

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Tendring in Essex

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

November 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Clacton-on-Sea and Frinton & Walton is inserted inside the back cover of this report.



Local Government Commission for England

28 November 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 30 November 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Tendring under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 2000 and undertook an eleven-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 121). This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Tendring.

We recommend that Tendring District Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 35 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the whole council should continue to be elected together every four years.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Tendring on 30 November 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 20 June 2000, after which we undertook an eleven-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 18 of the 32 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 19 wards and by more than 20 per cent in ten wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 121-122) are that:

- **Tendring District Council should have 60 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 35 wards, instead of 32 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 34 of the proposed 35 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average both initially and in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Frinton & Walton and Harwich;**

- **an increase in the number of councillors for Brightlingsea Town Council; and a reduction in the number of councillors for Great Bentley Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 8 January 2001:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Alresford	1	Alresford, Thorrington & Frating ward (part – Alresford parish)	Map 2
2	Alton Park	2	Bockings Elm ward (part); Rush Green ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
3	Ardleigh & Little Bromley	1	Ardleigh ward; Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley ward (part – Little Bromley parish)	Map 2
4	Beaumont & Thorpe	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
5	Bockings Elm	2	Bockings Elm ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
6	Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
7	Brightlingsea	3	Brightlingsea East ward; Brightlingsea West ward	Map 2
8	Burrsville	1	St Bartholomews ward (part); St Johns ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
9	Frinton	2	Frinton ward (part); Walton ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
10	Golf Green	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2 & Large map
11	Great & Little Oakley	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
12	Great Bentley	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
13	Hamford	2	Frinton ward (part); Holland & Kirby ward (part); Walton ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
14	Harwich East	1	Harwich East ward (part)	Maps 2 & A2
15	Harwich East Central	2	Harwich East ward (part); Harwich East Central ward; Harwich West Central ward (part)	Maps 2, A2 & A3
16	Harwich West	2	Harwich West ward (part)	Maps 2, A2 & A3
17	Harwich West Central	2	Harwich West ward (part); Harwich West Central ward (part)	Maps 2, A2 & A3
18	Haven	1	Haven ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
19	Holland & Kirby	2	Frinton ward (part); Holland & Kirby ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
20	Homelands	1	Holland & Kirby ward (part); Walton ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
21	Lawford	2	Lawford & Manningtree ward (part – Lawford parish)	Map 2
22	Little Clacton & Weeley	2	Little Clacton ward; Tendring & Weeley ward (part – Weeley parish)	Map 2
23	Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring	2	Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley ward (part – Little Bentley parish); Lawford & Manningtree ward (part – Manningtree parish); Mistley ward; Tendring & Weeley ward (part – Tendring parish)	Map 2
24	Peter Bruff	2	Bockings Elm ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
25	Pier	2	Rush Green ward (part); St James ward (part); St Marys ward (part); Southcliff ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
26	Ramsey & Parkeston	1	Ramsey ward	Map 2
27	Rush Green	2	Bockings Elm ward (part); Rush Green ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
28	St Bartholomews	2	Haven ward (part); St Bartholomews ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
29	St James	2	Rush Green ward (part); St James ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
30	St Johns	2	St Johns ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
31	St Marys	2	Bockings Elm ward (part); St Johns ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
32	St Osyth & Point Clear	2	St Osyth ward	Map 2
33	St Pauls	2	Southcliff ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map
34	Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley	2	Alresford, Thorrington & Frating ward (part – the parishes of Thorrington and Frating); Elmstead ward; Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley ward (part – Great Bromley parish)	Map 2
35	Walton	2	Walton ward (part)	Map 2 & Large map

Notes: 1 Clacton-on-Sea is the only unparished part of the district.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tendring

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alresford	1	1,688	1,688	-5	1,709	1,709	-6
2 Alton Park	2	3,523	1,762	0	3,527	1,764	-3
3 Ardleigh & Little Bromley	1	1,777	1,777	1	1,802	1,802	-1
4 Beaumont & Thorpe	1	1,819	1,819	3	1,844	1,844	1
5 Bockings Elm	2	3,409	1,705	-4	3,487	1,744	-4
6 Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix	1	1,733	1,733	-2	1,756	1,756	-4
7 Brightlingsea	3	6,217	2,072	17	6,319	2,106	16
8 Burrsville	1	1,770	1,770	0	1,799	1,799	-1
9 Frinton	2	3,424	1,712	-3	3,521	1,761	-3
10 Golf Green	2	3,831	1,916	8	3,997	1,999	10
11 Great & Little Oakley	1	1,639	1,639	-7	1,719	1,719	-6
12 Great Bentley	1	1,797	1,797	2	1,805	1,805	-1
13 Hamford	2	3,374	1,687	-5	3,395	1,698	-7
14 Harwich East	1	1,855	1,855	5	1,906	1,906	5
15 Harwich East Central	2	3,647	1,824	3	3,774	1,887	4
16 Harwich West	2	3,362	1,681	-5	3,815	1,908	5
17 Harwich West Central	2	3,647	1,824	3	3,769	1,885	4
18 Haven	1	1,783	1,783	1	1,785	1,785	-2
19 Holland & Kirby	2	3,501	1,751	-1	3,639	1,820	0
20 Homelands	1	1,738	1,738	-2	1,740	1,740	-4
21 Lawford	2	3,365	1,683	-5	3,438	1,719	-6
22 Little Clacton & Weeley	2	3,680	1,840	4	3,760	1,880	3

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring	2	3,266	1,633	-8	3,464	1,732	-5
24 Peter Bruff	2	3,344	1,672	-5	3,502	1,751	-4
25 Pier	2	3,481	1,741	-2	3,713	1,857	2
26 Ramsey & Parkeston	1	1,774	1,774	0	1,827	1,827	0
27 Rush Green	2	3,469	1,735	-2	3,629	1,815	0
28 St Bartholomews	2	3,781	1,891	7	3,825	1,913	5
29 St James	2	3,263	1,632	-8	3,453	1,727	-5
30 St Johns	2	3,633	1,817	3	3,692	1,846	1
31 St Marys	2	3,585	1,793	1	3,593	1,797	-1
32 St Osyth & Point Clear	2	3,316	1,658	-6	3,398	1,699	-7
33 St Pauls	2	3,595	1,798	2	3,605	1,803	-1
34 Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead, & Great Bromley	2	3,646	1,823	3	3,736	1,868	3
35 Walton	2	3,329	1,665	-6	3,452	1,726	-5
Totals	60	106,061	-	-	109,195	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,768	-	-	1,820	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Tendring in Essex. We have now reviewed the twelve districts in Essex as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Tendring. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1975 (Report No. 16). The electoral arrangements of Essex County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 401). We completed a directed review of Thurrock in 1996 and a periodic electoral review of Southend-on-Sea in 1999. We expect to undertake a periodic electoral review of Thurrock in 2000 and a review of the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Essex 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 Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 30 November 1999, when we wrote to Tendring District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, the local authority associations, Essex Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East 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 28 February 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

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

Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The district of Tendring is situated in north-east Essex. It has a water frontage of some 38 miles stretching from the River Stour in the north to the River Colne in the south. The majority of the population (approximately 130,900) are situated along the coastline in the main settlements of Clacton-on-Sea, Harwich, Frinton and Brightlingsea. The district covers some 33,650 hectares and has a population density of approximately 3.9 persons per hectare. Tendring district contains 27 parishes; Clacton-on-Sea town is unparished and comprises around 40 per cent of the district's total electorate.

14 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'.

15 The electorate of the district is 106,061 (February 1999). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 32 wards, 15 of which are relatively rural in profile. Seven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 14 are each represented by two councillors and 11 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Tendring district, with around 24 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Bockings Elm and Frinton wards.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,768 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,820 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 18 of the 32 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Bockings Elm ward, where the councillors represent 156 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Tendring

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alresford, Thorrington & Frating	2	2,985	1,493	-16	3,069	1,535	-16
2 Ardleigh	1	1,581	1,581	-11	1,596	1,596	-12
3 Beaumont & Thorpe	1	1,819	1,819	3	1,844	1,844	1
4 Bockings Elm	2	9,066	4,533	156	9,405	4,703	158
5 Bradfield Wrabness & Wix	1	1,733	1,733	-2	1,756	1,756	-4
6 Brightlingsea East	2	3,177	1,589	-10	3,232	1,616	-11
7 Brightlingsea West	2	3,040	1,520	-14	3,087	1,544	-15
8 Elmstead	1	1,488	1,488	-16	1,507	1,507	-17
9 Frinton	3	5,343	1,781	1	5,461	1,820	0
10 Golf Green	2	3,831	1,916	8	3,997	1,999	10
11 Great & Little Oakley	1	1,639	1,639	-7	1,719	1,719	-6
12 Great Bentley	1	1,797	1,797	2	1,805	1,805	-1
13 Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley	1	1,274	1,274	-28	1,294	1,294	-29
14 Harwich East	2	2,526	1,263	-29	2,599	1,300	-29
15 Harwich East Central	2	2,762	1,381	-22	2,867	1,434	-21
16 Harwich West	2	4,190	2,095	19	4,643	2,322	28
17 Harwich West Central	2	3,033	1,517	-14	3,155	1,578	-13
18 Haven	2	2,726	1,363	-23	2,728	1,364	-25
19 Holland & Kirby	2	4,518	2,259	28	4,656	2,328	28
20 Lawford & Manningtree	2	4,068	2,034	15	4,149	2,075	14

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 Little Clacton	1	2,293	2,293	30	2,352	2,352	29
22 Mistley	1	1,826	1,826	3	1,999	1,999	10
23 Ramsey	1	1,774	1,774	0	1,827	1,827	0
24 Rush Green	3	4,330	1,443	-18	4,421	1,474	-19
25 Southcliff	3	4,533	1,511	-15	4,765	1,588	-13
26 St Bartholomews	2	2,841	1,421	-20	2,885	1,443	-21
27 St James	3	5,416	1,805	2	5,586	1,862	2
28 St Johns	3	5,827	1,942	10	5,915	1,972	8
29 St Marys	3	3,897	1,299	-27	3,905	1,302	-28
30 St Osyth	2	3,316	1,658	-6	3,398	1,699	-7
31 Tendring & Weeley	1	1,907	1,907	8	1,943	1,943	7
32 Walton	3	5,505	1,835	4	5,630	1,877	3
Totals	60	106,061	-	-	109,195	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,768	-	-	1,820	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Harwich East ward were relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while electors in Bockings Elm ward were significantly under-represented by 156 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received eight representations, including district-wide schemes from Tendring District Council and the Labour Group on the Council. We also received representations from two town councils, two parish councils and two district councillors. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Tendring in Essex*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting nine wards, using our own proposals to further improve the level of electoral equality. We proposed that:

- Tendring District Council should be served by 60 councillors, as at present, representing 35 wards, three more than at present;
- the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Frinton and Harwich; an increase in the number of councillors for Brightlingsea Town Council; and a reduction in the number of councillors for Great Bentley Parish Council.

Draft Recommendation

Tendring District Council should comprise 60 councillors, serving 35 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 34 of the 35 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with only Brightlingsea ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 18 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Tendring District Council and the Commission.

Tendring District Council

22 The District Council generally supported the draft recommendations. However, it proposed that Brightlingsea should be represented by one two-member ward and one single-member ward, and proposed two minor boundary modifications in the town of Frinton.

Parish and Town Councils

23 The Parish Councils of Thorington and Little Clacton supported our draft recommendations with regard to their respective parishes. Brightlingsea Town Council supported our proposed three-member district ward for the town and stated a preference for a single ward at town council level. Frinton & Walton Town Council proposed revised town warding arrangements and an alternative boundary between the proposed wards of Holland & Kirby and Hamford. Mistley Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to amalgamate the parish with Manningtree, Tendring and Little Bentley. Weeley Parish Council stated a preference for remaining with the parish of Tendring in a single-member ward. Tendring Parish Council opposed the new two-member ward to include Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley and Tendring. The parish wished to remain with Weeley or join Beaumont and Thorpe or Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix and enclosed a 102 signature petition.

Other Representations

24 A further ten representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. Councillor Dixon, representing Brightlingsea West ward, supported the proposed three-member Brightlingsea ward. Town Councillor Dale and two local residents stated that the ward or wards for Brightlingsea should be coterminous at both district and town level. Councillor Patrick, member for Brightlingsea East district ward and Town Councillor Bailey supported the District Council's proposal for Brightlingsea. Councillor Bucke, representing Holland & Kirby ward, opposed the transfer of the area of Kirby Cross which includes Laburnum Crescent and Sycamore Way into Hamford ward.

25 Councillor Johnston, representing Weeley & Tendring ward, opposed the draft recommendation which placed the parishes of Weeley and Tendring in separate district wards. Tendring Parish Councillor Rooney and a local resident opposed Tendring and Little Bentley forming a ward with Manningtree and Mistley. In a joint submission Councillors Smith, Randall, Ling, Scott, Rolfe and Rose opposed the two-member Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

26 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Tendring 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”.

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

28 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

30 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 106,061 to 109,195 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the wards of Bockings Elm and Harwich West. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

31 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

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

33 Tendring District Council is at present served by 60 councillors. At Stage One the District Council proposed a council size of 60. It stated that it had decided upon a council size of 60 after considering the effects of having a council size of 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60. It concluded that a council size of 60 would provide convenient and effective local government and would also facilitate a scheme with good electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria.

34 The Tendring District Council Labour Group proposed a council size of 57 members as “this figure shows a best fit between the various towns and areas of the district”. The Labour Group also argued that its council size provided “a good fit in terms of the rural area and maintains the present constituency boundaries” while ensuring that “none of the major shopping areas [are] split by a ward boundary”.

35 In our draft recommendations report we considered the arguments put forward both for a 57-member and a 60-member council. We were concerned that there was no evidence as to what effect a council size of 57 members would have on the internal political management of the council, the role of councillors or the residents. We were also concerned that the Labour Group’s proposals for a 57-member council had not been made available for public inspection or the subject of local consultation, nor had they received cross-party support from members on the District Council. We also noted that the Labour Group’s proposals involved a degree of parish warding.

36 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members.

37 During Stage Three, Councillors Smith, Randall, Ling, Scott, Rolfe and Rose in a joint submission stated that the “difficulties in redesigning the new wards in Tendring (district), and in particular the unmanageable new ward of Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring, stem from the number of councillors chosen for the Council”.

38 We have not been persuaded by this argument, as discussed later in this chapter, and therefore conclude that the statutory criteria would continue to be best met by a council of 60 members.

Electoral Arrangements

39 In view of the degree of consensus behind elements of the Council’s proposals, the exercise of testing council sizes of 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60 that the council carried out, and our decision to propose a 60-member council, we concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council’s scheme. We considered that the scheme would provide a better balance between

electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to further improve electoral equality and having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the District Council's proposals in three areas, affecting nine of the Council's proposed wards.

40 The response to our draft recommendations report has been generally positive, with a number of respondents supporting our proposals. However, we have noted some local concerns regarding our proposed wards affecting the parishes of Little Bentley, Manningtree, Mistley, Tendring and Weeley. We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Clacton-on-Sea
 - Haven, St Bartholomews and Southcliff wards;
 - Golf Green, Rush Green and St James wards;
 - Bockings Elm, St Johns and St Marys wards.

- (b) Frinton & Walton
 - Frinton, Holland & Kirby and Walton wards.

- (c) Harwich
 - Harwich East, Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central wards.

- (d) Brightlingsea
 - Brightlingsea East and Brightlingsea West wards.

- (e) The rural area
 - Alresford, Thorrington & Frating, Ardleigh and Elmstead wards;
 - Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley, Lawford & Manningtree and Mistley wards;
 - Great Bentley, Little Clacton, St Osyth and Tendring & Weeley wards;
 - Beaumont & Thorpe, Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix, Great & Little Oakley and Ramsey wards.

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

Clacton-on-Sea

42 Clacton-on-Sea is the main settlement in Tendring. It is situated in the south of the district and is the only unparished area, comprising around 40 per cent of the district's total electorate.

Haven, St Bartholomews and Southcliff wards

43 These three wards are situated in the south of Clacton town. The two-member Haven and St Bartholomews wards are currently 23 per cent and 20 per cent over-represented (25 per cent and 21 per cent by 2004). The three-member Southcliff ward is 15 per cent over-represented (13 per cent by 2004).

44 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed transferring 943 electors from Haven ward into a modified St Bartholomews ward. It also proposed the creation of two new wards, Pier and St Pauls. It proposed that the new Pier ward should comprise 2,443 electors from St James ward, 948 electors from Southcliff ward, 79 electors from Rush Green ward and 21 electors from St Marys ward. St Pauls ward should comprise the remaining electors of the existing Southcliff ward, which would cease to exist. The District Council proposed that the ward of Haven should be represented by one councillor, while the wards of Pier, St Bartholomews and St Pauls should be represented by two councillors each.

45 Under the District Council's proposals Pier ward would have an electoral variance of 1 per cent below the district average (2 per cent above by 2004). Haven, St Bartholomews and St Pauls wards would have electoral variances of 1 per cent, 7 per cent and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2004).

46 We concluded that the District Council's proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. However we proposed minor boundary modifications to the District Council's proposed Pier and St Pauls wards, to provide a clearer boundary. We also proposed adopting the railway line as the boundary between St Pauls ward and St Johns ward. We otherwise adopted the District Council's proposals, and consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council's proposals.

47 At Stage Three we received support from the District Council for our draft recommendations for the wards of Haven, Pier, St Bartholomews and St Pauls, and no further submissions were received. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Golf Green, Rush Green and St James wards

48 These three wards are situated in the west of Clacton town. The two-member Golf Green ward is 8 per cent under-represented (10 per cent by 2004) and the three-member wards of Rush Green and St James are 18 per cent over-represented and 2 per cent under-represented respectively (19 per cent and 2 per cent by 2004).

49 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed no change to the electoral arrangements of Golf Green ward, except for one minor boundary modification which did not affect any electors.

It proposed modifications to the boundaries of Rush Green and St James wards. It proposed including 2,159 electors from Bockings Elm ward with 1,310 electors from the existing Rush Green ward in a revised Rush Green ward. The District Council proposed that 290 electors from Rush Green ward should be included with the remaining electors from St James ward in a revised ward. It also proposed a new Alton Park ward, comprising 41 electors from Bockings Elm ward, 2,651 electors from Rush Green ward and 831 electors from St Marys ward. It proposed that each of these four wards should be represented by two councillors.

50 Under the District Council's proposals, the ward of Golf Green would have an electoral variance of 8 per cent above the district average (10 per cent by 2004) while the wards of Rush Green and St James would have electoral variances of 2 per cent and 8 per cent below the district average respectively (equal to the district average and 5 per cent below by 2004). The new ward of Alton Park would be equal to the district average (3 per cent below by 2004).

51 Councillor Cook stated that the District Council's proposals for Rush Green ward would involve "the unnatural split of Bluehouse Estate". It would also involve "splitting of the community to the south west of St Osyth Road, around Coopers Lane". He also stated that the proposed Alton Park ward would "continue the existing arbitrary split of the community between Old Road and Wellesley Road".

52 We also received representations from residents of Golf Green stating their objection to any plans to create a Jaywick Parish Council. However, the Commission *does not* have the power to propose the creation of new parish councils as part of a periodical electoral review.

53 We noted the electoral variance of 10 per cent in the District Council's proposed Golf Green ward (by 2004). However, having visited the area, we agreed with the District Council that Golf Green ward "is a self-contained area which naturally forms a ward of its own". We considered alternative arrangements in the area, including the Labour Group's proposals for two single-member wards. However, we considered that the existing two-member ward best represents community identity, and that any alternative would not provide improved electoral arrangements or facilitate convenient and effective local government.

54 We therefore adopted the District Council's proposals for these wards without modification and consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council's proposals.

55 At Stage Three we received support from the District Council for our draft recommendations for the wards of Alton Park, Golf Green, Rush Green and St James, and no further submissions were received. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Bockings Elm, St Johns and St Marys wards

56 These three wards are situated in the north of Clacton town. The two-member Bockings Elm ward is 156 per cent under-represented (158 per cent by 2004), the three-member St Johns ward is 10 per cent under-represented (8 per cent by 2004) and the three-member St Marys ward is 27 per cent over-represented (28 per cent by 2004).

57 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed that St Marys ward should be modified to include 427 electors from the Castle Hill area of St Johns ward and the 482 electors from the Cann Hall area of Bockings Elm ward. It also proposed transferring 1,221 electors from St Marys ward to form part of the new Alton Park ward, Peter Bruff ward and Pier ward. The District Council proposed that a revised St Johns ward should be made up of the remaining parts of the existing St Johns ward. It also proposed two new wards, Burrsville ward, comprising 1,767 electors of St Johns ward and three electors of St Bartholomews ward, and Peter Bruff ward comprising 2,975 electors and 369 electors currently included in Bockings Elm ward and St Marys ward respectively. It also proposed that the ward of Bockings Elm should have a significant reduction in the number of electors, with 5,657 electors being transferred into the proposed wards of Alton Park, Peter Bruff, Rush Green, St Johns and St Marys, as outlined earlier. The District Council proposed that Burrsville ward should be represented by one councillor while Bockings Elm, Peter Bruff, St Johns and St Marys wards should each be represented by two councillors.

58 Under the District Council's proposals the wards of St Johns and St Marys would have electoral variances of 3 per cent and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2004). Bockings Elm and Peter Bruff wards would have electoral variances of 4 per cent and 5 per cent below the district average respectively (both wards would be 4 per cent below by 2004). Burrsville ward would have an electoral variance equal to the district average (1 per cent below by 2004).

59 Councillor Cook stated his opposition to the District Council's proposed Bockings Elm, Peter Bruff, Burrsville, St Johns and St Marys wards. However, he did not propose alternative arrangements.

60 We concluded that the District Council's proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. However, we proposed one minor modification to the District Council's proposed boundary between St Pauls ward and St Johns ward (affecting no electors). We adopted the railway line as the boundary between these two wards, which we believed provided a clearer boundary than that proposed by the District Council. We otherwise adopted the District Council's proposals and consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council's proposals.

61 At Stage Three we received support from the District Council for our draft recommendations for the wards of Bockings Elm, Burrsville, Peter Bruff, St Johns and St Marys, and no further submissions were received. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Frinton & Walton

Frinton, Holland & Kirby and Walton wards

62 The three-member wards of Frinton and Walton and the two-member Holland & Kirby ward cover Frinton & Walton parish. The number of electors per councillor in Frinton ward is currently 1 per cent above the average (equal to the average by 2004), 4 per cent above the average in Walton ward (3 per cent by 2004) and 28 per cent above the average in Holland & Kirby ward,

both initially and by 2004.

63 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed increasing the representation of Frinton & Walton by one district councillor, from eight to nine. It proposed significant boundary modifications in Frinton & Walton and the creation of two new wards, Hamford and Homelands. It proposed that Hamford ward should comprise 2,142 electors currently in Frinton ward, 1,045 electors currently in Holland & Kirby ward and 145 electors currently in Walton ward. Homelands ward should comprise 1,843 electors currently in Walton ward and 25 electors currently in Frinton ward. A revised Frinton ward should comprise the remainder of the existing ward and 13 electors currently in Walton ward. Holland & Kirby ward and Walton ward should comprise the remainder of the existing wards of the same names. The District Council proposed that the wards of Frinton, Hamford, Holland & Kirby and Walton should each be represented by two councillors, with Homelands ward returning one councillor.

64 Under the District Council's proposals the wards of Frinton, Hamford, Holland & Kirby and Walton would have electoral variances below the district average of 10 per cent, 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (10 per cent, 8 per cent, 1 per cent and equal with the district average by 2004). Homelands ward would have an electoral variance of 6 per cent above the district average (3 per cent by 2004).

65 During Stage One Tendring District Council forwarded to us copies of correspondence between the Town Council of Frinton & Walton and themselves. The Town Council opposed the District Council's proposed boundary between Holland & Kirby ward and the new Hamford ward. It proposed that electors to the north side of Frinton Road should be transferred into Hamford ward instead of the electors of Laburnum Crescent and Sycamore Way, as proposed by the District Council. It stated that transferring the necessary number of electors from the north side of Frinton Road into Hamford ward would improve community identity as these electors have more in common with the electors in the proposed Hamford ward than the electors of Laburnum Crescent and Sycamore Way. The Town Council of Frinton & Walton also put forward proposals for its town warding arrangements.

66 Councillor Cook agreed with the Town Council of Frinton & Walton's comments on the District Council's proposed boundary between Hamford ward and Holland & Kirby ward. He also stated that the south-west and south-east corners of the Homelands estate had been excluded from Homelands ward and included in Hamford ward and Walton ward, which would create unnatural boundaries.

67 We endorsed the District Council's proposal that this area be represented by four two-member wards and one single-member ward. We then considered the opposing proposals of Tendring District Council and the Town Council of Frinton & Walton for a transfer of electors from Holland & Kirby ward into Hamford ward, which are outlined in the previous paragraphs. Having visited the area we noted that the access into Hamford ward was particularly good from the eastern entrance of Laburnum Crescent whereas the area to the north of Frinton Road would not have good access into the proposed Hamford ward. We also concluded that there was very little difference between the housing to the north and south of Frinton Road and therefore we decided to adopt the District Council's proposal, as it provided better access and consequently more convenient and effective local government. However, we proposed some modifications to the District Council's

proposed boundaries in order to further improve electoral equality and provide clear, identifiable boundaries. We proposed including the 235 electors of Easton Way, Rainham Way and Warley Way in Frinton ward as opposed to Walton ward. We proposed transferring the 95 electors of Elm Tree Avenue, Garden Road and Homelands Court included in Homelands ward under the District Council's proposals into Hamford ward. We proposed transferring the 28 electors of Turpins Lane' included in Hamford ward under the District Council's proposals into Holland & Kirby ward. Finally, we proposed transferring 60 electors from Kirby Road, included in Homelands ward under the District Council's proposals into Walton ward.

68 Under our draft recommendations Frinton, Hamford, Holland & Kirby, Homelands and Walton wards would all have electoral variances below the district average by 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 1 per cent, 3 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 6 per cent, equal to the district average, 6 per cent and 5 per cent by 2004).

69 At Stage Three the District Council generally supported our draft recommendations for the town. However, it proposed that 25 electors in Garden Road (including Homelands Court) be retained in the proposed Homelands ward and a minor boundary modification (affecting no electors) between the proposed wards of Frinton and Holland & Kirby. Frinton & Walton Town Council reiterated its opposition to the boundary between the proposed wards of Holland & Kirby and Hamford. Councillor Bucke also opposed the transfer of the area of Kirby Cross which includes Laburnum Crescent and Sycamore Way into Hamford ward. He argued that voters in the area would be "required to cross the main road to attend polling stations".

70 We have carefully considered all the representations received with regards to Frinton & Walton. However, we continue to believe that our proposed boundary between the wards of Hamford and Holland & Kirby provides the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. The arguments for our alternative boundary between the proposed wards of Hamford and Holland & Kirby are clearly stated in the draft recommendations report and we have received no substantive evidence to persuade us to move away from our initial argumentation. However, we do accept the view of the Town Council that the proposed Holland & Kirby town ward should be further warded to reflect the distinct communities of Great Holland, Kirby-le-Soken and Kirby Cross.

71 We therefore propose substantially endorsing our draft recommendations, subject to the minor boundary modifications in the town proposed by the District Council to provide clearer boundaries and the revised town warding arrangements proposed by the Town Council. Under the final recommendations the wards of Frinton, Hamford, Holland & Kirby, Homelands and Walton would have electoral variances of 3 per cent, 5 per cent, 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 7 per cent, equal to the average, 4 per cent and 5 per cent by 2004). As a consequence of these recommendations, we propose amendments to the town wards of Frinton & Walton to reflect the proposed district wards (see paragraph 126 later in this chapter and the large map inserted at the back of this report).

Harwich

Harwich East, Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central wards

72 These four two-member wards cover Harwich town, which is situated in the far north-east corner of the district. Harwich East ward is 29 per cent over-represented, both initially and by 2004. Harwich East Central ward is currently 22 per cent over-represented (21 per cent by 2004), Harwich West ward is currently 19 per cent under-represented (28 per cent by 2004) and Harwich West Central ward is currently 14 per cent over-represented (13 per cent by 2004).

73 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed reducing the number of district councillors representing Harwich, from eight to seven. It proposed transferring 885 electors into Harwich East Central ward from part of Harwich old town, currently in Harwich East ward, and part of the Pound Farm area, currently in Harwich West Central ward. It also proposed transferring 811 electors from part of the All Saints area, currently in Harwich West ward, into Harwich West Central ward. The revised Harwich East ward and Harwich West ward would comprise the remainder of the existing wards. The District Council proposed that the wards of Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central should each be represented by two councillors while Harwich East ward should return one councillor.

74 Under the District Council's proposals the wards of Harwich East, Harwich East Central and Harwich West Central would have electoral variances of 5 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent by 2004). Harwich West ward would have an electoral variance of 5 per cent below the district average (5 per cent above by 2004).

75 Harwich Town Council proposed the retention of eight district councillors to represent Harwich. It proposed new ward boundaries for Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central wards. Councillor Cook opposed the District Council's proposals for Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central wards, but made no alternative proposals. We noted that the electorate of Harwich town (based on 1999 and 2004 figures) would only be entitled to seven members under a 60-member council and could not therefore recommend Harwich Town Council's scheme.

76 We therefore concluded that the District Council's proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria, and adopted the District Council's proposals without modification. Consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council's proposals.

77 At Stage Three we received support from the District Council for our draft recommendations and no further submissions were received, and therefore we propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. As a consequence of these recommendations, we propose amendments to the town wards of Harwich to reflect the proposed district wards (see paragraph 127 later in this chapter and Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A).

Brightlingsea

Brightlingsea East and Brightlingsea West wards

78 The two-member wards of Brightlingsea East and Brightlingsea West cover the town of Brightlingsea. Brightlingsea East ward is currently 10 per cent over-represented (11 per cent by 2004) and Brightlingsea West ward is currently 14 per cent over-represented (15 per cent by 2004).

79 During Stage One Tendring District Council proposed a single-member Brightlingsea South ward and a two-member Brightlingsea North ward. It stated that Brightlingsea North ward would cover “most of the newer part of the town” while Brightlingsea South ward would “include the old part of the town”. The District Council acknowledged that these proposals resulted in both wards having electoral variances of over 10 per cent. It stated that Brightlingsea was surrounded by water on three sides and that the “community identity of this urban area is very different from the adjoining parishes”. It also stated that “the separation of Brightlingsea is further enhanced by the fact that only one road connects Brightlingsea to the remainder of the district”.

80 Under the District Council’s proposals the wards of Brightlingsea North and Brightlingsea South would both have electoral variances of 17 per cent above the district average (16 per cent in both wards by 2004).

81 Brightlingsea Town Council opposed the proposals put forward by Tendring District Council. It proposed a single three-member ward or, alternatively, three single-member wards. The Town Council felt that a single and two-member ward “could lead to feelings of being hard done by in the under-represented minority”. It also stated that “a single-member ward for Brightlingsea would not coincide with a distinct area of the town”. Brightlingsea Town Council also proposed an increase in the number of town councillors from 10 to 12.

82 Councillor Patrick and Councillor Bailey stated their “strong support for Tendring District Council’s proposals for the warding of Brightlingsea”. They stated their support for the “retention of Brightlingsea as a separate urban unit”. They stated that the boundaries between the two wards, put forward by the District Council, “are easily identifiable on the ground and logical as far as the local electorate is concerned”. They also supported Brightlingsea Town Council’s proposals for an increase in the number of town councillors.

83 Councillor Cook proposed that Thorrington parish should be included with Brightlingsea in order to create two two-member wards, which would greatly improve electoral equality. He argued that “the properties in Clacton Road, Thorrington are very similar to those in Church Road, Brightlingsea”. Councillor Cook also stated that the District Council’s proposed boundary between Brightlingsea North ward and Brightlingsea South ward involved “an unnatural split in the community”, with a modern estate being included with the older pre-war part of the town.

84 We visited the area and agreed with Tendring District Council, Brightlingsea Town Council and Councillors Patrick and Bailey, that Brightlingsea should not be included in a ward with the neighbouring parish of Thorrington. The two areas are clearly very separate communities with a considerable area of open land separating them. Also, we could not identify an area of Brightlingsea that could be included in a ward with Thorrington while providing convenient and

effective local government. Having decided that Brightlingsea should remain separate from neighbouring parishes we considered the arguments for three single-member wards, a single member and a two-member ward and a single three-member ward. We agreed with Brightlingsea Town Council that although there is an older and newer part of Brightlingsea the boundary put forward by Tendring District Council “would not coincide with a distinct area of the town”. We also considered the boundaries proposed by the Labour Group for three single-member wards; however under a council size of 60, these proposals did not provide better electoral equality or clearer boundaries than those proposed by the District Council.

85 We were concerned at the electoral variance of 16 per cent by 2004 in Brightlingsea Town Council’s proposal, but having considered the geographical position of Brightlingsea in relation to the rest of the district we concluded that it is a separate and cohesive community. We therefore believed that a three-member ward provided a strong, clear boundary while reflecting community identity and providing convenient and effective local government. We proposed that the ward should be named Brightlingsea.

86 At Stage Three Brightlingsea Town Council and Councillor Dixon supported the draft recommendation for a three-member Brightlingsea ward and stated a preference for a single ward at town council level. Councillor Dale and two local residents stated that whatever scheme is adopted for Brightlingsea the ward or wards should be coterminous at both district and town level. The District Council and Councillors Patrick and Bailey continued to argue that Brightlingsea should be represented by one two-member ward and one single-member ward.

87 We have carefully considered all the representations received with regards to Brightlingsea. However, we continue to support the Town Council’s proposal for a single three-member ward, covering the whole of Brightlingsea. The arguments against three single-member wards or a single member and a two-member ward were clearly stated in the draft recommendations report and are outlined above. We have received no substantive evidence to persuade us to move away from our initial argumentation. We continue to accept the views of many of the respondents, including the Town Council, that the town should have a single ward at both town and district level to avoid confusion to the electorate.

88 Therefore, having noted the support of Brightlingsea Town Council, we propose confirming our draft recommendation for the ward of Brightlingsea, as final (subject to the change at town warding level). Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as those under our draft recommendations. As a consequence of these recommendations, we propose amendments to the town wards of Brightlingsea to reflect the proposed district ward (see paragraph 128 later in this chapter). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

The rural area

Alresford, Thorrington & Frating, Ardleigh and Elmstead wards

89 These three wards are situated on the western border of the district. The two-member ward of Alresford, Thorrington & Frating comprises the parishes of the same name and is 16 per cent over-represented, both initially and by 2004. The single-member wards of Ardleigh and Elmstead are each coterminous with the parishes of the same names and are currently 11 per cent and 16 per cent

over-represented respectively (12 per cent and 17 per cent by 2004).

90 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed that the parish of Alresford should form a single-member ward. It also proposed including Ardleigh parish in a new ward with the parish of Little Bromley (currently in a ward with the parishes of Great Bromley and Little Bentley). This new single-member ward should be named Ardleigh & Little Bromley. The District Council proposed that the parishes of Frating and Thorrington should be included in a district ward with the parishes of Elmstead (currently in a ward that is coterminous with the parish), and Great Bromley (currently in a ward with the parishes of Little Bentley and Little Bromley). It proposed that this new ward should be named Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley and should return two councillors. The proposals for Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley ward were supported by Thorrington Parish Council. Ardleigh Parish Council stated that Ardleigh parish “should continue as one unit preferably with its own representative”.

91 Under the District Council’s proposals Alresford ward would have an electoral variance of 5 per cent below the district average (6 per cent by 2004). Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley ward and Ardleigh & Little Bromley ward would have an electoral variance above the district average of 3 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (3 per cent and 1 per cent below by 2004).

92 Councillor Cook stated that Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley ward was a “very ungainly ward that seems to have little support anywhere”, but did not propose an alternative.

93 We concluded that the District Council’s proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore adopted the District Council’s proposals without modification and consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council’s proposals.

94 At Stage Three the District Council and Thorrington Parish Council expressed support for our proposals in this area and we received no other comments. Having noted this support we propose confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of Alresford, Ardleigh & Little Bromley and Thorrington, Frating, Elmstead & Great Bromley, as final. Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as those under our draft recommendations. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley, Lawford & Manningtree and Mistley wards

95 These three wards are situated in the north of the district. The single-member Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley ward comprises the parishes of the same name and is currently 28 per cent over-represented (29 per cent by 2004). The two-member Lawford & Manningtree ward comprises the parishes of the same names and is currently 15 per cent under-represented (14 per cent by 2004). The single-member Mistley ward comprises the parish of the same name and is currently 3 per cent under-represented (10 per cent by 2004).

96 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed that the parish of Lawford should form a two-member ward. It proposed that the parishes of Little Bentley, Manningtree and Mistley should be included in a district ward with Tendring parish, to be named Manningtree, Mistley, Little

Bentley & Tendring ward. The parishes of Great Bromley and Little Bromley, currently in Great Bromley, Little Bromley & Little Bentley ward, should be included in new district wards, as outlined earlier in the chapter. It proposed that Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward should be represented by two councillors.

97 Under the District Council's proposals, the electors per councillor in Lawford ward and Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward would vary by 5 per cent and 8 per cent below the district average respectively (6 per cent and 5 per cent by 2004).

98 During Stage One Tendring District Council forwarded to us copies of correspondence it had received from the parishes of Little Bentley, Manningtree and Mistley; all three stating their opposition to the proposed grouping of parishes. They stated that Manningtree and Mistley parishes have different concerns from those of Little Bentley and Tendring parishes. Little Bentley Parish Council stated that it favoured the existing warding arrangements, Manningtree parish stated it should be grouped with part of Lawford parish or part of Mistley parish and Mistley parish stated that it should retain the existing arrangements.

99 Councillor Cook stated that the District Council's proposals for Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward were "a truly bad choice of villages to link together into a two-member ward". He stated that Manningtree parish should be included in a ward with Lawford parish and that Mistley parish "warrants a single-member in its own right". However he did not provide electorate figures or suggested boundaries for these proposals.

100 We carefully considered all the representations received and concluded that the District Council's proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We looked at alternatives to the District Council's proposals for the proposed Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward, such as those put forward by Councillor Cook; however we could not identify a better alternative without splitting parishes between district wards, which we concluded would be even less acceptable than the District Council's proposals. We therefore adopted the District Council's proposals without modification and consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as those proposals.

101 At Stage Three Tendring District Council supported the draft recommendations in this area. Mistley Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to include the parish in a ward with Manningtree, Tendring and Little Bentley, as it considered the ward would not reflect community identities. It also proposed a reduction in council size, to enable Manningtree and Mistley to form a single-member ward. Tendring Parish Council also opposed the ward, stating that Manningtree and Mistley are urban areas, while Tendring and Little Bentley are rural. The parish (which forwarded a 102 signature petition) stated a preference to remain with Weeley or be joined in a ward with Beaumont and Thorpe or Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix parishes. Councillor Johnston opposed the parish of Tendring being included in a ward with Mistley and Manningtree.

102 In a joint submission Councillors Smith, Randall, Ling, Scott, Rolfe and Rose opposed the two-member Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward. They stated that the parishes of Manningtree and Mistley are more urban in nature and Little Bentley and Tendring more rural. The respondents concluded that they suspected that the "difficulties in redesigning the new wards in Tendring (district), and in particular the unmanageable new ward of Manningtree, Mistley, Little

Bentley & Tendring, stem from the number of councillors chosen for the Council”. Councillor Rooney and a local resident also opposed the proposal to include the parishes of Tendring and Little Bentley in a ward with Manningtree and Mistley, on the grounds of community identity.

103 We acknowledge the views of the respondents regarding the proposed two-member ward of Manningtree, Mistley, Tendring & Little Bentley, and consequently have looked at alternatives to the District Council’s proposed Manningtree, Mistley, Little Bentley & Tendring ward at both Stage Two and Four. However, we could not identify a better alternative (under a council size of 60) which would not necessitate splitting parishes between district wards and we continue to believe such a proposal would be both undesirable and unnecessary in this area. Alternative arrangements have been considered which would not involve warding parishes, but would have a consequential effect on surrounding wards, where our draft recommendations have attracted some support. Indeed, no viable alternatives have been proposed by respondents at Stage Three. We believe that the District Council considered all the options when formulating its scheme and noted that its proposals would provide improved electoral equality in this area and across the district.

104 In the absence of any alternative proposals, we are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for the wards of Lawford and Manningtree, Mistley, Tendring & Little Bentley as final. Under our final recommendations the electoral variance would be the same as that under our draft recommendation. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Great Bentley, Little Clacton, St Osyth and Tendring & Weeley wards

105 Situated in the centre of the district, the wards of Great Bentley, Little Clacton and Tendring & Weeley are each represented by a single member, while St Osyth ward is represented by two members. Each ward is coterminous with the parish of the same names. The number of electors per councillor in Great Bentley ward is currently 2 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below by 2004), 30 per cent above the average in Little Clacton ward (29 per cent by 2004), 6 per cent below the average in St Osyth ward (7 per cent by 2004) and 8 per cent above the average in Tendring & Weeley ward (7 per cent by 2004).

106 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed no change to the electoral arrangements of Great Bentley ward and St Osyth ward. It proposed that the parish of Little Clacton should be included in a new ward with the parish of Weeley (currently in the ward of Tendring & Weeley), and that the ward should be named Little Clacton & Weeley. The District Council also proposed that Tendring parish should be included in a new ward with the parishes of Little Bentley, Manningtree and Mistley (as detailed earlier in the chapter).

107 Under the District Council’s proposals, the wards of Great Bentley and Little Clacton & Weeley would have electoral variances of 2 per cent and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent below and 3 per cent above by 2004). The ward of St Osyth would have an electoral variance of 6 per cent below the district average (7 per cent below by 2004).

108 St Osyth Parish Council supported the District Council’s proposal for no change to the boundaries of St Osyth ward; however it suggested a new ward name of St Osyth & Point Clear. Tendring Parish Council opposed forming part of a district ward with the parishes of Manningtree

and Mistley. Great Bentley Parish Council proposed new parish electoral arrangements (see paragraph 129 later in this chapter).

109 Councillor Cook made comments on the proposal to include Little Clacton and Weeley parishes together in a district ward, stating that “the linking of these two parishes into a two-member ward crosses the boundary between constituencies, which will cause some elector confusion”. However, we are unable to take parliamentary constituency boundaries into account as they will be the subject of future review by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission.

110 We carefully considered all the representations received and concluded that the District Council’s proposals for these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore adopted the District Council’s proposals with one modification, that St Osyth ward should be renamed St Osyth & Point Clear. Consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the District Council’s proposals.

111 At Stage Three the District Council and Little Clacton Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. Weeley Parish Council and Tendring Parish Council, with the support of Councillor Johnston, stated a preference for the parishes to remain together in a single-member ward. As stated above we looked at options that would include Tendring and Weeley in a single ward. However, we could not identify a better alternative (under a council size of 60). We acknowledge the views of the respondents regarding the proposals affecting the parishes of Tendring and Weeley. However, the District Council’s proposals for this part of the district secure an improved level of electoral equality and we have not been persuaded by any argument that we should move away from the draft recommendations in this area.

112 Therefore, having noted the support from the District Council and Little Clacton Parish Council, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of Little Clacton & Weeley and St Osyth Point Clear, as final. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Beaumont & Thorpe, Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix, Great & Little Oakley and Ramsey wards

113 These four wards are situated in the north-east of the district and are each represented by a single member. Beaumont & Thorpe ward comprises the parishes of Beaumont-cum-Moze and Thorpe-le-Soken and is currently 3 per cent under-represented (1 per cent by 2004). Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix ward is currently 2 per cent over-represented (4 per cent by 2004) and comprises the parishes of Bradfield, Wrabness and Wix. Great & Little Oakley ward is currently 7 per cent over-represented (6 per cent by 2004) and comprises the parishes of Great Oakley and Little Oakley. Ramsey ward is coterminous with the parish of Ramsey & Parkeston; the number of electors per councillor in Ramsey ward is equal to the district average, both initially and by 2004.

114 At Stage One Tendring District Council proposed no change to the electoral arrangements of Beaumont & Thorpe, Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix and Great & Little Oakley wards. It also proposed that the ward of Ramsey should retain its existing boundaries and number of councillors; however it put forward the new ward name of Ramsey & Parkeston. The parishes of Beaumont-cum-Moze, Bradfield, Great Oakley, Ramsey & Parkeston and Wrabness all supported Tendring District Council’s proposals for the retention of the existing arrangements in this area.

115 We therefore concluded that the District Council’s proposals for the retention of these wards provided the best electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria and adopted the District Council’s proposals without modification. Consequently our recommendations provided the same levels of electoral equality as the existing arrangements.

116 At Stage Three the District Council expressed support for our proposals in this area and we received no other comments. Having noted this support we propose confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of Beaumont & Thorpe, Bradfield, Wrabness & Wix, Great & Little Oakley and Ramsey & Parkeston, as final. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

117 At Stage One we received one proposal in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Tendring District Council Labour Group proposed “that the whole council should be elected in May 2003” and that following this, elections should take place by halves.

118 In undertaking electoral reviews the Commission can only make recommendations that are consistent with existing legislation. On electoral cycles, the existing legislation provides for either whole-council elections or elections by thirds for shire district councils. Consequently a system of elections by halves would require changes to the legislation.

119 We received no further submissions regarding the electoral cycle and accordingly we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

120 At Stage Three no further comments were received on the electoral cycle and we confirm our draft recommendation for no change as final.

Conclusions

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

- in Frinton & Walton – we propose that 25 electors in Garden Road (including Homelands Court) be retained in the proposed Homelands ward;
- the boundary between the proposed Frinton and Holland & Kirby wards should be amended (affecting no electors); and
- we propose revised town warding arrangements for the proposed Holland & Kirby district ward.

122 We conclude that, in Tendring:

- a council of 60 members should be retained;
- there should be 35 wards, three more than at present;
- the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	32	35	32	35
Average number of electors per councillor	1,768	1,768	1,820	1,820
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	18	1	19	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	10	0

124 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 18 to one. This level of electoral equality would continue in 2004, with only one ward, Brightlingsea, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 16 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Tendring District Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 35 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

125 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Frinton & Walton and Harwich to reflect the proposed district wards.

126 The parish of Frinton & Walton is currently served by 16 councillors representing four wards, Frinton ward and Walton ward each returning six parish councillors, Holland ward returning one parish councillor and Kirby ward returning three parish councillors. At Stage One the Town Council of Frinton & Walton stated that it wished to retain 16 councillors representing five wards, reflecting the proposed district ward boundaries. At Stage Three Frinton & Walton Town Council proposed that Holland & Kirby parish ward should be further warded to reflect the separate communities of Great Holland, Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken. We are content to endorse these recommendations.

Final Recommendation

The Town Council of Frinton & Walton should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Frinton and Walton (each returning four councillors), Hamford, Homelands and Kirby Cross (each returning two councillors) and Great Holland and Kirby-le-Soken (each returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries where applicable. The boundaries between Great Holland, Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken parish wards are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

127 The town of Harwich is currently served by 16 councillors representing four wards. The parish wards of Harwich East, Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central each return four town councillors. As a consequence of our draft recommendations we proposed modifying the town wards of Harwich Town Council to reflect the proposed district wards. At Stage Three, no further comments were received and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation for warding Harwich as final.

Final Recommendation

Harwich Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, the same as at present, representing four wards, Harwich East, Harwich East Central, Harwich West and Harwich West Central wards each of which should return four town councillors. The town ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries as illustrated in Appendix A on Map A2 and A3.

128 The town of Brightlingsea is currently served by 10 councillors representing two wards, Brightlingsea East and Brightlingsea West, each returning five town councillors. At Stage One Brightlingsea Town Council requested an increase in the number of town councillors to 12. During Stage Three Brightlingsea Town Council proposed that the town should have one single ward at both town and district level to avoid confusion to the electorate. We are content to endorse this recommendation.

Final Recommendation

Brightlingsea Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, two more than at present, representing the whole parish.

129 The parish of Great Bentley is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. Great Bentley Parish Council proposed a reduction in the number of parish councillors by two to nine councillors. At Stage Three, no further comments were received and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation for Great Bentley as final.

Final Recommendation

Great Bentley Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, two fewer than at present, representing the whole parish.

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

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tending

6 NEXT STEPS

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

132 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 8 January 2001.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Tendring: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Harwich town.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Harwich town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Clacton-on-Sea and Frinton & Walton.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Tending: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Harwich Town

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Harwich Town

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Tendring

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

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Hamford	Frinton ward (part); Holland & Kirby ward (part); Walton ward (part)
Homelands	Holland & Kirby ward (part); Walton ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Hamford	2	3,999	1,700	-4	3,420	1,710	-6
Homelands	1	1,713	1,713	-3	1,715	1,715	-6

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

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