

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
East Cambridgeshire

November 2001

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Ely, Littleport and Soham is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE 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 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 required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim 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, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

SUMMARY

We began a review of East Cambridgeshire's electoral arrangements on 17 April 2001.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in East Cambridgeshire:

- **in 12 of the 18 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to improve slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 11 wards and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main proposals for East Cambridgeshire's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 67–68) are that:

- **East Cambridgeshire District Council should have 39 councillors, two more than at present;**
- **there should be 19 wards, one more than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 14 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 12 of the proposed 19 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in 18 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parish of Ely;**
- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Littleport, Soham and Woodditton;**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for nine weeks from 27 November 2001. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, subject to Parliamentary approval, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 28 January 2002:

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Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Bottisham	2	The parishes of Bottisham, Brinkley, Burrough Green, Lode and Westley Waterless	Map 2
2	Burwell	3	<i>Unchanged</i> - the parish of Burwell	Map 2
3	Cheveley	2	The parishes of Ashley, Cheveley and Kirtling and the proposed Woodditton Urban parish ward of Woodditton parish	Maps 2 and A2
4	Downham Villages	2	The parishes of Coveney, Downham, Mepal and Witcham	Map 2
5	Dullingham Villages	1	The parishes of Dullingham and Stetchworth and the proposed Woodditton Rural parish ward of Woodditton parish	Maps 2 and A2
6	Ely East	2	part of Ely parish (the proposed Ely East parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
7	Ely North	3	part of Ely parish (the proposed Ely North parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
8	Ely South	2	part of Ely parish (the proposed Ely South parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
9	Ely West	2	part of Ely parish (the proposed Ely West parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
10	Fordham Villages	2	<i>Unchanged</i> - the parishes of Fordham, Chippenham, Kennett and Snailwell	Map 2
11	Haddenham	3	The parishes of Haddenham, Wentworth and Witchford	Map 2
12	Isleham	1	<i>Unchanged</i> - the parish of Isleham	Map 2
13	Littleport East	2	part of Littleport parish (the proposed Littleport East parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
14	Littleport West	2	part of Littleport parish (the proposed Littleport West parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
15	Soham North	2	part of Soham parish (the proposed Soham North parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
16	Soham South	3	The parish of Wicken; part of Soham parish (the proposed Soham South parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
17	Stretham	2	The parishes of Stretham, Thetford and Wilburton	Map 2
18	Sutton	2	The parish of Sutton	Map 2
19	The Swaffhams	1	<i>Unchanged</i> - the parishes of Reach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished .

2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2, Maps A1–A2 in Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report.

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for East Cambridgeshire

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bottisham	2	2,901	1,450	6	2,910	1,455	-1
2	Burwell	3	4,391	1,464	7	4,480	1,493	1
3	Cheveley	2	3,042	1,521	11	3,110	1,555	6
4	Downham Villages	2	3,105	1,553	13	3,270	1,635	11
5	Dullingham Villages	1	1,512	1,512	10	1,520	1,520	3
6	Ely East	2	2,808	1,404	2	2,940	1,470	0
7	Ely North	3	3,626	1,209	-12	4,416	1,472	0
8	Ely South	2	1,499	750	-45	2,756	1,378	-6
9	Ely West	2	2,737	1,369	0	2,768	1,384	-6
10	Fordham Villages	2	2,638	1,319	-4	2,680	1,340	-9
11	Haddenham	3	4,241	1,414	3	4,290	1,430	-3
12	Isleham	1	1,607	1,607	17	1,610	1,610	9
13	Littleport East	2	2,598	1,299	-5	3,020	1,510	3
14	Littleport West	2	2,682	1,341	-2	3,090	1,545	5
15	Soham North	2	2,470	1,235	-10	3,050	1,525	4
16	Soham South	3	4,827	1,609	17	4,550	1,517	3
17	Stretham	2	2,746	1,373	0	2,780	1,390	-6
18	Sutton	2	2,585	1,293	-6	2,680	1,340	-9
19	The Swaffhams	1	1,530	1,530	11	1,530	1,530	4
	Totals	39	53,545	-	-	57,450	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,373	-	-	1,473	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Cambridgeshire 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of East Cambridgeshire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five districts in Cambridgeshire 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 expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of East Cambridgeshire. East Cambridgeshire's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1980 (Report no. 389). The electoral arrangements of Cambridgeshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1983 (Report no. 460). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. 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* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. 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 assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half of 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 wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 17 April 2001, when we wrote to East Cambridgeshire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the local authority associations, the County of Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited East Cambridgeshire District Council to publicise the review further. The Commission’s Stage One consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 until 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; the closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 13 August 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 27 November 2001 and will end on 28 January 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will decide when any changes come into effect.

15 With effect from 1 April 2002, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee for England will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. The Boundary Committee for England's final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee for England's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The district of East Cambridgeshire covers an area of 64,941 hectares on the eastern side of the county of Cambridgeshire. It is bounded by the county of Norfolk to the north and east, the county of Suffolk to the south-east, the district of Fenland to the north-west, the district of Huntingdonshire to the west and the district of South Cambridgeshire to the south-west. The district has a population of 67,900 and is mainly farmland. It contains four significantly populated areas, Ely, Littleport, Soham and Burwell, which account for just over half of the district's population. The district is entirely parished, with 35 parishes in total.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 53,545 (February 2001). The Council presently has 37 members who are elected from 18 wards, three of which are relatively urban in Ely, Littleport and Soham, with the remainder being mainly rural. One ward is represented by five councillors, one is represented by four councillors, two are each represented by three councillors, eight are each represented by two councillors and six are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,447 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,553 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 18 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, six wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalances are in Cheveley ward where each councillor represents 34 per cent fewer electors than the district average, and in Ely Northern ward where each councillor represents 34 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in East Cambridgeshire

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bottisham	2	2,221	1,111	-23	2,230	1,115	-28
2	Burwell	3	4,391	1,464	1	4,480	1,493	-4
3	Cheveley	2	1,906	953	-34	1,920	960	-38
4	Downham	2	2,434	1,217	-16	2,480	1,240	-20
5	Dullingham Villages	1	1,711	1,711	18	1,720	1,720	11
6	Ely Northern	2	3,884	1,942	34	4,330	2,165	39
7	Ely Southern	2	2,278	1,139	-21	2,380	1,190	-23
8	Ely West	3	4,524	1,508	4	6,170	2,057	32
9	Fordham Villages	2	2,638	1,319	-9	2,680	1,340	-14
10	Haddenham	2	3,334	1,667	15	3,350	1,675	8
11	Isleham	1	1,607	1,607	11	1,610	1,610	4
12	Littleport	4	5,268	1,317	-9	6,110	1,528	-2
13	Soham	5	7,297	1,459	1	7,600	1,520	-2
14	Stretham	1	1,835	1,835	27	1,850	1,850	19
15	Sutton	2	3,258	1,629	13	3,470	1,735	12
16	The Swaffhams	1	1,530	1,530	6	1,530	1,530	-1
17	Witchford	1	1,821	1,821	26	1,870	1,870	20
18	Woodditton	1	1,608	1,608	11	1,670	1,670	8
	Totals	37	53,545	–	–	57,450	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,447	–	–	1,553	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Cambridgeshire 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 2001, electors in Cheveley ward are relatively over-represented by 34 per cent, while electors in Ely Northern ward are relatively under-represented by 34 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received nine submissions during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

East Cambridgeshire District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 38 members, one more than at present, serving 18 wards, the same number as at present. In the urban areas, the Council proposed warding Littleport and Soham, and modifying the warding in Ely. In the rural areas some new groupings of parishes were proposed, along with the retention of six existing wards. The Council stated that, as a result of its consultation procedures, it was aware that its proposals for the south of the district were “the most controversial”. Under the Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average in seven wards. By 2006 five wards were forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average.

Parish and Town Councils

23 We received responses from five parish councils. Haddenham Parish Council stated that it “regrets the conclusions” of the District Council for it to be linked with the parishes of Wentworth and Witchford. Littleport Parish Council objected to the proposed warding of the parish. Mepal Parish Council preferred that the parish remain in Sutton ward, rather than be placed in a ward with other neighbouring parishes, stating that “Mepal has far more in common with Sutton than with the other parishes”. Lode Parish Council was opposed to being linked with the parishes of Brinkley, Burrough Green and Westley Waterless because of the size of the ward and because “the parishes are geographically and socially completely different from Bottisham and Lode”. It proposed that the parishes of Bottisham and Lode be linked with the parish of Stow-cum-Quy in South Cambridgeshire district. Reach Parish Council supported the proposal for the retention of the parish in The Swaffhams district ward.

Other Submissions

24 Cambridgeshire County Council requested that thought be given to retaining coterminosity between district wards and county electoral divisions. Councillor Twentyman, member for Cheveley ward, submitted proposals for an alternative warding pattern in the south of the district which would result in a 39-member council, which generally secured better electoral equality than the Council’s proposals for the area. He stated that these proposals were supported by “all the members of the Council’s PER Working Party, all the elected members for the present wards in the area, by the chairmen and some members of

several affected parish councils, by both the County Councillors representing the areas involved, by the Leader of the Council and by its chairman and vice chairman”. Councillor Warren, member for Haddenham ward, expressed support for the retention of the existing boundaries of Haddenham ward as “the ward is geographically compact and electors are not miles from their councillors”.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

25 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for East Cambridgeshire and welcome comments from all those interested 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.

26 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for East Cambridgeshire is 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 of 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”.

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

28 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim 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 make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

30 Since 1975 there has been a 29 per cent increase in the electorate of East Cambridgeshire district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 7.3 per cent from 53,545 to 57,450 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Ely and Littleport. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council 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.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the District Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

32 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

33 East Cambridgeshire District Council presently has 37 members. At Stage One the District Council, having undertaken local consultation with parishes and council members on a draft scheme, proposed a council of 38 members representing 18 wards. This increase was proposed because of the forecast increase in the electorate in the district by 2006, in order to achieve a better balance of representation. Under the Council's scheme, Ely would be allocated eight councillors, with 30 councillors being allocated to the remainder of the district. The Council stated that in Ely "it was decided that eight rather than nine members...was appropriate, both because the projected growth in the electorate will only be complete towards the end of the review period, and because it is clearly easier to manage a numerically slightly larger ward in an urban rather than a rural environment".

34 However, given the size of Ely's electorate, the number of councillors to which it would be entitled under a 38-member council would be 7.57 initially, increasing to 8.52 by 2006 as a result of the projected increase in Ely's electorate. Thus Ely should be allocated nine councillors. Therefore, in the light of this, we have considered whether the District Council's proposal for 38 members would indeed provide the best balance of representation. Under a council size of 39 Ely would be entitled to 7.8 councillors initially (8.74 by 2006) and the remainder of the district would be entitled to 31.23 councillors initially (30.26 councillors by 2006). We further note that, although Councillor Twentyman's proposals were for a 39-member council, he proposed allocating an extra councillor in the south of the district, rather than Ely. Therefore, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, we conclude that East Cambridgeshire should be represented by 39 councillors overall and that allocating nine councillors to Ely and 30 councillors to the rest of the district would provide for the best balance of representation.

Electoral Arrangements

35 We have given careful consideration to all the views which we have received during Stage One. In particular, we note that there is consensus between the District Council and Councillor Twentyman with regard to the proposed warding pattern for most of the district, the exception being in the far south. We note also the cross-party support which has been given to the District Council's proposals.

36 In view of the support given to large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme, notwithstanding the small increase that we propose in council size and its consequent effect on electoral variance. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further and bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are moving away from the District Council's proposals in the southern part of the district and in Ely. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Downham, Littleport and Sutton wards;
- (b) Ely Northern, Ely Southern and Ely West wards;
- (c) Haddenham, Soham, Stretham and Witchford wards;
- (d) Burwell, Fordham Villages, Isleham and The Swaffhams wards;
- (e) Bottisham, Cheveley, Dullingham Villages and Woodditton wards.

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

Downham, Littleport and Sutton wards

38 These three wards are situated at the northern edge of the district. Littleport is a four-member ward, while Downham and Sutton each have two members. Littleport and Downham are significantly over-represented and Sutton is under-represented. The number of electors per councillor is 16 per cent below the district average (20 per cent below in 2006) in Downham ward, which comprises the parishes of Coveney, Downham and Witcham; 9 per cent below (2 per cent below in 2006) in Littleport ward, which comprises the parish of Littleport, and 13 per cent above (12 per cent above in 2006) in Sutton ward, which comprises the parishes of Mepal and Sutton.

39 At Stage One the District Council proposed amending the boundaries of all three wards. It proposed a revised two-member Downham Villages ward, comprising the parishes of Coveney, Downham, Mepal and Witcham, stating that feedback from its public consultation had shown Witcham Parish Council to be in favour of Mepal parish being included in the current Downham ward. The District Council also proposed creating two two-member wards of Littleport East and Littleport West, “based as far as possible on existing polling districts”. It stated that some of the polling district boundaries could no longer be clearly defined as they had been built over, and so proposed amending these boundaries. As a consequence, the boundary between the two wards would run from north to south, from the parish boundary, utilising the boundary between existing polling districts IG1 and IH1, along the line of the Old Croft River to the ring road. Then it would run along Camel Road and along the backs of properties to the west of Pontois Hill, Crown Lane, High Street and Ely Road to Grange Lane, and then northwards along the ring road before proceeding in a north-westerly direction to Black Bank Road.

40 The Council further proposed amending the boundary of Sutton ward by transferring the parish of Mepal to its proposed Downham Villages ward. It had considered warding the parish of Mepal, but decided “it was not an option as local opinion would be against this and Mepal is a small, close-knit community”. Under the District Council’s proposals for a 38-member council, the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average in Downham Villages ward (8 per cent above in 2006), 8 per cent below in Littleport East ward (equal to the average in 2006), 5 per cent below in Littleport West ward (2 per cent above in 2006) and 8 per cent below in Sutton ward (11 per cent below in 2006).

41 Littleport Parish Council objected to the proposals to ward the parish and stated that “consideration for the substantial new developments have not been taken into account” in the District Council’s proposals. Mepal Parish Council was of the opinion that Mepal should remain in Sutton ward as it has “far more in common with Sutton than with the other parishes”.

42 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the District Council's proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of community identities. We note the wishes of Littleport Parish Council, but cannot concur with them, as retaining Littleport as one ward would necessitate recommending a four-member ward. It continues to be our view that numbers in excess of three members per ward result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. We note also the wishes of Mepal Parish Council, but cannot concur with them in the interest of electoral equality in this part of the district. Therefore we are adopting the District Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, we have modified the southern part of the Council's proposed boundary between Littleport East and Littleport West wards to include the whole of Highfield Farm in Littleport East ward as its access is on to Ely Road. Consequently, after going along the rear of properties in Upton Lane, the boundary would run across fields to Woodfen Road, and then south to the ring road before proceeding northwards.

43 Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 13 per cent above the district average (11 per cent above in 2006) in Downham Villages ward, which would comprise the parishes of Coveney, Downham, Mepal and Witcham; 5 per cent below (3 per cent above in 2006) in Littleport East ward; 2 per cent below (5 per cent above in 2006) in Littleport West ward, and 6 per cent below (9 per cent below in 2006) in Sutton ward. Our draft recommendations for the proposed wards of Downham Villages and Sutton are illustrated on Map 2; those for Littleport East and Littleport West are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Ely Northern, Ely Southern and Ely West wards

44 The city of Ely is situated towards the north of the district, and is the only parish in the district which is currently warded. The two-member Ely Northern ward is significantly under-represented, while the two-member Ely Southern is over-represented. The three-member Ely West ward, which currently has a low electoral variance, is forecast to be significantly under-represented by 2006. The number of electors per councillor is 34 per cent above the district average in Ely Northern ward (39 per cent above in 2006), 21 per cent below in Ely Southern ward (23 per cent below in 2006) and 4 per cent above in Ely West ward (32 per cent above in 2006).

45 At Stage One the District Council did not propose any wards which would breach the external boundaries of Ely parish, reasoning that "its population will grow substantially but slowly over the period covered by this review" and "it did not seem practicable to add to it or subtract from it". As we have already seen, the Council proposed an increase in the number of councillors representing Ely overall from seven to eight because of the forecast electorate growth by 2006. It proposed two three-member wards of Ely North and Ely West and a two-member ward of Ely South, modifying the boundaries of the three existing wards. The boundary between Ely North and Ely West wards would follow Egremont Street and Downham Road rather than Lynn Road as at present, and the boundary between Ely North and Ely South wards would follow Prickwillow Road and Clayway Drove rather than Kiln Lane. The existing boundary between Ely South and Ely West wards along Cambridge Road would be retained. Under the District Council's proposals for a 38-member council, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the district average in Ely North

ward (9 per cent above in 2006), equal to the average in Ely South ward (3 per cent below in 2006) and 12 per cent below in Ely West ward (10 per cent above in 2006).

46 We have given careful consideration to the District Council's proposals for this area. While we note that the Council's proposals would provide improvements in electoral equality, as argued earlier, we are not able to adopt them as they are based on an incorrect allocation of eight councillors. The correct allocation of councillors for Ely should be nine. In order to provide for nine councillors, we propose creating a fourth ward from the southern part of the Council's proposed Ely North ward, between Downham Road and Lynn Road, and the northern part of the Council's proposed Ely West ward, bounded by West Fen Road, Beald Way, Fieldside and St Mary's Street. This two-member ward would be called Ely West ward; the remainder of the Council's proposed Ely West ward would become the two-member ward of Ely South, while the remainder of the Council's proposed Ely North ward would become the three-member Ely North ward. The Council's proposed two-member Ely South ward would be renamed Ely East ward.

47 Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the district average in Ely East ward (equal to the average in 2006), 12 per cent below in Ely North ward (equal to the average in 2006), 45 per cent below in Ely South ward (6 per cent below in 2006) and equal to the average in Ely West ward (6 per cent below in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Haddenham, Soham, Stretham and Witchford wards

48 The rural two-member Haddenham ward and the single-member Stretham and Witchford wards are in the north-western corner of the district, south-west of Ely, and are all significantly under-represented. The five-member Soham ward is in the centre of the district, to the south of Ely. The number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the district average (8 per cent above in 2006) in Haddenham ward, which comprises the parishes of Haddenham and Wilburton; 1 per cent above (2 per cent below in 2006) in Soham ward, which comprises the parishes of Soham and Wicken; 27 per cent above (19 per cent above in 2006) in Stretham ward, which comprises the parishes of Stretham and Thetford, and 26 per cent above (20 per cent above in 2006) in Witchford ward, which comprises the parishes of Wentworth and Witchford.

49 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new three-member Haddenham ward, comprising the parishes of Haddenham, Wentworth and Witchford "as the variance is low and the ward makes geographical sense". Having consulted on these proposals the Council believed that more parishes would be satisfied with this than other possible warding arrangements. The Council proposed warding the parish of Soham, so creating a two-member Soham North ward comprising parts of Soham town centre and the rural area to the north, and a three-member Soham South ward, comprising the southern part of Soham town and the parish of Wicken. The boundary would run from the parish boundary in the west in a north-easterly direction along Great Drove and Soham Lode. After crossing the railway line and proceeding through the town centre, it would run north-easterly across Soham Fen to the parish boundary.

50 The Council also proposed a two-member Stretham ward, comprising the parishes of Little Thetford, Stretham and Wilburton. It contended that this was in response to its public consultation which showed that “Stretham did not wish to be linked to Witchford”, although it was aware that Wilburton and Haddenham parish councils were not in favour of this proposed warding arrangement. The Council further argued that there were good road and community links between the constituent parishes of the proposed ward. Under the District Council’s proposals for a 38-member council, the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average in Haddenham ward (5 per cent below in 2006), 12 per cent below in Soham North ward (1 per cent above in 2006), 14 per cent above in Soham South ward (equal to the average in 2006) and 3 per cent below in Stretham ward (8 per cent below in 2006).

51 Haddenham Parish Council stated that it “regrets the conclusions that have been arrived at” by the District Council, namely that it be linked with the parishes of Wentworth and Witchford. Councillor Warren, member for Haddenham ward, contended that the ward should retain its existing boundaries on the grounds that the existing ward is compact and the constituent villages share amenities.

52 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the District Council’s proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of community identities. We note the views of Haddenham Parish Council and Councillor Warren, but cannot concur with them in the interest of electoral equality in this part of the district. Therefore we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed wards for this area as part of our draft recommendations. However, we have modified the eastern part of the Council’s proposed boundary between Soham North and Soham South wards in order to ensure it adheres to ground detail.

53 Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the district average (3 per cent below in 2006) in Haddenham ward, which would comprise the parishes of Haddenham, Wentworth and Witchford; 10 per cent below (4 per cent above in 2006) in Soham North ward, which would comprise the proposed parish ward of Soham North; 17 per cent above (3 per cent above in 2006) in Soham South ward, which would comprise the proposed parish ward of Soham South and the parish of Wicken, and equal to the average (6 per cent below in 2006) in Stretham ward, which would comprise the parishes of Stretham, Thetford and Wilburton. Our draft proposals for the proposed wards of Haddenham and Stretham are illustrated on Map 2; those for Soham North and Soham South wards are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Burwell, Fordham Villages, Isleham, and The Swaffhams wards

54 These four wards are situated in the southern half of the district. The two-member Fordham Villages and single-member Isleham wards lie to the north of Newmarket, while the single-member The Swaffhams ward and the three-member Burwell ward lie to the west of it. The number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent above the district average (4 per cent below in 2006) in Burwell ward, which comprises the parish of Burwell; 9 per cent below (14 per cent below in 2006) in Fordham Villages ward, which comprises the parishes of Chippenham, Fordham, Kennett and Snailwell; 11 per cent above (4 per cent above in 2006) in Isleham ward, which comprises the parish of Isleham, and 6 per cent above (1 per cent

below in 2006) in The Swaffhams ward, which comprises the parishes of Reach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior.

55 At Stage One the District Council proposed no changes to the electoral arrangements for all four wards. The reason given for maintaining the status quo in Burwell ward was that “the variance level is minimal”. It also stated that Burwell Parish Council supported this proposal. Although it recognised that the electoral variance for Fordham Villages ward would be relatively high, it claimed to be responding to public support for a retention of the ward and stated that Councillors Abbott and Woodbridge felt that to link the ward with Isleham ward, a possible alternative, would create a ward too large to manage effectively. It proposed no change to Isleham ward as “it is a relatively isolated community and has limited links with its surrounding areas”. In proposing no change to The Swaffhams ward the Council pointed out that this would result in only a small variance, and that it coincided with strongly held local opinion. Under the District Council’s proposals for a 38-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the average (1 per cent below in 2006) in Burwell ward, 6 per cent below (11 per cent below in 2006) in Fordham Villages ward, 14 per cent above (6 per cent above in 2006) in Isleham ward and 9 per cent above (1 per cent above in 2006) in The Swaffhams ward.

56 Reach Parish Council expressed support for the District Council’s proposals.

57 We have given careful consideration to the District Council’s proposals for this area. We note that the Council’s proposals would provide satisfactory levels of electoral equality, while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. Therefore, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposals as our draft recommendations for these wards. Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council the number of electors per councillors would be 7 per cent above the average (1 per cent above in 2006) in Burwell ward, 4 per cent below (9 per cent below in 2006) in Fordham Villages ward, 17 per cent above (9 per cent above in 2006) in Isleham ward and 11 per cent above (4 per cent above in 2006) in The Swaffhams ward. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Bottisham, Cheveley, Dullingham Villages and Woodditton wards

58 These four wards are situated in the far south of the district. Bottisham and Cheveley each return two members, while Dullingham Villages and Woodditton are single-member wards. The number of electors per councillor is 23 per cent below the average (28 per cent below in 2006) in Bottisham ward, which comprises the parishes of Bottisham and Lode; 34 per cent below (38 per cent below in 2006) in Cheveley ward, which comprises the parishes of Ashley and Cheveley; 18 per cent above (11 per cent above in 2006) in Dullingham Villages ward, which comprises the parishes of Brinkley, Burrough Green, Dullingham, Stetchworth and Westley Waterless, and 11 per cent above (8 per cent above in 2006) in Woodditton ward, which comprises the parishes of Kirtling and Woodditton.

59 At Stage One the District Council proposed that there should be no change in the electoral arrangements for Bottisham ward. Although it was aware that this would create a large variance, it could see “no practical alternative options which realistically address this”. It also stated that the members for Bottisham ward and Bottisham Parish Council supported the District Council’s proposal. The Council also proposed no change in the electoral arrangements for Dullingham Villages ward, claiming support from the member for

Dullingham and the parish councils in the ward. The Council stated that “the local electorate believe they will receive a better representation by maintaining this ward with this higher variance than having a lower variance and being linked to villages...which have no community links”. The Council proposed that the two existing wards of Cheveley and Woodditton should be joined to form the two-member ward of Southern Villages, regarding it as “the best compromise available”. Under the District Council’s proposals for a 38-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 21 per cent below the average (26 per cent below in 2006) in Bottisham ward, 21 per cent above (14 per cent above in 2006) in Dullingham Villages ward and 25 per cent above (19 per cent above in 2006) in Southern Villages ward.

60 Lode Parish Council expressed opposition to the District Council’s consultation proposals, which entailed linking the parishes of Bottisham and Lode with the other southern parishes of Burrough Green, Brinkley and Westley Waterless in a new district ward. It proposed an alternative warding arrangement which would link the two parishes with the parish of Stow-cum-Quy in the neighbouring South Cambridgeshire district.

61 Councillor Twentyman, member for Cheveley ward and chairman of the PER Working Party, submitted proposals for an alternative warding pattern for the area, stating that they were supported by all the members of the Council’s PER working party, the elected members for the existing wards in the area, the chairmen and some members of several local parish councils, both the County Councillors for the area and the Leader, the chairman and vice chairman of the Council. Councillor Twentyman contended that his proposals would provide better levels of electoral variance in the area by providing an extra councillor which would solve the problem of the Council’s proposed Dullingham Villages and Southern Villages wards being notably under-represented.

62 He proposed warding the existing Woodditton ward, utilising polling district boundaries, with the proposed Woodditton Rural parish ward being placed in a two-member district ward with the parishes of Ashley, Cheveley and Kirtling. The remainder of the existing Woodditton ward, the proposed Woodditton Urban parish ward, would be placed in a new two-member ward of Dullingham Villages with the parishes of Brinkley, Burrough Green, Dullingham, Stetchworth and Westley Waterless. Councillor Twentyman proposed the same warding arrangements as the Council for the other villages in this part of the district. Under his proposals for a 39-member council, the number of electors per councillor would be 24 per cent below the average in Bottisham ward, 6 per cent below in Cheveley ward and 13 per cent below in Dullingham Villages ward. These figures are only for 2006, as no 2001 figures were provided. Councillor Twentyman also submitted alternative proposals from members of the PER working party for a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Bottisham, Lode, Reach, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior. Under these proposals, comprising a 39-member council serving seventeen wards, the number of electors per councillor would be 15 per cent below the average in Bottisham and the Swaffhams ward, 6 per cent below in Cheveley ward and 13 per cent below in Dullingham Villages ward. Again, these figures are only for 2006, as no 2001 figures were provided

63 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the constraints of the district boundary make the provision of a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria difficult. We note also that the District Council, in responding to the wishes of the parish councils in the area, has proposed wards

which have high electoral variances. However, it is our opinion that these variances are unacceptably high, with the result that we are unable to endorse the Council's proposals. While we note the views of Lode Parish Council, we are unable to consider a ward which crosses district administrative boundaries. We are also unable to consider further the proposals put forward by Councillor Twentyman as they provide for an extra councillor in this part of the district, which would result in the area being over-represented.

64 In the absence of any further proposals for this area, we are putting forward our own proposals as our draft recommendations for this part of the district, building upon the suggestion to ward Woodditton parish, as proposed by Councillor Twentyman. We propose a two-member Bottisham ward, comprising the parishes of Bottisham, Burrough Green, Brinkley, Lode and Westley Waterless. For the rest of the area, it is our conclusion that Councillor Twentyman's proposal to ward the parish of Woodditton, based on existing polling district boundaries, would provide a warding pattern which would provide the best electoral equality, while having regard to local community identities. However, we propose modifying Councillor Twentyman's proposed parish ward boundaries to create a Woodditton Urban parish ward, which would include properties bordering Newmarket and a Woodditton Rural parish ward, with the boundary running along Woodditton Road. Furthermore, we propose including the Woodditton Urban parish ward in the proposed Cheveley ward, with the proposed Woodditton Rural ward parish ward being included in the Dullingham Villages ward, so that the urban overspill from Newmarket is retained in the same ward. The proposed two-member Cheveley ward would comprise the parishes of Ashley, Cheveley, Kirtling and the Woodditton Urban parish ward of Woodditton parish. The proposed single-member Dullingham Villages ward would comprise the parishes of Dullingham, Stetchworth and the Woodditton Rural parish ward of Woodditton parish. Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the average (1 per cent below in 2006) in Bottisham ward, 11 per cent above (6 per cent above in 2006) in Cheveley ward and 10 per cent above (3 per cent above in 2006) in Dullingham Villages ward. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2.

65 We have noted that our proposed Bottisham ward is the same as that proposed by the District Council during its consultation procedures, which received notable opposition locally. However, in our opinion, it provides the best possible balance between electoral equality and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. We would welcome comments from all interested parties at Stage Three, particularly alternative warding arrangements for the area which would secure similar levels of electoral equality, while also reflecting the statutory criteria.

Electoral Cycle

66 At Stage One the Council stated that "currently this council is elected every four years. There are currently no recommendations to change this". We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

67 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be an increase in council size from 37 to 39;
- there should be 19 wards;
- the boundaries of 14 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

68 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- we propose that the Council should comprise 39 councillors, rather than 38 as proposed by the Council;
- we propose an increase, from eight to nine, in the number of councillors serving Ely, with consequent modifications to ward boundaries in the city, resulting in four wards instead of three;
- we propose modifications to ward boundaries in the southern part of the district, providing a two-member Bottisham ward, a two-member Cheveley ward and a single-member Dullingham Villages ward, which would involve the warding of Woodditton parish into two parish wards: Woodditton Urban and Woodditton Rural.

69 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	37	39	37	39
Number of wards	18	19	18	19
Average number of electors per councillor	1,447	1,373	1,553	1,473
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	12	7	11	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	1	5	0

70 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for East Cambridgeshire District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 12 to seven. By 2006 only one ward, Downham Villages, is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

East Cambridgeshire District Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 19 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 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 whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

71 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states 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 Ely, Littleport, Soham and Woodditton to reflect the proposed district wards.

72 The parish of Ely is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Ely North, Ely South and Ely West, represented by four, four and seven councillors respectively. In the light of our draft recommendations for district wards in this area we are proposing to create four parish wards, Ely East, Ely North, Ely South and Ely West, to reflect the proposed district ward boundaries. We propose that Ely East, Ely South and Ely West wards should each be represented by three councillors and Ely North by six councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Ely Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Ely East (returning three councillors), Ely North (six), Ely South (three) and Ely West (three). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

73 The parish of Littleport is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. We noted that, in response to the Council's Stage One consultation, Littleport Parish Council stated that it objected to the warding of the parish. However, as outlined above, if a parish is to be divided between separate district wards, it should also be divided into wards. Therefore, in the light of our draft recommendations for district wards in this area we are proposing to create two parish wards, Littleport East and Littleport West, to reflect the proposed district ward boundaries. We propose that Littleport East parish ward should be represented by seven councillors and Littleport West parish ward should be represented by eight councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Littleport Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Littleport East (returning seven councillors) and Littleport West (eight). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

74 The parish of Soham is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. We noted that, in response to the Council’s Stage One consultation, Soham Town Council stated that it would “reluctantly accept the suggested warding for Soham for District Council elections” but that it would “strongly oppose any system of warding being introduced for Town Council elections”. However, as outlined above, if a parish is to be divided between separate district wards it should also be divided into wards. Therefore, in the light of our draft recommendations for district wards in this area we are proposing to create two parish wards, Soham North and Soham South, to reflect the district ward boundaries. We propose that Soham North parish ward should be represented by seven councillors and Soham South parish ward should be represented by eight councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Soham Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Soham North (returning seven councillors) and Soham South (eight). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

75 The parish of Woodditton is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. In the light of our draft recommendations for district wards in this area we are proposing to create two parish wards, Woodditton Rural and Woodditton Urban, to reflect the district ward boundaries. We propose that Woodditton Rural parish ward should be represented by three councillors and Woodditton Urban parish ward should be represented by eight councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Woodditton Parish Council should comprise 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of Woodditton parish to be included in the proposed Dullingham Villages ward should be named Woodditton Rural parish ward (returning three councillors) and that part of Woodditton parish to be included in the proposed Cheveley ward should be named Woodditton Urban parish ward (returning eight councillors), as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

Parish council elections should continue to take place every four years, at the same time as elections for the district ward of which they are part.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for East Cambridgeshire

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

77 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for East Cambridgeshire contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 28 January 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

78 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
East Cambridgeshire 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
www.lgce.gov.uk

79 In the light of responses 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for East Cambridgeshire: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the East Cambridgeshire area.

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Woodditton parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Ely, Littleport and Soham.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for East Cambridgeshire: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Woodditton Parish

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken..	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.