

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Rochford in Essex

*June 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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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the centre of the district is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Rochford 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 Rochford:

- **in 14 of the 23 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and nine 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 82-83) are that:

- **Rochford District Council should have 40 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 23 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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 19 of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all 20 wards expected to vary by no more 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 re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Ashingdon, Great Wakering, Hawkwell, Hockley, Hullbridge, Rayleigh and Rochford.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 20 June 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 4 September 2000:

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Rochford Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
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London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142  
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Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Ashingdon & Canewdon	2	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed Ashingdon parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Canewdon ward (the parishes of Canewdon, Paglesham and Stambridge)	Large map
2	Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West	2	Barling & Sutton ward (the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton); Great Wakering Central ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Great Wakering parish); Great Wakering West ward (part of the proposed West parish ward of Great Wakering parish)	Map A2
3	Downhall & Rawreth	2	Downhall ward (part – the proposed Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – the parish of Rawreth)	Large map
4	Foulness & Great Wakering East	2	Foulness & Great Wakering East ward (the parish of Foulness Island and part of the proposed East ward of Great Wakering parish); Great Wakering Central ward (part – part of the proposed East ward of Great Wakering parish)	Map A2
5	Grange	2	Downhall ward (part – part of the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – part of the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map
6	Hawkwell North	2	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed Ashingdon Heights parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hawkwell East ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Hawkwell parish)	Large map
7	Hawkwell & Rochford West	2	Hawkwell West ward (part – the proposed South West parish ward of Hawkwell parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part – the proposed West ward of Rochford parish)	Large map
8	Hawkwell South	2	Hawkwell East ward (part – the proposed South ward of Hawkwell parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part – the proposed North ward of Rochford parish)	Large map
9	Hockley Central	2	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed South West parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hockley Central ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Hockley parish); Hockley East ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Hockley parish)	Large map

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
10 Hockley North	1	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hockley East ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Hockley parish)	Large map
11 Hockley West	2	Hawkwell West ward (part -the proposed North West parish ward of Hawkwell parish); Hockley Central ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Hockley parish); Hockley West ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Hockley parish )	Large map
12 Hullbridge & Hockley Rural	2	Hullbridge Riverside ward (part – part of the proposed South parish ward of Hullbridge parish); Hullbridge South ward (part – part of the proposed South parish ward of Hullbridge parish); Hockley East ward (part – part of the proposed Rural parish ward of Hockley parish); Hockley West ward (part – part of the proposed Rural parish ward of Hockley parish)	Large map
13 Hullbridge Riverside	2	Hullbridge Riverside ward (part – part of the proposed Riverside parish ward of Hullbridge parish); Hullbridge South ward (part – part of the proposed Riverside parish ward of Hullbridge parish)	Large map
14 Lodge	2	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map
15 Rayleigh Central	2	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Central ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map
16 Rochford	3	Rochford Eastwood ward (part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford Roche ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rochford parish)	Large map
17 Sweyne Park	2	Downhall ward (part – part of the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – part of the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
18 Trinity	2	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Wheatley ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map
19 Wheatley	2	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Wheatley ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map
20 Whitehouse	2	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Whitehouse ward (part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish)	Large map

*Notes: 1 The whole 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 Rochford

	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	Ashingdon & Canewdon	2	3,295	1,648	7	3,524	1,762	9
2	Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West	2	2,822	1,411	-8	2,953	1,477	-9
3	Downhall & Rawreth	2	2,982	1,491	-3	3,193	1,597	-1
4	Foulness & Great Wakering East	2	2,917	1,459	-5	2,985	1,493	-8
5	Grange	2	2,562	1,281	-17	3,275	1,638	1
6	Hawkwell North	2	3,234	1,617	5	3,413	1,707	5
7	Hawkwell & Rochford West	2	3,096	1,548	1	3,215	1,608	-1
8	Hawkwell South	2	3,310	1,655	8	3,391	1,696	5
9	Hockley Central	2	3,128	1,564	2	3,128	1,564	-3
10	Hockley North	1	1,522	1,522	-1	1,646	1,646	2
11	Hockley West	2	3,076	1,538	0	3,129	1,565	-3
12	Hullbridge & Hockley Rural	2	3,174	1,587	3	3,200	1,600	-1
13	Hullbridge Riverside	2	3,163	1,582	3	3,227	1,614	0
14	Lodge	2	3,165	1,583	3	3,301	1,651	2
15	Rayleigh Central	2	3,316	1,658	8	3,336	1,668	3
16	Rochford	3	4,726	1,575	2	5,114	1,705	5
17	Sweyne Park	2	2,926	1,463	-5	3,182	1,591	-2
18	Trinity	2	2,907	1,454	-5	3,107	1,554	-4
19	Wheatley	2	3,148	1,574	2	3,295	1,648	2
20	Whitehouse	2	3,109	1,555	1	3,183	1,592	-2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>61,578</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,797</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on figures provided by Rochford 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Rochford 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 Rochford. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report No. 25). 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 (LGBC Report No. 401). We expect to review 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

Stage	Description
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, ie 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 were 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 Rochford District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Essex County Council,

Essex Police Authority, the local authority associations, Essex Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the Members of the European Parliament for the Essex region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 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 20 June 2000 and will end on 4 September 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 Rochford is situated in the south-east of Essex and is bordered by the River Crouch and the North Sea to the north and east and shares its land boundaries with the districts of Basildon, Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea. Rochford is largely rural comprising large areas of protected green belt land and large rural parishes, with the two main towns of Rochford and Rayleigh. The area is well connected to London by rail and road and has a large commuter population. It also contains London Southend airport. There has been much development in the area, which is largely residential, resulting from the district's strong road and rail links with London. Growth has centred on the Rayleigh area, and in parts of Hawkwell, Hockley and Rochford.

17 The district is wholly parished, containing 12 rural parishes and two town councils. Rayleigh town comprises 38 per cent of the district's total electorate, while Rochford town comprises 9 per cent.

18 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'.

19 The electorate of the district is 61,578 (February 1999). The Council presently has 40 members who are elected from 23 wards, nine of which are relatively urban ones in Rayleigh and Rochford with the remainder being predominantly rural. Three of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 11 are each represented by two councillors and nine are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Rochford district, with around 17 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Hockley Central and Hockley West wards.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,539 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,620 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 14 of the 23 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and in nine wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Hockley West ward where the councillor represents 46 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Rochford*

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 Ashingdon	2	2,433	1,217	-21	2,719	1,360	-16
2 Barling & Sutton	1	1,385	1,385	-10	1,407	1,407	-13
3 Canewdon	1	1,903	1,903	24	1,944	1,944	20
4 Downhall	2	3,352	1,676	9	3,445	1,723	6
5 Foulness & Great Wakering East	1	1,727	1,727	12	1,775	1,775	10
6 Grange & Rawreth	3	5,118	1,706	11	6,205	2,068	28
7 Great Wakering Central	1	1,377	1,377	-11	1,403	1,403	-13
8 Great Wakering West	1	1,250	1,250	-19	1,353	1,353	-16
9 Hawkwell East	3	5,776	1,925	25	5,938	1,979	22
10 Hawkwell West	2	3,101	1,551	1	3,220	1,610	-1
11 Hockley Central	1	1,994	1,994	30	2,035	2,035	26
12 Hockley East	2	3,137	1,569	2	3,273	1,637	1
13 Hockley West	1	2,243	2,243	46	2,255	2,255	39
14 Hullbridge Riverside	2	3,144	1,572	2	3,208	1,604	-1
15 Hullbridge South	2	2,314	1,157	-25	2,328	1,164	-28
16 Lodge	3	4,641	1,547	0	4,777	1,592	-2
17 Rayleigh Central	2	2,934	1,467	-5	3,027	1,514	-7
18 Rochford Eastwood	1	1,379	1,379	-10	1,382	1,382	-15
19 Rochford Roche	1	1,968	1,968	28	2,183	2,183	35
20 Rochford St Andrews	2	2,332	1,166	-24	2,502	1,251	-23
21 Trinity	2	2,939	1,470	-5	3,139	1,570	-3
22 Wheatley	2	2,379	1,190	-23	2,453	1,227	-24
23 Whitehouse	2	2,752	1,376	-11	2,826	1,413	-13
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>61,578</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,797</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>-</b>

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rochford 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 Hullbridge South ward were relatively over-represented by 25 per cent, while electors in Hockley West ward were relatively under-represented by 46 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 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 Rochford District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

23 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 six 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.

#### **Rochford District Council**

24 The District Council proposed retaining a council of 40 members, serving 22 wards, compared to the existing 23. This scheme was put forward following a consultation process involving local residents, businesses, parish and town councils and other relevant organisations.

25 It proposed 18 two-member wards and four single-member wards. Overall, change was proposed to all but one of the existing wards. It supported maintaining the system of elections by thirds.

26 Under the District Council's proposals there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by no more than 10 per cent in 18 wards and by no more than 20 per cent in 21 of the 22 wards. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years such that 19 of the proposed 22 wards would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average by 2004, while no wards would vary by more than 20 per cent. The Council's proposal is summarised in Appendix B.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

27 We received representations from four parish and town councils. Hawkwell Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for Hawkwell. Hockley Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal for Hockley. Hullbridge Parish Council argued that it would prefer an increased council size of 42, with three councillors representing either three or two Hullbridge wards. Rayleigh Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for Rayleigh.

#### **Other Representations**

28 We received a further representation from a local councillor which was signed by 24 local residents. The councillor made general recommendations for 21 two-member wards based around key town centres and shopping zones, but did not put forward a scheme containing precise boundaries or electorate figures.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Rochford is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. 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, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

30 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.

31 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.

32 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**

33 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 5 per cent from 61,578 to 64,797 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Grange & Rawreth ward. 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.

34 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.

## **Council Size**

35 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.

36 Rochford District Council presently has 40 members. The District Council proposed that this council size should be retained, arguing that “the current number of councillors has secured both effective and convenient representation for the residents of the District”. It also considers that a 40-member council would be the “appropriate” number to “represent the community and to undertake the workload that councillors will face over the coming years”.

37 Hullbridge Parish Council proposed that the council size should be increased to 42 members. However, it stated that it was “prepared to accept” a 40-member council, as proposed by the District Council. A local councillor proposed that there should be a 42-member council, arguing that there should be 21 two-member wards in order that all electors be equally represented. However, neither of these respondents put forward schemes under an increased council size.

38 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 40 members. While we note that we have received two submissions in favour of an increase in council size, with no supporting argumentation for this change we have not been persuaded that an increased council size would offer better representation.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

39 The District Council put forward a scheme of one- and two-member wards, arguing that “access to councillors will generally best be served by a system of two councillors per ward in the built up areas and single councillor wards in rural Rochford”. In its scheme the Council only departed from this preference “in order to meet the current rules governing the creation of district wards”, to avoid the introduction of parish warding to unwarded parishes and to respect existing parish and parish ward boundaries. The Council also argued that “a system of predominantly two councillor wards helps to spread the representational workload” while a system of three-member wards might “blur responsibilities and result in confusion as to which councillor the public should approach”. In drawing up its scheme the Council was also mindful that a pattern of two-yearly elections might be introduced in future.

40 With regard to two-member wards, Rayleigh Town Council supported a “consistent approach” throughout the district and opposed the creation of single-member wards. A local councillor supported a scheme of two-member wards, arguing that this would ensure that every elector would be equally represented.

41 Having considered the general support for two-member wards throughout the district, in our draft recommendations we have proposed a scheme of two-member wards, except for one single-member ward and one three-member ward. We have not received any significant argumentation

opposing single or three-member wards in urban areas, and we consider that these proposed wards would offer the best balance between electoral equality and community representation in these areas, while maintaining clearly identifiable boundaries.

42 As a result of our proposals to address the poor levels of electoral equality put forward by the District Council in Hullbridge and Rochford, we were required to significantly depart from the Council’s scheme throughout the centre of the district. In Hullbridge and Rochford, the District Council proposed wards which respected parish boundaries but which would result in poor electoral equality. In our proposals we have used parish boundaries where possible. However, we have traversed these boundaries in a number of wards in order to provide significantly improved levels of electoral equality. While we recognise that the parish councils of Hawkwell and Hullbridge and a local councillor opposed such a move, we do not consider that our proposals would have an adverse effect on the reflection and representation of community identities and interests, given that the areas we have proposed combining have good transport links and are of a similar character. We have also attempted, in our proposals, to respect the major natural boundaries in the area.

43 We note the degree of consensus over large elements of the Council’s proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties. However, while we have adopted the Council’s scheme in part, we have moved away from it in a number of areas in order to improve electoral equality while also having regard to local community identities and interests. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Downhall, Grange & Rawreth, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards;
- (b) Hockley Central, Hockley East, Hockley West, Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge South wards;
- (c) Hawkwell East, Hawkwell West, Rochford Eastwood, Rochford Roche and Rochford St Andrews wards;
- (d) Ashingdon, Barling & Sutton, Canewdon, Foulness & Great Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards.

44 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.

**Downhall, Grange & Rawreth, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards**

45 The existing wards of Downhall, Grange & Rawreth, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse cover the western area of the district. Downhall, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards are each represented by two councillors, while Grange & Rawreth and Lodge wards are each represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Downhall, Grange & Rawreth, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards varies from the district average by 9 per cent, 11 per cent, 5 per cent, 5 per cent, 23 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, while equalling the

district average in Lodge ward. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Downhall and Trinity wards to vary by 6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively by 2004, but is projected to deteriorate over the next five years in Grange & Rawreth, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards to vary by 28 per cent, 2 per cent, 7 per cent, 24 per cent and 13 per cent by 2004 respectively.

46 The District Council proposed that this area should be represented by eight wards, with the proposed wards of Downhall & Rawreth, Grange, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Sweyne Park, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that the area to the west of the railway should be divided into Downhall & Rawreth, Grange and Sweyne Park wards. Downhall & Rawreth ward would comprise the parish of Rawreth and the majority of the existing Downhall ward less the Arundel Gardens area and that part to the south-east of Deepdene Avenue, Downhall Road, Ely Close and Preston Gardens. It proposed that Sweyne Park ward should include that part of the existing Grange & Rawreth ward that lies within Rayleigh parish boundary, excluding those parts bounded by London Road, Louis Drive, Louis Drive West, Hatfield Road and Purleigh Road, and including that part of the existing Downhall ward which comprises Arundel Gardens in order to include an area of recent development beyond the existing ward boundary. Its proposed Grange ward should combine the remainder of the existing Downhall and Grange & Rawreth wards. It argued that its proposals recognise the tie between the parishes of Rayleigh and Rawreth and the community links between the Downhall area and Rawreth parish and are based on the advice of Rayleigh Town Council. It proposed including the Louis Drive area in Grange ward rather than in Sweyne Park ward, arguing that there were better links between these communities. The District Council admitted that the proposed Grange ward “appears strange in geographical terms” but argued that this is justified given the clearly identifiable areas of different housing.

47 The District Council proposed that the area of Rayleigh to the east of the railway should be represented by the wards of Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse. It proposed that Lodge ward should comprise the existing Lodge ward, less that part to the south of Eastwood Road, that part to the south-west of Clarence Road and Warwick Road and that part to the east of The Chase, plus that part of the existing Trinity ward comprising Chase End. Under its proposals, Rayleigh Central ward would include those parts of the existing Lodge ward to the south-west of Clarence and Warwick roads and to the west of The Chase, excluding properties on the south side of Bull Lane, plus the majority of the existing Rayleigh Central ward, less those parts to the west of Queens Road. It proposed that Trinity ward should combine properties on the south side of Bull Lane from the existing Lodge ward, those properties on the south side of Louise Road from the existing Rayleigh Central ward, the remainder of the existing Trinity ward, less properties on the east side of Hockley Road, beside the school, and that part of the existing Wheatley ward which comprises properties on the southern side of Upway. It put forward a Wheatley ward combining that part of the existing Lodge ward comprising properties on the east side of Bull Lane to the south of Hilary Crescent, that part of Rayleigh Central ward to the east of Queens Road, excluding that part to the south of Eastwood Road and properties on the south side of Louise Road, and the remainder of the existing Trinity and Wheatley wards. The proposed Whitehouse ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Lodge and Rayleigh Central wards and the existing Whitehouse ward, using the strong boundaries of Eastwood Road, High Road and High Street.

48 The District Council argued that Rayleigh “possesses a strong community spirit” and that there are key boundaries within the town including the main roads of the A129, the A1015 and the Southend to London railway line. It attempted to reflect these boundaries within its proposals and combined a large area of the town centre within a single ward.

49 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in Grange, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Sweyne Park, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards would vary by 26 per cent, 3 per cent, 8 per cent, 1 per cent, 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, while equalling the district average in Downhall & Rawreth ward. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years to equal the district average in Grange ward while varying by 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average in Lodge, Rayleigh Central and Trinity wards, while remaining at 2 per cent in Wheatley ward and deteriorating in Downhall & Rawreth, Sweyne Park and Whitehouse wards to vary by 1 per cent, 3 per cent and 2 per cent from the district average by 2004.

50 Rayleigh Town Council fully supported the District Council’s proposals for Rayleigh. It rejected the District Council’s consultation proposal for a North Rayleigh & Rawreth ward, arguing that this ward name would be “confusing” as it would not reflect the identity of the area. It argued that this ward should be named Downhall & Rawreth and should include Appledene Close and Deepdene Avenue. It argued that the proposed Sweyne ward should be named Sweyne Park, in line with the senior school within the ward, and that the boundaries of the proposed Grange and Sweyne wards should be amended to include the London Road and Louis Drive area in Sweyne Park ward in order to reflect this “community”.

51 A local councillor argued that warding arrangements should reflect the links between the parish of Rawreth and the adjoining part of Rayleigh due to Rawreth residents’ links with Rayleigh station and shopping facilities in the town. She argued that the London to Southend railway line should be retained as a boundary between the east and west parts of Rayleigh, with three two-member wards to the west of the railway and five to the east of the railway, with the whole of the town centre being included in one of those wards.

52 Having carefully considered the representations received, we consider that the District Council’s proposals for this area generally offer good electoral equality and have received local support and we are content to adopt its proposals for the east of the town as our draft recommendation. However, we have not been persuaded that the District Council’s proposed Sweyne Park ward would offer the best representation of communities given that it would combine two areas sharing only a short connecting area. We consider that the District Council’s consultation proposal, comprising a more sensible geographical area, would offer a more clearly identifiable ward. As a result of accepting the District Council’s consultation proposals for Sweyne Park ward, we propose adopting their consultation proposals for the whole of the western part of Rayleigh. Under these proposals, Sweyne Park ward would comprise that part of the existing Grange ward within Rayleigh parish, less the southern undeveloped part of the ward and that part to the south east of Hatfield Road and London Road, plus that part of the existing Downhall ward that comprises Arundel Gardens, in order to include the area of recent development on the ward boundary. North Rayleigh & Rawreth ward would comprise the parish of Rawreth and that part of the existing Downhall ward to the north of Deepdene Avenue, Preston

Gardens and to the west of Caversham Park Avenue. Grange ward would combine the remainder of the existing Downhall and Grange & Rawreth wards. We have noted Rayleigh Town Council's opposition to two of these ward names and we agree that the proposed North Rayleigh & Rawreth ward should be renamed Downhall & Rawreth ward, while Sweyne ward should be named Sweyne Park ward in order to reflect better the constituent communities. We note that the District Council received a number of submissions regarding these proposals which opposed the division of the Deepdene Avenue area between wards. However, having examined the options available, we consider that these proposals would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

53 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Downhall & Rawreth, Grange, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Sweyne Park, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards would vary by 3 per cent, 17 per cent, 3 per cent, 8 per cent, 5 per cent, 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years to vary by 1 per cent, 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average in Downhall & Rawreth, Grange, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Sweyne Park and Trinity wards, while remaining at 2 per cent in Wheatley ward and deteriorating in Whitehouse ward to vary by 2 per cent from the district average in 2004.

### **Hockley Central, Hockley East, Hockley West, Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge South wards**

54 The existing wards of Hockley Central, Hockley East, Hockley West, Hullbridge Riverside, and Hullbridge South cover the northern central area of the district. Hockley Central and Hockley West wards are each represented by a single councillor, while Hockley East, Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge South wards are each represented by two councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the five wards varies from the district average by 30 per cent, 2 per cent, 46 per cent, 2 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally over the next five years in Hockley Central, Hockley East, Hockley West and Hullbridge Riverside wards to vary by 26 per cent, 1 per cent, 39 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, while deteriorating in Hullbridge South ward, to vary by 28 per cent by 2004.

55 The District Council proposed that this area should be represented by five wards, with the proposed Hockley West and Hullbridge South wards each being represented by a single councillor, while Hockley North, Hockley South and Hullbridge Riverside wards would each be represented by two councillors. Hockley North ward would comprise that part of the existing Hockley East ward to the north of the railway line and Greensward Lane, plus the adjoining built-up area of Ashingdon ward which, it argued, "for all intents and purposes forms an integral part of Hockley". Hockley South ward would include the existing Hockley Central ward, the remainder of the existing Hockley East ward, and that part of the existing Hockley West ward bounded by Buckingham Road, Bullwood Road and Westminster Drive. It proposed that Hockley West ward should comprise the remainder of Hockley West ward. It argued that Hockley is geographically separate from other areas and has a "clear sense of community identity" which should be reflected in the warding arrangements. It argued that a break from the system of two-member wards to create a single-member ward in this area can "be readily justified" in order to

provide “effective and convenient local government” for this community. It also noted that there are “no obvious divisions within the local community” upon which to base ward boundaries and therefore it based its proposals on existing polling districts, which it considered “will command support and recognition amongst the local electorate”.

56 It proposed that Hullbridge Riverside ward should combine the existing Hullbridge Riverside ward with those parts of the existing Hullbridge South ward on Malyons Lane and to the north-east of Coventry Hill and Hilltop Avenue. It proposed that Hullbridge South ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Hullbridge South ward. It argued that Hullbridge is “geographically separate from neighbouring settlements” and that it has a “considerable identity of interest”. Therefore, it did not consider that combining Hullbridge with adjoining areas would “command the support of local electors”.

57 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in Hockley North, Hockley South, Hockley West, Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge South wards would vary by 5 per cent, 10 per cent, 8 per cent, 19 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years to vary by 3 per cent, 6 per cent, 4 per cent, 16 per cent and 11 per cent from the district average by 2004.

58 Hockley Parish Council supported the District Council’s proposals for Hockley, including the proposal to include part of the parish of Ashingdon within a Hockley ward. It argued that this proposal would “properly reflect the community identity of Hockley”. It particularly supported the increased representation of the area on the District Council and the division of the area into two two-member wards and one single-member ward. Hullbridge Parish Council argued that Hullbridge should be represented by three wards, each represented by a single councillor; however, it was willing to accept that the area should be represented by two wards with a two-member Hullbridge Riverside and a single-member Hullbridge South ward. The Parish Council argued that it felt “very strongly” that Hullbridge should be represented as a separate area, adding that it would only “agree reluctantly” to wards crossing the parish boundaries in the interests of electoral equality. A local councillor argued that the parish of Hullbridge should not be warded with other areas given that it has “always stood alone”. She argued that Hullbridge should be divided into two two-member wards, while Hockley should be divided into three two-member wards with one containing the whole of the town centre. She supported the inclusion of the Greensward Lane area of Ashingdon parish in a Hockley ward.

59 Having given careful consideration to the representations received, we note that, by seeking to respect parish boundaries, the District Council’s proposals would result in poor levels of electoral equality for the Hullbridge area. While we have noted the local support for reflecting parish boundaries at district level, we do not consider that the resulting high levels of electoral variance are justifiable. On the basis of its electorate, Hullbridge merits three and a half district councillors. It is therefore necessary to combine parts of the parish with adjoining areas in order for the area to be fairly represented at district level. The adjoining parts of Hockley parish share strong road links with Hullbridge and are of a similar rural character, we consider, therefore, that these areas should be linked. We do not consider that our proposals would have an adverse effect on the reflection and representation of community identities and interests. We are proposing two two-member wards, Hullbridge & Hockley Rural and Hullbridge Riverside. Hullbridge &

Hockley Rural ward would combine the rural area of Hockley with the rural and southern parts of Hullbridge, combining the Lower Road area of the existing Hockley East ward, with that part of the existing Hockley West ward to the north-west of Alderman's Hill, Hillside Road, Manor Road, Woodside Road and the school grounds, and the existing Hullbridge South ward less the Malyons and Kingsmans Farm Road. Hullbridge Riverside ward would comprise the existing ward with minor boundary amendments in order to address anomalies in the current boundary.

60 As a result of our proposals in Hullbridge, we have been unable to adopt the District Council's scheme in Hockley, although we have attempted to reflect elements of its proposals and the views of Hockley Parish Council and a local councillor. We are proposing one single-member ward, Hockley North, and two two-member wards, Hockley Central and Hockley West. We propose that Hockley Central ward should contain the centre of Hockley town, combining that part of the existing Hockley Central ward bounded by the railway station, Bramerton Way, Gladstone Road, Main Road and Southend Road, with that part of the existing Hockley East ward to the south of Cherry Close, Orchard Avenue, Orchard Close and Walnut Court, less that part to the north of Greensward Lane up to and including Hampstead Gardens, and the built-up part of the existing Ashingdon ward on the boundary of Hockley, to the south of Greensward Lane. We propose that Hockley North ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Hockley East ward, and the adjoining built-up area of Ashingdon ward to the north of Greensward Lane. Hockley West ward should include the remainder of the existing Hockley Central and Hockley West wards and the adjoining area of Hawkwell West ward comprising the school, Belchamps Way, Claybrick Avenue, High Mead, Hockley Rise, Southend Road, Sunny Road and The Westerings. The parts of Ashingdon and Hawkwell that we are proposing to combine with Hockley are well connected to the area and are of a similar character.

61 Under our draft recommendations there would be significantly improved levels of electoral equality, the number of electors per councillor in Hockley Central, Hockley North, Hullbridge & Hockley Rural and Hullbridge Riverside wards would vary from the district average by 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent respectively, while equalling the district average in Hockley West ward. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally in Hockley Central, Hockley North and Hockley West wards, to vary from the district average by 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 3 per cent, while improving in Hullbridge & Hockley Rural to vary by 1 per cent and to equal the district average in Hullbridge Riverside ward in 2004.

### **Hawkwell East, Hawkwell West, Rochford Eastwood, Rochford Roche and Rochford St Andrews wards**

62 The existing wards of Hawkwell East, Hawkwell West, Rochford Eastwood, Rochford Roche and Rochford St Andrews cover the central area of the district. Rochford Eastwood and Rochford Roche wards are each represented by a single councillor, while Hawkwell West, Hockley East, and Rochford St Andrews wards are each represented by two councillors and Hawkwell East ward is represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the five wards varies from the district average by 25 per cent, 1 per cent, 10 per cent, 28 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Hawkwell East and Rochford St Andrews wards to vary by 22 per cent and 23 per

cent respectively, while remaining at 1 per cent in Hawkwell West ward, and deteriorating over the next five years in Rochford Roche ward to vary by 35 per cent by 2004.

63 The District Council proposed that this area should be represented by five wards, with the proposed wards of Hawkwell North, Hawkwell South, Hawkwell West, Rochford East and Rochford West wards each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Hawkwell North ward should comprise the built up area of the existing Hawkwell East ward, to the north of Cambridge Gardens, Central Avenue, Rectory Road and Rutland Grove and that part of Ashingdon parish containing Rectory Avenue, Stanley Road and adjoining fields. It argued that this part of Ashingdon comprises the edges of an estate that lies predominantly within the parish of Hawkwell which is “geographically separate” from the rest of Ashingdon parish, “with residents identifying as much, if not more, with Hawkwell than with Ashingdon”. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Hawkwell East ward should form Hawkwell South ward. It argued that the boundary between these two wards is “clearly identifiable” as a division between housing areas. It proposed that the existing boundaries of Hawkwell West ward should be retained given that it currently has good electoral equality and the London to Southend railway line forms a “natural division” in this area.

64 The District Council proposed that Rochford should be divided into two two-member wards, with Rochford East comprising the existing Rochford Eastwood ward and the majority of Rochford Roche ward, less that part comprising Doggetts Close, St Clare Meadow, St Marks Field and the recreation ground. It argued that this area links the “commonality of interest” between the commercial centre of the town and the industrial and commercial area in the south-east of Rochford. It recommended that Rochford West ward should comprise the remainder of Rochford Roche ward and the whole of Rochford St Andrews ward. It argued that the parish of Rochford contains a “distinctive community” that should be respected at district level. It stated that there is “no obvious boundary” within Rochford, and that its proposed boundary between the two wards was “the product of ensuring equality of representation for electors”, arguing that the Doggetts Close area shares community links with the north-west of Rochford.

65 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in Hawkwell North, Hawkwell South, Hawkwell West, Rochford East and Rochford West wards would vary by 4 per cent, 4 per cent, 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Hawkwell North, Rochford East and Rochford West wards, which would vary by 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 10 per cent from the district average, while remaining at 1 per cent in Hawkwell West ward and deteriorating in Hawkwell South ward to vary by 6 per cent from the district average by 2004.

66 Hawkwell Parish Council supported the District Council’s proposals for Hawkwell, stating its concern that wards in this area should not cross parish boundaries, given the close identification between electors and the parish. A local councillor argued that the part of Ashingdon parish on the boundary of Hawkwell should be warded with Hawkwell. She argued that the existing Hawkwell East ward should be divided into two two-member wards, with the southern ward including the Golden Cross shopping area and the northern ward containing the adjoining part of Ashingdon parish. She supported retaining the existing boundaries of Hawkwell West ward. She also proposed that the parish of Great Stambridge should be warded with the

centre of Rochford town, that the part of Rochford St Andrews ward to the north of the railway line should form a further ward, while the remainder of the parish to the south of the railway line would form a third ward.

67 Having considered the representations received, we have not been persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals for Rochford, given that they offer poor electoral equality. We are also concerned that its proposal to exclude the Doggetts Close area from Rochford East ward would separate this area from the only roads to which it is directly connected. While we recognise the merit in its proposals for Hawkwell, as a result of our recommendations for Hockley and Rochford we are unable to adopt the District Council's proposals in this area. However, we have sought to reflect elements of the proposals of the District Council, Hawkwell Parish Council and the local councillor in our recommendations. We did not consider that the local councillor's proposal to combine the parish of Great Stambridge with Rochford would offer improved representation of these communities given that the east of Rochford is relatively urban in character while Great Stambridge is rural.

68 In our draft recommendations for Hawkwell and Rochford we have used parish boundaries where possible. However, we have traversed these boundaries in a number of areas. While we recognise that Hawkwell Parish Council opposed the combination of Hawkwell with adjoining areas, we do not consider that our proposals would have an adverse effect on the reflection and representation of community identities and interests given that the areas that we have proposed combining have good transport links and are of a similar character.

69 We are proposing three two-member wards to represent the Hawkwell area, which strongly reflect the proposals of the District Council and the local councillor and use the clear boundary of the London to Southend railway line. We propose that Hawkwell North ward should comprise that part of Hawkwell East ward to the north-west of Central and Harewood Avenues and the adjoining part of Ashingdon parish which the District Council proposed combining with Hawkwell. Hawkwell & Rochford West ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Hawkwell West ward, less that part to be transferred to Hockley West ward as above, and that part of Rochford St Andrews ward to the south of the railway line. Under our recommendations Hawkwell South ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Hawkwell East ward and that part of the existing Rochford St Andrews ward to the north-west of Rochford Garden Way, the school boundary and Little Stambridge Hall. This part of Rochford parish adjoins Hawkwell and is of a similar character.

70 We propose combining the whole of the urban area of the town in a three-member ward comprising the remainder of the existing Rochford Eastwood, Rochford Roche and Rochford St Andrews wards. These areas are well connected and residents share amenities in the centre of the town. While we are aware that the District Council was keen to put forward a scheme of wholly single and two-member wards, we consider that this ward provides the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and avoids the creation of an arbitrary boundary between areas of the town which are of a similar character.

71 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Hawkwell North, Hawkwell & Rochford West, Hawkwell South and Rochford wards would vary from the district

average by 5 per cent, 1 per cent, 8 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally in Rochford ward, to vary from the district average by 5 per cent, while continuing to vary by 5 per cent in Hawkwell North ward and by 1 per cent in Hawkwell & Rochford West ward, and improving to vary by 5 per cent from the District average in Hawkwell South ward in 2004.

### **Ashingdon, Barling & Sutton, Canewdon, Foulness & Great Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards**

72 The existing wards of Ashingdon, Barling & Sutton, Canewdon, Foulness & Great Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West cover the eastern, rural area of the district. Barling & Sutton, Canewdon, Foulness & Great Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards are each represented by a single councillor, while Ashingdon ward is represented by two councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the six wards varies from the district average by 21 per cent, 10 per cent, 24 per cent, 12 per cent, 11 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Ashingdon, Canewdon and Foulness & Great Wakering East wards, to vary by 16 per cent, 20 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, but is projected to deteriorate over the next five years in Barling & Sutton, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards, to vary by 13 per cent, 13 per cent and 16 per cent by 2004.

73 The District Council proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West and Foulness & Great Wakering South East wards each being represented by a single councillor, while Ashingdon & Canewdon and Great Wakering Central wards would each be represented by two councillors. It proposed that Ashingdon & Canewdon ward should comprise the parishes of Canewdon, Paglesham and Stambridge, with the remainder of Ashingdon parish, less those areas of development on the north west edge of Hawkwell and the eastern edge of Hockley, as described above. It argued that these areas “share a common rural identity” which sets them apart. It proposed that Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West ward should include the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton and that part of Great Wakering parish to the west of the village of Great Wakering. It argued that this area links hamlets and villages with a “commonality of community”. It opposed creating a two-councillor ward in this area to include a larger part of Great Wakering parish, arguing that this would involve combining areas where the communities have different “interests and needs”. It proposed that the majority of the village of Great Wakering should be combined in the ward of Great Wakering Central, arguing that this ward would reflect the “distinctive and recognisable community of interest”. This ward would comprise that part of the existing Great Wakering West ward, to the north of Poynters Lane and the whole of the built-up area of Great Wakering Central ward, plus that part of Foulness and Great Wakering East ward comprising the edge of Great Wakering village, less the lower part of Conway Avenue, New Road, St Johns Close, St Johns Road and Shoebury Road. It argued that the high level of electoral inequality in this proposed ward is “not ideal” but is “an acceptable price to pay for creating effective and convenient representation that reflects and meets the needs of residents in this part of the district”. It proposed that Foulness & Great Wakering South East ward should combine the parish of Foulness Island and the remaining parts of Great Wakering parish. It argued that it was necessary to link part of Great Wakering parish with Foulness Island parish because Foulness Island does

not warrant a district councillor in itself. While the level of electoral inequality in this ward would be relatively high, it considered that this was “necessary to achieve an appropriate solution for this part of the district”.

74 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in Ashingdon & Canewdon, Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West, Foulness & Great Wakering South East and Great Wakering Central wards would vary by 7 per cent, 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West ward, to vary by 1 per cent from the district average, while remaining at 10 per cent in Great Wakering Central ward and deteriorating in Ashingdon & Canewdon and Foulness & Great Wakering South East wards to vary by 9 per cent and 12 per cent from the district average by 2004.

75 A local councillor proposed that the parish of Great Stambridge should be combined with part of Rochford with which it has “always been associated” and that those parts of Ashingdon parish on the borders of Hawkwell and Hockley should be warded with parts of those towns. She also argued that the remainder of Ashingdon should be combined with the existing Canewdon ward. She proposed that Great Wakering should not be combined with other areas given that it has always “stood alone”. She also proposed that Foulness Island should be combined with Barling Magna, Little Wakering and Sutton.

76 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we consider that the District Council’s proposed Ashingdon & Canewdon ward offers the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, while respecting parish and natural boundaries in the area. We support its proposal to transfer parts of the existing Ashingdon ward to Hawkwell and Hockley, as described above, which would emphasize the existing community links in these areas. While we note that the part of Ashingdon ward adjacent to the eastern boundary of the existing Hawkwell East ward would be best combined with a Hawkwell ward in order to reflect the links between these communities, this is not possible without having a significant adverse effect on electoral equality in the rural ward. We have not been persuaded to adopt the District Council’s proposals for the south-east of the district, given the high levels of electoral inequality they would offer. We are also concerned that the District Council’s proposal to divide the area of Conway Avenue, New Road, St Johns Close, St Johns Road and Shoebury Road from the remainder of Great Wakering village would not offer the best level of representation for the residents of this area. Similarly, we do not consider that it would best reflect community identity and interests to combine the parishes of Great Stambridge and Rochford, as proposed by a local councillor, given that the former is rural in character while the latter is more urban. Nor have we been persuaded by her proposal to combine the parish of Foulness Island with areas other than Great Wakering, given the distinct natural river boundaries and the lack of road links between Foulness Island and all other adjoining areas.

77 In the south-east of the district, we are proposing two two-member wards. Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West ward would comprise the existing wards of Barling & Sutton and Great Wakering West with that part of Great Wakering Central ward that comprises the whole of Alexandra Road, Lee Lotts, Rushley Close and Morland Close. This ward is based on the existing warding arrangements for the division of Great Wakering village, combining areas in the north-

west of this area which are of a similar character. The minor boundary amendments that we have proposed in the centre of the village will address an existing anomaly whereby Alexandra Road is divided between wards, as well as offering improved electoral equality. We propose that Foulness & Great Wakering East ward should comprise the existing Foulness & Great Wakering East ward and the remainder of Great Wakering Central ward. This proposal retains the existing links between the rural parts of this area, which are connected by road and are of a similar character.

78 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Ashingdon & Canewdon, Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West and Foulness & Great Wakering East wards would vary from the district average by 7 per cent, 8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally, to vary from the district average by 9 per cent, 9 per cent and 8 per cent in 2004.

## **Electoral Cycle**

79 We received two representations regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council itself stated that it considers that the present cycle of elections by thirds aids the electorate's interest in local politics; provides frequent opportunities for the electorate to change their representation; provides the opportunity for local communities to become more involved in local issues; and offers an element of continuity, given that there is less probability of a complete change of serving councillors. Therefore, it proposed retaining the current system of elections by thirds. However, it considered that a possible future change to elections every two years "could provide a useful balance between the need for the electorate to be provided with an opportunity to express their view of the performance of their councillor with the need for continuity of local authority administration".

80 Rayleigh Town Council commented that it would prefer two-yearly elections, but argued that parish elections should not be held at the same time as District Council elections in order to avoid confusion.

81 We have considered carefully all representations. While we note that there is some support for elections every two years, we are guided by current legislation under which we cannot propose elections by halves. However, we note that the District Council supports retaining the present electoral cycle. Accordingly, we propose no change to the current cycle of elections by thirds.

## **Conclusions**

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

- a council of 40 members should be retained;
- there should be 20 wards;

- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three wards;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

83 Our draft recommendations would involve modifications to all of the existing wards in Rochford district, as summarised below:

- we propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for Ashingdon & Canewdon, Lodge, Rayleigh Central, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards without modification;
- we propose adopting the District Council’s consultation proposals for the wards of Downhall & Rawreth, Grange and Sweyne Park, under these ward names, as proposed by Rayleigh Town Council;
- in Hockley and Hullbridge we propose creating the new wards of Hockley Central, Hockley North, Hockley West, Hullbridge & Hockley Rural and Hullbridge Riverside;
- in Hawkwell and Rochford we propose creating the new wards of Hawkwell North, Hawkwell & Rochford West, Hawkwell South and Rochford;
- in the south-east of the district we propose creating the new wards of Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West and Foulness & Great Wakering East.

84 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	40	40	40	40
Number of wards	23	20	23	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,539	1,539	1,620	1,620
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	14	1	15	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	1	8	0

85 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Rochford District Council would result in a significant reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 14 to 1. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

**Draft Recommendation**

Rochford District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 20 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. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

## **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

86 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 Ashingdon, Great Wakering, Hawkwell, Hockley, Hullbridge, Rayleigh and Rochford to reflect the proposed district wards.

87 The parish of Ashingdon is currently served by 11 councillors representing two wards: Ashingdon South and Fambridge. The District Council proposed that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that three new wards should be created to be coterminous with its proposed district wards. The proposed parish ward of Ashingdon would comprise the Ashingdon village area and the rural part of the ward, which it proposed including in Ashingdon & Canewdon ward. The proposed Ashingdon Heights ward would comprise that area of Ashingdon parish which borders Hawkwell and which the District Council argues is “known” as Ashingdon Heights; it argued that the creation of this parish ward would not only assist at a district level, but would also ensure that this area would be recognised as a distinct community on the parish council. Ashingdon West ward would comprise that area which borders Hockley. It proposed that Ashingdon ward be represented by seven councillors, Ashingdon Heights by one and Ashingdon West by three. It argued that these parish wards would ensure that those areas of the parish which “share greater community identity with neighbouring parishes” be included in different district wards.

88 We consider that the District Council’s proposals for Ashingdon parish are sensible and would aid representation at both a district and parish level. We endorse the District Council’s proposed Ashingdon and Ashingdon Heights parish wards. However, we recommend that its proposed Ashingdon West parish ward should be divided, given that it will be divided between two district wards. We recommend that the District Council’s proposed Ashingdon West ward should be divided and that the part to be included in Hockley Central ward should be named South West parish ward, to be represented by one councillor, given its smaller electorate, while the part to be included in Hockley North ward should be named West parish ward, to be represented by two parish councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**

Ashingdon Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Ashingdon (returning seven councillors), Ashingdon Heights (returning one councillor), South West (returning one councillor) and West (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

89 The parish of Great Wakering is currently served by 13 councillors representing three wards: Central, East and West. The District Council proposed that the existing parish wards should be abolished and replaced with a new South East ward, to be coterminous with the boundary of its proposed Foulness & Great Wakering South East ward, and a new West ward, to be coterminous with the boundary of the proposed Barling & Sutton district ward. Following discussion with Great Wakering Parish Council, it also proposed that the centre of Great Wakering should be subdivided into two wards along the existing Central and West parish ward boundary to form a Church End ward to the east and a Town Field ward to the west.

90 As a result of our proposals for this area at district level, we propose that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that they should be replaced with two parish wards, East and West, in line with our proposals. We propose that East parish ward should be represented by nine councillors and West parish ward should be represented by four councillors, in line with their share of the parish electorate. We note that Great Wakering Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for its parish wards. We would, therefore, particularly welcome the Parish Council's response to our alternative proposal.

**Draft Recommendation**

Great Wakering Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: East (returning nine councillors) and West (returning four councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

91 The parish of Hawkwell is currently served by 17 councillors and is divided into two parish wards: East and West. The District Council proposed that the existing East ward should be abolished to be replaced by a North and a South ward, to be coterminous with its proposed Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South wards, while the existing boundaries of West ward should be retained. It proposed that North ward should be represented by five councillors, South ward by six and West ward by six. Hawkwell Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals, arguing that the number of councillors representing West parish ward should be reduced by one to six in order to "equalise" the number of parish councillors per elector.

92 As a result of our proposals at district level, we recommend that the existing parish ward boundaries should be abolished and that the area should be divided into four parish wards: North, North West, South and South West. These wards should be coterminous with the proposed

boundaries of Hawkwell North, Hockley West, Hawkwell South and Hawkwell & Rochford West district wards, respectively, and should be represented by five, one, six and five councillors respectively, in view of their share of the parish electorate.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Hawkwell Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: North (returning five councillors), North West (returning one councillor), South (returning six councillors) and South West (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

93 The parish of Hockley is currently served by 15 councillors and is divided into four wards: Central, North East, South East and West. The District Council proposed that the existing North East ward should be renamed North ward. It proposed that the existing South East, Central and West wards should be abolished to be replaced by South and West wards, to be coterminous with the proposed boundaries of the district wards of Hockley South and Hockley West. Hockley Parish Council supported the District Council’s proposals for the parish.

94 As a result of our proposals at district level, we propose that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that they should be replaced by four wards: Central, North, Rural and West. These wards should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed district wards of Hockley Central, Hockley North, Hullbridge & Hockley Rural and Hockley West respectively, and should be represented by six, three, one and five councillors respectively, in order to offer a fair representation of the parish ward electorates.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Hockley Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Central (returning six councillors), North (returning three councillors), Rural (returning one councillor) and West (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

95 The parish of Hullbridge is currently represented by 13 parish councillors and is divided into two parish wards, Riverside and South. The District Council proposed that the boundaries of both wards should be modified in line with its district level proposals.

96 As a result of our proposals, we recommend that the existing parish wards of Riverside and South should be amended in line with the proposed district wards of Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge & Hockley Rural, returning their existing number of councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**

Hullbridge Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Riverside (returning seven councillors) and South (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

97 The parish of Rayleigh is currently served by 23 councillors and is divided into seven wards: Central, Downhall, Grange, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse. The District Council proposed that the boundaries of all wards should be modified in line with their proposed district wards and that Central, Grange, Lodge, Sweyne Park, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse wards should be represented by three councillors, while Downhall ward should be represented by two. Rayleigh Town Council supported the District Council’s proposals for Rayleigh, arguing that the Town Council should continue to be represented by 23 councillors with seven three-member wards and one two-member ward.

98 As a result of our proposal to adopt the District Council’s proposed district wards of Rayleigh Central, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse, we are content to endorse the proposed parish wards of Central, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse, which would be coterminous with these district wards. However, we are proposing to adopt alternative proposals in the west of the district and, therefore, we propose the creation of the parish wards of Downhall, Grange and Sweyne Park, whose boundaries should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed Downhall & Rawreth, Grange and Sweyne Park district wards. We suggest that these parish wards should return two, three and three councillors respectively, reflecting the number of electors in each ward.

**Draft Recommendation**

Rayleigh Parish Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards: Central, Grange, Lodge, Sweyne Park, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse, each returning three councillors, and Downhall, returning two councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

99 The parish of Rochford is currently represented by 17 councillors and is divided into three parish wards: Eastwood, Roche and St Andrews. The District Council proposed that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that new wards should be created in line with their district level proposals. It proposed that East ward should be coterminous with its proposed Rochford East district ward, while West ward should be coterminous with the proposed Rochford West district ward.

100 As a result of our proposals at district level, we recommend that the existing parish wards of Rochford should be abolished and that they should be replaced by three wards: Central, North

and West. The boundaries of these parish wards should be coterminous with the proposed district wards of Rochford, Hawkwell South and Hawkwell & Rochford West respectively, and should be represented by 14, two and one councillors respectively, in line with their share of the parish electorate.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Rochford Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Central (returning 14 councillors), North (returning two councillors) and West (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

101 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, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

**102 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Rochford 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 Rochford*

## 5 NEXT STEPS

103 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 4 September 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.

104 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Rochford 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)

105 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 Rochford: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Rochford 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 Map A2 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundary between Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West and Foulness & Great Wakering East wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the centre of the district.

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

*Map A2: Proposed Boundary between Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West and Foulness & Great Wakering East wards*



## APPENDIX B

### Rochford District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B1: Rochford District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Ashingdon & Canewdon	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed Ashingdon parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Canewdon ward (the parishes of Canewdon, Paglesham and Stambridge)
Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West	Barling & Sutton ward (the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton); Great Wakering West ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Great Wakering parish)
Downhall & Rawreth	Downhall ward (part – part of the proposed Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – the parish of Rawreth and part of the proposed Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Foulness & Great Wakering South East	Foulness & Great Wakering East ward (part – the parish of Foulness Island and part of the proposed South East parish ward of Great Wakering parish); Great Wakering Central ward (part – part of the proposed South East parish ward of Great Wakering parish)
Grange	Downhall ward (part – part of the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – part of the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Great Wakering Central	Foulness & Great Wakering East ward (part – part of the proposed Church End parish ward of Great Wakering parish); Great Wakering Central ward (part – part of the proposed Church End and Town Fields parish wards of Great Wakering parish); Great Wakering West ward (part – part of the proposed Town Field parish ward of Great Wakering parish)
Hawkwell North	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed Ashingdon Heights parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hawkwell East ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Hawkwell parish)
Hawkwell South	Hawkwell East ward (part – South parish ward of Hawkwell parish)
Hawkwell West	<i>Unchanged</i> (West parish ward of Hawkwell parish)
Hockley North	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed Ashingdon West parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hockley East ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Hockley parish)
Hockley South	Hockley Central ward (part – part of the proposed South East parish ward of Hockley parish); Hockley East ward (part – part of the proposed South East parish ward of Hockley parish); Hockley West ward (part – part of the proposed South East ward of Hockley parish)
Hockley West	Hockley West ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Hockley parish)
Hullbridge Riverside	Hullbridge Riverside ward (part of the proposed Riverside parish ward of Hullbridge parish); Hullbridge South ward (part – part of the proposed Riverside parish ward of Hullbridge parish)

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
Hullbridge South	Hullbridge South ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Hullbridge parish)
Lodge	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Rayleigh Central	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Central ward of Rayleigh parish)
Rochford East	Rochford Eastwood ward (part of the proposed East parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford Roche ward (part – part of the proposed East parish ward of Rochford parish)
Rochford West	Rochford Roche ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part of the proposed West parish ward of Rochford parish)
Sweyne Park	Downhall ward (part – part of the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – part of the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Trinity	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Wheatley ward (part – part of the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Wheatley	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Trinity ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Wheatley ward (part – part of the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
Whitehouse	Lodge ward (part – part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Rayleigh Central ward (part – part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Whitehouse ward (part of the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish)

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (1999)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
Ashingdon & Canewdon	2	3,295	1,648	7	3,524	1,762	9
Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West	1	1,577	1,577	2	1,599	1,599	-1

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 %
Downhall & Rawreth	2	3,065	1,533	0	3,276	1,638	1
Foulness & Great Wakering South East	1	1,384	1,384	-10	1,432	1,432	-12
Grange	2	2,288	1,144	-26	3,237	1,619	0
Great Wakering Central	2	2,778	1,389	-10	2,907	1,454	-10
Hawkwell North	2	2,948	1,474	-4	3,127	1,564	-3
Hawkwell South	2	2,970	1,485	-4	3,051	1,526	-6
Hawkwell West	2	3,101	1,551	1	3,220	1,610	-1
Hockley North	2	3,225	1,613	5	3,349	1,675	3
Hockley South	2	3,383	1,692	10	3,436	1,718	6
Hockley West	1	1,665	1,665	8	1,677	1,677	4
Hullbridge Riverside	2	3,679	1,840	19	3,743	1,872	16
Hullbridge South	1	1,779	1,779	16	1,793	1,793	11
Lodge	2	3,165	1,583	3	3,301	1,651	2
Rayleigh Central	2	3,316	1,658	8	3,336	1,668	3
Rochford East	2	2,970	1,485	-4	3,148	1,574	-3
Rochford West	2	2,709	1,355	-12	2,919	1,460	-10
Sweyne Park	2	3,117	1,559	1	3,137	1,569	-3
Trinity	2	2,907	1,454	-5	3,107	1,554	-4
Wheatley	2	3,148	1,574	2	3,295	1,648	2
Whitehouse	2	3,109	1,555	1	3,183	1,592	-2

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

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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



## 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.

11 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.

