

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Maldon in Essex

*May 2000*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)  
Peter Brokenshire  
Kru Desai  
Pamela Gordon  
Robin Gray  
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

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# CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>13</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>29</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Maldon: Detailed Mapping	<i>31</i>
B Proposed Electoral Arrangements: Maldon District Council Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party	<i>37</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>41</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon towns is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Maldon on 30 November 1999.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Maldon:

- **in 15 of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 15 wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 83-84) are that:

- **Maldon District Council should have 31 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, instead of 20 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

These draft recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each district councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 16 of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **Electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2004.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Burnham-on-Crouch, Heybridge and Maldon;**
- **new warding arrangements for the parishes of Mayland and Tollesbury;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council, and Heybridge and St Lawrence parish councils.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 16 May 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 10 July 2000:

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Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Althorne	2	Althorne ward (the parishes of Althorne and Latchingdon); The Maylands ward (part – the proposed Maylandsea parish ward of Mayland parish); Purleigh ward (part – Mundon parish)	Maps 2 and A2
2 Burnham-on-Crouch North	2	Burnham-on-Crouch North ward; Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
3 Burnham-on-Crouch South	2	Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
4 Great Totham	2	Great Totham ward (the parishes of Great Braxted and Great Totham); Goldhanger ward (part – Little Totham parish)	Map 2
5 Heybridge East	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the modified East parish ward and the proposed Basin parish ward of Heybridge parish)	Maps 2 and A5
6 Heybridge West	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (West parish ward of Heybridge parish)	Maps 2 and A5
7 Maldon East	1	Maldon East ward (part); Maldon South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
8 Maldon North	2	Maldon East ward (part); Maldon North West ward (part); Maldon South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
9 Maldon South	2	Maldon South ward (part); Maldon East ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
10 Maldon West	2	Maldon North West ward (part); Maldon South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
11 Mayland	2	The Maylands ward (part – the proposed Mayland parish ward of Mayland parish); St. Lawrence ward (part – the parishes of St Lawrence and Steeple)	Maps 2 and A2
12 Purleigh	2	Purleigh ward (part – Purleigh parish); Cold Norton ward (the parishes of Cold Norton, North Fambridge and Stow Maries)	Map 2
13 Southminster	2	Southminster ward (Southminster parish); St. Lawrence ward (part – Asheldham parish)	Map 2
14 Tillingham	1	Tillingham ward (the parishes of Bradwell-on-Sea and Tillingham); St. Lawrence ward (part – Dengie parish)	Map 2
15 Tollesbury	1	Tollesbury ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Tollesbury parish)	Maps 2, A3 and A4

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
16	Tolleshunt D'Arcy	2	Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (the parishes of Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Tolleshunt Knights); Tollesbury ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Tollesbury parish); Goldhanger ward (part – the parishes of Goldhanger and Tolleshunt Major)	Maps 2, A3 and A4
17	Wickham Bishops & Woodham	2	Wickham Bishops ward (the parishes of Little Braxted and Wickham Bishops); Woodham ward (the parishes of Hazeleigh, Langford, Ulting, Woodham Mortimer and Woodham Walter)	Map 2

*Notes: 1 The whole of Maldon district is parished.*

*2 Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Maldon

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Althorne	2	3,018	1,509	5	2,877	1,439	3
2 Burnham-on-Crouch North	2	2,884	1,442	0	2,795	1,398	0
3 Burnham-on-Crouch South	2	3,104	1,552	8	2,913	1,457	4
4 Great Totham	2	2,832	1,416	-1	2,756	1,378	-2
5 Heybridge East	2	2,828	1,414	-1	2,596	1,298	-7
6 Heybridge West	2	2,405	1,203	-16	2,761	1,381	-1
7 Maldon East	1	1,425	1,425	-1	1,390	1,390	-1
8 Maldon North	2	2,843	1,422	-1	2,796	1,398	0
9 Maldon South	2	3,017	1,509	5	2,754	1,377	-2
10 Maldon West	2	3,081	1,541	7	2,873	1,437	3
11 Mayland	2	2,676	1,338	-7	2,760	1,380	-1
12 Purleigh	2	2,635	1,318	-8	2,645	1,323	-6
13 Southminster	2	2,771	1,386	-3	2,994	1,497	7
14 Tillingham	1	1,523	1,523	6	1,406	1,406	0
15 Tollesbury	1	1,581	1,581	10	1,486	1,486	6
16 Tolleshunt D'Arcy	2	3,008	1,504	5	2,998	1,499	7
17 Wickham Bishops & Woodham	2	2,856	1,428	0	2,626	1,313	-6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>44,487</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>43,426</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Maldon District Council's submission.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The total number of electors in 1999 are marginally different from those in Figure 4 (by 27 electors) due to rounding in Maldon town. This has a negligible effect on electoral variances and the average number of electors per councillor.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Maldon in Essex on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 12 districts in Essex as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Maldon. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1975 (Report No. 89). We completed a directed electoral review of Thurrock in 1996 and a periodic electoral review of Southend-on-Sea in 1999. The electoral arrangements of Essex County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 401). We expect to undertake a periodic electoral review of Thurrock in 2000 and a review of the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for

schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

*Figure 3: Stages of the Review*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Essex districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals are now being taken forward in the Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 30 November 1999, when we wrote to Maldon District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, the local authority associations, Essex Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Member of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 28 February 2000.

13 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

14 Stage Three began on 16 May 2000 and will end on 10 July 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

15 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The district of Maldon is a largely rural area covering some 140 square miles, with over 60 miles of coastline. It is the one of the region's fastest growing areas and currently has a population of approximately 55,100. It is situated 40 miles to the north-east of London via the A12 and A414 with its coastline extending to the rivers Blackwater, Crouch and Chelmer. It includes the historic towns of Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch. The district contains 33 parishes, and is totally parished.

17 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

18 The electorate of the district is 44,460 (February 1999). The Council presently has 30 members who are elected from 20 wards, seven of which are relatively urban in Burnham-on-Crouch, Maldon and Heybridge, with the remainder being predominantly rural. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are each represented by two councillors and 12 are single-member wards. The Council is elected together every four years.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Maldon district, with around 39 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments, most notably in the Maldon and Heybridge areas.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,482 electors, which the District Council forecasts will reduce to 1,448 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 20 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Heybridge East ward where the councillor represents 91 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Maldon*

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Althorne	1	1,858	1,858	25	1,730	1,730	20
2 Burnham-on-Crouch North	1	2,334	2,334	57	2,249	2,249	55
3 Burnham-on-Crouch South	3	3,654	1,218	-18	3,459	1,153	-20
4 Cold Norton	1	1,629	1,629	10	1,652	1,652	14
5 Goldhanger	1	1,278	1,278	-14	1,199	1,199	-17
6 Great Totham	2	2,531	1,266	-15	2,476	1,238	-14
7 Heybridge East	1	2,828	2,828	91	2,596	2,596	79
8 Heybridge West	2	2,405	1,203	-19	2,761	1,381	-5
9 Maldon East	2	2,181	1,091	-26	2,288	1,144	-21
10 Maldon North West	3	3,218	1,073	-28	3,179	1,060	-27
11 Maldon South	2	4,941	2,471	67	4,346	2,173	50
12 Purleigh	1	1,291	1,291	-13	1,265	1,265	-13
13 St. Lawrence	1	1,233	1,233	-17	1,154	1,154	-20
14 Southminster	2	2,663	1,332	-10	2,897	1,449	0
15 The Maylands	1	2,528	2,528	71	2,683	2,683	85
16 Tillingham	1	1,421	1,421	-4	1,301	1,301	-10
17 Tollesbury	2	2,103	1,052	-29	2,006	1,003	-31
18 Tolleshunt D'Arcy	1	1,509	1,509	2	1,559	1,559	8
19 Wickham Bishops	1	1,629	1,629	10	1,511	1,511	4
20 Woodham	1	1,226	1,226	-17	1,115	1,115	-23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44,460</b>	–	–	<b>43,426</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>1,482</b>	–	–	<b>1,448</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Maldon District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Tollesbury ward were relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while electors in Heybridge East ward were significantly under-represented by 91 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Maldon District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 14 direct representations during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

#### **Maldon District Council**

23 During Stage One the District Council consulted widely with parish and town councils, political parties and other interested bodies on a scheme based on 31 members. It received over 30 responses, which it forwarded to the Commission during the early stages of the review. In response to its consultation, the Council made two changes to its proposals for the Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon areas, and confirmed the rest of its proposals as its formal submission.

24 The District Council proposed a council of 31 members, one more than at present, serving 17 wards, compared to the existing 20. The additional councillor was for Heybridge East ward, with two-member wards throughout the district, except for three wards which would elect a single councillor each. The towns of Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon would be re-warded, as well as the rural area. Only three wards would retain their existing boundaries – Heybridge East, Heybridge West and Southminster. Under these arrangements, two parishes would be warded for the first time, and three would be re-warded. Under these proposals two wards, Heybridge West and Tillingham would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average. All wards are expected to vary by less than 10 per cent in 2004. The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

#### **Local Political Parties**

25 The District Council forwarded two representations from local political parties during Stage One. Maldon & East Chelmsford Conservative Association supported the Council's proposals, and also stated that it favoured the continuation of whole-council elections every four years. Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party submitted a scheme based on a council of 32 members, representing 18 wards. The two additional councillors were for Heybridge East and Mayland wards. It proposed that the towns of Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon be re-warded, and changes to most of the remaining rural wards. Only three wards would retain their existing boundaries. Under its proposals, three wards would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average. In 2004 only one ward, Tillingham, would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average (21 per cent). Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

26 We received direct representations from nine parish and town councils. Maldon Town Council proposed that consideration should be given to rectifying ward boundaries where they split roads, and that the number of town councillors should be 15 or more to accommodate the growth in Maldon's electorate. Heybridge and Wickham Bishops parish councils supported the District Council's proposals for their respective areas. Both Langford & Ulting and Little Braxted parish councils opposed the District Council's proposed two-member Wickham Bishops ward, and preferred instead to be linked with more rural parishes. In addition, Langford & Ulting Parish Council proposed that a more logical solution would be to create two single-member wards in the area.

27 Mayland Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to divide The Maylands into two district wards on community grounds. It put forward alternative proposals for the southern part of the district, which provided for nine wards, one of which would be in two parts not joined together, and two of which retained electoral imbalances of over 20 per cent. The Parish Council also considered that the forecast 2004 figures for The Maylands were underestimated, as it stated that 25 houses were currently under construction. Mundon Parish Council objected to being grouped with Althorne, Latchingdon and Maylandsea in a new ward and preferred instead to remain in Purleigh ward to preserve local ties. It also proposed no change to its current number of parish councillors. Steeple Parish Council proposed a new single-member ward comprising St Lawrence and Steeple parishes, together with Old Mayland (the rural part of Mayland), and another single-member ward for the remainder of Mayland. Stow Maries Parish Council proposed no change to its current district and parish electoral arrangements.

28 During Stage One a further 14 representations from parish and town councils were forwarded by the District Council, some in support of the Council's proposals and some against.

## **Other Representations**

29 We received a further four direct representations from local councillors and local residents. Councillor Mrs Channer, member for The Maylands ward, opposed the Council's proposal to split the Maylands for community reasons, and supported the views expressed by Mayland Parish Council. Councillor Cooper, member for Purleigh & Mundon ward, proposed that Purleigh and Mundon parishes remain together for historical and community reasons, and opposed the Council's proposal to divide The Maylands and Tollesbury. He also favoured single-member wards in the rural areas and two-member wards in the more built-up areas.

30 Two residents from St Lawrence opposed the Council's proposals to include the rural parishes of St Lawrence and Steeple in a ward with the more urban Mayland. They instead preferred to be linked with similar-sized parishes within the Dengie Peninsular and proposed three alternative wards for the area, all of which retained relatively high electoral imbalances. They supported the Council's proposed number of parish and town councils in the district. Five residents from Tollesbury jointly opposed the inclusion of parts of the parish in different district wards on community grounds.

31 During Stage One seven additional representations from local councillors and residents were forwarded to the Commission by the Council, all of which commented on the Council's proposals.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Maldon is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

33 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

34 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

35 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

36 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a decrease in the electorate of some 2 per cent from 44,460 to 43,426 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. Although the electorate is expected to decline in the Maldon South and Burnham-on-Crouch areas, some growth is expected in Heybridge West and Southminster wards. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

37 Mayland Parish Council considered that the District Council's forecast electorate for The Maylands ward was underestimated, as 25 houses, currently under construction, had not been accounted for. However, the District Council has confirmed that these houses had already been included in the overall forecast electorate figures for The Maylands ward.

38 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council's figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. In particular, having considered the forecast electorate for The Maylands ward, we remain of the view that it provides a reasonable and prudent estimate of the

growth in electorate likely to take place. We welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

## **Council Size**

39 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

40 Maldon District Council presently has 30 members. The District Council proposed a council of 31 members which it considered was the best solution “to retain and foster community identity especially in the rural areas”. It believed that any significantly larger increase would create an unwieldy council.

41 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party submitted proposals to the District Council for a council of 32 members, although it did not include any supporting evidence for its proposals, or demonstrate why this would be preferable to a council size of 31.

42 We have carefully considered all the representations received before reaching a conclusion on the most appropriate council size for Maldon. In particular, we note that a scheme including an additional councillor, as proposed by the District Council, would achieve better electoral equality.

43 While we are generally cautious about increases or decreases in council size, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 31 members. As discussed below, the 32-member scheme submitted by Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party would result in worse electoral equality. The 31-member scheme would allow for a fairer distribution of councillors across the district than retaining a council of 30 members and forms the basis of our draft recommendations.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

44 Having carefully considered all the representations received, including the district-wide scheme from the District Council and the district-wide scheme it forwarded from Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party, a number of considerations have emerged which have informed our draft recommendations. First, there appears to be acknowledgement locally that the present arrangements are unsatisfactory and capable of significant improvement. Both district-wide schemes made positive proposals for change to the present arrangements and, to varying degrees, achieved good levels of electoral equality.

45 Second, there is general agreement for a small increase in council size. As discussed earlier, we are putting forward a scheme based on a council of 31 members, which achieves better electoral equality throughout the district. Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party’s proposal for a council size of 32 resulted in a different councillor:elector ratio and worse electoral equality.

46 Third, respondents have asked that the Commission take into account established communities. The District Council has sought to address this, where it is compatible with our aim of seeking improvements to electoral equality across the district.

47 We have therefore noted the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the indication of broad support for much of the scheme, as a result of the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties. Accordingly, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other proposals submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the District Council's proposals in four areas (affecting eight wards). For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) The towns of Burnham-on-Crouch (two wards) and Maldon (three wards);
- (b) Heybridge (East and West) wards;
- (c) Althorne, Cold Norton and Purleigh wards;
- (d) St. Lawrence, Southminster, The Maylands and Tillingham wards;
- (e) Great Totham, Wickham Bishops and Woodham wards;
- (f) Goldhanger, Tollesbury and Tolleshunt D'Arcy wards.

48 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Burnham-on-Crouch (two wards) and Maldon (three wards) towns**

49 Burnham-on-Crouch town is situated in the south-eastern corner of the district and currently contains two wards, Burnham-on-Crouch North and Burnham-on-Crouch South, coterminous with North and South parish wards of Burnham-on-Crouch parish. The number of electors represented by the single councillor for Burnham-on-Crouch North ward is 57 per cent above the district average (55 per cent in 2004), while the three councillors for Burnham-on-Crouch South ward each represent 18 per cent fewer electors than the average (20 per cent in 2004).

50 The District Council, together with Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council, proposed that the boundary between the two existing wards be revised to achieve a better balance, by transferring all the properties to the east of Station Road, as far as Devonshire Road and Arcadia Road, moving 589 electors from South to North, using the railway line partially as the boundary between the two. Each ward would then be served by two councillors. Under these proposals the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 2 per cent above the district average in Burnham-on-Crouch North ward (1 per cent in 2004) and 7 per cent above in Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (3 per cent in 2004).

51 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the District Council proposing that the town be re-warded into two new wards, Burnham East and Burnham West, although it did not provide any detailed ward boundary proposals.

52 Having considered the representations for Burnham-on-Crouch town, we note that there is general support for the wards in the town and are including them as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary in the Arcadia Road area, to go behind the back of the houses (nos 2-44), transferring 39 fewer electors from South ward to North ward. We consider this modification would provide easier access for those electors involved, and would include the whole road in one ward. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average in Burnham-on-Crouch North ward (unchanged in 2004) and 8 per cent above in Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (4 per cent above in 2004). Our draft recommendations for Burnham-on-Crouch town are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

53 Maldon town is located in the heart of the district and is currently served by three wards, Maldon East, Maldon North West and Maldon South, coterminous with the three wards of Maldon parish. Maldon East and Maldon South wards elect two councillors each, while Maldon North West ward is served by three councillors. The number of electors represented by each councillor is 26 per cent below the average in Maldon East ward (21 per cent in 2004), 28 per cent below in Maldon North West ward (27 per cent in 2004) and 67 per cent above in Maldon South ward (50 per cent in 2004).

54 To achieve a better balance of representation, the District Council, in consultation with Maldon Town Council, proposed that the town be re-warded into four wards, served by two councillors each, except for Maldon East ward which would elect a single councillor. Under these proposals the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 1 per cent above the district average in Maldon East ward (unchanged in 2004), 1 per cent below in Maldon North ward (equal to the average in 2004), 4 per cent above in Maldon South ward (3 per cent below in 2004) and 7 per cent above in Maldon West ward (3 per cent above in 2004). Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the District Council proposing a minor amendment between Maldon East and Maldon North wards “to ensure community cohesion”.

55 We have carefully considered the representations received for Maldon town and, while noting Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party’s amendment, consider that the District Council’s proposals achieve good levels of electoral equality, provide a good reflection of the statutory criteria and utilise clear boundaries. We are therefore including the Council’s proposed wards in Maldon town as part of our draft recommendations, subject to retaining the whole of the existing southern boundary between Maldon East and Maldon South wards (involving 26 electors) on Mundon Road, providing a clearer boundary, as opposed to following the backs of the properties in Chichester Way and Tennyson Road. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Maldon East ward (unchanged in 2004) and 5 per cent above in Maldon South ward (2 per cent below in 2004). Our draft recommendations for Maldon town are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Heybridge (East and West) wards**

56 Heybridge is served by two wards, Heybridge East and Heybridge West, coterminous with the parish wards of the same name. The wards are located immediately to the north of Maldon town and are served by a single councillor and two councillors respectively. Heybridge East ward is significantly under-represented with 91 per cent more electors than the district average (79 per

cent in 2004), while Heybridge West ward is relatively over-represented with 19 per cent fewer electors than the average (5 per cent in 2004).

57 With the exception of allocating an additional councillor to Heybridge East ward, the District Council proposed no change to either ward, as their boundaries were “clear cut and already accepted”, with “no easy way of sub-dividing them”. Under its proposals the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Heybridge East ward (7 per cent in 2004) and 16 per cent below in Heybridge West ward (1 per cent in 2004). These proposals were supported by Heybridge Parish Council. Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party also wrote to the District Council in support of these proposals.

58 Having considered the Council’s proposals in this area, we note that there is general support for the proposed wards and are including them as part of our draft recommendations. We acknowledge that a degree of electoral imbalance is inevitable in the short term in Heybridge West ward, but any further improvement in immediate electoral equality would be at the expense of equality in 2004, because of future development. Our draft recommendations for Heybridge are shown on Maps 2 and A5.

### **Althorne, Cold Norton and Purleigh wards**

59 These three wards are located in the south-west of the district and are each served by a single councillor. Althorne ward, comprising the parishes of Althorne and Latchingdon, is currently under-represented by 25 per cent (20 per cent in 2004). Cold Norton ward comprises the three parishes of Cold Norton, North Fambridge and Stow Maries; the number of electors represented by the councillor for the ward is 10 per cent above the district average (14 per cent in 2004). Purleigh ward comprises the parishes of Mundon and Purleigh and the number of electors represented by the councillor is 13 per cent below the average (unchanged in 2004).

60 To address the electoral imbalances in this area, the District Council proposed a new two-member Althorne ward, with its boundary extended to include Mundon parish and 852 electors from the western part of Mayland parish (the Maylandsea area). The remainder of Mayland parish would be included in a new Mayland ward (detailed later). It also proposed that Cold Norton ward be extended to include Purleigh parish, to form a new two-member Purleigh ward. Under these proposals the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 4 per cent above the district average in Althorne ward (2 per cent in 2004) and 8 per cent below in Purleigh ward (6 per cent in 2004).

61 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the District Council proposing a different ward configuration for this area. It proposed a revised Althorne ward, comprising the parishes of Althorne and Steeple (currently in St. Lawrence ward, detailed later) and 25 electors from the southern part of Mayland parish; a new two-member Latchingdon ward, incorporating the existing Cold Norton ward, Latchingdon parish and 18 electors from the southern part of Purleigh parish; with no further changes to Purleigh ward. Under these arrangements, assuming a council size of 32, the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Althorne ward (9 per cent in 2004) and 8 per cent below in both Latchingdon and Purleigh wards (both unchanged in 2004).

62 Councillor Cooper, member for Purleigh ward, considered that Purleigh and Mundon parishes should remain together because of their long association and close affinity. He also felt that two-member wards were more suitable for built-up areas. Stow Maries Parish Council proposed no change to the existing wards, while two residents from St Lawrence proposed no change to Althorne ward. Both Althorne and Purleigh parish councils wrote to the Council accepting the proposals for their respective areas. Mundon Parish Council wrote to the District Council opposing the Council's proposals for its area for community reasons. Instead it proposed two new wards, one comprising Purleigh, Mundon and Stow Maries parishes, and the other comprising Cold Norton and North Fambridge parishes.

63 We have carefully considered all the representations received for this area. While we are sympathetic to the views expressed by the local councillor and parish councils in the area, we consider that the Council's proposals have the advantage of achieving good electoral equality, while also adequately reflecting the statutory criteria. We note that the proposal for a ward comprising the parishes of Purleigh, Mundon and Stow Maries would be a detached ward and we do not consider that this would secure convenient and effective local government. In addition, we consider the proposal by the Labour Party to create a Mayland parish ward of 25 electors (out of a possible 2,500 in the whole parish) would not provide a good reflection of the statutory criteria in this instance. We are therefore including the District Council's proposed Althorne and Purleigh wards as part of our draft recommendations, subject to amending the boundary between Althorne and Mayland wards by running part of the boundary behind the backs of the houses on The Drive (nos. 86-112), thereby transferring 23 electors to Althorne ward to keep similar properties together in one ward, as we feel this would better reflect community identity. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Althorne ward would be 5 per cent above the average (3 per cent in 2004). Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 2 and A2.

### **St. Lawrence, Southminster, The Maylands and Tillingham wards**

64 These four wards are situated to the east of the district and are each served by a single councillor, except for Southminster ward which elects two councillors. St. Lawrence ward comprises the four parishes of Asheldham, Dengie, St Lawrence and Steeple and the number of electors represented by the councillor is 17 per cent below the district average (20 per cent in 2004). Southminster ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is over-represented by 10 per cent (forecast to be equal to the average in 2004 due to development). The Maylands ward, comprising Mayland parish, is significantly under-represented with 71 per cent more electors than the average (increasing to 85 per cent in 2004). Tillingham ward, comprising the parishes of Bradwell-on-Sea and Tillingham, has 4 per cent fewer electors than the average (10 per cent in 2004).

65 To achieve a better balance of representation in this area, the District Council proposed that St Lawrence and Steeple parishes (currently in St. Lawrence ward), together with the eastern part of Mayland parish (1,676 electors) should form a new two-member Mayland ward; and that the remaining two parishes in St. Lawrence ward, Asheldham and Dengie, be included in a modified Tillingham ward. No change was proposed to Southminster ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the district average in Mayland ward (1 per cent below in 2004), 14 per cent above in Tillingham ward (7 per cent above in 2004) and 7 per cent below in Southminster ward (3 per cent above in 2004).

66 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the District Council, submitting alternative proposals for this area. It proposed the merger of St. Lawrence (less Steeple parish) and Tillingham wards to form a new two-member Tillingham ward; a new single-member Althorne ward (described earlier), comprising the parishes of Althorne and Steeple, together with 25 electors from the southern part of Mayland parish; and a two-member Mayland ward, covering the remainder of Mayland parish. It also proposed no change to Southminster ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Althorne ward (9 per cent below in 2004), 10 per cent below in Mayland ward (2 per cent below in 2004), 4 per cent below in Southminster ward (7 per cent above in 2004) and 17 per cent below in Tillingham ward (21 per cent below in 2004).

67 Mayland Parish Council opposed the Council's proposals for the Mayland area, as it considered the area had nothing in common with the areas to which it would be linked, and instead proposed no change to The Maylands ward. These views were reiterated by Councillor Mrs Channer, member for The Maylands ward. Steeple Parish Council supported the proposal from Councillor Mrs Brock, member for St. Lawrence ward, for a new single-member ward comprising Steeple and St Lawrence parishes, and the rural part of Mayland parish (Old Mayland); and another single-member ward covering the remainder of Mayland parish. Two residents of St Lawrence objected to being included in a ward with Mayland, and instead preferred to be in a ward with similar sized parishes within the Dengie Peninsular.

68 St Lawrence Parish Council wrote to the District Council objecting to being included in the same ward as Mayland parish, citing community identity reasons. Instead it proposed a new ward, comprising St Lawrence, Steeple and Bradwell-on-Sea parishes; a new ward comprising Tillingham, Dengie and Asheldham parishes and part of Southminster parish; and no change to The Maylands ward. Dengie Hundred Group of Parish Councils (which represents most of the parishes in the southern part of the district) also wrote to the District Council opposing the changes to the wards in the Dengie area. In particular they were concerned that the inclusion of parts of Mayland parish in different district wards would break up communities. Two further representations opposing the warding of Mayland parish were forwarded by the District Council.

69 In looking at proposals for these wards, we note the concerns expressed and, in particular, those regarding the warding of Mayland parish. However, we have not found alternatives to the Council's proposals in this area that would simultaneously address the relatively high imbalances while reflecting the statutory criteria from a district-wide perspective. Specifically, when seeking to address the electoral imbalances in any district, we cannot look at any one area in isolation, but have to consider the consequential effects that proposals in one area would have on another in terms of improving electoral equality and reflecting the statutory criteria. We therefore consider that the Council's proposals for this part of the district achieve good levels of electoral equality, while adequately reflecting the statutory criteria, and therefore adopt them as part of our draft recommendations. However, we propose a minor change, which transfers Asheldham parish from Tillingham ward to Southminster ward to improve electoral equality. We note that Asheldham and Dengie parishes are jointly represented by a parish council, but we consider that this proposal would not adversely affect community identity in the area. As already stated, we also propose a minor amendment to the boundary between Mayland and Althorne wards.

70 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent below the district average in Mayland ward (1 per cent below in 2004), 3 per cent below in

Southminster ward (7 per cent above in 2004) and 6 per cent above in Tillingham ward (equal to the average in 2004). Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 2 and A2.

### **Great Totham, Wickham Bishops and Woodham wards**

71 Located in the north-west of the district, these three wards are each served by a single councillor, except for Great Totham ward, which elects two councillors. Great Totham ward comprises the parishes of Great Braxted and Great Totham; the number of electors represented by each councillor is 15 per cent below the district average (14 per cent in 2004). Wickham Bishops ward comprises the parishes of Little Braxted and Wickham Bishops, and the councillor represents 10 per cent more electors than the average (4 per cent in 2004). Woodham ward comprises the five parishes of Hazeleigh, Langford, Ulting, Woodham Mortimer and Woodham Walter; the number of electors represented by the councillor is 17 per cent below the average (23 per cent in 2004).

72 To improve electoral equality in the area, the District Council proposed extending Great Totham's ward boundary to include Little Totham parish (currently in Goldhanger ward, detailed later); and that Wickham Bishops and Woodham wards should be merged to form a new two-member Wickham Bishops ward. Under these proposals the number of electors represented by each councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Great Totham ward (2 per cent below in 2004) and equal to the average in Wickham Bishops ward (6 per cent below in 2004). Wickham Bishops Parish Council agreed with the Council's proposals for its area.

73 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the District Council supporting the new Wickham Bishops ward. However, they proposed alternative proposals for the rest of the area: a new Great Totham ward would comprise Great Totham parish, together with Goldhanger and Little Totham parishes (currently in Goldhanger ward); and a new Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward comprising Great Braxted parish (currently in Great Totham ward), Tolleshunt Major parish (currently in Goldhanger ward) and Tolleshunt D'Arcy parish (currently in Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward). Under these proposals, assuming a council size of 32, the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the average in Great Totham ward (8 per cent above in 2004), 12 per cent above in Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (10 per cent above in 2004) and 3 per cent above in Wickham Bishops ward (3 per cent below in 2004).

74 Langford & Ulting Parish Council opposed the merger of Wickham Bishops and Woodham wards, preferring instead two single-member wards – one covering the small rural parishes and the other covering the larger more urbanised Wickham Bishops area. Little Braxted Parish Council also opposed the merger, and instead preferred Wickham Bishops ward to be linked with Great Braxted and Great Totham parishes.

75 The District Council also forwarded representations from Great Totham and Wickham Bishops parish councils, both agreeing with the Council's proposals for their respective areas. Representations were also forwarded by the District Council from Councillor Bass in his capacity as both member for Great Totham ward and member for Tollesbury county division. He agreed with the proposals for the areas he represents, although he considered that the proposed two-member Wickham Bishops ward may create problems of community identity. He also proposed that the ward should be renamed Wickham Bishops & Woodham.

76 We have considered carefully all the representations received for this part of the district and are including the Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations, as we consider they provide improved electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria. However, as proposed by Councillor Bass, we propose that Wickham Bishops ward should be renamed Wickham Bishops & Woodham to reflect the communities involved, and would welcome comments at Stage Three. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 2.

### **Goldhanger, Tollesbury and Tolleshunt D'Arcy wards**

77 These three wards are located in the north of the district. Tollesbury ward elects two councillors, while the other two wards are each served by a single councillor. Goldhanger ward comprises the parishes of Goldhanger, Little Totham and Tolleshunt Major, and the number of electors represented by the councillor is 14 per cent below the district average (17 per cent in 2004). Tollesbury ward comprises the parish of the same name and each councillor represents 29 per cent fewer electors than the district average (31 per cent in 2004). Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward comprises Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Tolleshunt Knights parishes, and the number of electors represented by the councillor is 2 per cent above the average (8 per cent in 2004).

78 To achieve more equitable representation in the area, the Council proposed that Tollesbury ward be split into two, with the eastern part of the ward (1,581 electors) forming a revised single-member Tollesbury ward. The remainder of Tollesbury ward (522 electors), together with Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Goldhanger wards (less Little Totham parish which would be included in the revised Great Totham ward, detailed earlier) would form a revised single-member Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward. Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the average in Tollesbury ward (6 per cent in 2004) and 5 per cent above in Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (7 per cent in 2004).

79 Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party wrote to the Council, submitting an alternative configuration for this area. It proposed a new Great Totham ward comprising the parishes of Goldhanger, Great Totham and Little Totham; a new Tollesbury ward comprising Tollesbury and Tolleshunt Knights parishes; and, as stated earlier, a new Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward comprising the parishes of Great Braxted, Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Tolleshunt Major. Under these proposals, assuming a council size of 32, the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average in Great Totham ward (8 per cent in 2004), 1 per cent above in Tollesbury ward (4 per cent in 2004) and 12 per cent above in Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (10 per cent in 2004).

80 Five residents of Tollesbury wrote directly to us opposing the inclusion of parts of Tollesbury in different district wards for community identity reasons. The District Council also forwarded three representations relating to this area. Goldhanger Parish Council proposed no change to Goldhanger ward but, if change was necessary, suggested that the Council's proposed Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward be renamed Goldhanger, as it is the oldest settlement in the ward. Councillor Long, member for Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward, proposed that the ward be called Tolleshunts (as it includes "the three Tolleshunts"). A resident of Tollesbury opposed the splitting of Tollesbury as he considered it was "a strong, established community".

81 After due consideration of the representations received, we acknowledge the views expressed regarding the inclusion of parts of Tollesbury parish in different district wards, but consider that the warding of the parish is unavoidable if reasonable electoral equality is to be achieved.

Moreover, we have found that its position on the edge of the district restricts the number of available options that would both improve electoral equality and meet the statutory criteria. Therefore, in view of our proposals elsewhere in the district, we are including the Council's proposed wards in this area as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a minor modification (affecting no electors), to include the whole of Bohuns Hall in Tollesbury ward. Additionally, we are including the Council's proposed ward name of Tolleshunt D'Arcy, as it is an existing ward name, and there is no evidence of significant local desire that it should be renamed. We would, however, welcome comments at Stage Three. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 2, A3 and A4.

## **Electoral Cycle**

82 At Stage One we received no proposals for change to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

## **Conclusions**

83 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be an increase in council size from 30 to 31;
- there should be 17 wards, instead of 20 as at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three wards, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held every four years for the whole council.

84 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in four areas:

- we propose that the boundary between Mayland and Althorne wards be modified, transferring 23 electors from the former ward to the latter ward;
- we propose that the existing southern boundary along Mundon Road between Maldon East and Maldon South wards be retained, thereby transferring 26 electors from Maldon East ward to Maldon South ward;
- we propose that the boundary between Burnham-on-Crouch North and Burnham-on-Crouch South wards be modified, transferring 39 electors from the former ward to the latter ward;
- we propose that Asheldham parish be transferred from Tillingham ward to Southminster ward, and that Wickham Bishops ward be renamed Wickham Bishops & Woodham.

85 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	30	31	30	31
Number of wards	20	17	20	17
Average number of electors per councillor	1,482	1,435	1,448	1,401
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	1	15	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	8	0

86 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Maldon District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 15 to one. By 2004 all wards are forecast to vary by less than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Maldon District Council should comprise 31 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

**Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

87 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Burnham-on-Crouch, Maldon, Mayland and Tollesbury to reflect the proposed district wards.

88 The parish of Burnham-on-Crouch is currently warded into two parish wards, North and South, served by three and six councillors respectively. To reflect the proposed district wards in the area, the District Council, in agreement with Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council, proposed that the boundary between the two parish wards be modified, with each parish ward electing five

councillors. In the light of our proposals for district wards in this area, we are including the Council’s proposed re-warding of Burnham-on-Crouch parish as a draft recommendation, subject to a minor ward boundary amendment, transferring 39 electors from North ward to South ward.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council should comprise 10 councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards, North and South, each returning five councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

89 The parish of Maldon is currently warded into three parish wards: East, North West and South, served by three, six and six councillors respectively. In line with its district warding proposals for the area, the District Council, in agreement with Maldon Town Council, proposed that the parish be re-warded into four new wards. In addition, the District Council proposed that East parish ward should be served by two councillors, with North, South and West parish wards being served by four councillors each, resulting in a reduction in the parish council size from 15 to 14.

90 Maldon Town Council proposed that the number of town councillors should be at least 15 due to the rapid growth of Maldon’s electorate, with an extra councillor representing West parish ward. In the light of our proposals for district wards in this area, we are including the Council’s proposed re-warding of Maldon parish as a draft recommendation. However, while we recognise the Council’s proposed distribution of town councillors in the wards would provide a fairer balance, electoral equality is not required at parish level, and given the Parish Council’s wishes to retain the existing council size, we propose that Maldon Town Council should retain 15 councillors, with West parish ward being served by five councillors. We would welcome comments at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Maldon Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: East (returning two councillors), North and South (returning four councillors each), and West (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

91 The parish of Mayland is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. In line with its district warding proposals in the area, the District Council proposed that the parish be warded into two new wards, Mayland and Maylandsea, served by six and three councillors respectively. Mayland parish ward would form part of the new Mayland district ward and Maylandsea parish ward would form part of the modified Althorne district ward.

92 We received several representations opposing the warding of Mayland parish, including ones from Mayland Parish Council and Councillor Mrs Channer, member for The Maylands ward. However, in the light of our proposals for district wards in this area, we are including the Council’s proposed warding of Mayland parish as a draft recommendation, subject to a minor ward amendment, transferring 23 electors from Mayland ward to Maylandsea ward.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Mayland Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Mayland (returning six councillors) and Maylandsea (three). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

93 The parish of Tollesbury is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. In line with its district warding proposals in the area, the District Council proposed that the parish be warded into two new wards, East and West, served by eight and three councillors respectively. East parish ward would be coterminous with Tollesbury district ward and West parish ward would form part of the modified Tolleshunt D’Arcy district ward.

94 We received a number of representations opposing the warding of Tollesbury parish, including a joint one from five residents from Tollesbury. However, in the light of our proposals for district wards in this area, we are including the Council’s proposed warding of Tollesbury parish as a draft recommendation, subject to a minor ward boundary amendment in the south, affecting no electors.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Tollesbury Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: East (returning eight councillors) and West (three). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

95 The parish of Heybridge is currently warded into two parish wards, East and West, served by five and four councillors respectively. Heybridge Parish Council, in agreement with the District Council, proposed that the Parish Council should elect 12 councillors and that East parish ward should be divided into two new wards: East, electing five councillors, and Basin, electing a single councillor. It also proposed that West parish ward should elect six councillors instead of the current four. The boundaries for the proposed Basin parish ward are illustrated on Map A5 in Appendix A.

96 Councillor Harker, member for Heybridge East district ward, wrote to the District Council opposing the increase in the number of councillors to 12, as Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council, with a forecast electorate of 5,708 would be served by 10 members, compared to Heybridge’s forecast electorate of 5,357. He therefore proposed that Heybridge Parish Council should elect

10 councillors: West ward served by five councillors, East ward served by four councillors and The Basin Heybridge ward (instead of Basin ward) served by a single councillor.

97 We note the two proposals for the number of councillors serving Heybridge Parish Council. While there is no requirement for electoral equality at parish level, we consider that the Parish Council’s proposal achieves a more even distribution of electors between the three parish wards and are therefore including their proposal for a parish council size of 12 as part of our draft recommendations. We also propose that the third ward should be called Basin, in line with the other parish ward names.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Heybridge Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, three more than at present, representing three wards: West (returning six councillors), East (five) and Basin (one). The parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map A5 in Appendix A.

98 The Council also proposed that both St Lawrence and Steeple parish councils should increase their council size from five to seven. However, Steeple Parish Council wanted to retain their existing council size, while St Lawrence Parish Council agreed with the proposed increase. We are content to include the proposed increase in St Lawrence Parish Council as a draft recommendation as it would not have any effect on our proposed district warding arrangements in that area. In response to Steeple Parish Council’s wishes, we are not recommending a change to their current council size.

**Draft Recommendation**  
St Lawrence Parish Council should comprise seven parish councillors, instead of the current five. The parish should not be warded.

99 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

**Draft Recommendation**  
For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

**100 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Maldon and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Maldon*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

101 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 10 July 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

102 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Maldon Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

103 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Maldon: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Maldon area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4, A5 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Mayland parish.

**Maps A3 and A4** illustrate the proposed warding of Tollesbury parish.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed re-warding of Heybridge parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Burnham-on-Crouch and Maldon towns.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Maldon: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Mayland Parish*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Tollesbury Parish*

*Map A4: Proposed Warding of Tollesbury Parish*

*Map A5: Proposed Re-Warding of Heybridge Parish*

## APPENDIX B

### Maldon District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the District Council in the following wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

*Figure B1: Maldon District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Althorne	Althorne ward (the parishes of Althorne and Latchingdon); The Maylands ward (part – the proposed Maylandsea parish ward of Mayland parish); Purleigh ward (part – Mundon parish)
Burnham-on-Crouch North	Burnham-on-Crouch North ward; Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (part)
Burnham-on-Crouch South	Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (part)
Maldon East	Maldon East ward (part); Maldon South ward (part)
Maldon South	Maldon South ward (part); Maldon East ward (part)
Mayland	The Maylands ward (part – the proposed Mayland parish ward of Mayland parish)
Southminster	<i>Unchanged</i> (Southminster parish)
Tillingham	Tillingham ward (the parishes of Bradwell-on-Sea and Tillingham); St. Lawrence ward (part – the parishes of Asheldham and Dengie)

*Figure B2: Maldon District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Althorne	2	2,995	1,498	4	2,854	1,427	2
Burnham-on-Crouch North	2	2,923	1,462	2	2,834	1,417	1
Burnham-on-Crouch South	2	3,065	1,533	7	2,874	1,437	3
Maldon East	1	1,451	1,451	1	1,416	1,416	1
Maldon South	2	2,991	1,496	4	2,728	1,364	-3
Mayland	2	2,699	1,350	-6	2,783	1,392	-1
Southminster	2	2,663	1,332	-7	2,897	1,449	3
Tillingham	1	1,631	1,631	14	1,503	1,503	7

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Maldon District Council's submission.*

## Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

We have included the proposals from Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party in their entirety as they were based on a council size of 32.

Figure B3: Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Althorne	Althorne ward (part – Althorne parish); The Maylands ward (part – part of Mayland parish); St. Lawrence ward (part – Steeple parish)
Burnham East	Burnham-on-Crouch North ward (part of Burnham-on-Crouch parish)
Burnham West	Burnham-on-Crouch South ward (part of Burnham-on-Crouch parish)
Great Totham	Great Totham ward (part – Great Totham parish); Goldhanger ward (part – the parishes of Goldhanger and Little Totham)
Heybridge East	<i>Unchanged</i> (East parish ward of Heybridge parish)
Heybridge West	<i>Unchanged</i> (West parish ward of Heybridge parish)
Latchingdon	Althorne ward (part – Latchingdon parish); Cold Norton ward (the parishes of Cold Norton, North Fambridge and Stow Maries); Purleigh ward (part – part of Purleigh parish)
Maldon town (four wards)	Maldon parish (split into four wards)
Mayland	The Maylands ward (part – part of Mayland parish)
Purleigh	Purleigh ward (part – Mundon parish and part of Purleigh parish)
Southminster	<i>Unchanged</i> (Southminster parish)
Tillingham	Tillingham ward (the parishes of Bradwell-on-Sea and Tillingham); St. Lawrence ward (part – the parishes of Asheldham, Dengie and St Lawrence)
Tollesbury	Tollesbury ward (Tollesbury parish); Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (part – Tolleshunt Knights parish)
Tolleshunt D'Arcy	Tolleshunt D'Arcy ward (part – Tolleshunt D'Arcy parish); Cold Norton ward (part – Tolleshunt Major parish); Great Totham ward (part – Great Braxted parish)
Wickham Bishops	Wickham Bishops ward (the parishes of Little Braxted and Wickham Bishops); Woodham ward (the parishes of Hazeleigh, Langford, Ulting, Woodham Mortimer and Woodham Walter)

Figure B4: Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Althorne	1	1,331	1,331	-4	1,233	1,233	-9
Burnham East	2	2,974	1,487	7	2,889	1,445	6
Burnham West	2	3,014	1,507	8	2,819	1,410	4
Great Totham	2	3,050	1,525	10	2,933	1,467	8
Heybridge East	2	2,828	1,414	2	2,596	1,298	-4
Heybridge West	2	2,405	1,203	-13	2,761	1,381	2
Latchingdon	2	2,552	1,276	-8	2,509	1,255	-8
Maldon town (four wards)	7	10,340	1,477	6	9,813	1,402	3
Mayland	2	2,503	1,252	-10	2,658	1,329	-2
Purleigh	1	1,273	1,273	-8	1,247	1,247	-8
Southminster	2	2,663	1,332	-4	2,897	1,449	7
Tillingham	2	2,301	1,151	-17	2,138	1,069	-21
Tollesbury	2	2,818	1,409	1	2,817	1,409	4
Tolleshunt D'Arcy	1	1,553	1,553	12	1,490	1,490	10
Wickham Bishops	2	2,856	1,428	3	2,626	1,313	-3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>44,461</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>43,426</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Maldon & East Chelmsford Labour Party.



## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: The Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

#### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

10 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.

