

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Waveney in Suffolk

January 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
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Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the Lowestoft area is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Waveney on 27 June 2000.

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

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

- **in 11 of the 21 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and seven wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 12 wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 116-117) are that:

- **Waveney District Council should have 48 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 23 wards, instead of 21 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 22 of the proposed 23 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to continue with the number of electors per councillor in all 23 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district by 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for Beccles Town Council;**
- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Oulton parish.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 January 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 5 March 2001:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
1	Beccles North	2	Beccles Town ward (part – School ward (part), Centre ward (part) and Common ward of Beccles Town); Beccles Worlingham ward (part – Rigbourne ward of Beccles Town (part))	Maps 2, A2 and A3
2	Beccles South	2	Beccles Town ward (part – School ward (part) and Centre ward (part) of Beccles Town); Beccles Worlingham ward (part – Rigbourne ward (part) of Beccles Town (part))	Maps 2, A2 and A3
3	Blything	1	Blything ward (part – Blyford, Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Sotherton and Westhall parishes); Southwold ward (part – Wangford with Henham parish)	Map 2
4	Bungay	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Bungay Town)	Map 2
5	Carlton (in Lowestoft)	2	Carlton ward (part)	Large Map
6	Carlton Colville	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Carlton Colville parish)	Large Map and Map 2
7	Gunton & Corton (in Lowestoft)	2	Lothingland ward (part – Corton parish); Gunton ward (part)	Large Map and Map 2
8	Halesworth	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Halesworth Town)	Map 2
9	Harbour (in Lowestoft)	3	Gunton ward (part); Harbour ward (part); Normanston ward (part)	Large Map
10	Kessingland	2	Kessingland ward (part – Kessingland parish)	Map 2
11	Kirkley (in Lowestoft)	3	Kirkley ward (part); Pakefield ward (part); Whitton ward (part)	Large Map
12	Lothingland	1	Lothingland ward (part – Blundeston, Flixton, Lound and Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet parishes, and Camps Heath ward of Oulton parish (as proposed))	Large Map and Map 2
13	Normanston (in Lowestoft)	3	Harbour ward (part); Normanston ward (part); Oulton Broad ward (part); St Margaret's ward (part)	Large Map
14	Oulton	2	Lothingland ward (part – Oulton ward of Oulton parish (as proposed); Oulton Broad ward (part))	Large Map
15	Oulton Broad (in Lowestoft)	2	Oulton Broad ward (part)	Large Map
16	Pakefield (in Lowestoft)	3	Kirkley ward (part); Pakefield ward (part)	Large Map
17	Southwold & Reydon	2	Southwold ward (part – Reydon parish and Southwold Town)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
18	St Margaret's (in Lowestoft)	3	Lothingland ward (part – Parkhill ward of Oulton parish (as proposed)); Oulton Broad ward (part); St Margaret's ward (part)	Large Map
19	The Saints	1	Blything ward (part – Spexhall and Wissett parishes); South Elmham ward (part – Flixton, St Mary South Elmham, otherwise Homersfield, St Lawrence Ilketshall, St Margaret Ilketshall, Rumburgh, All Saints & St Nicholas South Elmham, St Cross South Elmham, St James South Elmham, St Margaret South Elmham, St Michael South Elmham and St Peter South Elmham parishes)	Map 2
20	Wainford	1	South Elmham ward (part – St John Ilketshall and Mettingham parishes); Wainford ward (Barsham, Ellough, St Andrew Ilketshall, Redisham, Ringsfield, Shadingfield, Shipmeadow, Sotterley, Weston and Willingham St Mary parishes); Mutford ward (part – Mutford parish)	Map 2
21	Whitton (in Lowestoft)	3	Carlton ward (part); Whitton ward (part)	Large Map
22	Worlingham	2	Beccles Worlingham ward (part – Worlingham parish); Mutford ward (part – Barnby and North Cove parishes)	Maps 2, A2 and A3
23	Wrentham	1	Kessingland ward (part – Gisleham parish); Mutford ward (part – Henstead with Hulver Street and Rushmere parishes); Southwold ward (part – Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, South Cove, Uggeshall and Wrentham parishes)	Large Map and Map 2

Notes: 1 Lowestoft is the only unparished part of the district and comprises the wards indicated above.

2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes would affect no electors.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Waveney

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Beccles North	2	3,898	1,949	7	3,979	1,990	3
2	Beccles South	2	3,916	1,958	7	4,026	2,013	4
3	Blything	1	1,963	1,963	7	2,043	2,043	6
4	Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	5	3,989	1,995	3
5	Carlton (in Lowestoft)	2	3,729	1,865	2	3,737	1,869	-3
6	Carlton Colville	3	4,687	1,562	-14	6,098	2,033	5
7	Gunton & Corton (in Lowestoft)	2	3,874	1,937	6	3,906	1,953	1
8	Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	3	3,998	1,999	4
9	Harbour (In Lowestoft)	3	5,760	1,920	5	5,849	1,950	1
10	Kessingland	2	3,288	1,644	-10	3,582	1,791	-7
11	Kirkley (in Lowestoft)	3	5,554	1,851	1	5,632	1,877	-3
12	Lothingland	1	1,716	1,716	-6	1,748	1,748	-9
13	Normanston (in Lowestoft)	3	5,354	1,785	-2	5,383	1,794	-7
14	Oulton	2	3,277	1,639	-10	3,899	1,950	1
15	Oulton Broad (in Lowestoft)	2	3,967	1,984	9	3,990	1,995	3
16	Pakefield (in Lowestoft)	3	5,545	1,848	1	5,579	1,860	-4
17	Southwold & Reydon	2	3,479	1,740	-5	3,573	1,787	-7
18	St Margaret's (in Lowestoft)	3	5,341	1,780	-3	6,234	2,078	8
19	The Saints	1	1,687	1,687	-8	1,753	1,753	-9
20	Wainford	1	1,998	1,998	9	2,055	2,055	7
21	Whitton (in Lowestoft)	3	5,946	1,982	9	5,993	1,998	4

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
22 Worlingham	2	3,309	1,655	-9	3,687	1,844	-4
23 Wrentham	1	1,786	1,786	-2	1,828	1,828	-5
Totals	48	87,667	–	–	92,561	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,826	–	–	1,928	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Waveney 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.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Waveney in Suffolk on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven districts in Suffolk as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Waveney. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1979 (Report No. 367). The electoral arrangements of Suffolk County Council were last reviewed in June 1982 (Report No. 429). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Suffolk districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

12 Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Waveney District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Suffolk County Council, Suffolk

Constabulary, the local authority associations, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 2 October 2000.

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

14 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 and will end on 5 March 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

15 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The district of Waveney covers an area of approximately 37,000 hectares and lies in the north-east corner of Suffolk, bordering the districts of Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk to the south and the County of Norfolk to the north. The northern and southern boundaries are formed by the rivers Waveney and Blyth and the district is bordered in the east by the North Sea coastline. The main town is Lowestoft; the district also includes the smaller market towns of Beccles and Bungay in the north and Halesworth and Southwold in the south. The district contains 44 parishes, but Lowestoft town itself is unparished and comprises approximately 50 per cent of the district's total electorate.

17 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'.

18 The electorate of the district is 87,667 (February 2000). The Council presently has 48 members who are elected from 21 wards, nine of which cover the town of Lowestoft. Eleven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, five are each represented by two councillors and five are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Waveney district, with around 22 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Carlton Colville and Lothingland wards.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,826 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,928 by the year 2005 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 11 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and seven wards vary by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Carlton Colville ward where the councillor represents 157 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Waveney

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Beccles Town	3	5,927	1,976	8	6,110	2,037	6
2	Beccles Worlingham	2	4,414	2,207	21	4,771	2,386	24
3	Blything	1	1,826	1,826	0	1,908	1,908	-1
4	Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	5	3,998	1,999	4
5	Carlton (in Lowestoft)	3	6,595	2,198	20	6,608	2,203	14
6	Carlton Colville	1	4,687	4,687	157	6,098	6,098	216
7	Gunton (in Lowestoft)	3	5,060	1,687	-8	5,100	1,700	-12
8	Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	3	3,989	1,995	3
9	Harbour (in Lowestoft)	3	4,006	1,335	-27	4,094	1,365	-29
10	Kessingland	2	3,673	1,837	1	3,967	1,984	3
11	Kirkley (in Lowestoft)	3	4,397	1,466	-20	4,459	1,486	-23
12	Lothingland	2	4,923	2,462	35	6,090	3,045	58
13	Mutford	1	1,509	1,509	-17	1,566	1,566	-19
14	Normanston (in Lowestoft)	3	4,336	1,445	-21	4,345	1,448	-25
15	Oulton Broad (in Lowestoft)	3	5,296	1,765	-3	5,328	1,776	-8
16	Pakefield (in Lowestoft)	3	5,453	1,818	0	5,485	1,828	-5
19	St. Margaret's (in Lowestoft)	3	5,668	1,889	3	6,053	2,018	5
17	South Elmham	1	1,523	1,523	-17	1,579	1,579	-18
18	Southwold	3	5,061	1,687	-8	5,198	1,733	-10
20	Wainford	1	1,391	1,391	-24	1,426	1,426	-26

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
21 Whitton (in Lowestoft)	3	4,329	1,443	-21	4,389	1,463	-24
Totals	48	87,667	–	–	92,561	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,826	–	–	1,928	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Waveney District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Harbour ward were relatively over-represented by 27 per cent, while electors in Carlton Colville ward were relatively under-represented by 157 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 10 representations during Stage One, including two district-wide options from the District Council, each with alternative proposals for the rural area, one from Waveney Constituency Labour Party, and one from Waveney District Council Conservative Group. All submissions received may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Waveney District Council

23 The District Council submitted two options, each with alternative proposals in the rural area, all of which were unanimously approved by the members of the Council. Option 1 was based on a council size of 47, one fewer than at present, representing 19 wards as opposed to the existing 21. This option was based around minimal change, and retaining Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad as a boundary between North and South Lowestoft. Option 2 was based on a Council size of 48, representing 20 wards and would maintain a three-member ward structure in Lowestoft by incorporating the urban parishes of Oulton and Corton with part of Lowestoft. Option 1a and 2a were variations on Options 1 and 2, following the same approach in the urban areas while proposing alternatives in the rural part of the district. In particular, both Options 1a and 2a would provide a two-member Southwold & Reydon ward and two-member Central & West and South East Waveney wards. Option 1a was based on a council size of 48, representing 20 wards and Option 2a was based on a council size of 49, representing 20 wards.

24 All four of the Council's options provided for improved levels of electoral equality, with no option having more than three wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average currently, improving to two wards by 2005. The Council also provided copies of submissions received as part of its own consultation exercise, which included a submissions from Suffolk Constabulary who stated that, "since a review in 1999, the policing boundaries and district boundaries had been coterminous and considered that is was desirable that this situation be retained". The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

Waveney Constituency Labour Party

25 Waveney Constituency Labour Party ('the Labour Party') proposed a council size of 48 members representing 21 wards. The Labour Party proposed that a three-member ward structure be retained for Central Lowestoft, with two-member wards for Carlton, Oulton Broad, Oulton and Gunton North & Corton. It proposed that Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad be retained as a ward boundary and that the more urban settlements of Corton and Oulton be combined with parts of Lowestoft. It proposed a three-member South East Waveney ward and a single-member Wainford

ward. It also proposed two two-member wards for Beccles and the retention of the existing Bungay and Halesworth wards. Under the Labour Party's proposals all of the proposed 21 wards would initially vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, deteriorating to 18 wards by 2005. The Labour Party's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Waveney District Council Conservative Group

26 Waveney District Council Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') broadly supported the District Council's Option 1a. However, it proposed amending two of the Council's proposed two-member rural wards in order to create four single-member wards, arguing that the Council's proposals would create wards which cover too large an area. Under the Conservatives' proposals, which were based on a council size of 48 members representing 22 wards, 18 of the proposed wards would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, improving to 20 wards by 2005. The Conservatives' proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Waveney Liberal Democrats

27 Waveney Liberal Democrats, ('the Liberal Democrats') opposed the Council's Option 1 arguing that it was a "political Option". Specific concern was expressed in relation to the proposed Pakefield and Kirkley wards, with alternative proposals submitted for these areas. In relation to the rural area, support was expressed for the amalgamation of Southwold Town Council and Reydon Parish Council in one district ward. Support was also expressed for Option 2 with regards to the rural area which, they argued, would better serve the community than the other options.

Parish and Town Councils

28 We received representations from six parish and town councils. The Group Parish Council of Frostenden, Uggeshall & South Cove supported the Council's Option 2, which aligned their group of parishes with Southwold and Reydon. Rumburgh Parish Council expressed opposition to the Council's Option 1, which would place the parish in a two-member Central & West ward. However, it supported the proposed West Waveney ward outlined in the Council's Option 2, subject to the exclusion of Westhall parish and a ward name change. Southwold Town Council supported the Council's Option 1a with specific reference to the amalgamation of Southwold and Reydon in a two-member Southwold & Reydon ward which it considered forms a natural unit. Worlingham Parish Council expressed a preference for the Council's Option 1.

Other Representations

29 We received three further representations from local residents. Two residents expressed support for the Council's Option 1a with specific reference to the amalgamation of Southwold and Reydon in a two-member ward, while another resident wrote in reference to the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

30 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Waveney is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

32 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.

33 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

34 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 5 per cent from 87,667 to 92,561 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Carlton Colville, although a significant amount is also expected in Oulton parish which forms part of Lothingland ward. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on the electorate of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

35 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, are generally content that they represent the best overall estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. However, following further analysis of the projected electorate figures and additional information on specific locations of future developments, we have made a number of modifications to the forecast electorates for some specific parishes and polling districts. As a result, modifications have been made to the forecast

electorates for a number of wards proposed by the District Council, Waveney Constituency Labour Party and Waveney District Council Conservative Group. These changes do not affect the total forecast electorate for 2005 and have been endorsed by the District Council.

Council Size

36 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

37 Waveney District Council presently has 48 members. Under the District Council's proposed four options, council sizes of 47, 48 and 49 were proposed. The Labour Party and the Conservative's both proposed a council size of 48.

38 While Council size is the starting point of any review, in the case of Waveney we note that the difference between the proposed council sizes of 47, 48 and 49 is quite marginal. However, we note that a council size of 48 is preferred by the Labour Party, the Conservatives, and the District Council under two of its options. We also note that, overall, a council size of 48 would provide marginally better electoral equality than either a council size of 47 or 49, in particular by providing the correct allocation of councillors for the rural area where we have been able to create single-member wards, reflecting the views of a number of respondents.

39 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

Electoral Arrangements

40 Having considered the alternative options submitted at Stage One by the District Council, the Labour Party and the Conservatives, a number of considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations. First, we have received a most positive response to the review. Respondents, including the District Council, the Labour Party and the Conservatives, have all made clear, district-wide proposals for change to the present electoral arrangements.

41 Second, there is broad agreement on council size. The Labour Party and the Conservatives supported the retention of the existing council size of 48, while the District Council's options were based on council sizes of 47, 48 and 49 members. As detailed above, we concur with this assessment and are putting forward a proposal for a council size of 48.

42 Third, we note that respondents have put forward proposals that would secure a considerable improvement in electoral equality. At present, in 11 of the 21 existing wards, the number of electors per councillor exceeds 10 per cent from the district average, and in seven wards it exceeds 20 per cent from the average. The District Council's different options would reduce this to

between one and three wards (and further to one or two wards by 2005), the Conservative's to four wards (and two wards by 2005), and the Labour Party to no wards (and three wards by 2005).

43 Fourth, differing assumptions have been made as to how best to reflect community identities and interests in Lowestoft. The District Council put forward two differing approaches: Option 1 would retain Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad as a boundary between the wards in North and South Lowestoft, while Option 2 combines areas either side to form an Oulton Broad South ward. The Council's Option 1 largely retains the existing ward boundaries in Lowestoft but would reduce the representation for Gunton, Kirkley and Normanston wards to two members each. Option 2 would retain a three-member ward pattern but would combine the relatively urban parishes of Corton and Oulton with parts of Gunton and Oulton Broad respectively. The Labour Party's proposals would also retain Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad as a boundary and combine the relatively urban parishes of Corton and Oulton with parts of Gunton and Oulton Broad respectively. However, it proposed that Carlton, Gunton North & Corton and Oulton wards be represented by two councillors each. The Conservatives supported the Council's Option 1, while the Liberal Democrats supported the retention of the existing Pakefield ward and a three-member Kirkley ward.

44 We consider that Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad should be retained as a ward boundary in Lowestoft as there are relatively few river crossings in the town, and while there are some similarities between areas either side, essentially it does define communities in the town. In addition, we consider that the parishes of Oulton and Corton, being relatively urban in nature, should be combined with part of Lowestoft rather than with the more rural areas that form the current Lothingland ward. As a result, and following detailed consideration of proposed ward boundaries, we have based our draft recommendations on the Labour Party's proposals in this area, although we propose a number of modifications in North Lowestoft.

45 Fifth, differing assumptions have been made as to how best to reflect community identities and interests in the rural part of the district. While there was broad consensus to retain the existing Bungay and Halesworth wards, and the creation of two two-member wards for Beccles, we received proposals for predominantly two- and three-member wards for the rest of the rural area from the District Council and the Labour Party, and a predominantly single-member ward pattern from the Conservatives. We propose basing our draft recommendations in this area on the Conservatives' proposals, subject to a number of modifications in order to improve electoral equality. We consider that the rural areas outside the market towns are sparsely populated and that creating multi-member wards would lead to the creation of wards that are large in area and, as a result, would fail to reflect community ties and may not provide the most convenient and effective local government for these areas. We also consider that there is merit in the proposal by the Conservatives (and the District Council in Options 1a and 2a), to create a separate two-member ward for Southwold and Reydon. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Beccles Town and Beccles Worlingham wards;
- (b) Carlton Colville ward;
- (c) Kessingland, Mutford and Southwold wards;
- (d) Blything, South Elmham and Wainford wards;

- (e) Bungay and Halesworth wards;
- (f) Gunton, Lothingland and Oulton Broad wards;
- (g) Harbour, Normanston and St Margaret's wards;
- (h) Carlton, Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton wards.

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

Beccles Town and Beccles Worlingham wards

47 The existing wards of Beccles Town and Beccles Worlingham cover the town of Beccles and the neighbouring village of Worlingham and are situated in the north of the district bordering South Norfolk. Beccles Town ward comprises Centre, Common and School wards of Beccles Town and is currently represented by three councillors. Beccles Worlingham ward comprises Rigbourne ward of Beccles Town together with Worlingham parish and is currently represented by two councillors. Beccles Town and Beccles Worlingham wards contain 8 per cent and 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (6 per cent and 24 per cent more by 2005).

48 At Stage One, the District Council submitted the same proposal for the Beccles area under all four of its options. It proposed the creation of two new two-member wards, Beccles North and Beccles South, covering the whole of Beccles Town Council area. The Council proposed that the boundary between the two new wards should follow in a westerly direction down the centre of Ellough Road, to the rear of Beccles Middle School, the centre of St George's Road, then in a southerly direction through the cemetery to the parish boundary. The remaining boundaries of the two wards would be formed by the existing Town Council boundaries. Under three of the four options, the remaining part of the existing Beccles Worlingham ward, Worlingham parish, would be combined with the parishes of Barnby, Mutford and North Cove in a new two-member Worlingham ward. However, under Option 2, the parishes of Barnby, Mutford and Worlingham would be combined with Henstead with Hulver Street parish in a revised two-member Mutford ward, detailed below. Under our proposed council size of 48, the District Council's new Beccles North and Beccles South wards would contain 6 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent and 5 per cent more by 2005). The Conservatives supported the District Council's proposals for this area. Worlingham Parish Council supported the Council's Option 1, which would combine Worlingham with Barnby, Mutford and North Cove parishes.

49 The Labour Party also proposed the creation of two new two-member Beccles North and Beccles South wards based on the four wards of Beccles Town Council. The Labour Party's proposals were broadly similar to the District Council's in this area. However, their proposed Beccles South ward would include all the properties on Ellough Road together with the St Anne's Close area, with their proposed boundary following the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line between St George's Road and Ingate. To compensate for this change, they proposed that all the properties on London Road and Wembley Avenue should form part of Beccles North ward. The remaining part of Beccles Worlingham ward, Worlingham parish, would be combined with the parishes of Barnby and North Cove in a new, two-member Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove

ward, detailed below. Under the Labour Party's proposals, the new Beccles North and Beccles South wards would contain 5 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent and 9 per cent more by 2005).

50 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we concur with the view that the Beccles area should be divided into two two-member wards, Beccles North and Beccles South. We note that the alternative proposals submitted by the District Council and the Labour party would both achieve improved levels of electoral equality and consider that they both have merit. However, we have decided to base our draft recommendations for this area on the District Council's proposals, subject to minor modifications in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries. First, we propose that all properties on Ellough Road should form part of Beccles South ward, as proposed by the Labour Party. Second, we propose that the western part of the boundary should follow the centre of the A145 London Road for part of its length, continuing along field edges until it meets Wash Lane. We consider that including properties on London Road and Wembley Avenue in Beccles North ward, as proposed by the Labour Party would not provide as clear boundaries and would isolate the new development in the Richard Crampton Road area from the rest of the ward. In addition, we consider the inclusion of the St Anne's Close area in Beccles South ward would worsen electoral equality, as much of the future development in the town in the next five years is forecast to take place in Beccles South ward. Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Beccles North and Beccles South wards would each contain 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent and 4 per cent more respectively by 2005). Our proposed boundaries in the Beccles area are illustrated on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A. Proposals for revised Town Council arrangements are detailed later.

Carlton Colville ward

51 Carlton Colville ward is located on the fringe of Lowestoft. Although the traditional centre of the village neighbours the Pakefield area of Lowestoft, the past 20 years have witnessed significant housing development, particularly in the north of the parish neighbouring Beccles Road (A146). The current Carlton Colville ward is represented by a single councillor and is coterminous with Carlton Colville parish. Currently, the area is significantly under-represented due to housing development since the last review, and Carlton Colville ward currently contains 157 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, expected to deteriorate further to 216 per cent by 2005.

52 At Stage One, the District Council put forward two differing proposals for this area. Its Options 1, 1a and 2a would all retain the existing ward but would increase the level of representation from one to three councillors in order to reflect the area's growth since the last review. Option 2 would also increase the level of representation for the area to three councillors, but would combine Carlton Colville with the neighbouring parishes of Gisleham (from Kessingland ward) and Rushmere (from Mutford ward) to form a new Carlton Colville & Gisleham ward. Under our proposed council size of 48, the District Council's proposed Carlton Colville ward, under options 1, 1a and 2a, would contain 14 per cent fewer electors per councilor than the district average currently, improving to 5 per cent more than average by 2005. Its alternative proposal for a new Carlton Colville & Gisleham ward would contain 6 per cent fewer

electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 12 per cent more than the average by 2005. The Conservatives supported the Council's Option 1a, which would retain the existing ward in this area but increase its representation to three councillors. As part of the District Council's own consultation exercise, Gisleham Parish Council expressed a preference for Option 1 which would retain its current link with Kessingland in a ward.

53 The Labour Party also proposed the creation of a three-member Carlton Colville ward. However, they proposed that the new ward include the parishes of Carlton Colville and Gisleham (from Kessingland ward). They argued that part of the parish of Gisleham, near Gisleham Middle School, is in effect part of the village of Carlton Colville and that the parish relates more strongly to Carlton Colville than Kessingland. Under the Labour Party's proposals, the proposed Carlton Colville ward would contain 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, deteriorating to 12 per cent more than the average by 2005 due to continued growth in the area.

54 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we concur with the view that the existing ward boundaries for Carlton Colville should be retained but that the representation for the ward should be increased from one to three councillors. While we recognise that there are some links between Carlton Colville and Gisleham, we note that Gisleham parish is quite diverse and also includes the settlement of Black Street which neighbours Rushmere and Kessingland parishes. Carlton Colville is an expanding settlement, and we wish to ensure that any new ward for the area has a degree of longevity and that our proposals would not lead to significant under-representation for the area by 2005. On this basis, we consider that the new ward should contain only Carlton Colville parish and should not be combined with neighbouring areas. Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Carlton Colville ward would initially contain 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 5 per cent more than the average by 2005, due to extensive growth in the area. Our proposed boundaries for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report.

Kessingland, Mutford and Southwold wards

55 The existing wards of Kessingland, Mutford and Southwold are situated in the east of the district. Kessingland ward comprises the parishes of Gisleham and Kessingland and is currently represented by two councillors. Mutford ward comprises the parishes of Barnby, Henstead with Hulver Street, Mutford, North Cove and Rushmere and is currently represented by a single councillor. Southwold ward comprises the parishes of Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, Reydon, South Cove, Southwold, Uggeshall, Wangford with Henham and Wrentham and is currently represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Kessingland ward contains 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent more by 2005). Mutford and Southwold wards contain 17 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (19 per cent and 10 per cent fewer by 2005).

56 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Kessingland ward should be retained under three of its four alternative options. Under Option 2, however, it proposed that Kessingland parish be combined with the neighbouring parish of Benacre in a revised two-member Kessingland ward. The remainder of the existing Kessingland ward, Gisleham parish, would be combined with Rushmere and Carlton Colville parishes in a new Carlton Colville &

Gisleham ward, as detailed above. Three of the District Council's options proposed that part of the existing Mutford ward, the parishes of Barnby, Mutford and North Cove, should be combined with part of the existing Beccles Worlingham ward, Worlingham parish, to form a new two-member Worlingham ward. Under Option 1, the remaining part of Mutford ward, the parishes of Henstead with Hulver Street and Rushmere would form part of a new three-member South East Waveney ward together with the whole of the existing Southwold ward, the parishes of Blyford and Sotherton from the existing Blything ward and the parishes of Ellough, Shadingfield, Sotterley and Willingham St Mary from the existing Wainford ward. Under Options 1a and 2a, the remainder of the existing Mutford ward, the parishes of Henstead with Hulver Street and Rushmere, would form part of a new two-member South East Waveney Ward, together with the parishes of Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, South Cove, Uggeshall, Wangford with Henham and Wrentham from the existing Southwold ward, and the parishes of Blyford, Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Sotherton and Westhall from the existing Blything ward.

57 The Council's Option 2 would result in the whole of the existing Mutford ward, less Rushmere parish, being combined with Worlingham parish in a revised two-member Mutford ward. The remainder of the existing Mutford ward, Rushmere parish, would be combined with the parishes of Carlton Colville and Gisleham in a revised Carlton Colville ward, as detailed above.

58 In relation to the existing Southwold ward, Options 1a and 2a both proposed the creation of a new two-member Southwold & Reydon ward comprising Reydon parish and Southwold Town. Under these two options, the remainder of the existing Southwold ward would be combined with part of the existing Mutford ward and part of the existing Blything ward, to form a new two-member South East Waveney ward, as detailed above. Under the Council's Option 1, the whole of the existing Southwold ward would be combined with parts of the existing Blything, Mutford and Wainford wards in a new three-member South East Waveney ward, as detailed above. Under the Council's Option 2, part of the existing Southwold ward, the parishes of Covehithe, Frostenden, Reydon, South Cove, Southwold, Uggeshall, Wangford with Henham and Wrentham would combine with part of the existing Blything ward, the parishes of Blyford, Holton and Sotherton, in a new three-member South Waveney ward. The remaining part of the existing Southwold ward, Benacre parish, would form part of a revised two-member Kessingland ward, as detailed above.

59 Under our proposed council size of 48, and the Council's Options 1, 1a and 2a, Kessingland and Worlingham wards would contain 1 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent and 6 per cent more by 2005). Under Option 2, Kessingland and Mutford wards would contain 9 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 8 per cent more by 2005). The proposed Southwold & Reydon ward and alternative options of South East Waveney and South Waveney wards would contain 5 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer, 10 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2005).

60 The Labour Party proposed the creation of a revised two-member Kessingland ward, coterminous with the boundaries of Kessingland parish. The remainder of the existing

Kessingland ward, Gisleham parish, would be combined with Carlton Colville parish in a revised, three-member Carlton Colville ward, as detailed above. In relation to the Mutford area, it proposed that part of the existing Mutford ward, the parishes of Barnby and North Cove, be combined with part of the existing Beccles Worlingham ward, Worlingham parish, in a new two-member, Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove ward. The remainder of the existing Mutford ward would be divided between a revised Wainford ward and a new South East Waveney ward. The parishes of Mutford and Rushmere would be combined with the parishes of Barsham, Ellough, Ringsfield, Shadingfield, Shipmeadow, Sotterley, Weston and Willingham St Mary from the existing Wainford ward and the parishes of Mettingham and St John Ilketshall from the existing South Elmham ward, in a revised single-member Wainford ward. Henstead with Hulver parish would be combined with the whole of the existing Southwold ward to form a new, three-member South East Waveney ward. Under the Labour Party's proposals, the proposed Kessingland, South East Waveney, Wainford and Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove wards would contain 10 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent, 6 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent fewer by 2005).

61 We received a further seven submissions in relation to this area. The Conservatives supported the District Council's Option 1a for Kessingland, Southwold & Reydon and Worlingham wards. However, they argued that the proposed two-member South East Waveney ward would cover too large an area and should be divided into two single-member wards. They proposed that the parishes of Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, Henstead with Hulver Street, Rushmere, South Cove, Wangford with Henham and Wrentham should be combined to form a new single-member Wrentham ward. The parishes of Brampton with Stoven, Blyford, Holton, Sotherton, Uggeshall and Westhall should be combined to form a revised single-member Blything ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the revised Blything and new Wrentham wards would contain 13 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent and 5 per cent fewer by 2005).

62 The Liberal Democrats supported the amalgamation of Southwold and Reydon into a separate district ward, as did Southwold Town Council and two local residents. Southwold Town Council argued that Southwold and Reydon "form a natural unit being relatively densely-populated 'urban' parishes surrounded by much larger and more thinly-populated rural parishes". The Group Parish Council of Frostenden, Uggeshall & South Cove expressed support for the District Council's Option 2 for their group of parishes, while Worlingham Parish Council considered that the District Council's Option 1 would be its preferred option for Worlingham.

63 As part of the District Council's own consultation exercise, Benacre Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's Option 1, arguing that it would be united with similar rural areas as opposed to larger urban areas. Blyford & Sotherton Parish Council supported the Conservatives' proposed Blything ward. Brampton with Stoven Parish Council opposed the District Council's Options 1 and 2, with specific reference to the proposed size of rural wards. It argued that the concept of one councillor per ward should be maintained in relation to wards comprising rural parishes. In addition, it supported the amalgamation of Reydon and Southwold. Gisleham Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's Option 1 as did Henstead with Hulver Street Parish Council, which argued that the proposal would place them with similarly sized parishes. Holton Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's

Options 1a and 2a; however, it stated that the proposed two-member wards should be divided into two single-member wards (as proposed by the Conservatives). Mutford Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's Option 1. Reydon Parish Council strongly supported the amalgamation of Southwold and Reydon in a separate two-member ward. It argued that Southwold and Reydon are very closely linked, sharing common geographical and social issues. Parish Councillor Child, Chairman of Reydon Parish Council, also expressed this view.

64 Westhall Parish Council expressed concern in relation to the District Council's Options 1 and 2. It argued that the rural part of the district should comprise single-member wards in order to maintain the link between individual councillors and their parishes. In addition, it supported a separate ward for Southwold and Reydon. One local resident expressed support for the District Council's Option 1 while another local resident expressed support for the District Council's Option 2a, with specific reference to the amalgamation of Southwold and Reydon.

65 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we have decided to base our draft recommendations for this area on a combination of proposals received at Stage One. We consider that Kessingland, being a large, self-contained village to the east of the A12, should be separately represented. We consider this proposal would reflect the identities and interests of the local community while providing a reasonable level of electoral equality, and we therefore propose endorsing the Labour Party's proposal for Kessingland ward. We also propose adopting the Labour Party's proposals in the Mutford area but propose changing the name of Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove ward to Worlingham ward. We note that while this ward would have a relatively small electorate for a two-member ward, extensive new development in Worlingham parish means that the proposed ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality by 2005.

66 In relation to the more rural remainder of this area, we note that there is considerable support for separate representation for Reydon and Southwold and for a single-member ward pattern elsewhere. We consider that Reydon and Southwold are distinct settlements which share considerable community ties and are significantly more urban in nature than the areas that neighbour them. The rural areas outside Kessingland, Southwold and Reydon are sparsely populated and we consider that in this area a single-member ward structure would best reflect community ties and the achievement of convenient and effective local government. We are therefore basing our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals. However, in order to improve electoral equality in its proposed Blything and Wainford wards we propose a number of changes. In particular, we propose that Mutford parish should form part of a revised Wainford ward as detailed below, and that Wangford with Henham parish should form part of a revised Blything ward, also detailed below. We propose a new Wrentham ward containing Gisleham parish from Kessingland ward, Rushmere and Henstead with Hulver Street parishes from the existing Mutford ward, and Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, South Cove, Uggeshall and Wrentham parishes from the existing Southwold ward. We consider that this ward would group a number of similar communities linked by the A12 trunk road and would also enable the Group Parish Council of Frostenden, Uggeshall & South Cove to be contained wholly within one ward.

67 Under our draft recommendations, Kessingland, Worlingham and Wrentham wards would contain 10 per cent, 9 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 7 per cent, 4 per cent and 5 per cent fewer by 2005. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Blything, South Elmham and Wainford wards

68 The existing wards of Blything, South Elmham and Wainford are situated in the central and western part of the district. Blything ward comprises the parishes of Blyford, Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Sotherton, Spexhall, Westhall and Wissett. South Elmham ward comprises the parishes of Flixton (near Bungay), St John Ilketshall, St Lawrence Ilketshall, St Margaret Ilketshall, Mettingham, Rumburgh, All Saints & St Nicholas South Elmham, St Cross South Elmham, St James South Elmham, St Margaret South Elmham, St Mary South Elmham, otherwise Homersfield, St Michael South Elmham and St Peter South Elmham. Wainford ward comprises the parishes of Barsham, Ellough, St Andrew Ilketshall, Redisham, Ringsfield, Shadingfield, Shipmeadow, Sotterley, Weston and Willingham St Mary. All three wards are currently each represented by a single councillor. Under existing arrangements, South Elmham and Wainford wards contain 17 per cent and 24 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent and 26 per cent fewer by 2005), while Blything ward contains equal to the average number of electors per councillor initially (1 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

69 At Stage One, the District Council proposed the same revised warding arrangements in this area under two of its four options. Options 1a and 2a provided for a new two-member South East Waveney ward comprising the parishes of Benacre, Covehithe, Frostenden, South Cove, Uggeshall, Wangford with Henham and Wrentham from the existing Southwold ward, the parishes of Henstead with Hulver Street and Rushmere from the existing Mutford ward and the parishes of Blyford, Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Sotherton and Westhall from the existing Blything ward. Under these two options, the remaining part of the existing Blything ward, the parishes of Spexhall and Wissett, would combine with the whole of the existing South Elmham and the whole of the existing Wainford wards to form a new two-member Central & West ward.

70 The Council's Option 1 would result in the parishes of Blyford and Sotherton from the existing Blything ward being combined with the parishes of Henstead with Hulver Street and Rushmere from the existing Mutford ward, the parishes of Ellough, Shadingfield, Sotterley and Willingham St Mary from the existing Wainford ward, together with the whole of the existing Southwold ward, in a new three-member South East Waveney ward. The remaining part of the existing Blything ward, the parishes of Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Spexhall, Westhall and Wissett would be combined with the whole of the existing South Elmham ward and the remaining part of the existing Wainford ward, the parishes of Barsham, St Andrew Ilketshall, Redisham, Ringsfield, Shipmeadow and Weston, in a new two-member Central & West ward.

71 The Council's Option 2 would result in the parishes of Blyford, Holton and Sotherton from the existing Blything ward being combined with the parishes of Covehithe, Frostenden, Reydon, Southwold, South Cove, Uggeshall Wangford with Henham and Wrentham from the existing Southwold ward in a new three-member South Waveney ward. Part of the remaining part of Blything ward, the parishes of Spexhall, Westhall and Wissett, would combine with the existing South Elmham ward, less the parishes of Mettingham and St John Ilketshall, in a new single-member West Waveney ward. The remaining part of Blything ward, Brampton with Stoven parish, would combine with the remaining part of South Elmham ward, the parishes of St John

Ilketshall and Mettingham and the whole of the existing Wainford ward in a revised single-member Wainford ward.

72 Under our proposed council size of 48, the Council's Options 1a and 2a would provide two two-member wards of South East Waveney and Central & West with 8 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent and 12 per cent fewer by 2005). Option 1 would, under a council size of 48, provide a three-member South East Waveney ward and a two-member Central & West ward with 7 per cent and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent and 14 per cent more by 2005). Option 2 would provide a three-member South Waveney ward and single-member Wainford and West Waveney wards with 7 per cent, 6 per cent, and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent, 3 per cent and 8 per cent more by 2005).

73 The Labour Party proposed that the whole of the existing Blything ward should be combined with the existing South Elmham ward, less the parishes of Mettingham and St John Ilketshall, and the parishes of Redisham and St Andrew Ilketshall from the existing Wainford ward to form a new, two-member South West Waveney ward. The remaining part of the existing South Elmham and Wainford wards would be combined with Mutford and Rushmere parishes from the existing Mutford ward to form a revised single-member Wainford ward. Under the Labour Party's proposals, the new South West Waveney and Wainford wards would each contain 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent and 7 per cent fewer by 2005).

74 The Conservatives broadly supported the District Council's Option 1a with the exception of the proposed South East Waveney and Central & West wards. They proposed the creation of four single-member wards, instead of two, two-member wards – Blything, Wrentham, South Elmham and Wainford. The proposed single-member Wainford ward would comprise the parishes of Barsham, Ellough, St Andrew Ilketshall, St John Ilketshall, Mettingham, Redisham, Ringsfield, Shadingfield, Shipmeadow, Sotterley, Weston and Willingham St Mary, while the proposed single-member South Elmham ward would comprise the parishes of Flixton (near Bungay), St Mary South Elmham, otherwise Homersfield, St Lawrence Ilketshall, St Margaret Ilketshall, Rumburgh, All Saints & St Nicholas South Elmham, St Cross South Elmham, St James South Elmham, St Margaret South Elmham, St Michael South Elmham, St Peter South Elmham, Spexhall and Wissett. Its proposed Blything ward would contain Blyford, Brampton with Stoven, Holton, Sotherton, Uggeshall and Westhall parishes. Its proposed Wrentham ward is detailed above. It argued that the proposals would reflect the historic links between Blyford, Sotherton, and Holton and those between the villages that make up South Elmham ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the revised Blything, Wainford and South Elmham wards would contain 13 per cent, 13 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent, 15 per cent and 9 per cent fewer by 2005).

75 The Liberal Democrats expressed support for the District Council's proposed West Waveney ward with its eastern boundary of Wissett, Spexhall, Westhall, St Lawrence Ilketshall, St Margaret Ilketshall and Flixton parishes. Rumburgh Parish Council strongly opposed the District Council's Option 1, arguing that under this proposal, the parish is in a ward that covers a third of the land area of the district, which it considers would be inappropriate for such a rural area. It

proposed an alternative based largely on the District Council's proposed West Waveney ward, but with the exclusion of Westhall parish (effectively the same as the Conservatives' proposed South Elmham ward). In addition, it also expressed opposition for the proposed name of West Waveney arguing that the South Elmhams are one of the most historical groupings of parishes in East Anglia.

76 As part of the Council's own consultation exercise, we received representations from Brampton with Stoven, Holton and Westhall parish councils which all supported separate representation for Southwold and Reydon and the creation of single-member wards in the rural area of the district.

77 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals for this area, subject to minor modifications. As mentioned above, we concur with the view expressed by a number of respondents that the proposed wards under the Council's options would cover too large an area of the district and as a result, we consider would not satisfactorily represent the identities and interests of local communities. However, under the Conservatives' proposals, the proposed Blything and Wainford wards would have 14 per cent and 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively by 2005. We consider that this level of electoral inequality should be addressed, and we therefore propose a number of modifications. In particular, we propose that Wainford ward be expanded to include Mutford parish as proposed by the Labour Party, that Wangford with Henham parish form part of a revised Blything ward and that Gisleham and Uggeshall parishes form part of a new Wrentham ward. We consider that the Conservatives' proposed South Elmham ward would reflect communities well, combining the rural communities between Bungay and Halesworth and broadly to the west of the A144 trunk road. We note a number of suggested ward names for this ward. For the purpose of consultation, we propose that the ward should be named The Saints to reflect the names of a number of parishes in the area. We would, however, particularly welcome further views on this issue at Stage Three.

78 Under our draft recommendations, The Saints ward would contain 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent fewer by 2005). Blything and Wainford wards would contain 7 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average respectively (6 per cent and 7 per cent more by 2005). Our proposals for this area illustrated on Map 2.

Bungay and Halesworth wards

79 The existing ward of Bungay is situated in the north-west of the district and is coterminous with Bungay Town. Halesworth ward is situated in the south of the district bordering Suffolk Coastal district and is coterminous with Halesworth council area. Both wards are currently represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Bungay and Halesworth wards contain 5 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent and 3 per cent more by 2005).

80 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for Bungay and Halesworth wards. The Labour Party, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats also supported the retention of the existing Bungay and Halesworth wards.

81 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we concur with the view that the existing Bungay and Halesworth wards should be retained. We note that these are distinctive, self-contained market towns with established communities, and that both wards provide a reasonable level of electoral equality under existing arrangements.

82 Under our draft recommendations, Bungay and Halesworth wards would contain 5 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent and 4 per cent more by 2005).

Gunton, Lothingland and Oulton Broad wards

83 The existing wards of Gunton, Lothingland and Oulton Broad are situated in the north-eastern corner of the district. Lothingland ward comprises the parishes of Blundeston, Corton, Flixton (near Lowestoft), Lound, Oulton and Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet and is currently represented by two councillors. Gunton and Oulton Broad wards form part of the unparished town area of Lowestoft and are currently each represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Gunton and Oulton Broad wards contain 8 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (12 per cent and 8 per cent fewer by 2005). Lothingland ward contains 35 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, deteriorating to 58 per cent more by 2005.

84 At Stage One, the District Council proposed two alternative options for Gunton, Lothingland and Oulton Broad wards. Its Option 1 was based on minimal change, and retained the existing Lothingland ward, while increasing its representation from two to three councillors in order to deal with the high level of electoral inequality which currently exists. In addition, it proposed broadly retaining the existing Oulton Broad ward with the addition of the area bounded by Gloucester Avenue, Somerleyton Road and Oulton Road (polling District FB), from St Margaret's ward. Under this option, the existing Gunton ward would also be broadly retained with the exception of its southern boundary, where the Council proposed that the boundary should follow the rear of properties on St Margaret's Road to the junction with the High Street, continuing in an easterly direction to the district boundary. The representation of the revised Gunton ward would be reduced from three to two. The Council proposed that the area south of these roads should be transferred to the neighbouring Harbour ward.

85 Under our proposed council size of 48, Lothingland ward would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 5 per cent more than the average by 2005. Gunton and Oulton Broad wards would have 5 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the average respectively (1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer by 2005).

86 The Council's Option 2 proposed a far more radical change to the wards of Lothingland, Gunton and Oulton Broad. It proposed that Lothingland ward be retained as a predominantly rural ward and that the more urban areas of Oulton and Corton be combined with parts of Lowestoft. The revised single-member Lothingland ward would comprise the parishes of Blundeston, Flixton (near Lowestoft), Lound and Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet. The existing Oulton parish would be combined with the Parkhill and Spashett Road areas of St Margaret's ward to form a new three-member Oulton ward. The existing Gunton ward, less the area to the south of St

Margaret's Road and The Ravine, would be combined with Corton parish and the part of the existing St Margaret's ward to the east of Hollingsworth Road in a new three-member Gunton with Corton ward. As under Option 1, the area to the south of St Margaret's Road and The Ravine would be transferred to the neighbouring Harbour ward.

87 The most radical modification under this option is in relation to the existing Oulton Broad ward. The northern part of the existing ward would be combined with the area bounded by Crestview Drive and Somerleyton Road from St Margaret's ward, along with the area to the north-west of Fir Lane and the properties on the south-east side of Monkton Drive from Normanston ward to form a new three-member Oulton Broad North ward. The southern boundary for this new ward would follow in an westerly direction along the Lowestoft to Norwich railway line, along Hall Road to the junction with Gilpin Road, heading in a northerly direction to the junction with Clarkson Road, continuing in a westerly direction to the rear of properties on Clarkson Road, and Prospect Road to the district boundary. The part of the existing Oulton Broad ward to the south of this boundary would be combined with parts of Carlton and Whitton wards in a new Oulton Broad South ward, which is discussed in more detail below. As a result therefore, this option would combine areas on either side of Lake Lothing and Oulton Broad in a new ward.

88 Under our proposed council size of 48, Lothingland, Gunton with Corton and Oulton wards would contain 10 per cent, 2 per cent and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2005). Oulton Broad North ward would contain 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent fewer by 2005).

89 The Labour Party also proposed that the predominantly urban areas of Corton and Oulton be combined with parts of Lowestoft, resulting in a rural, single-member Lothingland ward comprising the parishes of Blundeston, Flixton (near Lowestoft), Lound and Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet. It also proposed a new two-member Oulton ward, combining the existing Oulton parish with the northern part of Oulton Broad ward so that the southern boundary would follow to the rear of properties on Sands Lane, including the whole of Chestnut Avenue, the rear of properties on Clarkson Road and Prospect Road in a westerly direction to the district boundary. The area to the south of this new boundary would form a revised two-member Oulton Broad ward which would retain its existing southern and eastern boundaries, with a minor modification to its northern boundary to transfer Gloucester Avenue and adjoining roads to the neighbouring St Margaret's ward. In relation to the existing Gunton ward, the Labour Party proposed that the northern part of the ward be combined with Corton parish to form a new two-member Gunton North & Corton ward. The southern boundary would continue down Yarmouth Road to the junction with The Ravine then continue in a easterly direction to the district boundary. It proposed that the southern part of the current Gunton ward, broadly to the south of Yarmouth Road and the Sparrow's Nest Theatre, should be combined with Harbour ward, as discussed below.

90 Under the Labour Party's proposals, Gunton North & Corton and Oulton Broad wards would contain 6 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent and 4 per cent more by 2005). Lothingland and Oulton wards would contain 10 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent fewer and 18 per cent more by 2005).

91 We received a further two representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives expressed support for the District Council's Option 1, while the Liberal Democrats strongly opposed Option 1 and offered alternative proposals for the South Lowestoft wards, discussed in more detail below. As part of the Council's own consultation exercise, two residents of Parkside Drive expressed the view that the area would be better represented in Oulton Broad ward.

92 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we concur with the view that Oulton and Corton, being predominantly urban areas, would be better represented if they were combined with parts of the existing Oulton Broad and Gunton wards respectively. This would result in the creation of a predominantly rural single-member Lothingland ward, as proposed by the Labour Party and under the District Council's Option 2. However, after closer inspection of the electorate forecasts for this area, we found that it had been assumed that electorate growth would be distributed equally across the current Lothingland ward. However, much of the forecast development is expected to take place in Oulton parish in the Parkhill development and on land north of Sands Lane (known locally as Wood's Meadow). As a result, there would be insufficient electorate in the proposed Lothingland ward by 2005 to achieve an acceptable level of electoral equality. In order to improve electoral equality, we propose transferring 73 electors from the Camps Heath area of Oulton parish into a revised single-member Lothingland ward. We propose that Oulton parish, less Camps Heath, be combined with the area to the north of Clarkson Road and Prospect Road from the existing Oulton Broad ward, as proposed by the Labour Party, to form a new, two-member Oulton ward. However, we propose that 87 electors from Chestnut Avenue be transferred to Oulton Broad ward and that the new development area of Parkhill, which is currently divided between Oulton parish and St Margaret's ward, should form part of a revised St Margaret's ward, as detailed below.

93 We propose basing our draft recommendations for the revised Oulton Broad ward on the Labour Party's proposals which, we consider provides for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We note that its proposal would retain the majority of Oulton Broad within one ward and would retain Lake Lothing as a ward boundary. However, we propose two minor modifications to the eastern boundary. We propose that the area surrounding Monkton Avenue be transferred to the neighbouring Normanston ward in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality. In addition, we propose that the boundary which currently lies to the east of Peto Way be modified to follow Peto Way, which would tie the boundary to ground detail while affecting no electors. Finally, we propose endorsing the Labour Party's proposals for Gunton ward but propose changing the proposed name of Gunton North & Corton to Gunton & Corton. We consider that there is a great deal of similarity between Gunton and Corton, and that the Ravine and Yarmouth Road provide a good, clear boundary for a new ward.

94 Under our draft recommendations, Lothingland and Oulton wards would contain 6 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2005). Gunton & Corton and Oulton Broad wards would contain 6 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average respectively (1 per cent more and 3 per cent more by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report.

Harbour, Normanston and St Margaret's wards

95 The existing wards of Harbour, Normanston and St Margaret's are situated in the north-eastern corner of the district and form part of the unparished area of Lowestoft. All three wards are currently each represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Harbour and Normanston wards contain 27 per cent and 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (29 per cent and 25 per cent fewer by 2005). St Margaret's ward contains 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent more by 2005).

96 The District Council proposed two alternative options for this area. Option 1 proposed broadly retaining the existing three-member St Margaret's ward, with the exception of the transfer of the area in the south-west corner (polling district FB) to the neighbouring Oulton Broad ward, as detailed above. Under this option, the boundaries of the existing Normanston ward would remain unchanged, with the exception of the boundary with Harbour ward. The revised boundary would result in the Winnipeg Road area being transferred from Harbour ward to Normanston ward and the area bounded by Love Road and Avondale Road being transferred from Normanston to Harbour ward. The revised Harbour ward would retain its existing southern boundary of Lake Lothing and the Harbour, but would be expanded northwards to include that part of Gunton ward to the south of St Margaret's Road. Harbour ward would continue to be represented by three councillors, while the revised Normanston ward would be represented by two councillors. Under our proposed council size of 48, Harbour and Normanston wards would have 8 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more and equal to the average by 2005). St Margaret's ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average currently, and 6 per cent fewer by 2005.

97 Under the Council's Option 2, the most significant change would occur in relation to St Margaret's ward which would be divided between the neighbouring five wards. The majority of St Margaret's ward, the area to the north of Montgomery Avenue and west of Hollingsworth Road would form part of a new Oulton ward, with the south-westerly corner forming part of a new Oulton Broad North ward, as detailed above. The area to the south of Montgomery Avenue and west of Somerton Avenue would be combined with part of the existing Normanston ward in a new Central ward. The area to the east of Hollingsworth Road and Somerton Avenue would form part of a new Gunton & Corton ward, less the Church Road area which would transfer to Harbour ward. The area surrounding Newbon's Meadow and the area bordered by Norwich Road and Rotterdam Road, from Normanston ward would both be transferred to the neighbouring Harbour ward. The new three-member Central ward would also contain the area to the west of Raglan Street from the existing Harbour ward. The area to the west of Fir Lane would also be transferred from Normanston ward to a new Oulton Broad North ward, as detailed above. The remainder of the existing Harbour ward would be combined with part of the existing Gunton ward, to the south of St Margaret's Road, as detailed above, to form a revised three-member Harbour ward.

98 Under our proposed council size of 48, Central and Harbour wards would contain 3 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent and 10 per cent fewer by 2005).

99 The Labour Party proposed broadly retaining the existing boundaries of St Margaret's ward subject to the inclusion of a number of streets around Gloucester Avenue from Oulton Broad ward, as detailed above. In addition, they proposed that the Ashley Downs area be transferred to the neighbouring Harbour ward. They proposed that the boundaries of the existing Normanston ward should be broadly retained, with the exception of the boundary between Normanston and Harbour wards, where the area bounded by Roman Road, Clapham Road South and the Harbour (polling district DN), would be transferred from Harbour ward to Normanston ward. The revised St Margaret's and Normanston wards would both be represented by three councillors. The remaining part of Harbour ward would be combined with the part of Gunton ward to the south of The Ravine and Yarmouth Road and the Ashley Downs area from St Margaret's ward, in a revised three-member Harbour ward, as detailed above.

100 Under the Labour Party's proposals, Harbour and Normanston wards would each contain equal to the average number of electors per councillor (4 per cent and 5 per cent fewer respectively by 2005). St Margaret's ward would contain 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average and 1 per cent fewer by 2005.

101 We received a further two representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives expressed support for the District Council's Option 1, while the Liberal Democrats strongly opposed Option 1 and offered alternative proposals for the South Lowestoft wards, discussed in more detail below. As part of the Council's own consultation exercise, two residents of Parkside Drive expressed the view that they would be better represented in Oulton Broad ward. Another local resident opposed the Council's Option 2, arguing that the proposed new Central ward would not adequately reflect community identity. He expressed support for Option 1.

102 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we have decided to base our draft recommendations for Harbour, Normanston and St Margaret's wards on the Labour Party's proposals, which we consider provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. However, we propose modifying the Labour Party's proposals in order to better reflect the local communities in the area. Under existing arrangements, the western boundary of St Margaret's ward, which the Labour Party propose retaining, the Parkhill development and in particular Wainright Close is dissected by the ward boundary. We propose that the whole of the Parkhill development, including that part that currently forms part of Oulton parish, be transferred to a revised St Margaret's ward. In addition, we consider that the Ashley Downs area, which under the Labour Party's proposals would be transferred to a revised Harbour ward, would be better represented in a revised Normanston ward. In addition to this modification and the modifications to the boundary with Oulton Broad ward, as detailed above, we also propose minor modifications to the boundary between Normanston and Harbour wards. We consider that Bevan Street, Commercial Road and Clapham Road South are integral parts of the current Harbour ward and should not be transferred to Normanston ward. We recognise, however, that it is a particularly difficult to provide a good balance between electoral equality and community identities in this area. We propose that the Princes Road area be transferred from Normanston ward to Harbour ward and the area between Clapham Road South and Trafalgar Street continue to form part of Harbour ward. In addition we propose two minor boundary amendments, one to the west side of the football ground on Yeovil Road and to the eastern boundary of St Margaret's ward in order to tie the existing boundaries to ground detail. This changes would affect no electors.

103 Under our draft recommendations, Harbour ward would contain 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more by 2005). Normanston and St Margaret's wards would contain 2 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Carlton, Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton wards

104 The existing wards of Carlton, Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton cover the unparished area of South Lowestoft. All four wards are currently represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Kirkley and Whitton wards contain 20 per cent and 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent and 24 per cent fewer by 2005). Pakefield and Carlton wards have equal to and 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer and 14 per cent more than the average by 2005).

105 The District Council proposed two alternative options for South Lowestoft. Under Option 1, a revised three-member Carlton ward would retain part of its northern boundary of Lake Lothing, west of Oulton Broad to the Saltwater Way. The boundary would then continue in a southerly direction along the Lowestoft to Ipswich railway line to the junction with Beccles Road, easterly along Dell Road, then to the rear of Dell Primary School until it meets the existing boundary. The area to the east of this new boundary, the Victoria Road and Dell Road areas, would be transferred to a revised Whitton ward. The existing Carlton ward boundaries would be retained for the rest of the revised ward, with a minor modification in the south following Bloodmoor Road. The revised three-member Whitton ward would retain its existing northern and southern boundaries, but would be combined with the area surrounding Dell Road and Victoria Road from the existing Carlton ward, as detailed above. In addition, the area to the west of Kirkley Street and north of Carlton Road would be transferred from the existing Kirkley ward. The remaining part of the existing Kirkley ward, less the properties on the east side of The Avenue and adjoining roads and the properties on the west side of London Road, would form a revised two-member Kirkley ward. The existing three-member Pakefield ward would remain broadly unchanged under this option, with the exception of the northern boundary which would follow the rear of The Avenue and the west side of London Road, as detailed above. There would also be a minor modification to the boundary with Carlton ward, near Bloodmoor Road, as detailed above.

106 Under our proposed council size of 48, Whitton ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average and 6 per cent fewer by 2005. Kirkley, Carlton and Pakefield wards would have 11 per cent, 5 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (6 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer by 2005).

107 Under Option 2, the District Council proposed a new three-member Oulton Broad South ward comprising part of the existing Oulton Broad ward, as detailed above, together with the area of Carlton ward to the north-west of Cotmer Road, Colville Road and Rowan Way, together with the Aubretia Close area from the existing Whitton ward. The remaining part of the existing Carlton ward would be combined with Long Road and adjoining roads from Pakefield ward

together with the part of Whitton ward to the south of Hawthorn Avenue and Cypress Way to the west of Kirkley Run, in a revised three-member Carlton ward. The remaining part of the existing Whitton ward would combine with the existing Kirkley ward, excluding the area surrounding Kirkley Gardens and Kirkley Park Road, to form a new three-member Lake Lothing ward. The part of the existing Kirkley ward surrounding Kirkley Gardens and Kirkley Park Road would then be combined with the remaining part of the existing Pakefield ward in a revised three-member Pakefield ward.

108 Under our proposed council size of 48, Oulton Broad South, Lake Lothing and Pakefield wards would each contain 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Carlton ward would contain equal to the average number of electors per councillor now, and 5 per cent fewer by 2005.

109 The Labour Party proposed a revised two-member Carlton ward containing the part of the existing ward to the west of Elm Tree Road, Cotmer Road and Bridge Road. The majority of the remaining Carlton ward would be combined with the part of the existing Whitton ward to the west of Kirkley Run, in a revised three-member Whitton ward. The Labour Party proposed that 161 electors on Long Road (from Carlton ward) should be combined with the existing Pakefield ward in a revised three-member Pakefield ward. The remaining part of Whitton ward would be combined with the existing Kirkley ward to form a revised three-member Kirkley ward.

110 Under the Labour Party's proposals, Carlton, Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton wards would contain 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more than the average by 2005).

111 We received a further two representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives expressed support for the District Council's Option 1 while the Liberal Democrats strongly opposed the District Council's Option 1, arguing that it is a "political option". It proposed that Pakefield ward remain unchanged and that Kirkley ward should retain three councillors by combining the area to the east of Kirkley Run in the existing ward. As part of the Council's own consultation exercise, a local resident argued that under both Options 1 and 2, Kirkley ward would be "down graded". He suggested that the boundaries of Kirkley ward should be extended to coincide with the boundaries of the Single Regeneration Budget area.

112 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we have decided to base our draft recommendations for the South Lowestoft wards on the Labour Party's proposals which we consider provide for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we note that the proposals would largely retain the current Pakefield ward and would not divide the Kirkley community. However, we propose a few minor modifications. In relation to Carlton ward, we concur with the view that Elm Tree Road and Cotmner Road would provide a strong eastern boundary for a new ward. However, we propose that in the north, the boundary should follow the western side of the Broadlands Holiday Village, transferring this area to the neighbouring Whitton ward. In relation to Whitton ward, we propose that the western boundary of the revised Kirkley ward should follow the rear of properties on Kirkley Run, resulting in the transfer of an additional 117 electors to the neighbouring Kirkley ward. We consider that the best

warding arrangement for the Kirkley area is to retain three councillors but to expand the ward westwards, as proposed by the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. We consider that the alternative proposal for a two-member ward would divide the Kirkley area, one of the most established communities in Lowestoft. We also propose a minor amendment to the Labour Party's proposed boundaries for Pakefield ward.

113 We note the differing views expressed in relation to Long Road. While the District Council's Option 2 transferred the road together with all streets leading from it to Carlton ward, the Labour Party proposed that the whole of Long Road form part of Pakefield ward. We consider that the District Council's proposal would provide the clearest boundary in this area with the "Green Wedge" to the rear of Long Road earmarked for a new road. We consider on balance that the current boundary of Long Road would provide the best boundary for the two wards. We do, however, consider that the boundary between Kirkley and Pakefield wards could be improved and propose that the boundary should follow the rear of properties on The Avenue, resulting in the transfer of 126 electors from Kirkley ward to Pakefield ward. We also propose that the boundary continue along Kensington Road, resulting in the transfer of 61 electors from Pakefield ward to Kirkley ward. We note that our proposals reflect elements of views expressed by the Liberal Democrats and a local resident, specifically in relation to the Kirkley and Pakefield wards, which would be broadly retained.

114 Under our draft recommendations, Carlton, Kirkley, Pakefield and Whitton wards would contain 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 1 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

115 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds for Waveney District Council.

Conclusions

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

- a council of 48 members should be retained;
- there should be 23 wards;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two wards;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

117 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on a combination of the District Council's, the Labour Party's and the Conservatives' proposals. Our proposals for the following areas are outlined below:

- we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals for Blything, South Elmham Wainford and Wrentham wards subject to transferring Wangford with Henham parish to Blything ward, Gisleham and Uggeshall parishes to Wrentham ward, Mutford parish to Wainford ward, and a ward name change;
- we propose a new Southwold & Reydon ward as proposed by the District Council in Options 1a and 2a;
- we propose retaining unchanged Bungay and Halesworth wards as proposed by the Labour Party, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats;
- we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for Beccles and Carlton Coville (under Options 1,1a and 2a), subject to minor boundary changes in Beccles;
- we propose adopting the Labour Party's proposals for Lowestoft wards, Kessingland and Lothingland wards subject to a number of boundary modifications, and a ward name change;
- we propose adopting the Labour Party's proposed Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove ward subject to a ward name change.

118 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	48	48	48	48
Number of wards	21	23	21	23
Average number of electors per councillor	1,826	1,826	1,928	1,928
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	1	12	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	8	0

119 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Waveney District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 11 to one. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation
 Waveney District Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 23 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A, and on the large map inside the back cover of this report. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

120 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the town of Beccles and the parish of Oulton to reflect the proposed district wards.

121 The town of Beccles is currently served by 16 councillors representing four wards – Centre, Common, Rigbourne and School – each returning four councillors. At Stage One, the District Council and the Labour Party proposed the creation of new Beccles North and Beccles South district wards comprising the four wards of Beccles Town. As part of our draft recommendations, we propose the creation of two new wards in the Beccles area based on elements of both the District Council’s and the Labour Party’s proposals, together with some of our own proposals. The new Beccles South district ward would be coterminous with a revised Rigbourne ward and a new Darby ward of Beccles Town. At Stage One, the Labour Party proposed that Beccles School ward be renamed. In the absence of any locally generated proposals, we propose the name of Darby ward, reflecting Darby Road as one of the main focal points of the revised parish ward. We propose that the revised Rigbourne ward should contain the current ward, less that area to the north of properties on Ellough Road, with the addition of the St Andrew’s Road area from the current School ward, as its main access is from Banham Road. We propose that the new Darby ward should reflect the current School ward less the area to the west of Beccles Cemetery and the St Andrew’s Road area.

122 The new Beccles North district ward would be coterminous with Centre and Common wards of Beccles Town. As proposed by the Labour Party, we also propose modifying the current Centre and Common wards to equalise electorates. We propose that Common ward be expanded to include the whole of Grove Road, The Harbourage, Holly Grove and Kibrack areas from Centre ward, in addition to the Lowestoft Road area from Rigbourne ward. Centre ward would, in turn, be expanded to include the area to the south of Ashman’s Road and west of Beccles Cemetery from School ward, and all residential properties in the Newgate, Smallgate, Saltgate and Manor House Lane area. We consider that these proposals would provide more even-sized town council wards and would unite the main shopping area in Centre ward.

<p>Draft Recommendation Beccles Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Centre, Common, Darby and Rigbourne, each returning four councillors. The town ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, and are illustrated and named on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.</p>

123 The parish of Oulton is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. As part of our draft recommendations we propose dividing the parish of Oulton between the three district wards of Lothingland, Oulton and St Margaret’s. Consequentially, we propose that the parish should be divided into three parish wards. Camps Heath ward, which would form part of Lothingland ward, would be represented by one councillor; Oulton ward, which would form part of the new Oulton ward, would be represented by five councillors; and Parkhill ward, which would form part of St Margaret’s ward, would return four councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Oulton Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, one more than at present, representing three wards: Camps Heath, returning one councillor; Oulton, returning five councillors; and Parkhill returning four councillors. The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted in the back cover of this report.

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

Draft Recommendation

For parish and town councils, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

125 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Waveney and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Waveney

5 NEXT STEPS

126 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 March 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

127 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Waveney Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

Website: www.lgce.gov.uk

128 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Waveney: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundaries in the Beccles area – Beccles South ward;

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundaries in the Beccles area – Beccles North ward.

The **large map** inserted in the back cover of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the Lowestoft area.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Waveney: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed boundaries in the Beccles area – Beccles South ward

Map A3: Proposed boundaries in the Beccles area – Beccles North ward

APPENDIX B

Waveney District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 are based on elements of all the district-wide proposals submitted at Stage One. The details of these proposals are as follows:

Figure B1: Waveney District Council's Proposals – Option 1: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Beccles North	2	3,880	1,940	4	3,953	1,977	0
Beccles South	2	3,934	1,967	5	4,053	2,027	3
Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	3	3,998	1,999	1
Carlton	3	5,732	1,911	2	5,743	1,914	-3
Carlton Colville	3	4,687	1,562	-16	6,098	2,033	3
Central & West	2	4,248	2,124	14	4,406	2,203	12
Gunton	2	3,853	1,927	3	3,883	1,942	-1
Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	1	3,989	1,995	1
Harbour	3	5,916	1,972	6	6,015	2,005	2
Kessingland	2	3,673	1,837	-2	3,967	1,984	1
Kirkley	2	4,037	2,019	8	4,094	2,047	4
Lothingland	3	4,923	1,641	-12	6,090	2,030	3
Normanston	2	3,851	1,926	3	3,859	1,930	-2
Oulton Broad	3	5,701	1,900	2	5,739	1,913	-3
Pakefield	3	5,614	1,871	0	5,648	1,883	-4
South East Waveney	3	5,875	1,958	5	6,040	2,013	2
St Margaret's	3	5,045	1,682	-10	5,424	1,808	-8

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Whitton	3	5,391	1,797	-4	5,466	1,822	-7
Worlingham	2	3,714	1,857	0	4,107	2,054	4
Totals	47	87,667	-	-	92,572	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,865	-	-	1,970	-

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

Note: 1. 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.

2. Further to detailed analysis of electorate forecasts, we have made a number of amendments to electorate figures for 2005. There remains some small anomalies in the electorate figures. Small changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

Figure B2: Waveney District Council's Proposals – Option 1a (Rural Variations): Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Central & West	2	3,280	1,640	-10	3,388	1,694	-12
South East Waveney	2	3,364	1,682	-8	3,485	1,743	-10
Southwold & Reydon	2	3,479	1,740	-5	3,573	1,787	-7

Figure B3: Waveney District Council's Proposals – Option 2: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Beccles North	2	3,880	1,940	6	3,953	1,977	2
Beccles South	2	3,934	1,967	8	4,053	2,027	5
Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	5	3,998	1,999	4
Carlton Colville & Gisleham	3	5,144	1,715	-6	6,483	2,161	12
Carlton	3	5,454	1,818	0	5,501	1,834	-5
Central	3	5,658	1,886	3	5,700	1,900	-1
Gunton with Corton	3	5,353	1,784	-2	5,404	1,801	-7
Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	3	3,989	1,995	3
Harbour	3	5,104	1,701	-7	5,180	1,727	-10
Kessingland	2	3,316	1,658	-9	3,871	1,936	0
Lake Lothing	3	5,634	1,878	3	5,711	1,904	-1
Lothingland	1	1,643	1,643	-10	1,675	1,675	-13
Mutford	2	3,964	1,982	9	4,182	2,091	8
Oulton	3	4,400	1,467	-20	5,832	1,944	1
Oulton Broad North	3	5,523	1,841	1	5,601	1,867	-3
Oulton Broad South	3	5,659	1,886	3	5,678	1,893	-2
Pakefield	3	5,635	1,878	3	5,669	1,890	-2
South Waveney	3	5,843	1,948	7	6,015	2,005	4
Wainford	1	1,935	1,935	6	1,992	1,992	3
West Waveney	1	1,995	1,995	9	2,075	2,075	8
Totals	48	87,667	-	-	92,562	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,826	-	-	1,928	-

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

Note: 1. 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.

2. Further to detailed analysis of electorate forecasts, we have made a number of amendments to electorate figures for 2005. There remains some small anomalies in the electorate figures. Small changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

Figure B4: Waveney District Council's Proposals – Option 2a (Rural Variations): Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Carlton Colville	3	4,687	1,562	-13	6,098	2,033	8
Central & West	2	3,280	1,640	-8	3,388	1,694	-10
Kessingland	2	3,673	1,837	3	3,967	1,984	5
South East Waveney	2	3,364	1,682	-6	3,485	1,743	-8
Southwold & Reydon	2	3,479	1,740	-3	3,573	1,787	-5
Worlingham	2	3,714	1,857	4	4,107	2,054	9

Waveney Constituency Labour Party's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B5: Waveney Constituency Labour Party's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Beccles North	2	3,821	1,911	5	3,939	1,970	2
Beccles South	2	3,993	1,997	9	4,217	2,109	9
Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	5	3,989	1,995	3
Carlton	2	3,729	1,865	2	3,737	1,869	-3
Carlton Colville	3	5,072	1,691	-7	6,483	2,161	12
Gunton North & Corton	2	3,874	1,937	6	3,906	1,953	1
Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	3	3,998	1,999	4
Harbour	3	5,498	1,833	0	5,582	1,861	-4
Kessingland	2	3,288	1,644	-10	3,582	1,791	-7
Kirkley	3	5,529	1,843	1	5,607	1,869	-3
Lothingland	1	1,643	1,643	-10	1,675	1,675	-13
Normanston	3	5,491	1,830	0	5,525	1,842	-5
Oulton	2	3,437	1,719	-6	4,570	2,285	18
Oulton Broad	2	4,005	2,003	10	4,029	2,015	4
Pakefield	3	5,614	1,871	2	5,646	1,882	-2
South East Waveney	3	5,311	1,770	-3	5,458	1,819	-6
South West Waveney	2	3,483	1,742	-5	3,622	1,811	-6
St Margaret's	3	5,341	1,780	-3	5,723	1,908	-1
Wainford	1	1,734	1,734	-5	1,786	1,786	-7

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Whitton	3	5,902	1,967	8	5,951	1,984	3
Worlingham, Barnby & North Cove	2	3,309	1,655	-9	3,542	1,771	-8
Totals	48	87,667	–	–	92,567	–	–
Average	–	–	1,826	–	–	1,928	–

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

Note: 1. 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.

2. Further to detailed analysis of electorate forecasts, we have made a number of amendments to electorate figures for 2005. There remains some small anomalies in the electorate figures. Small changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

Waveney District Council Conservative Group's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B6: Waveney District Council Conservative Group's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Beccles North	2	3,880	1,940	6	3,953	1,977	2
Beccles South	2	3,934	1,967	8	4,053	2,027	5
Bungay	2	3,837	1,919	5	3,998	1,999	4
Carlton	3	5,732	1,911	5	5,743	1,914	-1
Carlton Colville	3	4,687	1,562	-14	6,098	2,033	5
Blything	1	1,591	1,591	-13	1,660	1,660	-14
Wrentham	1	1,773	1,773	-3	1,826	1,826	-5
Gunton	2	3,853	1,927	5	3,883	1,942	1
Halesworth	2	3,756	1,878	3	3,989	1,995	3
Harbour	3	5,916	1,972	8	6,015	2,005	4
Kessingland	2	3,673	1,837	1	3,967	1,984	3
Kirkley	2	4,037	2,019	11	4,094	2,047	6
Lothingland	3	4,923	1,641	-10	6,090	2,030	5
Normanston	2	3,851	1,926	5	3,859	1,930	0
Oulton Broad	3	5,701	1,900	4	5,739	1,913	-1
Pakefield	3	5,614	1,871	2	5,648	1,883	-2
Wainford	1	1,593	1,593	-13	1,635	1,635	-15
South Elmham	1	1,687	1,687	-8	1,753	1,753	-9
Southwold & Reydon	2	3,479	1,740	-5	3,573	1,787	-7
St Margaret's	3	5,045	1,682	-8	5,424	1,808	-6

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Whitton	3	5,391	1,797	-2	5,466	1,822	-6
Worlingham	2	3,714	1,857	2	4,107	2,054	6
Totals	48	87,667	–	–	92,573	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,826	–	–	1,929	–

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

Note: 1. 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.

2. Further to detailed analysis of electorate forecasts, we have made a number of amendments to electorate figures for 2005. There remains some small anomalies in the electorate figures. Small changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London Districts; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish

¹ The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

(f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and

(g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

(h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;

(i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.