

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
TEIGNBRIDGE
IN DEVON

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

January 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Teignbridge.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Professor Michael Clarke

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray

Robert Hughes

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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Local Government Commission for England

12 January 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 13 January 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Teignbridge under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in August 1998 and undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 106 and 107) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Teignbridge.

We recommend that Teignbridge District Council should be served by 46 councillors representing 25 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 be elected together every four years.

We note that you have set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government - In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place 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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Teignbridge on 13 January 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 4 August 1998, after which we undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 21 of the 33 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, with 12 wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2003 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 22 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in 14 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 106 and 107) are that:

- **Teignbridge District Council should be served by 46 councillors, rather than the present 58. This partly reflects the local consensus that such a reduction could lead to more effective internal political management of the Council, although we acknowledge that it also leads to some substantial changes to ward boundaries;**
- **there should be 25 wards, eight fewer than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should remain unchanged;**
- **elections for the whole council should continue to take place every four years.**

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 23 of the 25 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **Due to localised increases in electorate, the number of electors per councillor is forecast to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all but one ward by 2003.**

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

- **revised parish or town council electoral arrangements for the towns of Bovey Tracey, Dawlish, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot and Teignmouth and the parish of Haccombe with Combe.**

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 23 February 1999:

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

*Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Ambrook	2	Abbotskerswell ward (the parish of Abbotskerswell); Ambrook ward (the parishes of Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan, Ogwell and Woodland)	Map 2
2 Ashburton & Buckfastleigh	3	Ashburton ward (the parish of Ashburton); Buckfastleigh ward (the parish of Buckfastleigh); Moorland ward (part – the parish of Buckland in the Moor)	Map 2
3 Bishopsteignton	1	Haldon ward (part – the parish of Bishopsteignton)	Map 2
4 Bovey	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bovey Tracey and Lustleigh)	Map 2
5 Bradley (Newton Abbot)	2	Bradley ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
6 Buckland & Milber (Newton Abbot)	3	Buckland ward; Milber ward; Teignhydes ward (part – the proposed Haccombe Urban parish ward of Haccombe with Combe parish)	Map 2 and large map
7 Bushell (Newton Abbot)	2	Bradley ward (part); Bushell ward	Map 2 and large map
8 Chudleigh	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Chudleigh and Hennock)	Map 2
9 College (Newton Abbot)	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2 and large map
10 Dawlish Central & North East	3	Dawlish Central ward (part); Dawlish North East ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
11 Dawlish South West	2	Dawlish Central ward (part); Dawlish North East ward (part); Dawlish South West ward	Maps 2 and A3
12 Haytor	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bickington and Ilsington)	Map 2
13 Ipplepen	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Ipplepen)	Map 2
14 Kenn Valley	2	Kenn Valley ward (the parishes of Dunchideock, Ide, Kenn and Shillingford St George); Powderham ward (part – the parishes of Exminster and Powderham)	Map 2

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
15 Kenton with Starcross	1	Powderham ward (part – the parishes of Ashcombe, Kenton, Mamhead and Starcross)	Map 2
16 Kerswell-with-Combe	2	Kingskerswell ward (the parish of Kingskerswell); Teignhydes ward (part – the parish of Coffinswell, and the proposed Haccombe Rural parish ward of Haccombe with Combe parish)	Map 2
17 Kingsteignton East	2	Haldon ward (part – the parish of Ideford); Kingsteignton East ward (part); Kingsteignton West ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
18 Kingsteignton West	2	Kingsteignton East ward (part); Kingsteignton West ward (Kingsteignton West ward (part) and the parish of Teigngrace)	Map 2 and large map
19 Moorland	1	Moretonhampstead ward (the parish of Moretonhampstead); Moorland ward (part – the parishes of Manaton, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor)	Map 2
20 Shaldon & Stokeinteignhead	1	Shaldon ward (the parish of Shaldon); Teignhydes ward (part – the parish of Stokeinteignhead)	Map 2
21 Teignbridge North	1	Dunsford ward (part – the parish of Holcombe Burnell); Whitestone ward (the parishes of Tedburn St Mary and Whitestone)	Map 2
22 Teignmouth Central	2	Teignmouth Central ward (part); Teignmouth North ward (part)	Maps 2 and A4
23 Teignmouth East	2	Teignmouth Central ward (part); Teignmouth East ward; Teignmouth North ward (part)	Maps 2 and A4
24 Teignmouth West	2	Teignmouth North ward (part); Teignmouth West ward	Maps 2 and A4
25 Teign Valley	1	Dunsford ward (part – the parish of Dunsford); Teign Valley ward (the parishes of Ashton, Bridford, Christow, Doddiscombsleigh and Trusham)	Map 2

Note: The district is entirely parished.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Teignbridge. We have now reviewed all the districts in Devon (except for Plymouth and Torbay unitary authorities) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

3 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996, supplemented in September 1996 and updated in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 13 January 1998, when we wrote to Teignbridge District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to Devon County Council, the Devon & Cornwall Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Devon Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review, and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published notices in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 20 April 1998. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three began on 4 August 1998 with the

publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Teignbridge in Devon*, and ended on 5 October 1998. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

⁶ Teignbridge district lies predominantly between the rivers Exe and Dart (between Exeter and Torbay) and also contains the river Teign, from which it gets its name. Its major settlements are the administrative centre of Newton Abbot, the coastal resorts of Dawlish and Teignmouth, and the smaller towns of Ashburton, Bovey Tracey, Buckfastleigh and Kingsteignton. The district also contains a number of smaller villages and hamlets. The Dartmoor National Park extends into the western part of Teignbridge and 15 of the district's 50 parishes lie either wholly or partly within Dartmoor.

⁷ The Council presently has 58 councillors who are elected from 33 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2). Four wards each return three councillors, seventeen wards return two councillors each, whilst the remaining twelve wards return a single councillor each. The Council holds elections on a whole-council basis.

⁸ 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'.

⁹ Since the last electoral review was completed in 1977 there has been an increase in the electorate of around seven per cent. Growth in the district is projected to continue, with the electorate forecast to increase from 91,273 to 97,228 by 2003.

¹⁰ At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,574 electors, which the Council forecasts would increase to 1,676 by the year 2003 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 21 of the 33 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and in 12 wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Ambrook ward where the councillor represents 2,889 electors, an electoral imbalance of 84 per cent above the district average.

Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbotskerswell	1	1,246	1,246	-21	1,280	1,280	-24
2 Ambrook	1	2,889	2,889	84	3,125	3,125	86
3 Ashburton	2	2,831	1,416	-10	3,028	1,514	-10
4 Bovey	3	5,397	1,799	14	6,113	2,038	22
5 Bradley (Newton Abbot)	3	5,030	1,677	7	5,556	1,852	10
6 Buckfastleigh	2	2,714	1,357	-14	2,882	1,441	-14
7 Buckland (Newton Abbot)	2	2,737	1,369	-13	2,833	1,417	-16
8 Bushell (Newton Abbot)	2	3,004	1,502	-5	3,174	1,587	-5
9 Chudleigh	2	3,893	1,947	24	4,466	2,233	33
10 College (Newton Abbot)	3	3,904	1,301	-17	4,140	1,380	-18
11 Dawlish Central	2	4,074	2,037	29	4,201	2,101	25
12 Dawlish North East	2	2,644	1,322	-16	2,730	1,365	-19
13 Dawlish South West	2	3,310	1,655	5	3,415	1,708	2
14 Dunsford	1	1,005	1,005	-36	1,035	1,035	-38
15 Haldon	2	2,349	1,175	-25	2,503	1,252	-25
16 Haytor	1	2,087	2,087	33	2,318	2,318	38
17 Ipplepen	1	2,013	2,013	28	2,118	2,118	26
18 Kenn Valley	1	1,627	1,627	3	1,671	1,671	0
19 Kingskerswell	2	3,634	1,817	15	3,877	1,939	16
20 Kingsteignton East	2	4,929	2,465	57	5,372	2,686	60

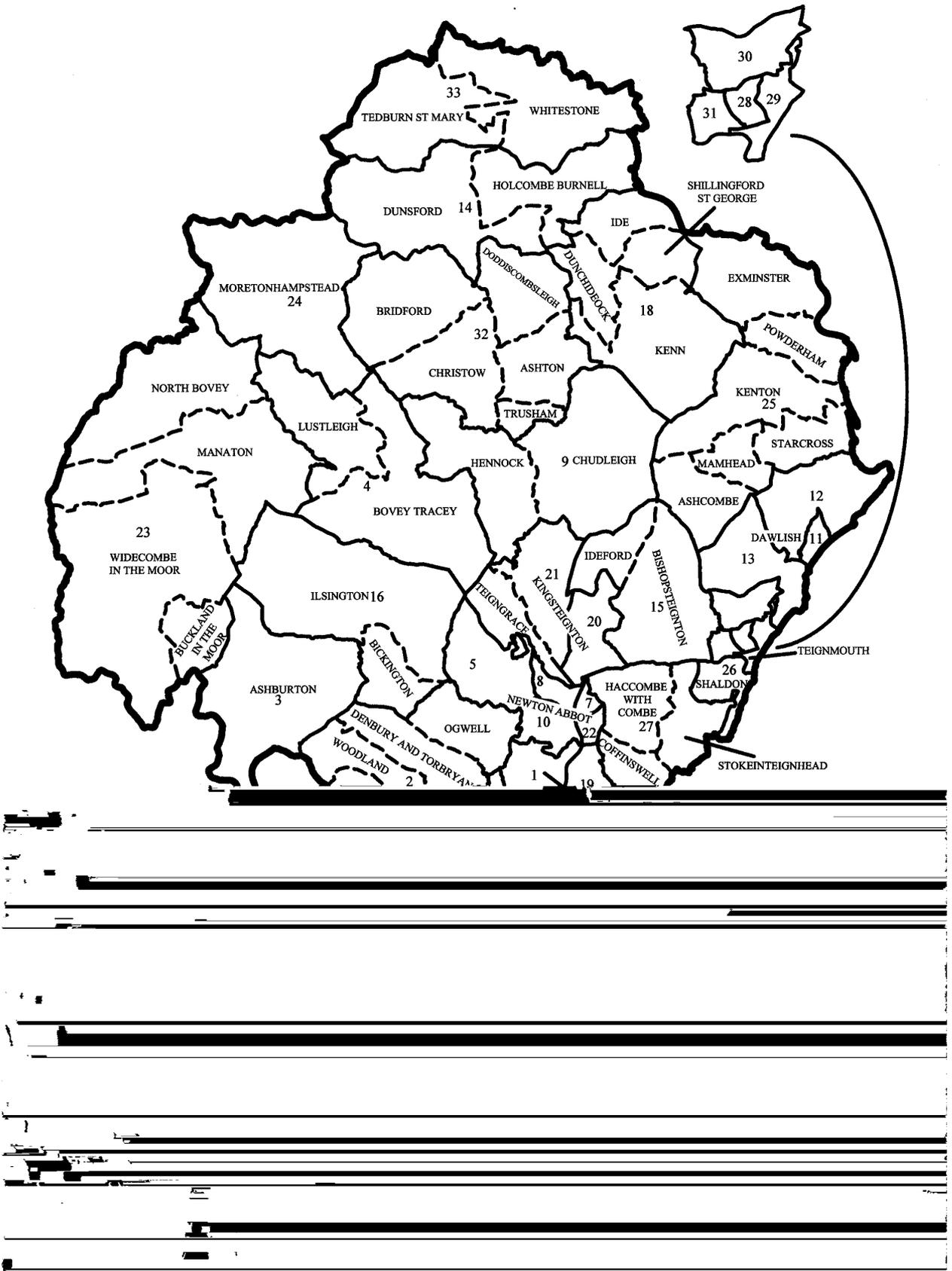
Figure 2 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 Kingsteignton West	2	3,096	1,548	-2	3,367	1,684	0
22 Milber (Newton Abbot)	2	2,738	1,369	-13	2,833	1,417	-16
23 Moorland	1	1,018	1,018	-35	1,018	1,018	-39
24 Moretonhampstead	1	1,227	1,227	-22	1,299	1,299	-23
25 Powderham	3	4,815	1,605	2	5,193	1,731	3
26 Shaldon	1	1,427	1,427	-9	1,451	1,451	-13
27 Teignhydes	1	1,256	1,256	-20	1,320	1,320	-21
28 Teignmouth Central	2	2,485	1,243	-21	2,586	1,293	-23
29 Teignmouth East	2	2,925	1,463	-7	3,045	1,523	-9
30 Teignmouth North	2	3,020	1,510	-4	3,144	1,572	-6
31 Teignmouth West	2	2,714	1,357	-14	2,825	1,413	-16
32 Teign Valley	1	1,507	1,507	-4	1,539	1,539	-8
33 Whitestone	1	1,728	1,728	10	1,771	1,771	6
Totals	58	91,273	—	—	97,228	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,574	—	—	1,676	—

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Dunsford ward are relatively over-represented by 36 per cent, while electors in Ambrook ward are relatively under-represented by 84 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Teignbridge



3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

11 During Stage One we received representations from Teignbridge District Council, the Teignbridge Constituency Conservative Association and seven parish councils. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Teignbridge in Devon*. Our draft recommendations are summarised at Appendix B.

12 Our draft recommendations were based on the Council's scheme which achieved improved electoral equality, generally provided for good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and took account of the projected increase in electorate. However, we moved away from the Council's scheme in the south-west of the district (its proposed Ashburton & Buckfastleigh and Moorland wards) and in Dawlish. We proposed that:

- (a) Teignbridge District Council should be served by 46 councillors, 12 fewer than at present, representing 25 wards rather than the present 33;
- (b) the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (c) the whole council should continue to be elected together every four years.

Draft Recommendation

Teignbridge District Council should be served by 46 councillors representing 25 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected together every four years.

13 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 25 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further with only one of the wards projected to vary by more than 10 per cent by 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

14 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 65 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Teignbridge District Council and the Commission by appointment.

Teignbridge District Council

15 The District Council supported the majority of our proposals, including those for a reduction in council size from 58 to 46 members and that whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years. However, it put forward alternatives for the proposed Ambrook, Ashburton & Buckfastleigh and Moorland wards, and also a different name for the proposed Mamhead ward.

16 The Council put forward two different proposals for the Ambrook area. Its first suggestion was that the whole of the Ogwell Cross area (of Ogwell parish) should be included in a single-member district council ward with Abbotskerswell parish. The remaining part of Ogwell parish would form a separate single-member Ambrook ward with the parishes of Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan and Woodland. Its second proposal was a variation on the first, and involved just a part of the Ogwell Cross area being included in the Abbotskerswell-based single-member ward. Again, the remainder of Ogwell parish would be included in a revised single-member Ambrook district ward.

17 In the south-west of the district, it proposed that the town of Buckfastleigh should be split into two wards, with the majority of the town forming a single-member district ward and the remainder forming part of a new two-member district ward with the neighbouring town of Ashburton and the parishes of Buckland in the Moor and Widecombe in the Moor. The Council also suggested that the proposed Mamhead ward should instead be named Kenton with Starcross, to better reflect settlement patterns within the ward.

Devon County Labour Party

18 The Devon County Labour Party expressed concern over the reduction in the number of

district councillors, stating that the proposed decrease of 12 in overall council size “is a major cut in local representation”.

Parish and Town Councils

19 We received representations from 15 parish or town councils. Kingsteignton Town Council supported our proposals for the town, while Shaldon Parish Council stated that it had “no further comments” on our draft recommendations. Broadhempston and Denbury & Torbryan parish councils opposed the proposed two-member Ambrook ward, both favouring the District Council’s proposal for single-member wards to be formed in this area. This view was supported by Abbotskerswell Parish Council.

20 Ogwell Parish Council expressed strong opposition to the proposal for the parish to be divided between two district wards. It argued that it (the Parish Council) has worked hard to unite the different parts of the parish and that dividing these communities would be detrimental to the links which have now been established. It proposed that Ogwell parish should form a separate single-member district ward on its own boundaries.

21 Bovey Tracey Town Council made no comment on our proposals for district warding arrangements, although it supported our proposal to split the town into two new town council wards. Buckfastleigh Town Council opposed the proposal for a new three-member Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward, suggesting instead that both towns in that area (Ashburton & Buckfastleigh) should be split into two town wards each and that the area as a whole should be served by three single-member wards. Its proposal was that the greater part of both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh should be represented by single-member wards, and that a third ward be created from the outskirts of the two towns.

22 Dawlish Town Council supported our proposal to reduce the number of district councillors serving the town from six to five. However, it opposed our proposal for a new three-member Dawlish Central & North East ward to be created, preferring instead for there to be two separate wards: Dawlish

Central ward to return two district councillors and Dawlish North East ward to return one. Kenton Parish Council opposed the proposal for a new Mamhead ward, arguing that the parish of Ashcombe should be included in a ward with part of Dawlish in order to redress the electoral imbalance of Mamhead ward. It also opposed our proposed name for the ward, preferring instead that it be named Kenton.

23 Holcombe Burnell Parish Council reiterated its Stage One comments and objected to our proposal for the parish to be included in a ward with the parishes of Tedburn St Mary and Whitestone. It argued that the A30 road formed a clear division in this area. Dunsford Parish Council also opposed our proposals for this northern part of the district, preferring instead to remain in the same ward as the neighbouring parish of Holcombe Burnell. Ideford Parish Council opposed our proposal that the parish be included in a ward with the eastern part of Kingsteignton, preferring instead for Ideford to be included in a ward with Bishopsteignton.

24 Moretonhampstead Parish Council opposed our proposal that it be included in an enlarged Moorland ward, preferring instead that Moretonhampstead be included in a new Wray Valley ward, together with the parishes comprising the present Bovey ward. Widecombe in the Moor Parish Council also opposed the enlargement of the present Moorland ward, preferring that the ward remain unchanged.

Other Representations

25 Councillor Colclough, the district councillor for the present Abbotskerswell ward, endorsed the proposals of the District Council to divide (i.e. ward) Ogwell parish and include the eastern part of the parish in a revised single-member Abbotskerwell ward. Councillor Hessé, a town councillor in Dawlish, opposed our proposal for the creation of a new three-member Dawlish Central & North East district ward. He argued that around 220 electors should be transferred to the Central 'part' of the ward from the North East 'part' and that those areas should subsequently be separately represented on the District Council.

26 Councillor Whittaker, the county councillor for the Ashburton & Buckfastleigh division, supported the majority of the draft recommendations, including the overall reduction in council size, but

opposed our proposal for an enlarged Moorland ward. She proposed that the parishes of Buckland in the Moor, Manaton, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor should form a single-member ward, with the parishes of Lustleigh and Moretonhampstead forming a separate ward. Councillor Phillips, a district and town councillor, opposed our proposal that each of the town wards in Teignmouth should return four town councillors, stating that "the very most it should be is three per ward."

27 We also received representations from 44 local residents opposing our proposal to include the parish of Coffinswell in a new district ward with the parish of Kingskerswell. Of these respondents, 36 preferred Coffinswell to be in the same district ward as the parishes of Abbotskerswell and Haccombe with Combe, while seven residents did not put forward an alternative proposition. One resident proposed that Kingskerswell parish be divided into parish wards and that its northern part be included in a Coffinswell/Abbotskerwell ward.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Teignbridge is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

29 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. First, 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. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

30 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.

31 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, 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. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over

should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

Electorate Forecasts

32 At Stage One Teignbridge District Council submitted electorate forecasts, projecting an increase in the electorate of seven per cent from 91,273 to 97,228 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It expected much of the growth to be in the larger towns in the district, in particular Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

33 During Stage Three we received representations on this subject from the parish councils of Ideford, Kenton and Moretonhampstead. Each expressed concern that, as a result of housing developments in or near their locality, the wards we proposed for their areas could be under-represented within a relatively short period of time. However, none of the submissions specifically disputed the Council's Stage One electorate projections. On balance, we remain satisfied that the Council's forecasts represent the best estimates available.

Council Size

34 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a borough or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

35 Teignbridge District Council is at present served by 58 councillors, at the upper end of this range. The representations received during Stage One pointed towards there being considerable support for a council size of 46, as proposed by Teignbridge District Council. The District Council commented in its Stage One submission that,

among other things, having fewer councillors could assist in streamlining the process of decision-making. Our *Draft Recommendations* report endorsed the proposal for a 46-member council and explained that we had carefully considered the impact that such a radical reduction in council size would have on the local electorate.

36 We bore in mind the fact that the ‘third tier’ of local government – parish and town councils – would still exist throughout Teignbridge despite the level of representation on the District Council being reduced. The district’s population is towards the middle of the national range of district councils, which might lead to the conclusion that a 46-member council size is more appropriate for Teignbridge than 58. We also acknowledged that the Council has no formal political groupings and that support for a reduced council size was “virtually unanimous” among members. Finally, we recognised that the Council had undertaken a widespread consultation exercise with parish and town councils and others in drawing up its submission. Local views on the effect that the Council’s 46-member scheme may have in different localities within the district could therefore be considered in some detail by the Council prior to its decision to approve the scheme.

37 During Stage Three the District Council and Councillors Hessé and Whittaker supported our proposal to decrease the size of the council by 12 members. We received only two other direct representations regarding council size. The Devon County Labour Party expressed concern at the scale of the proposed reduction of district councillors serving Teignbridge, stating that this would form “a major cut in local representation”. Dunsford Parish Council opposed our specific proposal for its part of the district, supporting instead an alternative proposal which would more or less retain the same council size as at present.

38 We have considered all the representations received regarding the proposed reduction in council size. There remains substantial support for the proposal, although we acknowledge that representations from some of the more rural areas of the district expressed concern over the geographic size of some of the proposed wards. Given the good level of support that our draft recommendations have generally received, however, we have decided to confirm our proposal for a reduced council size of 46 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

39 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Dawlish (three wards);
- (b) Newton Abbot (five wards);
- (c) Teignmouth (four wards);
- (d) Abbotskerswell, Ambrook and Ipplepen wards;
- (e) Ashburton, Bovey, Buckfastleigh, Haytor, Moorland and Moretonhampstead wards;
- (f) Chudleigh, Dunsford, Teign Valley and Whitestone wards;
- (g) Haldon, Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West wards;
- (h) Kingskerswell, Shaldon and Teignhydies wards;
- (i) Kenn Valley and Powderham wards.

Dawlish (three wards)

40 The coastal town of Dawlish is located in the east of the district and is currently served by six district councillors, returned from three two-member wards: Dawlish Central, Dawlish North East and Dawlish South West. The number of electors per councillor in these wards is 29 per cent above, 16 per cent below and 5 per cent above the district average respectively (25 per cent, 19 per cent and 2 per cent by 2003).

41 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that the town should be served by one district councillor fewer, and that the following transfers of electors should be made: 55 electors from Dawlish Central ward into Dawlish South West ward; and 617 electors from Dawlish North East ward into Dawlish South West ward. We also proposed that the revised Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards should be combined to form a new three-member Dawlish Central & North East ward.

42 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the three-member Dawlish Central & North East ward would be 2 per cent above the district average initially, projected to be 1 per cent below by 2003. The number of electors

per councillor in the two-member Dawlish South West ward would initially be equal to the district average, projected to be 3 per cent below by 2003.

43 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Dawlish Town Council and Councillor Hessé. The District Council supported our proposals for the town, while the Town Council supported the proposed reduction in the number of district councillors serving Dawlish but opposed the creation of a three-member ward. It preferred that modified Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards be retained, returning two and one councillors respectively. The Town Council stated that “if necessary to achieve equality of electors to councillors, adjustments could be made by transferring streets from one ward to another”. It also stated that it would prefer the Holcombe area to be retained in a ward within Dawlish, rather than be transferred into Teignmouth.

44 Councillor Hessé also supported our proposal to reduce the number of councillors serving Dawlish but, like the Town Council, preferred that the Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards should remain separate. He cited a number of roads which could be transferred into the latter ward in order to improve electoral equality in the area.

45 We recognise that there are parts of Dawlish North East ward which are distinctly ‘rural’ and other parts which are distinctly ‘urban’ in character, and that the majority of the ward’s electorate reside in the ‘urban’ area (around Longlands and Upper Longlands). We are not able to propose a ward comprising solely the ‘rural’ area as it does not contain sufficient electors to justify its own district councillor. It would be possible to include this area within a neighbouring, more rural, district ward, but such a proposal would significantly increase electoral inequality both within that ward and in the remainder of Dawlish.

46 As described in our *Draft Recommendations* report, we gave consideration to transferring the Holcombe area from Dawlish South West ward into a ward within Teignmouth. Given the geographical proximity of Holcombe to Teignmouth, the electors of Holcombe may perhaps share closer ties with Teignmouth than they do with Dawlish. However, Dawlish Town Council opposed this proposal during Stage Three. Furthermore, the proposed wards in both

Teignmouth and Dawlish would need to be revised if these electors were transferred to a Teignmouth-based ward. Given the lack of local support for such a proposal, we are content to leave the Holcombe area in a Dawlish-based ward as part of our final recommendations.

47 Notwithstanding the opposition to our proposed three-member Dawlish Central & North East ward, we regard our draft proposals for the town as providing the best balance between securing reasonable levels of electoral equality and attempting, so far as is practicable, to reflect local community interests. We therefore confirm our draft proposals for Dawlish as final, and details of our proposed boundaries are illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A. Proposals in respect of town council electoral arrangements are detailed at the end of this chapter.

Newton Abbot (five wards)

48 Newton Abbot is the administrative centre of Teignbridge and is located in the south-east of the district. It is currently served by 12 district councillors returned from two three-member wards (Bradley and College) and three two-member wards (Buckland, Bushell and Milber). The number of electors per councillor in each of the five wards is currently 7 per cent above, 17 per cent below, 13 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 13 per cent below the district average respectively (10 per cent, 18 per cent, 16 per cent, 5 per cent and 16 per cent by 2003).

49 In our *Draft Recommendations*, we proposed that the town should be served by three fewer district councillors, bringing the total to nine. We also proposed that 1,115 electors should be transferred from Bradley ward into Bushell ward, with Bradley ward then being served by one fewer councillor to become two-member, and that Buckland and Milber wards should be combined to form a new three-member ward. We also proposed that the neighbouring Haccombe with Combe parish should be split into two parish wards, in order to include a number of ‘urban’ electors in the new Buckland & Milber ward. Bushell ward would continue to return two members, but College ward would be served by one fewer councillor to become two-member.

50 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bradley, Buckland & Milber,

Bushell and College wards would be 1 per cent below, 6 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average respectively (2 per cent above, 9 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2003).

51 During Stage Three the District Council supported our proposals for Newton Abbot, and we received no other representations regarding our proposals for the town. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Newton Abbot as final. Details of our proposed boundaries in the town are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report. Proposals in respect of town council electoral arrangements are detailed at the end of this chapter.

Teignmouth (four wards)

52 The coastal town of Teignmouth is located in the east of the district immediately south of Dawlish, and is served by eight district councillors returned from four two-member wards. The number of electors per councillor in Teignmouth Central, Teignmouth East, Teignmouth North and Teignmouth West wards is 21 per cent, 7 per cent, 4 per cent and 14 per cent below the district average respectively (23 per cent, 9 per cent, 6 per cent and 16 per cent by 2003).

53 As part of our draft recommendations for Teignmouth, we proposed that the town should be served by two fewer councillors, bringing the total to six, and that 131 electors should be transferred from Teignmouth Central ward into Teignmouth East ward. We also proposed that Teignmouth North ward should be disbanded, with its 3,020 electors included in the town's remaining wards as follows: 1,354 electors into Teignmouth Central; 611 electors into Teignmouth East; and 1,055 electors into Teignmouth West.

54 The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Teignmouth Central, Teignmouth East and Teignmouth West wards would be 7 per cent below, 8 per cent below and 5 per cent below the district average respectively (9 per cent, 10 per cent and 7 per cent by 2003).

55 During Stage Three the only representation we received in respect of the district wards in Teignmouth was from the District Council, which expressed its support for our proposals. Given the Council's support, and since we have not received any other submissions, we are confirming our

draft recommendations for district council wards in Teignmouth as final. Our proposed boundaries in Teignmouth are illustrated on Map A4 at Appendix A. Proposals in respect of town council electoral arrangements, on which subject we received a representation regarding Teignmouth, are detailed at the end of this chapter.

Abbotskerswell, Ambrook and Ipplepen wards

56 Presently Abbotskerswell and Ipplepen wards each return a single councillor and each comprises solely the parishes of those names. Ambrook ward also returns a single councillor and comprises the parishes of Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan, Ogwell and Woodland. The number of electors per councillor in Abbotskerswell and Ipplepen wards is currently 21 per cent below and 28 per cent above the district average respectively (24 per cent and 26 per cent by 2003). Ambrook ward currently has the worst level of electoral imbalance in the district, with the number of electors per councillor being 84 per cent above the average, projected to be 86 per cent by 2003.

57 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Abbotskerswell and Ambrook wards be combined to form an enlarged two-member Ambrook ward, and that no change be made to Ipplepen ward. Under our proposals the number of electors per councillor in the revised Ambrook ward and unchanged Ipplepen ward would be 4 per cent above and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent and equal to the average by 2003).

58 During Stage Three, we received representations from the District Council, the parish councils of Abbotskerswell, Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan and Ogwell, and Councillor Colclough (who represents the existing Abbotskerswell district ward). The District Council supported our proposal for Ipplepen ward but opposed the Ambrook ward and put forward two alternative schemes – both of which would involve the parish of Ogwell being split into two parish wards. We received no other representations concerning our proposed Ipplepen ward.

59 The Council's first proposal for this area placed all of the eastern part of the parish (the Ogwell Cross area) into a new single-member ward with the parish of Abbotskerswell, with the remaining part of Ogwell parish and the parishes of Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan and Woodland forming

another single-member ward. The number of electors per councillor in these wards would be 22 per cent above and 13 per cent below the district average respectively (on the Council's own calculations). The Council's second proposal involved only part of the Ogwell Cross area being included in a ward with Abbotskerswell parish, with the remaining part forming a single-member ward with the remainder of Ogwell parish and the parishes of Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan and Woodland. According to the Council's own calculations, the number of electors per councillor in these wards would be 5 per cent below and 14 per cent above the district average respectively.

60 Abbotskerswell Parish Council and Councillor Colclough both endorsed the options put forward by the District Council for this area, with the parish council not expressing a preference between the two and the councillor preferring the second option. Broadhempston Parish Council also endorsed the District Council's second option, while Denbury & Torbryan Parish Council supported the first, although it did express reservations concerning the proposed warding of Ogwell parish. Ogwell Parish Council strongly opposed both schemes put forward by the District Council for this area, stating that warding the parish would divide the community. It suggested that an alternative could be to create a single-member Ogwell ward, comprising solely that parish.

61 We acknowledge the arguments which have been put to us during Stage Three against the proposed two-member Ambrook ward. Both sets of proposals put forward by the District Council would facilitate single-member district wards in this area, and would therefore reflect the views of a number of local interests. However there are also disadvantages.

62 The Council's proposal for all of Ogwell Cross to form a single-member ward with Abbotskerswell parish would retain all electors in Ogwell Cross within the same ward. This proposal may minimise any adverse impact on community identities that warding the parish could have but both the proposed single-member wards would have a high level of electoral inequality. Its second proposal, with only part of Ogwell Cross being included in a ward with Abbotskerswell parish, would have a better (but by no means excellent) overall level of electoral equality, but could impinge upon local community interests in the Ogwell Cross area.

63 We have not been persuaded that splitting Ogwell parish into two parish wards to facilitate single-member district wards in this area would have sufficient benefit to outweigh the adverse impact the proposal could have on community identities. We consider that our draft proposals provide a suitable balance between securing reasonable levels of electoral equality whilst generally reflecting local interests and community ties, notwithstanding the locally expressed desire to secure single-member wards if possible.

64 Although we sympathise with the concerns expressed, in particular by Broadhempston and Denbury & Torbryan parish councils, regarding the possibility of a 'rural' single-member ward for the area, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a two-member Ambrook ward comprising the parishes of Abbotskerswell, Broadhempston, Denbury & Torbryan, Ogwell and Woodland as final. We are also confirming our draft recommendation for an unchanged Ipplepen ward as final.

Ashburton, Bovey, Buckfastleigh, Haytor, Moorland and Moretonhampstead wards

65 The constituent parishes, number of councillors and electoral variances in the wards of Ashburton, Bovey, Buckfastleigh, Haytor, Moorland and Moretonhampstead are detailed in Figure 3 (overleaf).

66 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that this south-western area of the district should be served by eight councillors overall, rather than the present ten. We proposed: that Ashburton and Buckfastleigh wards should be combined to form a new three-member Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward; that Moretonhampstead ward should be combined with Moorland ward to form an enlarged single-member Moorland ward; and that no change should be made to the three-member Bovey and single-member Haytor wards.

67 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward and the revised Moorland ward would be 7 per cent below and 13 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent and 10 per cent by 2003). Due to the overall reduction in council size, the number of electors per councillor in the unchanged Bovey and Haytor wards would improve to 9 per cent below and 5 per cent above the district average respectively, projected to be 4 per cent and 10 per cent by 2003.

Figure 3:
The Present Ashburton, Bovey, Buckfastleigh, Haytor, Moorland and Moretonhampstead Wards

Present ward	Number of councillors	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
			1998	2003
Ashburton	2	Ashburton	-10	-10
Bovey	3	Bovey Tracey and Lustleigh	14	22
Buckfastleigh	2	Buckfastleigh	-14	-14
Haytor	1	Bickington and Ilsington	33	38
Moorland	1	Buckland in the Moor, Manaton, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor	-35	-39
Moretonhampstead	1	Moretonhampstead	-22	-23

68 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Buckfastleigh Town Council, the parish councils of Moretonhampstead and Widecombe in the Moor, and County Councillor Whittaker (who represents the county division of Ashburton & Buckfastleigh).

69 The District Council supported our proposals for Bovey and Haytor wards, but it opposed those for Ashburton & Buckfastleigh and Moorland wards. It proposed as an alternative that Buckfastleigh should be split into two town wards. It suggested that the southern ('Buckfastleigh') town ward should form a single-member ward, and that the northern ('Buckfast') town ward should form a two-member ward with the parishes of Ashburton, Buckland in the Moor and Widecombe in the Moor. A revised Moorland ward would then comprise the parishes of Manaton, Moretonhampstead and North Bovey. It suggested that the ward comprising solely 'Buckfastleigh town' ward could retain the name of the parish, but did not suggest a name for its proposed ward including Ashburton, stating that this would "require further consultation".

70 Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in its Buckfastleigh ward, Moorland ward and proposed ward to include Ashburton would be 17 per cent above, 13 per cent below and 5 per cent below the district average respectively (16 per cent, 15 per cent and 6 per cent by 2003).

71 Buckfastleigh Town Council also opposed our proposed three-member Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward, preferring instead for the area as a whole to be served by three single-member wards with each town being split into two parish wards. Its proposals would involve the central parts of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh each forming a single-member ward, with the remaining ward comprising "the outskirts of the two main settlements". It did not submit any names or electorate totals for its proposed wards.

72 Moretonhampstead and Widecombe in the Moor parish councils both opposed our proposed Moorland ward, with the former preferring to be included in a new Wray Valley ward along with Bovey Tracey and the latter preferring for no change to be made to the existing Moorland ward. County Councillor Whittaker opposed our proposed Moorland ward on the grounds that an over-represented Moorland ward is justified because of the "sparse population, and the independent character of the people who live there". She put forward an alternative proposal, stating that a district ward comprising the parishes of Buckland in the Moor, Manaton, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor (i.e. the present Moorland ward) "would make sense", with Moretonhampstead parish forming a separate ward with Lustleigh parish.

73 We have re-considered carefully our draft proposals for this area, and the alternative

configurations of wards which have been put forward. This area is quite exceptional in character, including as it does the towns of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh and some remote and sparsely populated parishes – all of which lie either wholly or partly within the Dartmoor National Park. The issue is further complicated by the presence of the district boundary which particularly affects Buckfastleigh, virtually cut-off from the rest of Teignbridge.

74 We are not endorsing the proposals put forward by the District Council, principally due to the levels of electoral inequality which would result although we were concerned about community identity implications in the proposed ward based on Ashburton. Similarly, we would not be following the rules guiding our work if we were to propose no change to the existing Moorland ward: the total electorate of this ward is 1,018, and the district average number of electors per councillor under a council size of 46 would be 1,984. The number of electors per councillor in an unchanged Moorland ward would therefore be almost 50 per cent below the district average - an unacceptably high level of inequality. It is for this reason that we are also unable to consider Moretonhampstead Parish Council's proposed Wray Valley ward: it would result in the Moorland ward remaining unchanged.

75 We considered the proposals put forward by Buckfastleigh Town Council that Ashburton and Buckfastleigh should be split into two town wards each, and that the area as a whole should be served by three single-member wards. However, we do not regard this proposal as reflecting the interests and identities of electors in this area. The proposal may secure reasonable levels of electoral equality, but the ward which comprised the southern part of Ashburton and the northern part of Buckfastleigh would, by its nature, contain disparate parts of two larger communities with little other than the main A30 road to unite them. Furthermore, we consider Buckfast Abbey to share closer ties with Buckfastleigh than with Ashburton, and that separating it from the rest of the town could be detrimental to local and historic ties.

76 Although Buckland in the Moor parish is currently placed in a ward with other moorland parishes, we are of the view that it shares strong ties with Ashburton town, given its geographical proximity to the town and that the two areas are linked directly by road. The Council's Stage Three proposals included Buckland in the Moor in a ward with Ashburton, albeit as part of an alternative

proposal. Buckland in the Moor Parish Council also indicated, as part of a questionnaire that the District Council distributed prior to submitting its Stage One proposals, that it shares many ties with Ashburton.

77 We acknowledge that our proposed Moorland ward, as stated by many respondents, would be relatively large in geographical area from its northernmost point to its southernmost. However, in order to secure reasonable levels of electoral equality in all wards in this area, it is necessary that Moretonhampstead and Widecombe in the Moor parishes are included in the proposed Moorland ward to ensure that it does not suffer from a degree of over-representation. This inevitably means the creation of a ward relatively large in area.

78 On balance, we have decided to modify our proposed Ashburton & Buckfastleigh and Moorland wards, such that a new three-member Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward would comprise the parishes of those same names plus Buckland in the Moor parish. The revised Moorland ward would comprise the parishes of Manaton, Moretonhampstead, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor. Our final recommendations seek to achieve a balance between electoral equality, reasonable community ties and to reflect, in part, the views expressed in relation to the geographic size of Moorland ward.

79 The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Ashburton & Buckfastleigh and Moorland wards would be 6 per cent below and 9 per cent above the district average respectively (6 per cent and 6 per cent by 2003). Given the general acceptance of our other proposals in this area, we are confirming as final our proposals for no change to Bovey and Haytor wards. Details of town council electoral arrangements in respect of Bovey Tracey are at the end of this chapter and on Map A2 at Appendix A.

Chudleigh, Dunsford, Teign Valley and Whitestone wards

80 The constituent parishes, number of councillors and electoral variances in the wards of Chudleigh, Dunsford, Teign Valley and Whitestone are detailed in Figure 4 (overleaf).

81 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that this area be served by one fewer councillor, and that Dunsford ward should be

Figure 4:
The Present Chudleigh, Dunsford, Teign Valley and Whitestone Wards

Present ward	Number of councillors	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
			1998	2003
Chudleigh	2	Chudleigh and Hennock	24	33
Dunsford	1	Dunsford and Holcombe Burnell	-36	-38
Teign Valley	1	Ashton, Bridford, Christow, Doddiscombsleigh and Trusham	-4	-8
Whitestone	1	Tedburn St Mary and Whitestone	10	6

disbanded, with Dunsford parish being included in an expanded Teign Valley ward and Holcombe Burnell parish being included in a new single-member Teignbridge North ward, along with the parishes of Tedburn St Mary and Whitestone. We also proposed that no change should be made to Chudleigh ward.

82 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in a new Teignbridge North ward and expanded Teign Valley ward would be 11 per cent above and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2003). Due to the revised council size, the number of electors per councillor in Chudleigh ward would initially be 2 per cent below the district average, projected to be 6 per cent above by 2003.

83 At Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Dunsford Parish Council and Holcombe Burnell Parish Council. The District Council supported our proposals for these wards, but both parish councils opposed them. Dunsford Parish Council preferred to be placed in a ward with the parishes of Doddiscombsleigh, Dunchideock and Holcombe Burnell, while Holcombe Burnell Parish Council opposed including the parish in a ward with parishes which lie to the north of the A30 road, preferring instead to be placed in a ward with parishes which lie to the road's south.

84 We have carefully considered the proposals put forward by the parish councils of Dunsford and Holcombe Burnell, in light of the need to secure reasonable levels of electoral equality across the district. The two parishes each contain a sufficient number of electors (539 and 466 respectively) to

have a significant impact on the level of electoral equality in any of the neighbouring wards, should we modify our draft recommendations. Each of our proposed wards in this area has a reasonable level of electoral equality, and we have received a degree of support for them, including from the District Council.

85 We acknowledge that the A30 road represents a significant ground feature in this part of the district. However, we do not consider that the parishes which lie to the north of the road have distinctly separate identities to those which lie to its south, given that they are linked by road networks. In light of the support we have received for our draft recommendations, and the absence of alternative proposals which would give a reasonable level of electoral equality, we have decided to confirm our draft proposals for this area as final.

Haldon, Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West wards

86 Haldon ward currently returns two councillors and comprises the parishes of Bishopsteignton and Ideford, with the number of electors per councillor being 25 per cent below the district average both initially and by 2003. Kingsteignton is presently served by four councillors returned from two two-member wards: Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West. The number of electors per councillor in Kingsteignton West ward is currently 2 per cent below the district average, projected to equal the average by 2003. However, Kingsteignton East ward currently has a high level of electoral imbalance, with the number of electors per councillor being 57 per cent above the district average, projected to worsen to 60 per cent above by 2003.

87 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed: that Haldon ward be disbanded, with a new single-member Bishopsteignton ward being formed comprising solely the parish of the same name; that Ideford parish be transferred into Kingsteignton East ward; that 984 electors be transferred from Kingsteignton East ward into Kingsteignton West ward; and that an area of open land be transferred from Kingsteignton West ward into Kingsteignton East ward. Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the new Bishopsteignton, and revised Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West wards would be 4 per cent above, 7 per cent above and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent above, 9 per cent above and 5 per cent above by 2003).

88 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Ideford Parish Council and Kingsteignton Parish Council, with the District Council and Kingsteignton Parish Council supporting our proposals. However Ideford Parish Council opposed our proposal to include the parish in a revised Kingsteignton East ward, stating that Ideford has “few historic or other links with Kingsteignton”. It would prefer to be placed in a ward with Bishopsteignton, as at present.

89 However, were we to place Ideford parish in Bishopsteignton ward a high level of electoral inequality would result, with the number of electors per councillor in an enlarged Bishopsteignton ward being 18 per cent above the district average. Given that we have received support from both the District Council and Kingsteignton Parish Council for our proposed wards in Kingsteignton, and that to place Ideford in an enlarged Bishopsteignton ward would result in a high level of electoral inequality, we are not adopting its proposals as part of our final recommendations.

90 We do not consider that our proposed Kingsteignton East ward would have a significantly adverse impact on local community identities, given that Ideford and Kingsteignton are linked directly by road. We have decided to confirm as final our draft recommendations for these three wards; details of our proposed boundary between Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West wards are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report. Proposals in respect of Kingsteignton’s town council electoral arrangements are detailed at the end of this chapter.

Kingskerswell, Shaldon and Teignhyses wards

91 Presently Kingskerswell and Shaldon wards comprise solely the parishes of those names, with the former ward returning two councillors and the latter ward returning a single councillor. Teignhyses ward comprises the parishes of Coffinswell, Haccombe with Combe and Stokeinteignhead, with the number of electors per councillor in these wards being 15 per cent above, 9 per cent below and 20 per cent below the district average respectively (16 per cent, 13 per cent and 21 per cent by 2003).

92 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that Kingskerswell and Coffinswell parishes be included in a new two-member Kerswell-with-Combe ward, along with a new parish ward of Haccombe with Combe parish (named ‘Haccombe Rural’). The remaining part of Haccombe with Combe parish (‘Haccombe Urban’ parish ward) would be included in a new Buckland & Milber district ward (as mentioned earlier). We also proposed that a new single-member Shaldon & Stokeinteignhead ward should be formed, comprising solely the parishes of those names.

93 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the new Kerswell-with-Combe and Shaldon & Stokeinteignhead wards would be 6 per cent above and equal to the district average respectively, projected to be 6 per cent above and 3 per cent below by 2003.

94 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Shaldon Parish Council and 44 local residents. The District Council supported our proposals, while the Parish Council had “no further comments” on our review. Of the 44 local residents who wrote, 36 opposed our proposal to include Coffinswell parish in a ward with Kingskerswell parish, preferring instead for Coffinswell to be placed in a ward with Abbotskerswell parish and the rural part of Haccombe with Combe parish. Each of these respondents stated that Coffinswell shares closer ties with Abbotskerswell than it does with Kingskerswell, and that the parishes should therefore be combined in the same ward.

95 Seven residents also opposed our proposal to include Coffinswell and Kingskerswell parishes in the same ward, without putting forward an alternative. One resident similarly opposed our proposal for Coffinswell and Kingskerswell

parishes to be included in the same ward. He alternatively put forward that Kingskerswell parish should be warded to include the northern part of the parish in a ward with Abbotskerswell and Coffinswell parishes.

96 The geography of this area is important in the context of 43 of the 44 representations we have received from residents in Coffinswell, as Kingskerswell parish in fact physically separates the parishes of Coffinswell and Abbotskerswell. In order for Coffinswell to be included in the same ward as Abbotskerswell, Kingskerswell parish would have to be split into wards, to provide a link between the two other parishes. We consider that this proposal could have an adverse impact on local interests.

97 Should we create a Coffinswell and Abbotskerswell ward and consequently a single-member ward comprising the remaining parishes of our proposed Ambrook ward, a high level of electoral inequality would result, due to Abbotskerswell parish containing 1,246 electors and the remaining parishes in Ambrook ward comprising a total of 2,889 electors. Moreover, we do not consider that a distinctive boundary (to facilitate parish wards) would be simple to identify which does not impede upon community ties in Kingskerswell, given that the majority of electors in this parish reside in a relatively compact area.

98 If we were to ward Kingskerswell parish, with the two parish wards being included in different district wards, we would be dividing communities with similar interests. Additionally, we have not received any support for this proposal from other sources in the area, including the District Council or Kingskerswell Parish Council. We are reluctant to put forward a parish warding proposal which had not received a degree of support, including ideally from the District Council and the parish council.

99 Having considered all the representations we have received, we regard our proposals as providing the best balance of the statutory criteria guiding our work and we therefore confirm as final our draft proposals for this part of the district.

Kenn Valley and Powderham wards

100 Presently the single-member Kenn Valley ward comprises the parishes of Dunchideock, Ide, Kenn and Shillingford St George, with the number of electors per councillor being 3 per cent above the district average, projected to equal the average by 2003. Powderham ward currently comprises the parishes of Ashcombe, Exminster, Kenton,

Mamhead, Powderham and Starcross, with the number of electors per councillor being 2 per cent above the district average, projected to be 3 per cent by 2003.

101 Under our draft recommendations, we proposed that Powderham ward be disbanded, with Exminster and Powderham parishes being included in an enlarged two-member Kenn Valley ward. The remaining parishes of the present Powderham ward (Ashcombe, Kenton, Mamhead and Starcross) would form a new single-member Mamhead ward. Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the revised Kenn Valley ward and new Mamhead ward would be 2 per cent above and 21 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent above and 17 per cent above by 2003).

102 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council and Kenton Parish Council, with the District Council expressing support for our proposals. However, the Parish Council opposed our proposed Mamhead ward on the grounds that the ward (which it preferred to be named Kenton) would have the highest level of electoral inequality in the district, and it alternatively proposed that Ashcombe parish be included in a ward within Dawlish. The District Council also proposed that our Mamhead ward should be renamed Kenton with Starcross, to reflect the historical significance of Kenton in the area and settlement patterns in the ward.

103 We have not been persuaded that Ashcombe parish shares closer ties with Dawlish than it shares with the parishes comprising our proposed Mamhead ward. Dawlish South West ward is the only town ward that Ashcombe could realistically be placed in, however the majority of the electors in Dawlish South West ward reside on its eastern edge. We do not consider that the electors in Ashcombe share ties with the majority of the electors in Dawlish South West ward, given the distance and geography which lies between them. Additionally this proposal has not been endorsed by the District Council, Dawlish Town Council or Ashcombe Parish Council, and we have therefore decided to discontinue this proposal.

interests and settlement patterns and therefore put this ward name forward as a final recommendation. We acknowledge that this ward would have a relatively high level of electoral inequality but we consider this as being acceptable in order to secure reasonable levels of electoral equality in other wards across the district.

Electoral Cycle

105 In the initial stage of the review we did not receive any proposals for change to the District Council's electoral cycle. In our draft recommendations report, therefore, we proposed that the present system of whole-council elections in Teignbridge be retained and at Stage Three the District Council supported our proposal. No comments were received to the contrary, and we therefore confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

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

- (a) Buckland in the Moor parish should be included in our three-member Ashburton & Buckfastleigh ward, rather than in our proposed Moorland ward;

- (b) our proposed Mamhead ward should be renamed Kenton with Starcross.

107 We conclude that in Teignbridge:

- (a) there should be a decrease in council size from 58 to 46;
- (b) there should be 25 wards, eight less than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

108 Figure 5 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

109 As Figure 5 shows, our recommendations would result in a substantial reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 21 to two, with only one ward, Kenton with Starcross, varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. Due to projected development in the district, electoral equality would improve by 2003, by which time only one ward is projected to vary by more than 10 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

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

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	58	46	58	46
Number of wards	33	25	33	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,574	1,984	1,676	2,114
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	21	2	22	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	12	1	14	0

Final Recommendation

Teignbridge District Council should comprise 46 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 6, and illustrated on Map 2, Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of this report. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

Parish & Town Council Electoral Arrangements

110 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. In our draft recommendations report we proposed modifications to the town wards in Dawlish, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot and Teignmouth. We proposed that Haccombe with Combe parish be warded to reflect district wards in the area and that Bovey Tracey be warded for town council elections.

111 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that Dawlish should continue to be served by 16 town councillors, however we put forward that each of the three town wards should be modified. Although we proposed that for District Council purposes Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards should be combined to form a single ward, we proposed that the two wards should remain separate for Town Council purposes.

112 During Stage Three we received representations from the District Council, Dawlish Town Council and Councillor Hessé. The District Council supported our proposals, while the Town Council supported our proposed boundary modifications between each of the town wards, but opposed our proposal that the district and town council wards in the town should not be coterminous. The Town Council stated that in order to facilitate Dawlish's district and town wards sharing the same boundaries, "adjustment could be made by transferring certain streets from one ward to another".

113 Councillor Hessé also opposed our proposal that the district council and town council wards in Dawlish should not be coterminous, and he accordingly put forward a modification to the boundary between Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards.

114 As detailed earlier in this chapter, we are endorsing our draft recommendation that Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East wards should be combined to form a three-member district council ward. We do not consider that a clearly recognisable boundary, reflecting local community identities, is securable between separate Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East district wards, without being detrimental to electoral equality in either district ward.

115 Our proposal for a combined Dawlish Central & North East district council ward, in our view, would secure a reasonable level of electoral equality in the area, without having a significant impact on local community interests. However, we consider that separate town council wards reflect local preferences, given that the District Council and the Town Council support such a proposal and we have not received any other views. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Dawlish as final.

Final Recommendation

Dawlish Town Council should continue to be served by 16 town councillors, representing three wards. Dawlish Central and Dawlish South West wards should return six town councillors each and Dawlish North East ward should return four town councillors. Dawlish South West town council ward should be coterminous with the proposed Dawlish South West district council ward, while the boundary between Dawlish Central and Dawlish North East town council wards should be as illustrated in Map A3 at Appendix A.

116 As part of our draft proposals, we put forward that Kingsteignton should continue to be served by 13 parish councillors, although we put forward that a number of electors should be transferred from Kingsteignton East district council ward into Kingsteignton West ward. We proposed that the parish council wards should be modified to reflect the revised district council wards. During Stage

Three, we received representations from the District Council and Kingsteignton Parish Council, both of which supported our proposals. In light of the support we have received for our proposals, we have concluded to confirm them as final.

Final Recommendation

Kingsteignton Parish Council should continue to be served by 13 parish councillors, representing two wards. Kingsteignton East ward should return seven parish councillors and Kingsteignton West ward should return six parish councillors. The boundary between the parish council wards should be the same as that between the proposed district council wards of Kingsteignton East and Kingsteignton West, as illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

117 As our draft proposals for Newton Abbot, we proposed that the Town Council should continue to return 18 town councillors, but that Bushell ward should be served by one additional councillor and College ward should be served by one fewer councillor. We proposed that Buckland and Milber wards should be combined to form a new Buckland & Milber district council ward, but that they should remain separate at town council level.

118 We also proposed a boundary modification between Bradley and Bushell wards and that the neighbouring Hacombe with Combe parish should be warded, with a new Hacombe Urban parish ward being included in the new Buckland & Milber district ward, to include a number of 'urban' electors in a district ward within the town. Our proposals were the same as put forward by the District Council and the remaining part of Hacombe with Combe parish would be included in Kerswell-with-Combe district ward.

119 During Stage Three we received a representation from the District Council in support of our proposals and we received no other views, although the Town Council supported these proposals during the District Council's consultation exercise. Given that the District Council expressed support for our proposals, that we have received no representations in opposition to them and that the Town Council supported them at Stage One, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation

Newton Abbot Town Council should continue to be served by 18 town councillors, representing five wards. Bradley, Bushell and College town council wards should each return four town councillors, and be coterminous with the proposed Bradley, Bushell and College district council wards. Buckland and Milber town council wards should remain unchanged and each should return three town councillors. The proposed boundaries for each of the revised wards are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Final Recommendation

Hacombe with Combe Parish Council should be warded and continue to be served by eight parish councillors, with the proposed Hacombe Rural parish ward returning six parish councillors and the proposed Hacombe Urban parish ward returning two parish councillors. Hacombe Rural parish ward would be included in Kerswell-with-Combe district ward, while Hacombe Urban parish ward would be included in Buckland & Milber district ward. The proposed boundary between the parish wards is illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

120 As part of our draft proposals, we put forward that Teignmouth should continue to be served by 12 town councillors, and that modifications should be made to each of the wards. During Stage Three the District Council supported our proposals. We also received a submission from Councillor Phillips, a district and town councillor from Teignmouth, who argued that due to the functions carried out by town councils, Teignmouth Town Council should have less members – "at very most it should be three per ward" (giving a town council size of nine). However, given the support of the District Council and that Teignmouth Town Council has not expressed a preference, we are of the view that our draft recommendation, to continue with 12 town councillors for Teignmouth, is appropriate and therefore confirm it as final.

Final Recommendation

Teignmouth Town Council should continue to be served by 12 town councillors, representing three wards. Teignmouth Central, Teignmouth East and Teignmouth West wards should each return four town councillors and be coterminous with the proposed district council wards of those same names, as illustrated on Map A4 at Appendix A.

Final Recommendation

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

121 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that Bovey Tracey Town Council should continue to be served by 14 town councillors but that the town should be split into two wards for town council electoral purposes. Under our proposal, a new Heathfield ward would return two town councillors, and the remaining Bovey ward would return 12 town councillors. During Stage Three the District Council supported our proposal and we also received a submission from Bovey Tracey Town Council. The Town Council stated that it would prefer for a new Bovey ward to be renamed 'Bovey Tracey'.

122 We concur with the Town Council that the name 'Bovey Tracey' town ward may better reflect local interests than our draft recommendation. We therefore propose to modify our proposal to reflect the views of the Town Council, and confirm as final our proposals for the number of town councillors to be returned from each ward.

Final Recommendation

Bovey Tracey Town Council should continue to be served by 14 town councillors, with a new Bovey Tracey town ward returning 12 town councillors and a new Heathfield town ward returning two town councillors. Details of our proposed town ward boundary are shown on Map A2 at Appendix A.

123 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district, and given that we have not received any opposing views we are confirming this as final.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Teignbridge

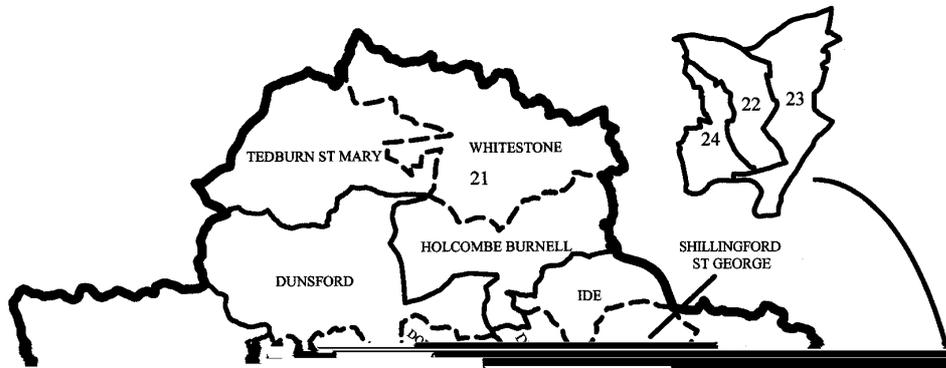


Figure 6:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Teignbridge

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ambrook	2	4,135	2,068	4	4,405	2,203	4
2 Ashburton & Buckfastleigh	3	5,619	1,873	-6	5,984	1,995	-6
3 Bishopsteignton	1	2,072	2,072	4	2,209	2,209	5
4 Bovey	3	5,397	1,799	-9	6,113	2,038	-4
5 Bradley (Newton Abbot)	2	3,915	1,958	-1	4,315	2,158	2
6 Buckland & Milber (Newton Abbot)	3	5,608	1,869	-6	5,799	1,933	-9
7 Bushell (Newton Abbot)	2	4,119	2,060	4	4,415	2,208	4
8 Chudleigh	2	3,893	1,947	-2	4,466	2,233	6
9 College (Newton Abbot)	2	3,904	1,952	-2	4,140	2,070	-2
10 Dawlish Central & North East	3	6,046	2,015	2	6,246	2,082	-1
11 Dawlish South West	2	3,982	1,991	0	4,100	2,050	-3
12 Haytor	1	2,087	2,087	5	2,318	2,318	10
13 Ipplepen	1	2,013	2,013	1	2,118	2,118	0
14 Kenn Valley	2	4,035	2,018	2	4,400	2,200	4
15 Kenton with Starcross	1	2,407	2,407	21	2,464	2,464	17
16 Kerswell-with-Combe	2	4,191	2,096	6	4,467	2,234	6
17 Kingsteignton East	2	4,234	2,117	7	4,606	2,303	9
18 Kingsteignton West	2	4,068	2,034	3	4,427	2,214	5

Figure 6 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Teignbridge

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Moorland	1	2,171	2,171	9	2,243	2,243	6
20 Shaldon & Stokeinteignhead	1	1,993	1,993	0	2,048	2,048	-3
21 Teignbridge North	1	2,194	2,194	11	2,258	2,258	7
22 Teignmouth Central	2	3,708	1,854	-7	3,860	1,930	-9
23 Teignmouth East	2	3,667	1,834	-8	3,817	1,909	-10
24 Teignmouth West	2	3,769	1,885	-5	3,923	1,962	-7
25 Teign Valley	1	2,046	2,046	3	2,087	2,087	-1
Totals	46	91,273	—	—	97,228	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,984	—	—	2,114	—

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

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

6. NEXT STEPS

¹²⁴ Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Teignbridge and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

¹²⁵ 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 earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

¹²⁶ 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 Review
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Teignbridge: Detailed Mapping

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

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

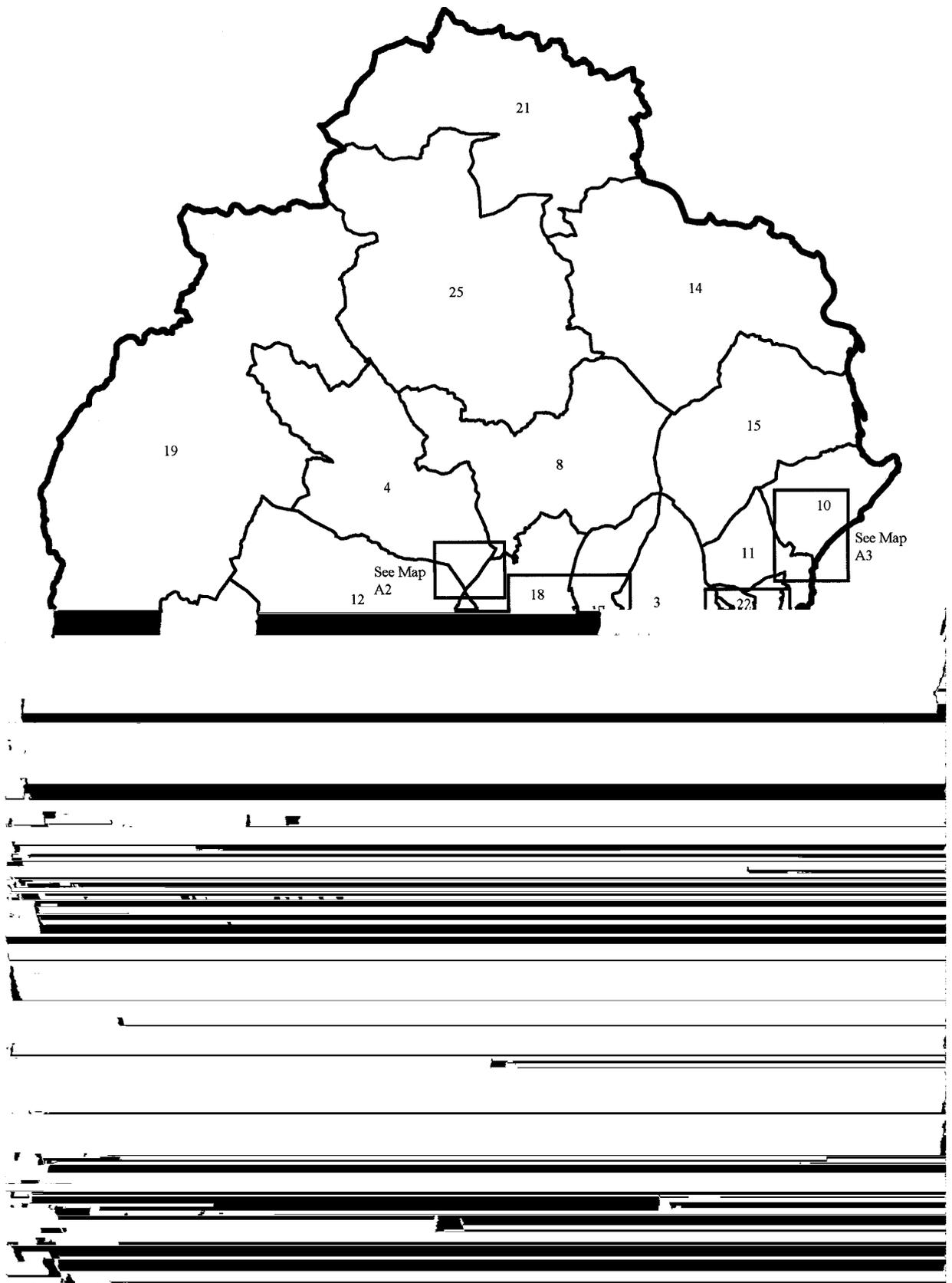
Map A2 illustrates the proposed town warding arrangements for the town of Bovey Tracey.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Dawlish.

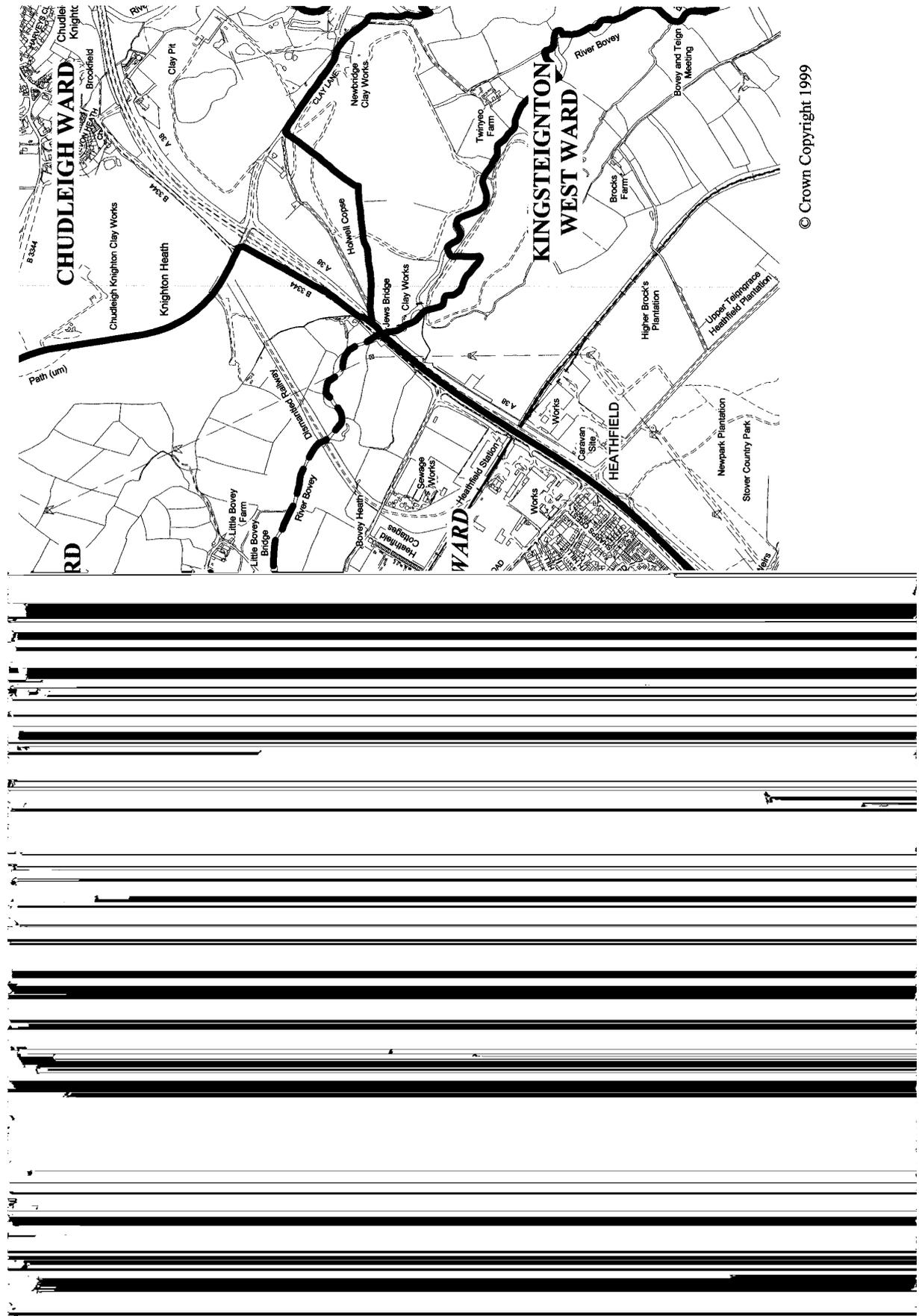
Map A4 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Teignmouth.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the Commission's proposed ward boundaries in Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot, and shows the proposed parish warding of Hacombe with Combe parish.

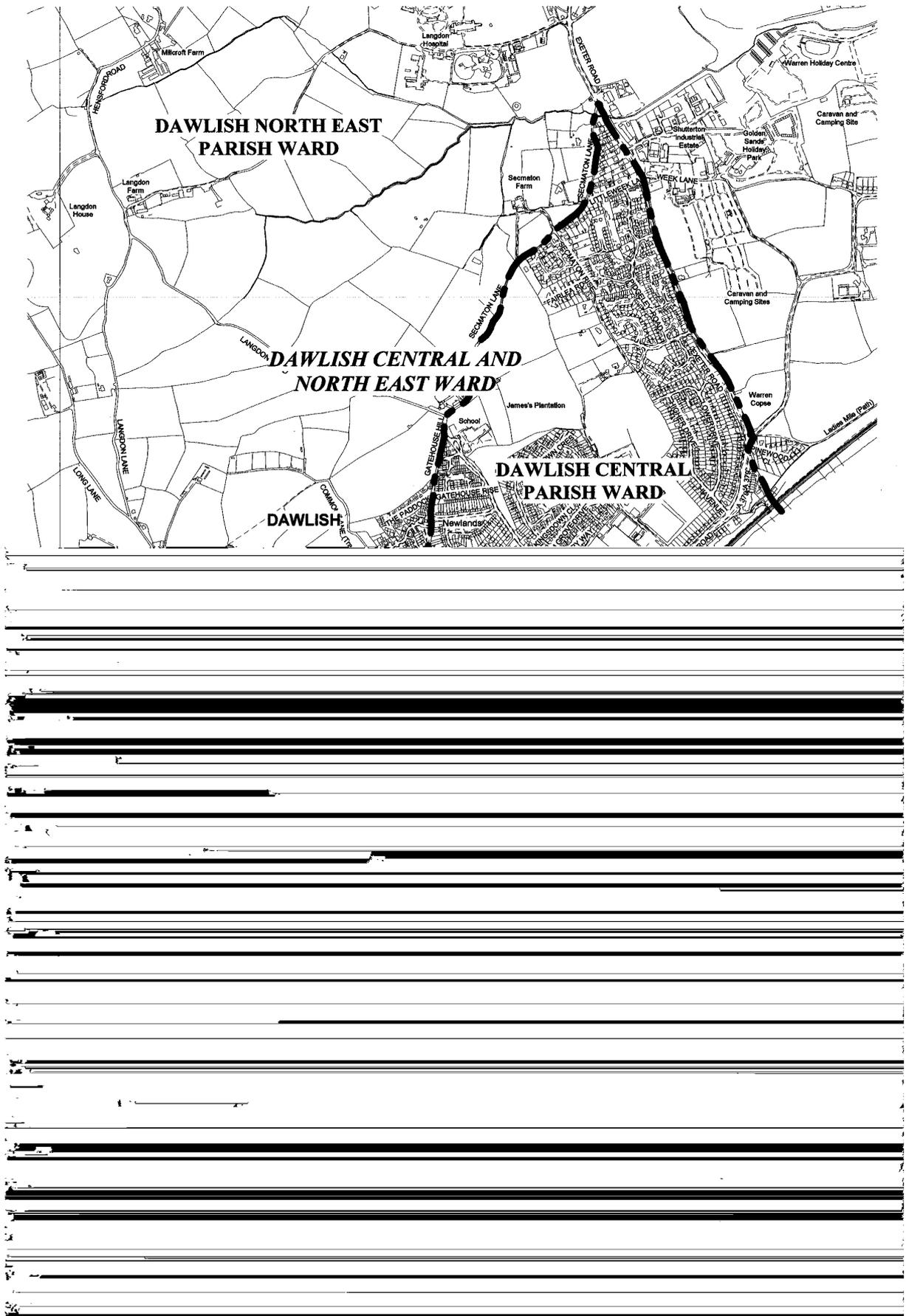
Map A1:
Final Recommendations for Teignbridge: Key Map



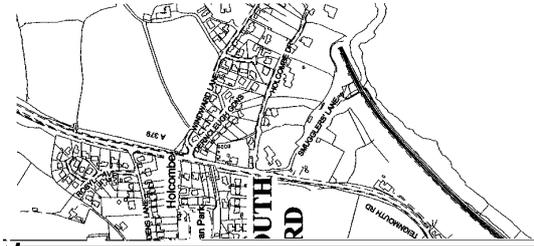
Map A2:
Proposed Town Warding Arrangements for the Town of Bovey Tracey



Map A3:
Proposed Ward Boundaries in Dawlish



Map A4:
Proposed Ward Boundaries in Teignmouth



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APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Teignbridge

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 6, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations only in respect of the following wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that our proposed Mamhead ward should be renamed Kenton with Starcross.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Ashburton & Buckfastleigh	Ashburton ward (the parish of Ashburton); Buckfastleigh ward (the parish of Buckfastleigh)
Moorland	Moretonhampstead ward (the parish of Moretonhampstead); Moorland ward (the parishes of Buckland in the Moor, Manaton, North Bovey and Widecombe in the Moor)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Ashburton & Buckfastleigh	3	5,545	1,848	-7	5,910	1,970	-7
Moorland	1	2,245	2,245	13	2,317	2,317	10

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

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

