

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA  
IN ESSEX

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

*November 1999*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Southend-on-Sea in Essex.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Kru Desai

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Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Southend-on-Sea is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

2 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 3 November 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Southend-on-Sea under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 1999 and undertook an eight-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 70-71) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Southend-on-Sea.

We recommend that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors representing 17 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.

We note that you have now 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 Borough 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 Southend-on-Sea on 3 November 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 May 1999, after which we undertook an eight-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 Southend-on-Sea:

- **in three of the 13 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and one ward varies 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 three wards and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 70-71) are that:

- **Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should have 51 councillors, 12 more than at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, instead of 13 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all 13 of the existing wards should be modified;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 17 wards expected to vary by no more than 5 per cent from the average for the borough in 2003.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of the existing 16 town councillors for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.**

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 14 December 1999:

**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 (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Belfairs	3	Belfairs ward (part – including Bonchurch ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed (part)); Blenheim ward (part – including Bonchurch ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed (part))	Large map and Map A3
2	Blenheim Park	3	Blenheim ward (part – including St James ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed); Prittlewell ward (part); Westborough ward (part)	Large map and Map A3
3	Chalkwell	3	Chalkwell ward (part)	Large map
4	Eastwood Park	3	Eastwood ward (part)	Large map
5	Kursaal	3	Milton ward (part); St Luke's ward (part); Thorpe ward (part)	Large map
6	Leigh	3	Chalkwell ward (part – Leigh Road ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed); Leigh ward (part – Elms ward and St Clements ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed)	Large map and Map A4
7	Milton	3	Milton ward (part)	Large map
8	Prittlewell	3	Blenheim ward (part); Eastwood ward (part); Prittlewell ward (part); Victoria ward (part); Westborough ward (part)	Large map
9	St Laurence	3	Eastwood ward (part); Prittlewell ward (part)	Large map
10	St Luke's	3	St Luke's ward (part); Southchurch ward (part); Victoria ward (part)	Large map
11	Shoeburyness	3	Shoebury ward (part)	Map A2
12	Southchurch	3	Southchurch ward (part)	Large map
13	Thorpe	3	Thorpe ward (part)	Large map
14	Victoria	3	St Luke's ward (part); Victoria ward (part)	Large map
15	Westborough	3	Westborough ward (part)	Large map

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

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
16	West Leigh	3	Belfairs ward (part – Highlands ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed); Leigh ward (part – Herschell ward and Thames ward of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council as proposed)	Large map, and Maps A3 and A4
17	West Shoebury	3	Shoebury ward (part)	Map A2

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

Figure 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Southend-on-Sea

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 Belfairs	3	7,451	2,484	0	7,472	2,491	-1
2 Blenheim Park	3	7,484	2,495	0	7,495	2,498	0
3 Chalkwell	3	7,466	2,489	0	7,560	2,520	1
4 Eastwood Park	3	7,668	2,556	3	7,692	2,564	2
5 Kursaal	3	7,530	2,510	1	7,841	2,614	4
6 Leigh	3	7,246	2,415	-3	7,312	2,437	-3
7 Milton	3	7,554	2,518	1	7,591	2,530	1
8 Prittlewell	3	7,481	2,494	0	7,536	2,512	0
9 St Laurence	3	7,536	2,512	1	7,619	2,540	1
10 St Luke's	3	7,536	2,512	1	7,586	2,529	1
11 Shoeburyness	3	7,515	2,505	1	7,529	2,510	0
12 Southchurch	3	7,474	2,491	0	7,507	2,502	0
13 Thorpe	3	7,322	2,441	-2	7,395	2,465	-2
14 Victoria	3	7,271	2,424	-2	7,459	2,486	-1
15 Westborough	3	7,336	2,445	-2	7,366	2,455	-2
16 West Leigh	3	7,336	2,445	-2	7,348	2,449	-2
17 West Shoebury	3	7,467	2,489	0	7,492	2,497	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>126,673</b>	—	—	<b>127,800</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>2,484</b>	—	—	<b>2,506</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Southend-on-Sea Borough 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 borough. 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 for the borough of Southend-on-Sea in Essex. We are reviewing Southend-on-Sea as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 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 of Southend-on-Sea. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1975 (Report No. 14). Since that review was undertaken, Southend-on-Sea has become a unitary authority (April 1998). The change to unitary status has led to the loss of 11 county councillors, bringing the total number of councillors to Southend-on-Sea from 50 to 39. We expect to begin the reviews of the remaining districts in Essex as part of our 1999-2000 programme of all principal local authority areas in England.

3 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.

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

5 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. For all unitary councils, it proposed elections by thirds. It also refers to local accountability being maximised where the whole electorate in a council's area is

involved in elections each time they take place, thereby pointing to a pattern of three-member wards for Southend-on-Sea, to reflect a system of elections by thirds.

6 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including Southend-on-Sea, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

7 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 3 November 1998, when we wrote to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the Essex Police Authority, the local authority associations, Essex Association of Parish and Town Councils, Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, the Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 February 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

8 Stage Three began on 25 May 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Southend-on-Sea in Essex*, and ended on 19 July 1999. 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

9 The borough of Southend-on-Sea covers an area of some 14,000 hectares in south-east Essex. Situated on the Essex bank of the Thames Estuary, Southend-on-Sea is bounded by Castle Point Borough to the west and Rochford District to the north. The borough is largely urban, with a population density of approximately 12 persons per hectare. Tourism has been historically a major part of the area's economic development, although in recent years the Borough Council has encouraged the development of industrial estates in the areas of Eastwood and Shoeburyness. Southend-on-Sea is served by two main rail links from London's Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations, and a significant percentage of the resident population commutes to London to work.

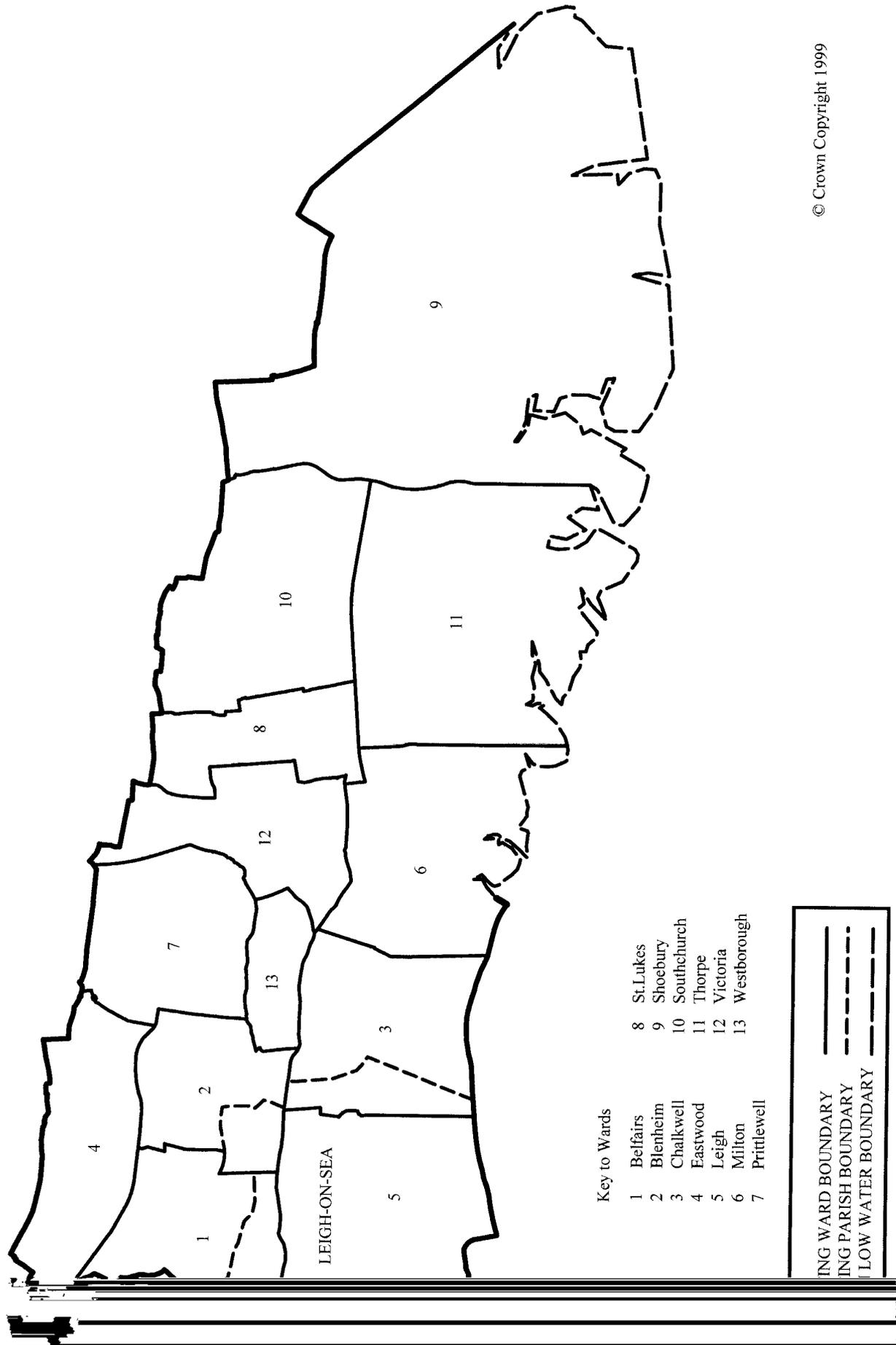
10 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the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

11 The electorate of the borough is 126,673 (February 1998). The Council presently has 39 members who are elected from 13 wards, which are predominantly urban in nature. (Map 1 and Figure 3). The Council is elected by thirds and the wards are each represented by three councillors. Southend-on-Sea contains one town council, Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, which comprises 13 per cent of the total electorate for the borough.

12 Since the last electoral review there has been a nominal increase in the electorate in Southend-on-Sea borough; there are 1 per cent more electors than two decades ago. Where growth has taken place, it has been concentrated primarily in Eastwood and Shoebury wards, with around 22 per cent more electors in the two wards than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,248 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,277 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 three of the 13 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward it varies by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Shoebury ward where each of the three councillors represents 54 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Southend-on-Sea



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Figure 3:  
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 Belfairs	3	9,129	3,043	-6	9,154	3,051	-7
2 Blenheim	3	9,192	3,064	-6	9,217	3,072	-6
3 Chalkwell	3	9,760	3,253	0	9,901	3,300	1
4 Eastwood	3	10,676	3,559	10	10,731	3,577	9
5 Leigh	3	9,322	3,107	-4	9,352	3,117	-5
6 Milton	3	9,077	3,026	-7	9,126	3,042	-7
7 Prittlewell	3	9,061	3,020	-7	9,139	3,046	-7
8 St Luke's	3	8,481	2,827	-13	8,595	2,865	-13
9 Shoebury	3	14,982	4,994	54	15,020	5,007	53
10 Southchurch	3	9,015	3,005	-7	9,052	3,017	-8
11 Thorpe	3	9,935	3,312	2	10,243	3,414	4
12 Victoria	3	9,376	3,125	-4	9,564	3,188	-3
13 Westborough	3	8,667	2,889	-11	8,706	2,902	-11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>126,673</b>	—	—	<b>127,800</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>3,248</b>	—	—	<b>3,277</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Southend-on-Sea Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Shoebury ward were relatively under-represented by 54 per cent, while electors in St Luke's ward were relatively over-represented by 13 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One we received 16 representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. 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 Southend-on-Sea in Essex*.

15 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough. However, we proposed minor alterations to the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting nine wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors, compared with the current 39, representing 17 wards, four more than at present;
- (b) the boundaries of all 13 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in an increase of four wards;
- (c) there should be new warding arrangements for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council and a redistribution of the existing 16 town councillors.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors, serving 17 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

16 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all 17 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average either currently or in 2003.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

<sup>17</sup> During the consultation on our 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 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and the Commission.

### **Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

<sup>18</sup> The Borough Council expressed its support for our draft recommendations. The Council's Policy Committee was "pleased to accept the Commission's proposals relating to the number, size and boundaries of the proposed wards". Although it did not oppose the ward names of West Leigh and West Shoebury, it saw no reason to depart from the names it had proposed in its original submission, Belton Hills and Garrison respectively. It also stated that our proposed St Lawrence ward should be named St Laurence ward to better reflect the area. With respect to the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council area, the Borough Council proposed that the names of Burnham and Thames town council wards should be reversed to reflect the respective locations of Burnham Road and Thames Drive.

### **Members of Parliament**

<sup>19</sup> We received two submissions from Mr David Amess, Member of Parliament for Southend West. In the first he supported the views of a local resident regarding the external boundaries of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council. The resident proposed that the town council boundaries should be changed to include all the residents in the Leigh-on-Sea area and Mr Amess suggested that the Commission might want to take this matter into consideration during the next review of town council boundaries. In the second Mr Amess expressed support for Leigh-on-Sea Town Councillor Dolby's proposal to change the electoral cycle of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council from whole-council elections every four years to electing half of the council every two years.

### **Leigh-on-Sea Town Council**

<sup>20</sup> Leigh-on-Sea Town Council fully supported our draft recommendations for borough council wards. It did, however, put forward several changes to our proposals for the Leigh-on-Sea town council wards. It supported the ward boundaries proposed in the draft recommendations, with the exception of the boundary between Burnham and Thames wards which it suggested should follow "the western side of the properties in Leigh Gardens and Harley Street [in order to] balance out the respective electorates of the two wards". It also proposed several alternative ward names to reflect traditional names and communities in these areas. Under their proposals, Herschell would replace Thames ward, Thames would replace Burnham ward, St Clements would replace Old Town/Cliff Parade and St James would replace Leigh North-East.

### **Other Representations**

<sup>21</sup> A further 12 submissions were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents. Councillor Briggs stated he was "happy that the Commission has agreed with most of the substantive points" put forward by the Borough Council. Councillor Copley expressed full agreement with the proposal to adjust the southern boundary of St Luke's ward to run to the rear of Southchurch Road, rather than down the centre as put forward by the Borough Council. A local resident argued that the recommended boundary between Milton and Kursaal wards would isolate Hartington Road from other areas in Milton ward and proposed that it be amended to include this road within Kursaal ward, which he suggested could be renamed Marine ward. Leigh-on-Sea Town Councillor Dolby proposed changing the electoral cycle of the town council from whole-council elections every four years to elections every two years with half of the seats being put up for election on each occasion. He argued that this would ensure "a greater degree of continuity, with at least half the council at any one time being

experienced councillors”. Regarding the issue of council size, one local resident opposed the proposed increase to 51 councillors, citing the increased financial burden of councillor allowances and the projected £5 million public deficit in Southend-on-Sea’s budget. Another local resident supported the increase in council size, saying that “additional councillors are urgently needed to cope with the increased workload following the transfer to unitary status”.

22 We received six submissions regarding proposed ward names in Southend-on-Sea. Both Councillors Briggs and Copley proposed changing the spelling of St Lawrence ward to St Laurence ward, in accordance with the spelling of a local church after which the ward is named. A local resident expressed a preference for the name West Leigh ward, rather than the proposed Belton Hills. Shoeburyness Residents’ Association stated that “local opinion is strongly in favour of retaining the Shoeburyness and West Shoebury identities”. A local resident proposed that Maplin ward would be a more suitable name for the proposed West Shoebury ward. Another respondent suggested that East Shoebury would be a more suitable name for the proposed Shoeburyness ward and considered that the redevelopment of the Shoebury Garrison site should be taken into consideration when finalising new ward boundaries, despite the fact that planning permission for the proposed dwellings has expired.

23 With reference to the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council area, Councillor Briggs suggested that the proposed Burnham and Thames town council wards would be more appropriately named as Marine West and Marine East or Thames and Marine town council wards respectively. A local resident noted that under the proposed warding arrangements Thames Drive would be located in the proposed Burnham town council ward and Burnham Road would be located in Thames ward, and suggested that their names should be reversed. He also proposed that St Clements and St James would be more suitable names for Old Town/Cliff Parade and Leigh North East town council wards respectively. Another respondent opposed the name of Burnham town council ward and suggested that Leigh West town council ward would be a more accurate description for the area.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

24 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Southend-on-Sea is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

25 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 must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

26 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.

27 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

28 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 1 per cent from 126,673 to 127,800 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. Growth is expected to be concentrated in the existing wards of Shoebury, Thorpe and Victoria. 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 were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time. At Stage Three we received one submission from a local resident suggesting that the redevelopment of the Shoebury Garrison site and the potential growth in population should be taken into consideration, despite that fact that planning permission for the site has expired.

29 We have examined the evidence submitted by the Borough Council on electorate projections and the locations of new housing developments. While significant residential growth is expected on the Shoebury Garrison site, the Borough Council maintains that it is unlikely that any housing will be completed and occupied by 2003. We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Borough Council's figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonable be made at this time.

### Council Size

30 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a unitary authority such as Southend-on-Sea to be in the range of 40 to 80.

31 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is at present served by 39 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a significant increase in

council size from 39 to 51. It argued that as a result of becoming a unitary authority in April 1998 the area's representation declined from 50 to 39, due to the loss of county council representation, and that an increase in council size was necessary in order for the Council to fulfil the additional responsibilities transferred to it. The Borough Council also argued that an increase to 51 councillors would better enable it to achieve the aims of the Government's Modernisation Agenda: to strengthen member scrutiny and community representation. It contended that the introduction of a cabinet system in a finely balanced council such as Southend-on-Sea would disadvantage parties represented on the Executive, leaving these with fewer councillors to fulfil the scrutiny role. Furthermore, it argued that such a system was likely to be adopted on party proportional lines and that "by definition some Executive members will then have to be scrutineers of their own decisions, thus conflicting with the declared aim of separating executive and scrutiny roles".

32 At Stage One we received seven additional submissions regarding the issue of council size. Sir Teddy Taylor and three residents expressed broad support for an increase in council size. Three residents opposed increasing the council size by an additional 12 councillors, citing a projected £5 million public deficit in Southend-on-Sea's budget and the increased financial burden of councillor allowances as the main reasons.

33 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We considered that the Borough Council had given serious consideration to the effects of the new unitary status of Southend-on-Sea and the implications of the White Paper for unitary authorities. We also recognised that the current council size is below our indicative range for unitary authorities, and that there was all-party support on the Borough Council for an increase. We took into consideration the representations received which opposed the increase in council size, but did not consider that the balance of the evidence indicated general opposition to the Borough Council's proposed increase. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 51 members.

34 During Stage Three we received four representations regarding the issue of council size.

The Borough Council and Leigh-on-Sea Town Council both expressed support for the Commission's proposals relating to the number of councillors and wards for Southend-on-Sea. One local resident opposed any increase in council size, arguing that Southend-on-Sea would be unable to afford the cost of an additional 12 councillors, noting that the borough currently has a £5 million public deficit. Another local resident expressed support for the proposed increase in council size, saying that "additional councillors are urgently needed to cope with the increased workload following the transfer to unitary status".

35 Having considered the changes in the distribution of the electorate over the past 20 years, the new unitary status of Southend-on-Sea and the particular characteristics of the area, together with the representations received during Stage One and Stage Three, we are content to confirm our recommendation for a council size of 51 as final. We concur with the Borough Council's assessment that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria of effective and convenient local government and community identities and interests would best be met by a council of 51 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

36 As set out in our draft recommendations report, in view of the degree of consensus behind large parts of the Council's proposals, and the consultation which it undertook with interested parties, we based our proposals on the Borough Council's scheme.

37 However, in order to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we made some minor alterations to the Borough Council's proposals in several areas.

38 We received a positive response to our draft recommendations. Most comments received were generally supportive of our proposals, although we received suggestions for further amendments, particularly in relation to ward names.

39 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. We consider that minor modifications should be made to our proposed electoral arrangements to better reflect community identities and create more clearly identifiable boundaries in a number of areas.

For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Leigh, Belfairs and Blenheim wards;
- (b) Eastwood and Prittlewell wards;
- (c) Westborough and Chalkwell wards;
- (d) Victoria, Milton and St Luke's wards;
- (e) Southchurch and Thorpe wards;
- (f) Shoebury ward.

<sup>40</sup> 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 at the back of this report.

### **Leigh, Belfairs and Blenheim wards**

<sup>41</sup> The three wards of Leigh, Belfairs and Blenheim are situated in the south-west of the borough and contain the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council area. Under the current electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Leigh ward is 4 per cent below the borough average (5 per cent by 2003), and Belfairs and Blenheim wards are each 6 per cent below the borough average (7 per cent and 6 per cent respectively by 2003), assuming a council size of 39. Each ward is currently represented by three councillors.

<sup>42</sup> At Stage One the Borough Council proposed changes to all the existing ward boundaries. Its scheme involved creating a new Belton Hills ward to the south of the Belfairs Golf Course, containing parts of Belfairs and Leigh wards. It proposed a revised Leigh ward, containing parts of the existing Leigh and Chalkwell wards. The Borough Council also put forward a revised Belfairs ward containing most of the existing ward and the western part of Blenheim ward, and a new Blenheim Park ward containing most of the existing Blenheim ward and part of Westborough ward. All four wards would be represented by three councillors each.

<sup>43</sup> We received two other representations during Stage One in relation to this area. A local resident objected to the Borough Council's proposed ward name of Belton Hills and suggested that the name of West Leigh would be more recognisable as it is also the name of a local school. Leigh-on-Sea Town Council noted that the West Leigh Residents'

Association covers 95 per cent of the proposed Belton Hills ward area.

<sup>44</sup> In the light of the representations received during Stage One, we based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals for this area. However, we put forward some modifications in order to better reflect the statutory criteria. We proposed that the boundary between Blenheim Park and Prittlewell wards should run to the rear of Cockethurst Close, Winsford Gardens and Arundel Gardens, rather than to the rear of Mannering Gardens as proposed by the Borough Council, which we considered would have resulted in a rather unclear ward boundary. We also proposed that the area to the south of Prittlewell Chase and west of Prittlewell School should be transferred from the existing Prittlewell ward to Blenheim Park ward. We judged that this new boundary would affect only a minimal number of electors and would result in a more clearly identifiable boundary between Blenheim Park and Prittlewell wards, while maintaining community ties in these areas. We put forward the Borough Council's proposals for Belton Hills, Leigh, Belfairs and Blenheim Park wards, which we considered would provide reasonable electoral equality and reflect community ties well. However, we considered that there was some merit in the suggested name of West Leigh, as an alternative to Belton Hills, and put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

<sup>45</sup> At Stage Three we received two representations regarding these wards. The Borough Council supported our proposed ward boundaries for this area but stated that, while it was not opposed to the proposed ward name of West Leigh, it saw no reason to depart from its suggested ward name of Belton Hills. A local resident, meanwhile, expressed a preference for the name West Leigh, as put forward in our draft recommendations.

<sup>46</sup> We remain of the view that the proposed warding arrangements provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In relation to the proposed ward names, we recognise that Belton Hills is a well-known local feature of the area. However, we consider that the name of West Leigh more accurately reflects the totality of the ward's area. We have therefore not been persuaded to alter the proposed name of West Leigh ward and are content to put forward our draft recommendations for this area as final in their entirety. Under our final recommendations,

Belfairs, Blenheim Park, Leigh and West Leigh wards would each have an electoral variance of no more than 3 per cent from the borough average currently and by 2003.

### **Eastwood and Prittlewell wards**

47 Eastwood ward is located in the north-west of the borough. Under current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Eastwood ward is 10 per cent above the borough average (9 per cent by 2003). Prittlewell ward, which predominantly covers the more established part of Southend-on-Sea, is located to the east of the existing Eastwood and Blenheim wards and has 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, both now and in five years' time, based on a council size of 39.

48 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating two new three-member wards – Eastwood Park and St Lawrence – in order to address the relatively high level of electoral inequality in the existing Eastwood ward. Under its proposals Eastwood Park ward would broadly cover the western part of the existing Eastwood ward, while St Lawrence ward would cover the eastern part of Eastwood ward together with the northern part of the existing Prittlewell ward. The Borough Council proposed a revised Prittlewell ward combining the southern section of the existing Prittlewell ward with part of the existing Blenheim ward to its west and parts of Westborough and Victoria wards to its south.

49 In our draft recommendations we endorsed the Borough Council's proposals for Eastwood Park, Prittlewell and St Lawrence wards, with minor changes, as we considered that they provided a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In relation to Prittlewell ward, we proposed that its western boundary should run to the rear of the streets that neighbour Sir Thomas More High School, eastwards on Kenilworth Gardens and to the east of Westbourne Grove. As outlined above, this change would involve the transfer of a similar number of electors between Blenheim Park and Prittlewell wards and we considered that it would better reflect community ties.

50 At Stage Three the Borough Council generally supported our draft recommendations. However, we received comments from the Borough Council,

Councillor Briggs and Councillor Copley regarding the name of our proposed St Lawrence ward. They all proposed an alternative spelling of St Laurence in keeping with the name of St Laurence Church, a local church after which the ward is named.

51 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we are content to largely endorse our draft recommendations for these three wards. We consider that they achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality and reflect the statutory criteria well. With regard to the alternative spelling of St Laurence ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and Councillors Briggs and Copley, we are content to put forward the revised ward name of St Laurence. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for Eastwood Park, Prittlewell and St Laurence wards would vary by no more than 3 per cent from the borough average currently and by 2003.

### **Westborough and Chalkwell wards**

52 These two wards are situated towards the centre of the borough between the existing Blenheim, Leigh and Victoria wards. Currently, Westborough ward has 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. The number of electors per councillor in Chalkwell ward is equal to the borough average. In both cases, the level of electoral equality is not expected to change by 2003, based on a council size of 39.

53 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed only minor changes to Westborough ward, leaving its boundaries to the north and south unchanged. The Council proposed the transfer of an area containing 975 electors from Westborough ward to a revised Blenheim Park ward, such that the new boundary between these two wards would run to the rear of Southbourne Grove. Similarly, it put forward the transfer of 356 electors from Westborough ward to a revised Prittlewell ward, thereby creating a new boundary between these two wards, to the east side of Wenham Drive. The Borough Council also put forward minor changes to the existing Chalkwell ward. It proposed that the area to the west of Woodfield Road and Woodfield Park Drive be transferred to Leigh ward so that it would be coterminous with the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council boundary, excluding Chalkwell Station, which it proposed should be transferred to Chalkwell ward.

54 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals for this area, as we considered that they provided a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We put forward the Borough Council's proposed Chalkwell and Westborough wards subject to one minor change. We proposed that the ward boundary between Chalkwell and Leigh wards remain coterminous with the boundary of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, as the Commission has no power to review external town council boundaries as part of the current electoral review, and therefore Chalkwell Station should form part of the revised Leigh ward.

55 At Stage Three the Borough Council maintained its general support for our draft recommendations for the Southend-on-Sea area. We received no further representations on our draft recommendations for these wards and therefore are content to confirm them as final in their entirety. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Chalkwell and Westborough wards would be equal to and 2 per cent below the borough average (1 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2003).

### **Victoria, Milton and St Luke's wards**

56 Victoria, Milton and St Luke's wards are located in the centre of the borough and consist of the area around the Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria railway line. Under the current council size of 39 the number of electors per councillor in Victoria ward is 4 per cent below the borough average and is expected to improve to 3 per cent below the average by 2003. Milton and St Luke's wards have 7 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, and the level of electoral equality is expected to remain unchanged in five years' time in each ward.

57 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed changes to most of the existing ward boundaries. It put forward a revised Victoria ward, containing the southern section of the existing Victoria ward and a small part of St Luke's ward to the north of Swanage Road. Under its proposals, Milton ward would remain essentially unchanged, with the exception of its eastern boundary which would move westwards to the centre of Queensway and Hartington Road. The Borough Council proposed substantial revisions to St Luke's ward. Its proposed ward would comprise the northern part of the existing ward, the eastern part of Victoria

ward and the part of Southchurch ward to the west of Hamstel Road. It proposed a new Kursaal ward combining the southern part of St Luke's ward, the eastern part of Milton ward and the western part of Thorpe ward.

58 In our draft recommendations report we carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals for this area and decided to base our draft recommendations on them. We put forward the Borough Council's proposals for Milton and Victoria wards in their entirety, and made only minor modifications to its proposed St Luke's and Kursaal wards. We proposed that the southern boundary of St Luke's ward should run to the rear of Southchurch Road, to ensure that the properties on both sides of the road remained within one ward. We also recommended that the area to the west of Surbiton Avenue, between Southchurch Road and the Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line, containing 225 electors, should form part of the new Kursaal ward.

59 At Stage Three we received two representations regarding this area. Councillor Copley expressed full agreement "with the recommendation to adjust the southern boundary of St Luke's ward to run to the rear of Southchurch Road, rather than down the centre as put forward by Southend Council". A local resident expressed disappointment that Milton ward had remained largely unchanged and that the boundary between Milton and Kursaal ward followed the middle of Hartington Road, thereby isolating the west side of Hartington Road and Seaway from the rest of Milton ward. She also considered that Kursaal, as a privately owned business, was an inappropriate name for a proposed ward, and suggested it should be named Marine, the name of the original telephone exchange for the area.

60 Having received no significant opposition to our draft proposals for this area, we are content to put most of them forward as final. We consider, however, that there is some merit in the boundary amendment between Milton and Kursaal wards as proposed by a local resident. We note that under our draft recommendations one side of Hartington Road and the properties on Seaway would be relatively isolated from the remainder of the proposed Milton ward, and consider that their inclusion in a new Kursaal ward would provide a better boundary between the two wards and would better reflect community ties. This change would involve only a minimal number of electors and

would not have a significant effect on electoral equality. Therefore, as part of our final recommendations, we propose that the new ward boundary run to the rear of properties on the west side of Hartington Road, such that all of Hartington Road and Seaway are located within a new Kursaal ward, a name proposed by the Borough Council. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Kursaal, Milton and St Luke's wards would be 1 per cent above the borough average (4 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent above the average respectively by 2003).

### **Southchurch and Thorpe wards**

<sup>61</sup> Southchurch ward is located in the east of the borough between the existing St Luke's and Shoebury wards. Its population is concentrated in the area to the south of Royal Artillery Way and Bournes Green Chase, and currently it has 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent fewer by 2003). Thorpe ward is located between Milton ward and Shoebury ward, and encompasses the residential community of Thorpe Bay. Under the current council size of 39 members, Thorpe ward has 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent by 2003).

<sup>62</sup> At Stage One the Borough Council proposed only minor modifications to both wards. It proposed that the western boundary of Southchurch ward should be shifted eastwards to the rear of properties on Hamstel Road, thereby transferring an area containing around 1,500 electors to St Luke's ward. In relation to Thorpe ward, the Council proposed that the current ward be retained with the exception of the area to the west of Victoria Road, containing around 2,600 electors, which it proposed transferring to a new Kursaal ward.

<sup>63</sup> In formulating our draft recommendations we were persuaded that the Borough Council's proposals for Southchurch and Thorpe wards provided reasonable levels of electoral equality and reflected community ties well. Therefore, we based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme for this area. To the north of Royal Artillery Way, however, we proposed that the western boundary of Southchurch ward follow Garon Park Road, as we considered that this would provide a clearer boundary than that suggested by the Borough Council. We also proposed that the south-west boundary of Southchurch ward should

run to the rear of Southchurch Road, as described previously, thereby maintaining all electors on that road within one ward, and along the centre of Surbiton Avenue, the existing ward boundary. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Southchurch and Thorpe wards would be equal to and 2 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively by 2003.

<sup>64</sup> At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposals. In addition, Councillor Copley expressed full agreement with our recommendation that the southern boundary between St Luke's and Southchurch wards should run to the rear of Southchurch Road, rather than down the centre as proposed by the Borough Council at Stage One. We received no further representations on our draft recommendations and are therefore content to confirm them as final.

### **Shoebury ward**

<sup>65</sup> Shoebury ward is located in the east of the borough, between Southchurch and Thorpe wards and the boundary with Rochford District. Currently this ward has the worst level of electoral equality in the borough, with 54 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, due to housing developments in Shoeburyness in the last 20 years. The level of electoral equality is not expected to improve by 2003.

<sup>66</sup> At Stage One, in order to improve electoral equality in the area, the Borough Council proposed dividing the existing Shoebury ward into two three-member wards. It proposed a revised Shoebury ward covering the western part of the existing ward; the ward boundary would run along Poynters Lane to the rear of properties on North Shoebury Road, south of the Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line, and west of Towerfield Road and Ness Road. Its proposed Garrison ward would cover the remainder of the existing ward, including the High Street area and Shoeburyness Garrison. Shoeburyness Residents' Association expressed broad support for the proposals put forward by the Borough Council, but considered that "the future development of the Shoebury Garrison site had not been taken into consideration and that this could increase the electorate by at least a thousand in that particular ward". It also strongly opposed the name Garrison, arguing that "the Garrison area is to be disposed of by the MoD", and suggested that the two Shoebury wards be known as West Shoebury and Shoeburyness. A local resident also opposed the

name for the proposed Garrison ward and suggested that it be called Maplin ward.

67 Following consideration of the representations received, we concluded in our draft recommendations report that the Borough Council's proposals for Shoebury ward achieved a reasonable level of electoral equality and would adequately reflect the statutory criteria. We considered that the balance of the evidence received strongly supported the creation of a new ward in the east of Southend-on-Sea, to account for the significant population growth that has taken place over the past two decades. Therefore we based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals for this area, subject to some minor modifications. We proposed that the boundary between the two new wards should follow that proposed by the Council except that it should run to the rear of St Mary's Close, Maplin Mews and Estuary Mews, in order to include within one ward all the properties leading from Ness Road and North Shoebury Road. We were persuaded by Shoeburyness Residents' Association's proposal to change the name of the Borough Council's Garrison ward to Shoeburyness ward, which is commonly used by residents to identify this area, and additionally to put forward the name of West Shoebury for the ward to its west. Regarding the issue of the future development of the Garrison site, we considered that the balance of the evidence suggested that little, if any, residential growth will take place over the next five years. The Borough Council confirmed that the planning permission granted for 200 dwellings had expired, and consequently its forecast electorate for the proposed new ward showed an increase of only 14 electors by the year 2003.

68 At Stage Three we received several submissions in relation to this area. The Borough Council expressed support for our proposals relating to the number, size and boundaries of the proposed wards and said that while it had no actual objection to the name of West Shoebury ward, it saw no reason to depart from its proposal for the name Garrison ward. Shoeburyness Residents' Association stated that they were pleased to note that their suggested names for the Shoebury wards had been put forward as part of our draft recommendations and stated that "local opinion is strongly in favour of retaining the Shoeburyness and West Shoebury identities". A local resident proposed that the two Shoebury wards should be named Shoebury East

and Shoebury West, and considered that the redevelopment of the Shoebury Garrison site and the potential increase in electorate should be taken into consideration, despite the fact that planning permission for the proposed dwellings has expired. Another resident proposed that West Shoebury ward should be designated Maplin ward, a name that is "equally cherished and revered" in that area.

69 In the light of the broad agreement regarding our proposals to create two three-member wards for the area, we are content to endorse our draft recommendations as final. We recognise that the development of the Shoeburyness Garrison site may have an impact on electoral equality in this area in the future, but under current legislation we are only allowed to have regard to changes over the next five years. We note that there is a lack of consensus regarding ward names for the Shoebury area but we have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations, which enjoyed some local support. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Shoeburyness and West Shoebury wards would be 1 per cent above and equal to the borough average respectively (both would be equal to the borough average by 2003).

## Conclusions

70 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 amendments:

- (a) the proposed St Lawrence ward should be renamed St Laurence ward;
- (b) the boundary between Milton and Kursaal wards should be altered to include all the properties on Hartington Road and Seaway within Kursaal ward.

71 We conclude that, in Southend-on-Sea:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 39 to 51;
- (b) there should be 17 wards, four more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

Figure 4 :  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	39	51	39	51
Number of wards	13	17	13	17
Average number of electors per councillor	3,248	2,484	3,277	2,506
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	3	0	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

72 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

73 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 three to none. By 2003 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

### Final Recommendation

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of the report. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

## Town Council Electoral Arrangements

74 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 borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to reflect the proposed borough wards.

75 Leigh-on-Sea Town Council is currently served by 16 councillors representing seven wards: Bonchurch, Elms, Glendale, Highlands, Leigh Road, Marine Estate and Old Town/Cliff Parade. In our draft recommendations, we put forward the Borough Council's proposal for eight town council wards. To the north of the A13 (London Road), Highlands ward would have three town councillors, and Bonchurch and Leigh North East wards would have one councillor each. South of the A13, the Borough Council proposed four two-member town council wards: Burnham, Leigh Road, Old Town/Cliff Parade and Thames, and a three-member Elms ward.

76 At Stage Three we received a number of representations regarding warding arrangements in the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council area. The Borough Council expressed general support for our draft recommendations, although it proposed

reversing the names of Thames and Burnham wards to reflect the locations of Burnham Road and Thames Drive. Leigh-on-Sea Town Council expressed support for our proposed town council ward boundaries with the exception of the boundary between Burnham and Thames wards which it suggested should follow “the western side of the properties in Leigh Gardens and Harley Street [in order to] balance out the respective electorates of the two wards”. It also put forward several alternative ward names which it argued were more traditional and better reflected the communities in these areas: Herschell ward rather than Thames ward, Thames ward rather than Burnham ward, St Clements rather than Old Town/Cliff Parade and St James rather than Leigh North-East.

77 Councillor Briggs suggested that the proposed Burnham and Thames wards would be more appropriately named Marine West and Marine East or Thames and Marine respectively. A local resident, similarly to the Borough Council, suggested that the names of Thames and Burnham wards should be reversed and also proposed that St Clements and St James would be more suitable names for Old Town/Cliff Parade and Leigh North-East wards respectively. Another respondent opposed the name of Burnham ward and suggested that Leigh West would be a more accurate description for the area.

78 Two residents considered that the boundaries of the Town Council should be addressed as part of this review. One stated that he considered that the Town Council’s boundaries should coincide with borough wards. He suggested that Leigh, West Leigh and Belfairs should be included, perhaps also with Blenheim Park ward. One resident of the proposed Blenheim Park ward also requested that the boundary of the Town Council be extended to include his area, arguing that the Town Council should represent all residents of Leigh-on-Sea.

79 Having considered all the evidence received, we note that there was general support for the draft recommendations with respect to the town council ward boundaries. We have considered Leigh-on-Sea Town Council’s proposal to change the boundary between Burnham and Thames wards and have not been persuaded that this change would provide a better level of electoral equality in each ward. With respect to ward names, we have been persuaded to put forward several name changes proposed by Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.

We are content to put forward their proposed ward names of Herschell, Thames, St Clements and St James as we consider that they represent traditional local names and features in the areas concerned.

80 We recognise that the boundaries of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council do not contain the whole of Leigh-on-Sea and that they are not coterminous with the new borough wards. However, we are unable to amend the Town Council’s boundaries as the boundaries of parish councils are outside the remit of this review. Any change to the boundaries of the Town Council would require a review of parishing arrangements which could be carried out by the Borough Council after completion of the periodic electoral review. We would therefore suggest that these views are brought to the attention of the Borough Council.

### **Final Recommendation**

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council should continue to comprise 16 councillors, representing eight wards. Elms and Highlands town council wards would each be represented by three councillors; Thames, Leigh Road, St Clements and Herschell would each be represented by two councillors; and Bonchurch and St James would be represented by one councillor each. The town council ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

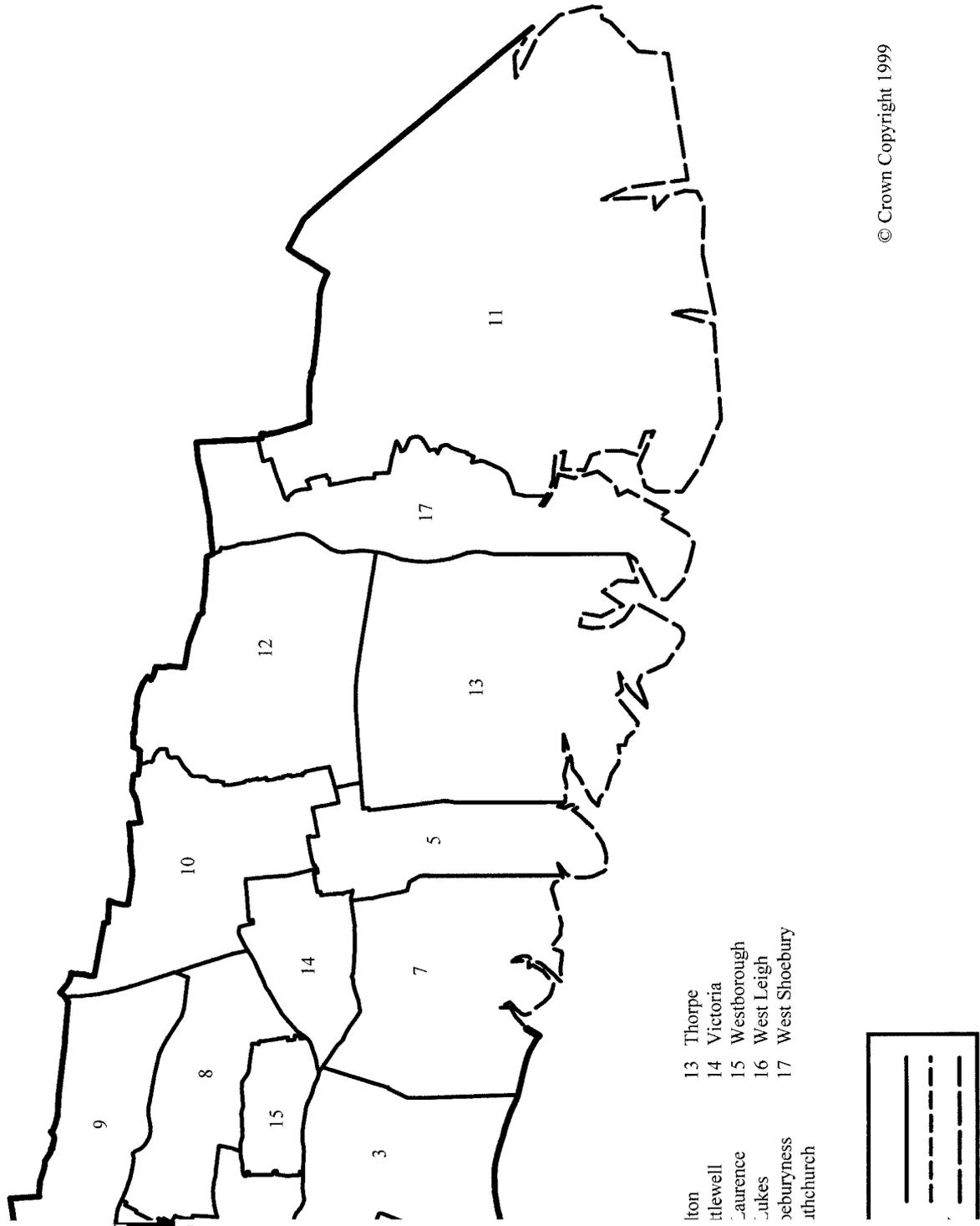
81 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of the town council in the borough, and are confirming this as final. The Chairman of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, Councillor Dolby, considered that elections should be held every two years, with half of the seats coming up for election on each occasion, as he considered this would assist in the smooth running of the Town Council. His views were supported by David Amess MP.

82 Currently, there is no statutory provision for elections at parish and town council level to be held every two years, and therefore we are unable to reflect the views outlined. Under existing legislation, town council elections can only be held every four years and should coincide with an election year for the Borough Council in that area.

### **Final Recommendation**

For Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

Map 2:  
 The Commission's Final Recommendations for Southend-on-Sea



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## 6. NEXT STEPS

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

84 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.

85 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 Southend-on-Sea: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Southend-on-Sea area.

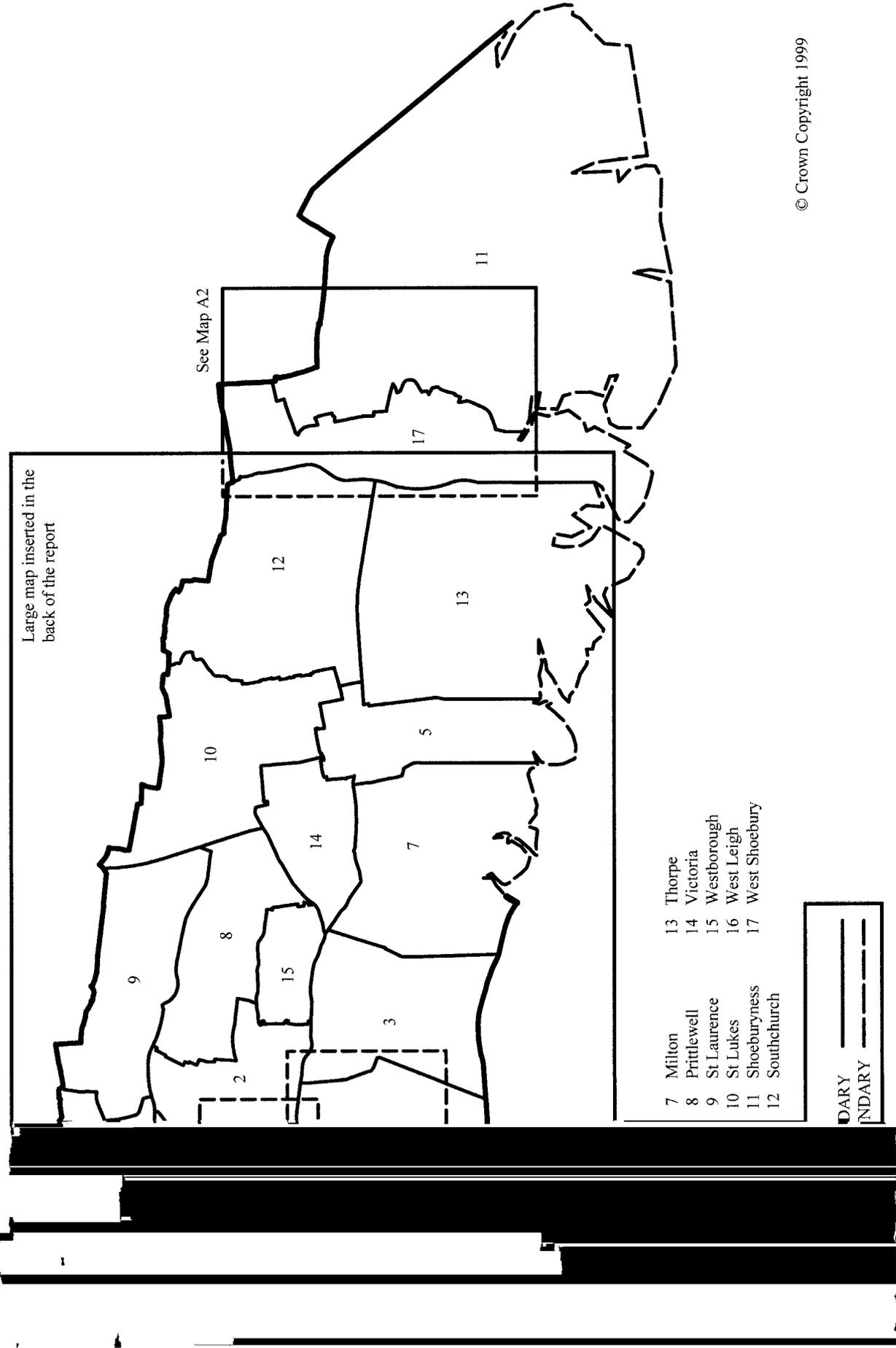
**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed wards in the Shoeburyness area.

**Maps A3 and A4** illustrate the proposed warding of the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council area.

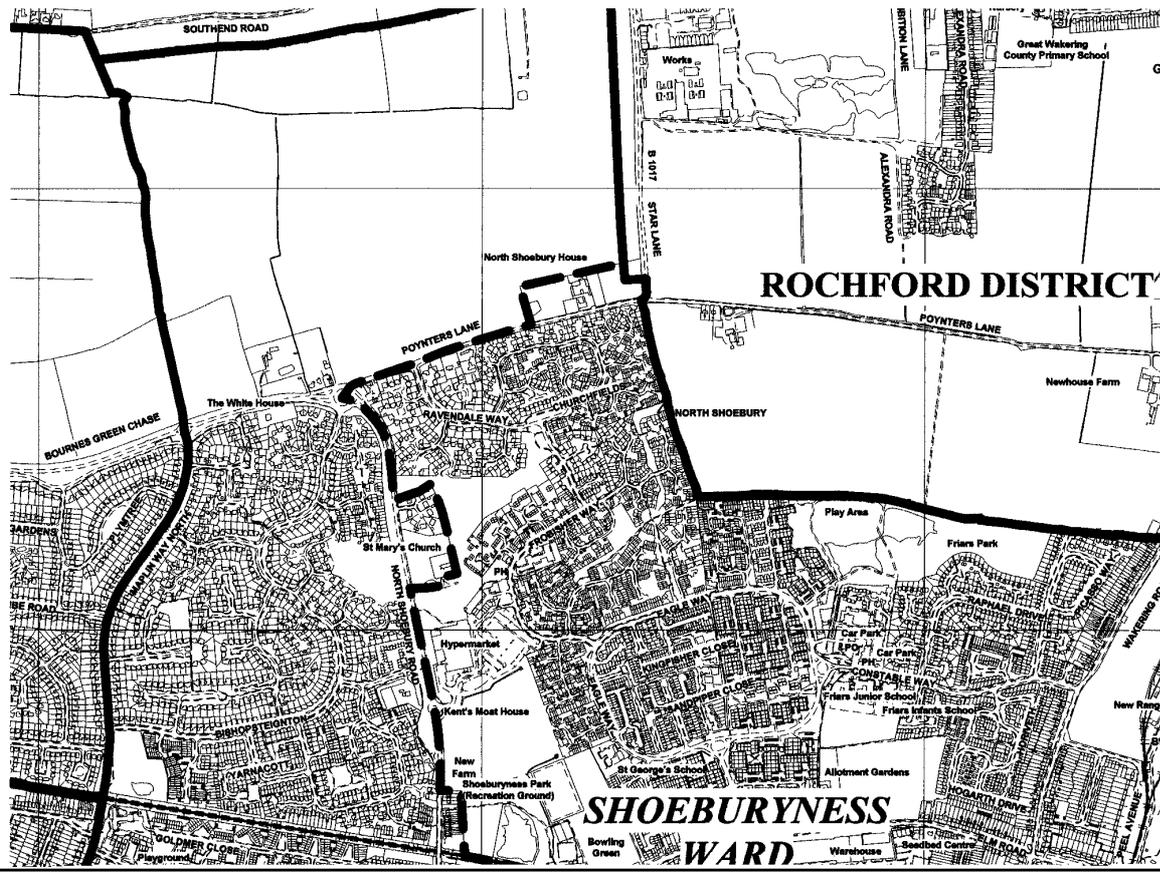
The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Southend-on-Sea.

Map A1:  
*Final Recommendations for Southend-on-Sea: Key Map*

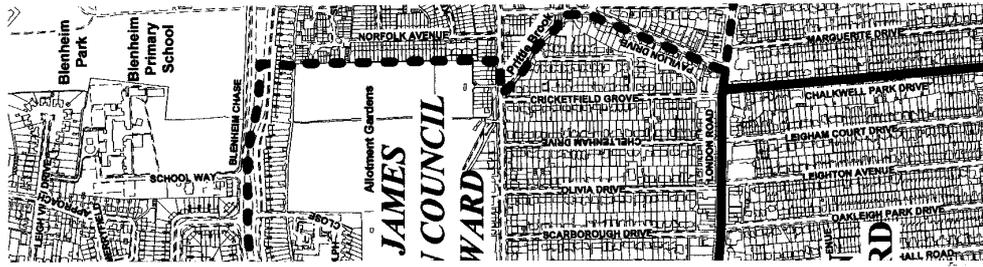


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Map A2:  
Proposed Wards in the Shoeburyness Area

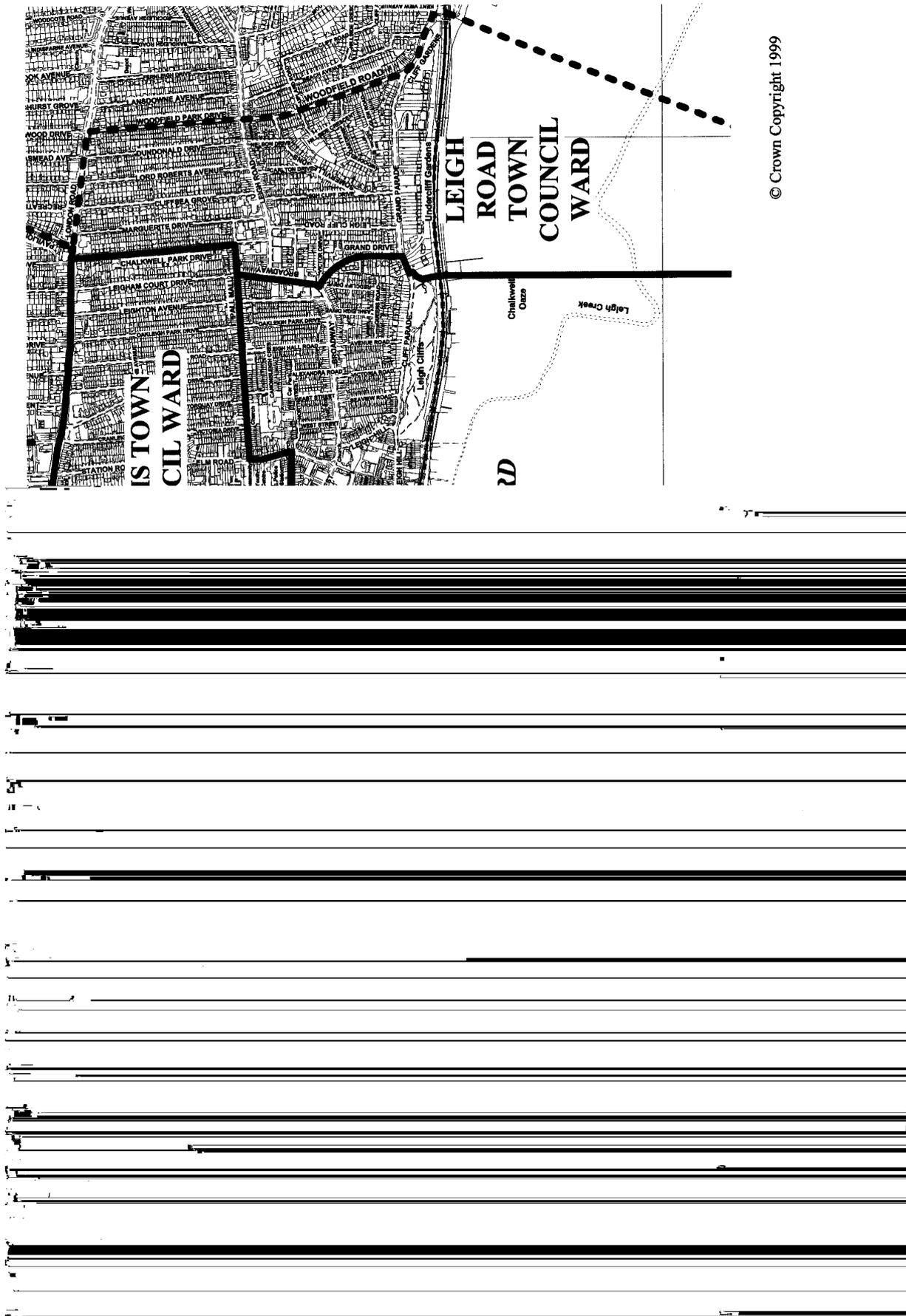


Map A3:  
Proposed Warding of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council (Northern Part)



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Map A4:  
Proposed Warding of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council (Southern Part)





# APPENDIX B

## Draft Recommendations for Southend-on-Sea

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only two 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 we propose to rename St Lawrence ward as St Laurence ward.

*Figure B1:*

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Kursaal	Milton ward (part); St Luke's ward (part); Thorpe ward part
Milton	Milton ward (part)

*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 %
Kursaal	3	7,473	2,491	0	7,784	2,595	4
Milton	3	7,611	2,537	2	7,648	2,549	2

*Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Southend-on-Sea Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*





