

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Rochford in Essex

Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions

*March 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Rochford in Essex.

Members of the Commission are:

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Rochford is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

29<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 30 November 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Rochford under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation. In the light of representations received during this period of consultation we undertook the exceptional step of publishing further draft recommendations, which were published in November 2000, and consulted on these for a further six weeks.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of this further consultation. We have almost entirely confirmed our further draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 102) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Rochford.

We recommend that Rochford District Council should be served by 39 councillors representing 19 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

The Local Government Act 2000, contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Rochford on 30 November 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 20 June 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. In the light of representations received during this consultation period we decided to compile further draft recommendations and undertook a further period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our further draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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 electoral equality 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 six wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 102-104) are that:

- **Rochford District Council should have 39 councillors, one less than at present;**
- **there should be 19 wards, instead of 23 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 16 of the proposed 19 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 forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only two wards, Barling & Sutton and Hullbridge, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford;**
- **revised warding arrangement for the parish of Great Wakering.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before: **10 May 2001. Address correspondence to:**

**The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</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)
2	Barling & Sutton	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> Barling & Sutton ward (the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton)
3	Downhall & Rawreth	2	Downhall ward (part – the proposed Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh parish); Grange & Rawreth ward (part – the parish of Rawreth)
4	Foulness & Great Wakering	3	Foulness & Great Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards (the parishes of Foulness Island and Great Wakering)
5	Grange	2	Downhall and Grange & Rawreth wards (part – the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
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)
7	Hawkwell South	2	Hawkwell East ward (part – the proposed South ward of Hawkwell parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Rochford parish)
8	Hawkwell West	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> Hawkwell West ward (West parish ward of Hawkwell parish)
9	Hockley Central	3	Ashingdon ward (part – the proposed South West parish ward of Ashingdon parish); Hockley Central, Hockley East and Hockley West wards (part – the proposed Central parish ward of Hockley parish)
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)
11	Hockley West	1	Hockley West ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Hockley parish)
12	Hullbridge	3	Hullbridge Riverside and Hullbridge South wards (the parish of Hullbridge)
13	Lodge	2	Lodge ward (part – the proposed Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
14	Rayleigh Central	2	Lodge and Rayleigh Central wards (part – the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish)

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
15 Rochford	3	Rochford Eastwood ward ( the Eastwood parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford Roche ward (part – the proposed Roche parish ward of Rochford parish); Rochford St Andrews ward (part – the proposed St Andrews parish ward of Rochford parish)
16 Sweyne Park	2	Downhall and Grange & Rawreth wards (part – the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
17 Trinity	2	Central, Lodge and Trinity wards (part – the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
18 Wheatley	2	Rayleigh Central, Trinity and Wheatley wards (part – the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish)
19 Whitehouse	2	Lodge, Rayleigh Central and Whitehouse ward (part – the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish)

*Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final 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	4	3,524	1,762	6
2 Barling & Sutton	1	1,385	1,385	-12	1,407	1,407	-15
3 Downhall & Rawreth	2	3,069	1,535	-3	3,280	1,640	-1
4 Foulness & Great Wakering	3	4,354	1,451	-8	4,531	1,510	-9
5 Grange	2	2,475	1,238	-22	3,188	1,594	-4
6 Hawkwell North	2	3,234	1,617	2	3,413	1,707	3
7 Hawkwell South	2	3,310	1,655	5	3,391	1,696	2
8 Hawkwell West	2	3,101	1,551	-2	3,220	1,610	-3
9 Hockley Central	3	5,073	1,691	7	5,126	1,709	3
10 Hockley North	1	1,534	1,534	-3	1,658	1,658	0
11 Hockley West	1	1,665	1,665	5	1,677	1,677	1
12 Hullbridge	3	5,458	1,819	15	5,536	1,845	11
13 Lodge	2	3,165	1,583	0	3,301	1,651	-1
14 Rayleigh Central	2	3,316	1,658	5	3,336	1,668	0
15 Rochford	3	5,054	1,685	7	5,442	1,814	9
16 Sweyne Park	2	2,926	1,463	-7	3,182	1,591	-4
17 Trinity	2	2,907	1,454	-8	3,107	1,554	-6
18 Wheatley	2	3,148	1,574	0	3,295	1,648	-1
19 Whitehouse	2	3,109	1,555	-2	3,183	1,592	-4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61,578</b>	-	-	<b>64,797</b>	-	-
	-	-	<b>1,579</b>	-	-	<b>1,661</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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements Rochford in Essex. We have now reviewed 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 was our first review of the electoral arrangements for Rochford. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 25). We completed a directed review of Thurrock 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 have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained 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* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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 have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), which 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, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. 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 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders 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 the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. 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, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 February 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 20 June 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rochford in Essex*, and ended on 4 September 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions.

12 In the light of representations received at Stage Three we took the exceptional step of publishing further draft recommendations on 28 November 2000. This period of extra consultation ended on the 8 January 2001.

13 Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our further draft recommendations in the light of our consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

14 The district of Rochford is situated in the south-east of Essex; it 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 mainly 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 part of 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.

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

16 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'.

17 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, 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.

18 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.

19 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 3: 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

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 %
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>64,797</b>	-	-
<b>Averages</b>	-	-	<b>1,539</b>	-	-	<b>1,620</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 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

20 During Stage One we received six representations, including a district-wide scheme from Rochford District Council which had been prepared following a local consultation exercise, and representations from four parish and town councils and a local councillor. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rochford in Essex*.

21 Our draft recommendations were partly based on the District Council's proposals. However, we also put forward our own proposals in a number of areas in order to improve electoral equality while also having regard to local community identities and interests. This provided a pattern of two-member wards across the majority of the district, with one three-member and one single-member ward. We proposed that:

- Rochford District Council should be served by 40 councillors, as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Ashingdon, Great Wakering, Hawkwell, Hockley, Hullbridge, Rayleigh and Rochford.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

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

22 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.



## **4 RESPONSES TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

23 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 68 representations were received of which only one expressed support for our proposals. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Rochford District Council and the Commission.

### **Rochford District Council**

24 The District Council supported our recommendations for Ashingdon, Canewdon and Rayleigh, subject to a minor amendment in Rayleigh town. However, it objected to our proposals for the rest of the district and reiterated its Stage One proposals. These were for a council of 40 members, serving 22 wards – 18 two-member wards and four single-member wards. Overall, change was proposed to all but one of the existing wards.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

25 We received 10 representations from parish and town councils. The majority of these representations opposed our draft recommendations for Hullbridge, Hockley, Hawkwell, Barling & Sutton, Great Wakering and Foulness on the grounds of community representation. However, there was some support for our recommendations for Ashingdon and Rayleigh. Most respondents expressed a preference for the District Council's Stage One proposal.

### **Other Representations**

26 We also received representations from two local parties, five local groups, one MP, 11 local councillors and 38 local residents, the majority of which opposed our draft recommendations and expressed support for the District Councils Stage One scheme.



## 5 FURTHER DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

27 In the light of the representations received at Stage Three we took the exceptional step of publishing further draft recommendations and undertaking a further period of public consultations on these recommendations, given the extent to which we were moving away from our draft recommendations.

28 Our further draft recommendations were based on our original draft recommendations and on the District Council's Stage One scheme, with amendments. The scheme addressed the majority of concerns raised at Stage Three, while providing better levels of electoral equality than the District Council's Stage One Scheme. We proposed that:

- Rochford District Council should be served by 39 councillors, compared with the current 40, representing 19 wards, 4 fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries.
- There should be revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford.

### **Further Draft Recommendation**

Rochford District Council should comprise 39 councillors, serving 19 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected by thirds.

29 Our proposals would result in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 16 of the 19 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve over the next five years with only two wards, Barling & Sutton and Hullbridge, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.



## **6 RESPONSES TO FURTHER CONSULTATION**

30 During the consultation on our further draft recommendations report, 15 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Rochford District Council and the Commission.

### **Rochford District Council**

31 The District Council supported our further draft recommendations almost in their entirety but proposed two minor boundary amendments. It proposed an amendment to the boundary between the District wards of Hockley North and Hockley Central. The District Council argued that the boundary should run to the west of Greensward School, combining the Hampstead Gardens area to the east with the remainder of the proposed North Ward of Hockley parish. This amendment would not involve the transfer of any electors. It also proposed an amendment to the boundary between the parish wards of Great Wakering West and Central. The District Council argued that this amendment would ensure that the 33 electors in this area would be in a parish ward with which they have road links and that the parish ward boundary would not run through properties.

### **Parish Councils**

32 We received representations from seven parish councils. Barling Magna Parish Council, Canewdon Parish Council, Hawkwell Parish Council, Hockley Parish Council and Sutton Parish Council supported our further draft recommendations. Ashingdon Parish Council expressed concern over the transfer of the South Fambridge ward of Ashingdon Parish to our proposed Ashingdon & Canewdon ward arguing that the area has no community ties with Canewdon and has independent community interests. Rochford Parish Council reiterated their support for the Stage One proposals of Rochford District Council in the Rochford area and expressed disappointment at the loss of a district councillor for Rochford and the combination of the northern part of Rochford with Hawkwell in a district ward.

### **Other Representations**

33 A further seven representations were received in response to our further draft recommendations from Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association, three local councillors and three local residents.

34 Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association expressed disappointment at our proposals for East Rayleigh, but broadly supported our further draft recommendations. The remaining six representations fully supported our further draft recommendations.



## **7 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

35 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”.

36 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 ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

37 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.

38 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, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

39 At Stage One 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. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations and further draft recommendations reports we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

40 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during our period of further consultation, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## **Council Size**

41 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 carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

42 Rochford District Council presently has 40 members. At Stage One the District Council proposed that this council size should be retained to secure effective and convenient representation. Hullbridge Parish Council suggested that the council should be increased to 42 members. However, it stated that it was “prepared to accept” a 40-member council. A local councillor proposed that there should be a 42-member council, representing 21 two-member wards. However, neither of these respondents put forward detailed schemes under an increased council size.

43 In our draft recommendations report, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 40 members. While we noted that we received two submissions in favour of an increase in council size, they gave no supporting argumentation for this change and we were not persuaded that an increased council size would offer better representation.

44 During Stage Three we received representations in support of a 40-member council from the District Council, Hullbridge Parish Council, Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association and two district councillors. However, in the light of evidence we received at Stage Three, and having considered all possible options for the district, we concluded that in order to create a scheme which reflected community identity, offered clear ward boundaries, respected parish boundaries where possible and offered reasonable levels of electoral equality, it was necessary to reduce the size of the council by one, to 39 members. We did not believe that a reduction in council size of one councillor would have an adverse effect on effective and convenient local government in the area.

45 During consultation on our further draft recommendations we received only one representation regarding the issue of council size, from Rochford Parish Council, who expressed disappointment at the loss of a district councillor. However, in the light of the general support for our further draft recommendations, we are confirming our further draft recommendations for a council size of 39 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

46 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we considered carefully all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide scheme from the District Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations. However, we were limited by the lack of argumentation and supporting evidence provided at Stage One.

47 In our draft recommendations, we put forward alternative proposals in order to address the relatively poor levels of electoral equality which would have resulted from the District Council’s

proposals for Hullbridge and Rochford. As a result, we departed from the Council's scheme throughout the centre of the district. In our proposals, we used parish boundaries wherever possible. However, we crossed these boundaries in a number of wards, in order to provide significantly improved levels of electoral equality.

48 At Stage Three our proposals for the majority of the district received considerable opposition. In contrast, the District Council's Stage One proposals were widely supported. We received significant opposition to our proposals to traverse parish boundaries in the centre of the district, particularly in Hawkwell. In the light of the large amount of new evidence and argumentation received at Stage Three, we considered that in order to effectively reflect community identity across Rochford, we must move away from our draft recommendations in the majority of wards.

49 In the light of evidence received at Stage Three, we prepared further draft recommendations which were based both on our original draft recommendations and on the District Council's Stage One scheme, with amendments. The scheme addressed the majority of concerns raised at Stage Three, while providing better levels of electoral equality than the District Council's Stage One scheme.

50 We have reviewed our further draft recommendations in the light of representations received during our further consultation. As a consequence we propose confirming our further draft recommendations as final subject to two minor boundary amendments in the Hockley and Great Wakering areas.

51 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 & Wakering East, Great Wakering Central and Great Wakering West wards;

52 Details of our final recommendations are set out in figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back of this report.

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

53 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.

54 Downhall ward comprises the Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh parish. Grange & Rawreth comprises the Grange parish ward of Rayleigh and the parish of Rawreth. Lodge ward comprises the Lodge parish ward of Rayleigh parish. Rayleigh Central comprises the Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish. Trinity ward comprises the Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish. Wheatley ward comprises the Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish and Whitehouse ward comprises the Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish. 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. The current electoral variances are shown in Figure 3.

55 At Stage One, 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.

56 At Stage One, 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. A local councillor argued that warding arrangements should reflect the links between Rawreth and Rayleigh, and should use the London to Southend railway line as a boundary between east and west Rayleigh.

## **Draft Recommendations**

57 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we concluded that the District Council's proposals for this area generally offered good electoral equality and had received some local support. We therefore decided to adopt its proposals for the east of the town as our draft recommendations. However, we were not persuaded that the District Council's proposed Sweyne Park ward would offer the best representation of communities given that it would combine two areas with little in common. We considered that the District Council's consultation proposal, comprising what would appear to be 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 proposed adopting their consultation proposals for the whole of the western part of Rayleigh.

58 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. 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 agreed with Rayleigh Town Council's proposal that the proposed North Rayleigh & Rawreth ward be renamed Downhall & Rawreth ward, and that the proposed Sweyne ward be renamed Sweyne Park ward, in order to better reflect the constituent communities. We noted that the District Council received submissions opposing the division of Deepdene Avenue between wards. However, given the lack of evidence we received at Stage One with regard to this area, we considered that the consultation scheme would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

59 At Stage Three Rochford District Council supported our proposals for Rayleigh subject to a minor amendment. It argued that the correspondence it had received illustrated that "the residents of Deepdene Avenue feel strongly that the whole of that road should be included in the same ward" and proposed that the road should therefore be united within the same ward. Rayleigh Town Council reiterated its Stage One submission in support of the District Council's Stage One proposals for Rayleigh. Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association supported our proposals for the west of Rayleigh, but objected to our proposals for the eastern part of the town, except for the proposed Whitehouse ward. It supported the proposal that was put forward by the District Council during its local consultation exercise for the east of Rayleigh. Under the District Council's consultation proposals, Lodge ward would comprise the majority of the existing Lodge ward; Rayleigh Central ward would comprise the existing Central ward, less that area to the south of the Eastwood Road, plus those properties to the east of Bull Lane. Trinity ward would comprise the majority of the existing Trinity ward, less that part to the west of Hockley Road, including the remainder of Lodge ward; Wheatley ward would retain its existing boundaries with an extension northwards to Hambro Hill; and Whitehouse ward would be the same as under our draft recommendations. It argued that much of the northern part of Wheatley is only accessible from the southern part via the proposed Trinity ward, while the consultation proposals would result in "greater respect to natural boundaries" within the town.

## **Further Draft Recommendations**

60 Having considered carefully the representations received, we decided to endorse the majority of our draft recommendations for Rayleigh as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and had received local support. However, we had been convinced that uniting Deepdene Avenue within a single ward would offer clearer community representation. We therefore proposed that Deepdene Avenue be included in Downhall & Rawreth ward as part of our further draft recommendations.

61 We did not receive any further evidence in support of the District Council's Stage One proposals for the west of the town. Accordingly, we were not persuaded that its proposals would offer a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. Nor were we persuaded by Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association's argumentation that the District Council's consultation proposals would offer better community representation than our draft recommendations.

## **Final Recommendations**

62 At the further consultation stage the District Council and the vast majority of representations supported our recommendations for this area. We received one representation from Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association expressing disappointment that we had ignored their plans for the east of Rayleigh. However, in the light of the support that our further draft recommendations have received we have decided to confirm them as final. The electoral variances under our final recommendations are shown in Figure 2.

63 Under our final recommendations Grange ward comprising the proposed Grange parish ward of Rayleigh parish, Trinity ward comprising the proposed Trinity parish ward of Rayleigh parish and Sweyne Park ward comprising the proposed Sweyne Park parish ward of Rayleigh parish would have 22 per cent less, 8 per cent less and 7 per cent less electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent less, 6 per cent less and 4 per cent less in 2004). Downhall & Rawreth comprising the proposed Downhall parish ward of Rayleigh and the Grange and Rawreth parish ward of Rawreth parish, Whitehouse ward comprising the proposed Whitehouse parish ward of Rayleigh parish, Wheatley ward comprising the proposed Wheatley parish ward of Rayleigh parish, Rayleigh Central ward comprising the proposed Central parish ward of Rayleigh parish and Lodge ward comprising the proposed Lodge ward of Rayleigh parish would have 3 per cent less, 2 per cent less, equal to the average, 5 per cent more and equal to the average electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent less, 4 per cent less, 1 per cent less and equal to the average in 2004). Details of our final recommendations are set out in figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back of this report

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

64 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. The current electoral variances are shown in Figure 3.

65 Hockley Central comprises the Central parish ward of Hockley parish. Hockley East comprises the North East and South East parish wards of Hockley parish. Hockley West comprises the West parish ward of Hockley parish. Hullbridge Riverside comprises the Riverside parish ward of Hullbridge parish. Hullbridge South comprises the South parish ward of Hullbridge parish. 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. The current electoral variances are shown in Figure 3.

66 At Stage One, 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 should each be represented by two councillors.

67 At Stage One Hockley Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for Hockley. Hullbridge Parish Council argued that Hullbridge should be represented by three single-member wards or a two-member Hullbridge Riverside and a single-member Hullbridge South ward. A local councillor argued that the parish of Hullbridge should not be warded with other areas and should be divided into two two-member wards, while Hockley should be divided into three two-member wards. She supported the inclusion of part of Ashingdon parish in a Hockley ward.

## **Draft Recommendations**

68 Having given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One, we noted that, by seeking to respect parish boundaries, the District Council's proposals would have resulted in poor levels of electoral equality for the Hullbridge area. While we noted that there was some local support for reflecting parish boundaries at district level, we did not receive convincing evidence to persuade us to accept the resulting high levels of electoral variance. On the basis of its electorate under a 40-member council, Hullbridge merits three and a half district councillors. It was therefore necessary to combine parts of the parish with adjoining areas in order for the area to be fairly represented at district level. We therefore proposed two two-member wards representing Hullbridge and the Hockley rural area.

69 As a result of our proposals in Hullbridge, we were unable to adopt the District Council's scheme in Hockley, although we attempted to reflect elements of its proposals and the views of Hockley Parish Council and a local councillor. We proposed one single-member ward, Hockley North, and two two-member wards, Hockley Central and Hockley West. Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

70 In response to our draft recommendations the District Council, Hockley Parish Council, Hullbridge Parish Council, Hockley Branch Conservative Association, Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association, Hawkwell Headstart Group, Hawkwell Residents' Association and the Rochford Hundred Amenities Society all opposed our draft recommendations for either Hullbridge or Hockley on the grounds that our draft recommendations did not adequately reflect community interests and identities. The District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for Hockley and Hullbridge, arguing that the "two communities are separated geographically" and have different interests.

## **Further Draft Recommendations**

71 We gave careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. Having considered the level of argumentation and support for the Hullbridge parish boundaries to be respected at district level due to its distinct community identity, we considered that the best option for this area would be to unite the whole parish community within a three-member ward.

We considered that the resulting electoral variance of 15 per cent was justified in terms of the improved reflection of community identity. As a result of this proposal it was necessary to amend our draft recommendations for Hockley, which also received some opposition. We considered that the District Council's proposed Hockley West ward offered the best option for the rural and western part of Hockley. This ward resulted in reasonable levels of electoral equality, comprised areas which are well connected by road, used clear boundaries and had received local support. However, we did not consider that the District Council's proposals for the east of the district would offer a better representation of this area, particularly as it proposed dividing part of Ashingdon from those parts of the centre of Hockley with which it shares direct road links. We considered that it was preferable to retain our proposed Hockley North ward, with an amendment to include the remainder of the northern rural part of the parish. We considered that this would offer clearer ward boundaries and better community representation. While we recognised that there had been some opposition to our proposal to combine the South Fambridge part of Ashingdon with Hockley, we also noted that we received support for our proposal to combine the remaining parts of Hockley and that part of Ashingdon on the edge of Hockley, which cover the whole central area of Hockley, in order to form a new Hockley Central ward. We remained of the opinion that the two areas are well connected by road and share community interests.

## **Final Recommendations**

72 At the further consultation stage the District Council supported our proposed recommendations for this area subject to one minor boundary amendment. They proposed that the boundary between Hockley North and Central wards should be amended to follow the western boundary of Greensward School and Plumberow Primary School rather than the eastern boundary, as proposed in our further draft recommendations. They argued that the present boundary serves to isolate the Hampstead Gardens area from most of the proposed North Ward of Hockley Parish Council and redrawing the boundary would help to link the two areas of the proposed Parish ward together without transferring any electors between wards. We consider that there is merit in the Council's proposals and we propose including their amendment in this area as part of our final recommendations. All the other representations received concerning this area supported our further draft recommendations. In the light of this support, we have decided to confirm our further draft recommendations in this area as final, subject to the minor boundary amendment proposed by the District Council. The electoral variances under our final recommendations are shown in Figure 2.

73 Under our final recommendations Hullbridge ward comprising the parish of Hullbridge, Hockley Central ward comprising the proposed South West parish ward of Ashingdon parish and the proposed Central parish of Hockley parish. Hockley West comprising the proposed West parish ward of Hockley parish and Hockley North comprising the proposed West parish ward of Ashingdon parish and the proposed North parish ward of Hockley parish would have 15 per cent more, 7 per cent more, 5 per cent more and 3 per cent less electors per councillor than the district average respectively (11 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 1 per cent more and equal to the district average in 2004). Details of our final recommendations are set out in figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back of this report.

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

74 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 and Rochford St Andrews wards are each represented by two councillors and Hawkwell East ward is represented by three councillors.

75 Hawkwell East comprises the East parish ward of Hawkwell parish. Hawkwell West comprises the West parish ward of Hawkwell parish. Rochford Eastwood comprises the Eastwood parish ward of Rochford Parish. Rochford Roche comprises the Roche parish ward of Rochford parish. Rochford St Andrews comprises the St Andrews parish ward of Rochford parish. 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. The current electoral variances are shown in Figure 3.

76 At Stage One, 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.

77 At Stage One, Hawkwell Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for Hawkwell. A local councillor argued that the part of Ashingdon parish on the boundary of Hawkwell should be warded with Hawkwell and that the existing Hawkwell East ward should be divided into two two-member wards. 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 comprise a ward, while the remainder of the parish to the west of the railway line would form a third ward.

### **Draft Recommendations**

78 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we were not persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals for Rochford, given that they would have resulted in poor levels of electoral equality. We were also concerned that its proposal to exclude the Doggetts Close area from Rochford East ward would separate this area from the only part of the town with which it has road links. While we recognised the merit of 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. We sought to reflect elements of the proposals from the District Council, Hawkwell Parish Council and the local councillor in our recommendations. However, we did not consider that the local councillor's proposal to combine the parish of Great Stambridge with part

of Rochford would offer improved representation of these communities, given that the east of Rochford is relatively urban in character while Great Stambbridge is rural.

79 In our draft recommendations we proposed three two-member wards to represent the Hawkwell area, which strongly reflected the proposals of the District Council and the local councillor, and used the clear boundary of the London to Southend railway line. We also proposed combining the whole of the urban area of Rochford in a three-member ward, comprising the remainder of the existing Rochford Eastwood, Rochford Roche and Rochford St Andrews wards. We considered that this ward would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and would avoid the creation of an arbitrary boundary between areas of the town which are of a similar character. Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

80 At Stage Three the District Council objected to our proposals and supported its Stage One proposals for this area. The District Council, Hawkwell Parish Council, Rochford Parish Council, Hawkwell Headstart Group, Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association, Rochford and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce, Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association Rochford Hundred Historical Society all opposed our proposal to combine parts of Hawkwell with Hockley and Rochford on the grounds that it did not respect community ties. We also received a number of other representations from local councillors and local residents opposing our proposals in the same area on similar grounds of community identity and interest.

### **Further Draft Recommendations**

81 We carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. We noted that our proposals for the east of Hawkwell received little opposition and a degree of support. We therefore proposed retaining our draft recommendations for Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South. While we noted that there was some opposition to our proposal to combine the north-western part of Rochford with Hawkwell, we were not persuaded that the residents of these closely connected areas do not share similar interests and identities. Nor were we persuaded that the local councillor's proposals for Hawkwell North and Ashingdon would result in improved levels of electoral equality or offer better community representation. The existing ward of Hawkwell West received local support and has good levels of electoral equality and we were therefore content to propose its retention.

82 The majority of correspondence that we received at Stage Three with regard to Rochford opposed our proposal to link the western part of Rochford with Hawkwell West. We were persuaded that this part of Rochford shares an identity with the centre of Rochford, and we proposed modifying our proposed Rochford ward to include that part of Rochford parish to the west of the railway line. While we noted that the District Council's proposals for Rochford received some support, we also received support for our draft recommendations for the town and we were concerned that the District Council's proposals would combine areas which have no transport connections. We therefore put forward our draft recommendations as final, except in the western part of Rochford which we proposed combining in a three-member ward.

## **Final Recommendations**

83 At the further consultation stage the District Council supported our proposals in this area. Rochford Parish Council expressed “disappointment” at our proposal to reduce the number of district councillors representing Rochford from four to three councillors, and at our proposal to link the northern part of Rochford parish with the southern part of Hawkwell. However, we consider that the existing road links in the north-western part of Rochford justify its inclusion in a ward with the southern part of Hawkwell and that a three member ward representing the whole of Rochford provides for better electoral equality. The Parish Council expressed broad support for the rest of our proposed recommendations and “welcomed the retention of that part of the ward to the west of the Railway line” in a Rochford Town ward. All the other representations received concerning this area supported our further draft recommendations. In the light of this support we have decided to confirm our further draft recommendations in this area as final. The electoral variances under our final recommendations are shown in Figure 2.

84 Under our final recommendations Rochford ward comprising the Eastwood parish ward of Rochford parish, the proposed Roche parish ward of Rochford parish and the proposed St Andrews parish ward of Rochford parish ward and Hawkwell South ward comprising the proposed South parish ward of Hawkwell parish and the proposed North parish ward of Rochford parish would have 7 per cent more and 5 per cent more electors than the district average respectively (9 per cent more and 2 per cent more in 2004 respectively). Hawkwell North comprising the proposed Ashingdon Heights parish ward of Ashingdon and the proposed North parish ward of Hawkwell parish and Hawkwell West comprising the West parish ward of Hawkwell parish would both have 2 per cent more and 2 per cent less electors than the district average respectively (3 per cent more and 3 per cent less in 2004). Details of our final recommendations are set out in figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back of this report.

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

85 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.

86 Ashingdon comprises the Ashingdon and South Fambridge parish wards of Ashingdon parish. Barling & Sutton comprises the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton. Canewdon comprises the parishes of Canewdon, Paglesham and Stambridge. Foulness & Great Wakering East comprises the parish of Foulness Island and the East parish ward of Great Wakering parish. Great Wakering Central comprises the Central parish ward of Great Wakering parish. Great Wakering West comprises the West parish ward of Great Wakering parish. 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. The current electoral variances are shown in Figure 3.

87 At Stage One 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

88 Also at Stage One, a local councillor proposed that the parish of Great Stambridge should be combined with part of Rochford and that those parts of Ashingdon parish on the borders of Hawkwell and Hockley should be warded and placed in district wards 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 and that Foulness Island should be combined with Barling Magna, Little Wakering and Sutton.

## **Draft Recommendations**

89 In our draft recommendations we considered carefully the representations received at Stage One. We considered that the District Council's proposed Ashingdon & Canewdon ward would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, while respecting parish and natural boundaries in the area. We supported its proposal to transfer parts of the existing Ashingdon ward to Hawkwell and Hockley, as described above. However, we were not persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals for the south-east of the district, given the high levels of electoral inequality they would create. We were also concerned that the District Council's proposal to divide the area of Conway Avenue, New Road, St Johns Close, St Johns Road and Shoebird Road from the remainder of Great Wakering village would not offer the best level of representation for the residents of this area. Similarly, we did 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 were we 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.

90 In the south-east of the district, we proposed two two-member wards as our draft recommendations. Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West ward would comprise the existing wards of Barling & Sutton and Great Wakering West with the north-western part of Great Wakering Central ward. We proposed that Foulness & Great Wakering East ward would comprise the existing Foulness & Great Wakering East ward and the remainder of Great Wakering Central ward. Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

91 At Stage Three we received support for our proposals in Ashingdon and Canewdon from the District Council, Ashingdon Parish Council and Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association, but we also received objections from a local resident and a parish councillor who proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area. We also received objections to our proposals for the south-east of the district from the District Council, Great Wakering Parish

Council, Sir Teddy Taylor MP, two district councillors and a parish councillor, all of whom expressed concern about the proposed combination of parts of Great Wakering with Barling and Sutton and Great Wakering with Foulness on the grounds of community identity. The District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals and was supported by Great Wakering Parish Council and a District Councillor. Great Wakering Parish Council and two District Councils also suggested that Potton Island be warded with Great Wakering rather than Barling & Sutton parishes.

## **Further Draft Recommendations**

92 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and noted the general support for our proposed Ashingdon & Canewdon ward. We therefore proposed retaining our draft recommendations for this ward. We did not receive convincing argumentation to persuade us that alternative proposals for the parishes of Ashingdon and Canewdon would offer better reflection of community interests.

93 Our proposals for the south-eastern rural part of the district received local opposition, while the District Council's proposals received some support. While we noted that there were objections to the way in which we proposed dividing the village of Great Wakering, we were not persuaded that the District Council's proposals would offer clearer boundaries or a better reflection of community identity. However, we did consider that there was merit in the proposal retaining the existing Barling & Sutton ward, which has clearly defined natural boundaries, and to combine the whole of the Great Wakering community in a three-member ward comprising Great Wakering and Foulness parishes in their entirety. We considered that this option would offer the most acceptable representation of the communities in this area and the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we noted the support for combining Potton Island with those parts of Great Wakering to which it is attached, we are unable to transfer part of a parish without first creating a parish ward and, given the fact that this area currently contains very few electors, we are not persuaded that creating a parish ward for this area would provide for effective and convenient local government.

94 We considered that the relatively high level of inequality in Barling & Sutton and Foulness & Great Wakering wards was justified as they are rural, parished areas with strong natural geographical boundaries and we did not consider that alternative arrangements would better reflect community identity or offer more clearly identifiable boundaries.

## **Final Recommendations**

95 At the further consultation stage the District Council supported our further draft recommendations for this area subject to one minor boundary amendment. The District Council proposed that the boundary between the proposed Central and West parish wards of Great Wakering Parish be amended in order to transfer a number of properties from the Central parish ward to the West parish ward. The District Council argued that this amendment would ensure that the 33 electors in these properties would be in a parish ward with which they have road links and that the boundary would be tied to ground detail rather than running through properties. We consider that there is merit in the Council's proposals and we are incorporating this amendment in our final recommendations. Ashingdon Parish Council expressed concern over the transfer of

the South Farnbridge ward of Ashingdon Parish to our proposed Ashingdon & Canewdon ward as they consider that the area has no community ties with Canewdon and has independent community interests. However, we consider that Ashingdon Parish Council did not provide a viable alternative warding pattern that would provide equivalent levels of electoral equality to those put forward in our further draft recommendations. The electoral variances under our final recommendations are shown in Figure 2.

96 The majority of the representations that we received regarding this eastern area supported our further draft recommendations. In the light of this support, we are content to confirm our further draft recommendations as final, subject to the minor boundary amendment described above.

97 Under our final recommendations Barling and Sutton ward comprising the parishes of Barling Magna and Sutton, Foulness & Great Wakering ward comprising the parishes of Foulness Island & Great Wakering and Ashingdon & Canewdon ward comprising the proposed Ashingdon parish ward of Ashingdon parish and the parishes of Canewdon, Paglesham and Stambridge would have 12 per cent less, 8 per cent less and 4 per cent more electors than the district average respectively (15 per cent less, 9 per cent less, and 6 per cent more in 2004). Details of our final recommendations are set out in figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back of this report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

98 At Stage One we received two representations regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council 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. As a result, 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". 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.

99 In our draft recommendations, we noted that there was some support for elections every two years. However, we are guided by current legislation under which we cannot propose elections by halves. We also noted that the District Council supported retaining the present electoral cycle. Accordingly, we proposed no change to the current cycle of elections by thirds.

100 In response to our draft recommendations, the District Council supported retaining elections by thirds. Rayleigh Constituency Conservative Association supported our recommendations for the frequency of elections, but it favoured a two-yearly cycle for the district. Given that we cannot recommend elections by halves, and as we received support for retaining elections by thirds, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds in our further draft recommendations.

101 At further consultation stage no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our further draft recommendation for the existing electoral cycle as final.

## Conclusions

102 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our further draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- In Hockley we propose a minor amendment to the district ward boundary between Hockley North and Hockley Central wards.
- in Great Wakering Parish we propose a minor amendment to the parish ward boundary between Great Wakering West and Central wards.

103 We conclude that, in Rochford:

- There should be a reduction in council size from 40 to 39.
- There should be 19 wards, four fewer than at present.
- The boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified.
- The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

104 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current electoral arrangements, based on the 1999 and 2004 figures.

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	40	39	40	39
Number of wards	23	19	23	19
Average number of electors per councillor	1,539	1,579	1,620	1,661
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	14	3	15	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	1	8	0

105 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 14 to three, with only one ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with only two wards, Barling & Sutton and Hullbridge, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 15 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

Rochford District Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 19 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

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

106 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford to reflect the proposed district wards.

107 At Stage Three, Great Wakering Parish Council suggested that if a three-member district ward represented the area, the existing parish wards should be retained. Therefore, we propose retaining the existing arrangements for Great Wakering to be represented by 13 councillors serving three wards – Central, East and West, and this was put forward as part of our further draft recommendations.

108 At further consultation stage the District Council supported our proposals for Great Wakering Parish subject to a minor boundary amendment between Great Wakering Central and West parish wards in order to transfer a number of properties from the Central to the West ward. The District Council argued that this amendment would ensure that the 33 electors in these properties would be in a parish ward with which they have road links and that the parish ward boundary would be tied to ground detail rather than running through properties. We consider that there is merit in the Council's proposals and, given that we received no objections to our proposals, we propose incorporating this amendment as part of our final recommendations.

**Final Recommendation**

Great Wakering Parish Council should have 13 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Great Wakering East (returning four councillors), Great Wakering Central (returning five councillors), and Great Wakering West (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

109 The parish of Ashingdon is currently served by 11 councillors representing two wards: Ashingdon South and Fambridge. At Stage One, 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 argued 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.

110 In our draft recommendations, we considered that the District Council’s proposals for Ashingdon parish were sensible and would aid representation at both a district and parish level and we endorsed the District Council’s proposed Ashingdon and Ashingdon Heights parish wards. However, we recommended that its proposed Ashingdon West parish ward should be divided, given that it would be divided between two district wards, with the part that would be in Hockley Central ward being named South West parish ward, to be represented by one councillor, given its smaller electorate. That part that would be in Hockley North ward should be named West parish ward, to be represented by two parish councillors.

111 In response to our draft recommendations a parish councillor put forward alternative parishing arrangements for Ashingdon and Canewdon in line with his proposed district wards. However, given that we endorsed our draft recommendations for the district warding arrangements for Ashingdon, we were content to adopt our draft recommendations for Ashingdon parish as part of our further draft recommendations. At Stage Three a local resident raised concerns regarding the loss of the name of South Fambridge. Given that we proposed new warding arrangements for the parish, we considered that it would be confusing to retain the existing ward name of Fambridge. However, we welcomed comments on the proposed parish ward names in response to our further draft recommendations.

112 In response to our further draft recommendations, the Chairman of Ashingdon Parish Council objected to the creation of a new parish ward containing South Fambridge and its part of Canewdon, and suggested parishing arrangements in line with his proposed district wards. The District Council expressed support for our proposals in this area and given that we are adopting our further draft recommendations for the district warding arrangements for Ashingdon as final, we are endorsing our further draft recommendations for Ashingdon Parish Council as our final recommendations.

**Final Recommendation**

Ashingdon Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing four wards (two more than at present): 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 on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

113 The parish of Hawkwell is currently served by 17 councillors and is divided into two parish wards: East and West. At Stage One the District Council proposed that the existing East ward should be abolished and replaced by a North and a South ward, to be coterminous with its proposed Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South district wards, while the existing boundaries of West ward should be retained. It proposed that North parish ward should be represented by five councillors, South parish ward by six and West parish ward by six. Hawkwell Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals.

114 In our draft recommendations, we recommended 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 – to be coterminous with the proposed boundaries of Hawkwell North, Hockley West, Hawkwell South and Hawkwell & Rochford West district wards respectively.

115 As a result of our further draft recommendations at district level we recommended that the existing East parish ward should be abolished and replaced by North and South parish wards, to be coterminous with the proposed Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South district wards. We recommended that the existing boundaries of West parish ward should be retained. In line with their share of the electorate, we recommended that North ward be represented by five councillors, South ward by six and West ward by six.

116 In response to our further draft recommendations we received a representation from Hawkwell Parish Council fully supporting our recommendations for the area. In the light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area and given that the District Council supported our proposals in this area, we confirm our further draft recommendations for warding Hawkwell parish as final.

#### **Final Recommendation**

Hawkwell Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards (one more than at present): North (returning five councillors), South (returning six councillors) and West (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

117 The parish of Hockley is currently served by 15 councillors and is divided into four wards: Central, North East, South East and West. At Stage One, 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

118 In our draft recommendations, we proposed that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that they should be replaced by four wards – Central, North, Rural and West – to be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed district wards of Hockley Central, Hockley North, Hullbridge & Hockley Rural and Hockley West respectively.

119 In response to our draft recommendations, Hockley Parish Council objected to the proposed parish wards, particularly the proposed West ward, which it asserted would have little connection to the centre of the parish.

120 As a result of our further draft recommendations at district level, we proposed that the existing parish wards should be abolished and that they should be replaced by three wards: Central, North and West. The parish wards would be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed district wards of Hockley Central, Hockley North and Hockley West respectively, and would be represented by 10, two and three councillors respectively, in order to offer a fair representation of the parish ward electorates.

121 In response to our further draft recommendations we received a representation from Hockley Parish Council fully supporting our recommendations for the area. In the light of the support for our proposed warding from both Hockley Parish Council and the District Council we confirm our further draft recommendations for warding Hockley parish as final.

### **Final Recommendations**

Hockley Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards (one less than at present): Central (returning 10 councillors), North (returning two councillors) and West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

122 The parish of Rayleigh is currently served by 23 councillors and is divided into seven wards: Central, Downhall, Grange, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse. At Stage One, 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.

123 Under our draft recommendations, as a result of our proposal to adopt the District Council's proposed district wards of Rayleigh Central, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse, we were content to endorse the proposed parish wards of Central, Lodge, Trinity, Wheatley and Whitehouse, which would be coterminous with these district wards. However, we adopted alternative proposals in the west of the district and, therefore, we proposed the creation of the parish wards of Downhall, Grange and Sweyne Park, whose boundaries would be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed Downhall & Rawreth, Grange and Sweyne Park district wards. We suggested that these parish wards should return two, three and three councillors respectively, reflecting the number of electors in each ward.

124 In response to our draft recommendations, Rayleigh Town Council reiterated its support for the District Council's Stage One proposals. However, given that we adopted our draft recommendations for the district wards of Rayleigh as the basis for our further draft recommendations, with a minor modification to the boundary between Downhall & Rawreth and Grange wards, we proposed that the parish wards reflect the proposed district ward boundaries.

125 We received no comments at the further consultation stage. In the light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards and the District Council's support for our proposals in this area, we confirm our further draft recommendations for warding Rayleigh Parish Council as final.

**Final Recommendations**

Rayleigh Parish Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards (one more than at present): 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 wards boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

126 The parish of Rochford is currently represented by 17 councillors and is divided into three parish wards: Eastwood, Roche and St Andrews. At Stage One, 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 parish ward should be coterminous with its proposed Rochford East district ward, while West parish ward should be coterminous with the proposed Rochford West district ward.

127 In our draft recommendations, we recommended 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 would be coterminous with the proposed district wards of Rochford, Hawkwell South and Hawkwell & Rochford West respectively, and would be represented by 14, two and one councillors respectively, in line with their share of the parish electorate.

128 Given that our further draft recommendations at district level would not affect the parishing arrangements for the majority of Rochford, we proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Eastwood and Roche parish wards. As a result of the proposed district warding arrangements, we proposed a minor boundary modification to the north-western boundary of the existing Roche parish ward. In view of our proposal to combine the north-western part of Rochford in Hawkwell South district ward, we proposed that this part of the existing St Andrews parish ward should form a North parish ward. We proposed that the parish wards of Eastwood, North, Roche and St Andrews should be represented by four, two, six and five councillors respectively, in line with their share of the parish electorate.

129 In response to our further draft recommendations we received a representation from Rochford Parish Council expressing disappointment at our proposal to place the proposed North parish ward in Hawkwell South district ward. However, we consider that the existing road links in the north-western part of Rochford justify its inclusion in a ward with the southern part of Hawkwell. Given that the District Council expressed support for our proposals in this area and the lack of any other representations, we confirm our further draft recommendations for this parish as final.

**Final Recommendations**

Rochford Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards (one more than at present): Eastwood (returning four councillors), North (returning two councillors), Roche (returning six councillors) and St Andrews (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

130 In our further draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

**Final Recommendation**

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

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Rochford*

## **6 NEXT STEPS**

131 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Rochford and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

132 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 10 May 2001.

133 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



## APPENDIX A

### **Final 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 final recommendations for Rochford.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundary between Great Wakering Parish West and Central wards.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed boundary between Hockley North and Hockley Central wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the Rochford District Council.

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

*Map A2: Proposed boundary between Great Woking West and Central parish wards*

*Map A3: Proposed boundary between Hockley North and Hockley Central wards*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Rochford

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

*Figure B1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Barling, Sutton & Great Wakering West	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)
Foulness & Great Wakering East	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)
Hawkwell & Rochford West	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)
Hockley Central	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)
Hullbridge & Hockley Rural	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)
Hullbridge Riverside	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)
Lodge	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)
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	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)

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)

*Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Barling , Sutton & Great Wakering West	2	2,822	1,411	-8	2,953	1,477	-9
Foulness & Great Wakering East	2	2,917	1,459	-5	2,985	1,493	-8
Hawkwell & Rochford West	2	3,096	1,548	1	3,215	1,608	-1
Hockley Central	2	3,128	1,564	2	3,128	1,564	-3
Hullbridge & Hockley Rural	2	3,174	1,587	3	3,200	1,600	-1
Hullbridge Riverside	2	3,316	1,582	3	3,227	1,614	0
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	3	4,726	1,575	2	5,114	1,705	5
Trinity	2	2,907	1,454	-6	3,107	1,554	-4
Wheatley	2	3,148	1,574	2	3,295	1,648	2

*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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

## APPENDIX C

### 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](http://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, 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 D1: Commission compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies 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	The Commission complies 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	The Commission complies 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	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods

<p>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</p>	<p>The Commission complies with this requirement</p>
<p>Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated</p>	<p>The Commission complies with this requirement</p>