

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Broadland in Norfolk

February 2002

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Hellesdon, Old Catton, Sprowston and Thorpe St Andrew is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE 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 on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim 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, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission has set up a Boundary Committee which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Broadland's electoral arrangements on 31 July 2001.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Broadland:

- **in 26 of the 35 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and 20 wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 28 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 20 wards.**

Our main proposals for Broadland's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 106 – 107) are that:

- **Broadland District Council should have 47 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of 35 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 33 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of ten, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 19 of the proposed 25 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 24 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Drayton, Hellesdon, Sprowston, Taverham and Thorpe St Andrew.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 February 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, subject to Parliamentary approval, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 22 April 2002:

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London WC1V 7JU**

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Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Acle	1	<i>Unchanged</i> ; the parish of Acle	Map 2
2	Aylsham	3	the parishes of Aylsham, Blickling, Burgh & Tuttington, Marsham and Oulton	Map 2
3	Blofield with South Walsham	2	the parishes of Blofield, Hemblington, South Walsham, Upton with Fishley and Woodbastwick	Map 2
4	Brundall	2	the parishes of Brundall, Cantley, Postwick with Witton and Strumpshaw	Map 2
5	Burlingham	1	the parish of Lingwood & Burlingham	Map 2
6	Coltishall & Buxton	2	the parishes of Belaugh, Brampton, Buxton with Lammas, Coltishall, Crostwick, Frettenham and Horstead with Stanninghall	Map 2
7	Drayton	2	part of Drayton parish (the proposed Drayton North parish ward); part of Taverham parish (the proposed Thorpe Marriott parish ward)	Map A3
8	Eynesford	1	the parishes of Cawston, Foulsham, Guestwick, Heydon, Salle, Themelthorpe and Wood Dalling	Map 2
9	Great Witchingham	1	the parishes of Alderford, Attlebridge, Booton, Brandiston, Great Witchingham, Haveringland, Honingham, Little Witchingham, Morton on the Hill, Ringland, Swannington and Weston Longville	Map 2
10	Hellesdon North West	2	part of Hellesdon parish (the proposed Hellesdon North West parish ward)	Large map
11	Hellesdon South East	2	part of Hellesdon parish (the proposed Hellesdon South East parish ward)	Large map
12	Hevingham	1	the parishes of Hainford, Hevingham and Stratton Strawless	Map 2
13	Horsford & Felthorpe	2	the parishes of Horsford and Felthorpe	Map 2
14	Marshes	1	the parishes of Beighton, Freethorpe, Halvergate and Reedham	Map 2
15	Old Catton & Sprowston West	3	the parish of Old Catton; part of Sprowston parish (the proposed Sprowston West parish ward)	Large map
16	Plumstead	1	<i>Unchanged</i> ; the parish of Great & Little Plumstead	Map 2
17	Reepham	1	the parish of Reepham	Map 2
18	Spixworth	2	the parishes of Beeston St Andrew, Horsham St Faith & Newton St Faith and Spixworth	Map 2
19	Sprowston Central	2	part of Sprowston parish (the proposed Sprowston Central parish ward)	Large map
20	Sprowston East	3	part of Sprowston parish (the proposed Sprowston East parish ward)	Large map
21	Taverham North	2	part of Taverham parish (the proposed Taverham North parish ward)	Map A2
22	Taverham South	2	part of Taverham parish (the proposed Taverham South parish ward); part of Drayton parish (the proposed Drayton South parish ward)	Map A2 & A3
23	Thorpe St Andrew North West	3	part of Thorpe St Andrew parish (the proposed Thorpe St Andrew North West parish ward)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
24	Thorpe St Andrew South East	3	part of Thorpe St Andrew parish (the proposed Thorpe St Andrew South East parish ward)	Large map
25	Wroxham	2	the parishes of Rackheath, Salhouse and Wroxham	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2, Maps A1 – A3 in Appendix A and on the Large map at the back of this report.

We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors. All proposed ward boundaries take account of the revised parish boundaries which come into effect in April 2003.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Broadland

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Acle	1	2,217	2,217	9	2,315	2,315	9
2 Aylsham	3	5,580	1,860	-8	5,962	1,987	-6
3 Blofield with South Walsham	2	4,377	2,189	8	4,434	2,217	4
4 Brundall	2	4,614	2,307	14	4,677	2,339	10
5 Burlingham	1	2,023	2,023	0	2,086	2,086	-2
6 Coltishall & Buxton	2	4,119	2,060	1	4,193	2,097	-1
7 Drayton	2	4,157	2,079	2	4,312	2,156	2
8 Eynesford	1	2,250	2,250	11	2,324	2,324	9
9 Great Witchingham	1	1,921	1,921	-5	1,968	1,968	-7
10 Hellesdon North West	2	4,599	2,300	13	4,609	2,305	9
11 Hellesdon South East	2	4,616	2,308	14	4,626	2,313	9
12 Hevingham	1	2,080	2,080	2	2,180	2,180	3
13 Horsford & Felthorpe	2	3,578	1,789	-12	3,882	1,941	-9
14 Marshes	1	2,215	2,215	9	2,359	2,359	11
15 Old Catton & Sprowston West	3	6,078	2,026	0	6,848	2,283	8
16 Plumstead	1	1,987	1,987	-2	2,277	2,277	7
17 Reepham	1	1,981	1,981	-3	2,051	2,051	-3
18 Spixworth	2	4,399	2,200	8	4,436	2,218	4
19 Sprowston Central	2	4,311	2,156	6	4,340	2,170	2
20 Sprowston East	3	5,947	1,982	-2	6,274	2,091	-1
21 Taverham North	2	3,795	1,898	-7	3,851	1,926	-9
22 Taverham South	2	4,025	2,013	-1	4,111	2,056	-3
23 Thorpe St Andrew North West	3	5,909	1,970	-3	5,922	1,974	-7
24 Thorpe St Andrew South East	3	5,018	1,673	-18	5,768	1,923	-9
25 Wroxham	2	3,703	1,852	-9	3,974	1,987	-6
Totals	47	95,499	-	-	99,779	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,032	-	-	2,123	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Broadland 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of Broadland in Norfolk, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven districts in Norfolk 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 expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Broadland. Broadland's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1977 (Report no. 190). The electoral arrangements of Norfolk County Council were last reviewed in 1984 (Report no. 472). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2005.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. 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 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish councils in the district.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. 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 assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *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 of 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 wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states 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 current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when we wrote to Broadland District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Police Authority, the local authority associations, Norfolk Local Councils Association, parish councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies 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 Broadland District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 22 October 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 26 February 2002 and will end on 22 April 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will decide when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Broadland District Council covers an area of some 55,000 hectares to the north, east and west of Norwich, and currently has a population of some 116,000. The district covers the more urban areas of Thorpe St Andrew, Hellesdon and Sprowston, which abut the district boundary with Norwich and more rural areas to the north. The district contains 65 parishes and is entirely parished.

16 The electorate of the district is 95,499 (February 2001). Since 1975 there has been an increase in the size of the electorate of some 30 per cent, which the District Council projects will increase by a further 4 per cent over the course of the next five years. The Council presently has 49 members who are elected from 35 wards, 13 of which are relatively urban, situated adjacent to the district boundary with the City of Norwich, with the remainder being mainly rural. One ward is represented by three councillors, 12 are each represented by two councillors and 22 are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

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

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,949 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,036 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 26 of the 35 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in 20 wards by more than 20 per cent and in nine wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Taverham ward where each councillor represents 110 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Broadland

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Acle	1	2,217	2,217	14	2,315	2,315	14
2	Aylsham	3	4,825	1,608	-17	5,159	1,720	-16
3	Blofield	2	2,913	1,457	-25	2,942	1,471	-28
4	Brundall	2	3,583	1,792	-8	3,603	1,802	-12
5	Burlingham	1	2,515	2,515	29	2,596	2,596	27
6	Buxton	1	1,623	1,623	-17	1,660	1,660	-18
7	Catton	2	4,755	2,378	22	5,010	2,505	23
8	Cawston	1	1,861	1,861	-5	1,926	1,926	-5
9	Coltishall	1	1,969	1,969	1	2,015	2,015	-1
10	Drayton	1	3,799	3,799	95	3,976	3,976	95
11	Foulsham	1	1,173	1,173	-40	1,206	1,206	-41
12	Freethorpe	1	1,425	1,425	-27	1,478	1,478	-27
13	Great Witchingham	1	1,634	1,634	-16	1,676	1,676	-18
14	Hainford	1	1,406	1,406	-28	1,458	1,458	-28
15	Hellesdon North	2	2,870	1,435	-26	2,872	1,436	-29
16	Hellesdon South East	2	2,872	1,436	-26	2,877	1,439	-29
17	Hellesdon West	2	3,473	1,737	-11	3,486	1,743	-14
18	Hevingham	1	1,844	1,844	-5	1,929	1,929	-5
19	Horsford	1	3,013	3,013	55	3,300	3,300	62
20	Plumstead	1	2,005	2,005	3	2,297	2,297	13
21	Rackheath	1	2,449	2,449	26	2,700	2,700	33
22	Reedham	1	1,329	1,329	-32	1,445	1,445	-29
23	Reepham	1	2,073	2,073	6	2,143	2,143	5
24	South Walsham	1	1,464	1,464	-25	1,492	1,492	-27
25	Spixworth	1	3,000	3,000	54	3,020	3,020	48
26	Sprowston Central	2	4,210	2,105	8	4,239	2,120	4
27	Sprowston East	2	3,564	1,782	-9	3,886	1,943	-5
28	Sprowston South	2	2,386	1,193	-39	2,392	1,196	-41

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29	Sprowston West	1	1,419	1,419	-27	1,935	1,935	-5
30	St Faith's	1	1,399	1,399	-28	1,416	1,416	-30
31	Taverham	2	8,178	4,089	110	8,298	4,149	104
32	Thorpe St Andrew North East	2	5,610	2,805	44	6,205	3,103	52
33	Thorpe St Andrew North West	2	3,192	1,596	-18	3,205	1,603	-21
34	Thorpe St Andrew South	1	2,127	2,127	9	2,280	2,280	12
35	Wroxham	1	1,324	1,324	-32	1,342	1,342	-34
	Totals	49	95,499	-	-	99,779	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,949	-	-	2,036	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Broadland 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 2001, electors in Hellesdon West ward were relatively over-represented by 11 per cent, while electors in Acle ward were relatively under-represented by 14 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

20 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE 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 ten submissions during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

Broadland District Council

21 The District Council proposed a council of 47 members, two fewer than at present, serving 35 wards, the same as at present. It had consulted on a district-wide scheme with local interested parties and had amended it in the light of representations received. The Council stated that its approach to the review had been to address the current electoral imbalances in the district while having regard to community identities and interests. The Council proposed one three-member, 10 two-member and 24 single-member wards. In particular, it had proposed the establishment of more multi-member wards in the rural area of the district, while proposing more single-member wards in more urban areas that surround the City of Norwich. Under the District Council's proposals (and having regard for the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001), 11 wards would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the district average currently, with five wards with an electoral variance of greater than 10 per cent by 2006.

Parish Councils

22 We received nine representations from parish councils in Broadland. Drayton and Taverham parish councils supported increased representation in their respective areas to reflect the increase in electorate over recent years. Drayton Parish Council supported the division of the parish into two single-member wards and outlined proposals identical to the District Council's. Taverham Parish Council stressed the importance of revised electoral arrangements that reflect the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001. It made a further representation stating that it favoured the division of the parish into no more than two district wards. Horsham & Newton St Faith's Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposals in its area. It argued that the proposed Spixworth ward would not reflect the independence of the parish and favoured being warded with more rural parishes to its north. Oulton and Freethorpe parish councils made general comments regarding parish electoral arrangements in their respective areas.

23 Western Longville Parish Council favoured an increase in council size in order to accommodate the under-representation of urban areas while retaining a largely single-member ward pattern in rural areas. Great Witchingham Parish Council supported retaining the existing warding arrangements in its area and stressed the importance of retaining its independence from adjoining parishes on the "Norwich fringe". Rackheath Parish Council considered that the District Council's electorate projection for its area had underestimated the likely growth in electorate over the next five years. It argued that the likely rate of growth could justify the establishment of a single-member Rackheath ward that would be coterminous with the parish.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

25 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Broadland is 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 of 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”.

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

27 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

28 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim 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 make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

29 Since 1975 there has been a 30 per cent increase in the electorate of Broadland district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4 per cent from 95,499 to 99,779 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the town of Sprowston, although a significant amount is also expected in the more rural Aylsham and Wroxham wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council, using a county-wide methodology, 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 electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

30 Rackheath Parish Council considered that the projected electorate for the parish was “a little uncertain” given housing developments under construction which will be completed by 2006. It

argued that the District Council's five-year electorate projection for Rackheath under-estimated the rate of growth for the parish and considered that the likely rate of growth by 2006 would justify the creation of a new single-member Rackheath ward which would be coterminous with Rackheath parish. The District Council noted the comments of Rackheath Parish Council but remained satisfied that its electorate projection for Rackheath was accurate. As stated below, it did not consider a single-member Rackheath ward to be a viable proposal given the amendment to parish boundaries under the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the District Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. However, given the difference of opinion in Rackheath parish, we would particularly welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts for this area during Stage Three.

Council Size

32 As explained earlier, we start by assuming 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.

33 Broadland District Council currently has 49 members. The District Council's Periodic Electoral Review Working Group had considered a number of different council sizes ranging from 41 to 49 members and had concluded that a small reduction in council size was justified due to a new internal political management structure and the consequential change in the role of elected members. It concluded that a council of 47 members was the minimum required for the Council to operate efficiently and to ensure the effective representation of the constituent communities of the district.

34 Western Longville Parish Council supported an increase in council size to ensure the equitable representation of urban areas while preserving the largely single-member ward pattern in the rural area of the district. It argued that rural wards covering too large a geographical area would prevent councillors effectively representing their electorate.

35 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and have noted the views of Western Longville Parish Council. However, we are not persuaded that an increase in council size would necessarily ensure the effective representation of electors in Broadland and, as stated in our *Guidance*, we cannot have regard to rural sparsity when formulating our recommendations. We also note that a council size of 47 members would ensure an equitable distribution of councillors between the primary areas of the district. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 47 members.

Electoral Arrangements

36 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide scheme put forward by the District Council. We recognise that Broadland is a diverse district. It combines a significant rural area with larger settlements to the south of the district, and has been subject to significant changes in size and distribution of its electorate over

recent years. We recognise that the District Council's proposals would secure improved levels of electoral equality and have a measure of local support. For the rural area of the district, we consider that the District Council's proposals provide an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we consider they would ensure significant improvement in electoral equality, while reflecting the views expressed by interested parties during the Council's local consultation exercise. Subject to one amendment in the Buxton and Coltishall areas we have therefore adopted the District Council's proposals for the rural area as part of our draft recommendations.

37 Having considered the District Council's proposals in the urban areas of the district, we recognise that they would have a measure of local support and achieve some improvement in electoral equality. However, we consider that in attempting to formulate a broadly single-member ward pattern the District Council has not sufficiently addressed the current high levels of electoral inequality that exist in this area. In particular, we note that the Council has proposed retaining the existing two-member Catton ward in spite of a projected electoral variance of 18 per cent by 2006. While we are not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, it is often the case that electoral equality is more achievable in a multi-member ward structure. Furthermore, we consider that in this case, the District Council's proposals will result in the establishment of single-member wards that would effectively divide communities rather than reflecting them.

38 We have therefore put forward our own proposals for the urban areas of the district. We have sought to reflect local preferences within the context of improving electoral equality and have therefore utilised the District Council's proposed single-member wards as the basis of our proposals in this area. By combining a number of the District Council's proposed single-member wards in a mixed two-member and three-member ward pattern, we consider that electoral equality can be improved without having a detrimental effect on the effective and convenient representation of local communities. However, we have considered it necessary to introduce an element of parish warding in the Sprowston, Drayton and Taverham areas to ensure a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

Broadland rural

- (a) Brundall, Burlingham, Freethorpe and Reedham wards;
- (b) Acle, Blofield and South Walsham wards;
- (c) Plumstead, Rackheath and Wroxham wards;
- (d) Horsford, St Faith's and Spixworth wards;
- (e) Aylsham, Buxton, Coltishall, Hainford and Hevingham wards;
- (f) Cawston, Foulsham, Great Witchingham and Reepham wards.

Broadland urban

- (g) Drayton and Taverham wards;
- (h) Hellesdon North, South East and West wards;
- (i) Sprowston West and Catton wards;
- (j) Sprowston East, South and Central wards;
- (k) Thorpe St Andrew North East, North West and South wards.

39 Details of our draft recommendations, including changes to district ward boundaries as a consequence of amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001, are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Brundall, Burlingham, Freethorpe and Reedham wards

40 The existing wards of Brundall, Burlingham, Freethorpe and Reedham are situated in the south east of the district. Brundall ward is served by two councillors and comprises the parishes of Brundall and Postwick with Witton. Burlingham, Freethorpe and Reedham wards are more rural in nature and each is represented by a single councillor. Burlingham ward comprises the parishes of Lingwood & Burlingham and Strumpshaw; Freethorpe ward comprises the parishes of Beighton, Freethorpe and Halvergate; while Reedham ward comprises the parishes of Cantley and Reedham. Under the existing arrangements, Brundall ward has 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average now, and is projected to have 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2006. Burlingham, Freethorpe and Reedham wards have 29 per cent more, 27 per cent fewer and 32 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (27 per cent more, 27 per cent fewer and 29 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

41 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new single-member Marshes ward comprising the existing Freethorpe ward and Reedham parish from the existing Reedham ward. It argued that its proposed ward would combine parishes of a similar nature and would secure improved electoral equality. It proposed that Cantley parish be combined with the existing Brundall ward and Strumpshaw parish from the existing Burlingham ward in a revised two-member Brundall ward. The District Council noted that Strumpshaw Parish Council was opposed to its proposed warding arrangements in this area and favoured alternative proposals that would necessitate the warding of Brundall parish. The District Council argued that such a proposal would result in the “artificial” division of Brundall parish and would therefore have insufficient regard to community identities and interests. It proposed a revised single-member Burlingham ward whose boundaries would be coterminous with Lingwood with Burlingham parish.

42 Freethorpe Parish Council made a submission with regard to parish council electoral arrangements, which is discussed in detail below.

43 We have carefully considered the evidence received at Stage One and note that the District Council’s proposed Brundall and Marshes wards would have a relatively high electoral variance, both now and in 2006. However, we recognise that the proposed wards have regard for community identities and interests and consider that they take account of the views expressed by local interested parties during the District Council’s consultation exercise. We acknowledge that our ability to consider alternative warding arrangements in this area is somewhat limited due to its proximity to the district boundary and note that electoral equality in the proposed wards is forecast to improve over the course of the next five years. We have concluded that the District Council’s proposals provide an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and have decided to adopt the proposed Brundall, Burlingham and Marshes wards as part of our draft recommendations.

44 Under our draft recommendations, Brundall and Marshes wards would have 14 per cent more and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent

more and 11 per cent more than the average by 2006). Burlingham ward would have an equal number of electors per councillor to the district average now and 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2006. Our draft proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 towards the back of the report.

Acle, Blofield and South Walsham wards

45 The existing wards of Acle, Blofield and South Walsham are situated in the east of the district. Acle ward is currently served by a single councillor and is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Blofield ward is represented by two councillors and comprises the parishes of Blofield and Hemblington. South Walsham ward comprises the parishes of South Walsham, Upton with Fishley and Woodbastwick and is a single-member ward. Under the existing arrangements Acle, Blofield and South Walsham wards have 14 per cent more, 25 per cent fewer and 25 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent more, 28 per cent fewer and 27 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

46 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new two-member Blofield & South Walsham ward comprising the existing South Walsham ward and the existing Blofield ward. The District Council considered that its proposed ward reflected the preferences of local interested parties and would ensure good electoral equality. The District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Acle ward, stating that the parish contained sufficient electors to justify its retention.

47 We have carefully considered the evidence received at Stage One. We note that the District Council's proposals would secure much improved electoral equality, both now and in five years' time. We also note that the District Council proposed retaining the existing Acle ward. While the electoral variance would be somewhat high, we accept that the existing ward contains a relatively large and cohesive community and contains a sufficient number of electors to sustain a coterminous single-member ward. We are therefore content to adopt the District Council's proposed Acle and Blofield & South Walsham wards as part of our draft recommendations.

48 Under our draft recommendations Acle and Blofield & South Walsham wards would have 9 per cent more and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent more and 4 per cent more than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 towards the back of the report.

Plumstead, Rackheath and Wroxham wards

49 The existing wards of Plumstead, Rackheath and Wroxham are situated in the central part of the district and are all single-member wards. Plumstead ward is coterminous with Great & Little Plumstead parish while Rackheath ward comprises the parishes of Rackheath and Salhouse. Wroxham ward comprises the parishes of Belaugh and Wroxham. Under the existing arrangements Plumstead, Rackheath and Wroxham wards have 3 per cent more, 26 per cent more and 32 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent more, 33 per cent more and 34 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

50 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Plumstead ward, arguing that the existing ward provides good electoral equality and has regard for community identities. It proposed a revised two-member Wroxham ward comprising Wroxham

parish and the existing Rackheath ward. (As detailed later, it proposed that Belaugh parish be transferred to a revised single-member Coltishall ward). The District Council argued that its proposals for this area reflected the preferences of local interested parties. While noting the support of Rackheath Parish Council for a coterminous single-member Rackheath ward, it argued that this proposal would not be viable, subsequent to the implementation of the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001.

51 Rackheath Parish Council considered that the District Council had underestimated the five-year electorate projection for the parish. In the light of this it argued that the parish would contain sufficient electors to form a coterminous single-member district ward. It argued that adjoining parishes were too large in size for Rackheath parish to be effectively represented should they be combined in the same district ward.

52 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We consider that the District Council's proposals provide an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we acknowledge the concerns of Rackheath Parish Council, we are not persuaded that a single-member Rackheath ward would provide good long-term levels of electoral equality, particularly after the implementation of revised parish boundaries in this area. We are persuaded that the District Council's proposals will ensure the effective and convenient representation of local communities in this area while ensuring much improved electoral equality. We have therefore decided to adopt the District Council's proposed Plumstead and Wroxham wards as part of our draft recommendations.

53 Under our draft recommendations (and having regard to the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001), Plumstead and Wroxham wards would have 2 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2, towards the back of the report.

Horsford, St Faith's and Spixworth wards

54 The existing wards of Horsford, St Faith's and Spixworth are situated in the south and central part of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Horsford ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name while St Faith's ward is coterminous with the parish of Horsham St Faith & Newton St Faith. Spixworth ward comprises the parishes of Spixworth and Beeston St Andrew. Under the existing arrangements, Horsford, Spixworth and St Faith's wards have 55 per cent more, 54 per cent more and 28 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (62 per cent more, 48 per cent more and 30 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

55 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new two-member Spixworth ward comprising the existing St Faith's ward, and Spixworth and Beeston St Andrew parishes from the existing Spixworth ward. It acknowledged that Horsham & Newton St Faith's Parish Council was opposed to its proposed Spixworth ward but argued that the Parish Council's preferred warding arrangements would not secure good electoral equality. The District Council proposed a new two-member Horsford & Felthorpe ward comprising the existing Horsford ward and Felthorpe parish from the existing Cawston ward. The District Council noted that the councillor for the existing Horsford ward and Horsford Parish Council had expressed support for its proposals during the District Council's local consultation exercise. It considered that this area would be

more effectively represented in a single two-member ward, as opposed to two single-member wards.

56 Horsham & Newton St Faith's Parish Council argued that the District Council's proposals would have an adverse effect on the independence and identity of the community. It stated that the adjoining parish of Spixworth was more urban in character and therefore subject to different local issues. It argued that the parish would be more effectively represented if combined with more rural parishes to its north. The Parish Council proposed that if it was to be combined in a district ward with Spixworth, then Spixworth should be warded along Crostwick Lane and one third of Spixworth parish be combined with Horsham & Newton St Faith's Parish Council for the purposes of district warding.

57 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and note that the District Council's proposals would ensure improvements in electoral equality, while providing a fair reflection of the views expressed during its consultation exercise with local interested parties. While we note the alternative proposals of Horsham & Newton St Faith's Parish Council, we are not persuaded that they would provide an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We must adopt a district-wide approach in formulating our draft recommendations, and have regard to the impact on adjoining wards when considering our proposals. We note that the District Council's proposed Spixworth ward would secure good electoral equality and not result in the division of communities in this area. We are therefore content to adopt the District Council's proposed Horsford & Felthorpe and Spixworth wards as part of our draft recommendations.

58 Under our draft recommendations (and having regard for the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001), Horsford & Felthorpe and Spixworth wards would have 12 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillors than the district average respectively (9 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 towards the back of the report.

Aylsham, Buxton, Coltishall, Hainford and Hevingham wards

59 The existing wards of Aylsham, Buxton and Hevingham are situated in the north of the district. Aylsham ward comprises the parishes of Aylsham, Blickling and Oulton and is a three-member ward, while Buxton ward comprises the parishes of Brampton, Burgh & Tuttington and Buxton with Lammas and is a single-member ward. Hevingham ward is represented by a single councillor and comprises the parishes of Hevingham, Marsham and Stratton Strawless.

60 The wards of Coltishall and Hainford are situated towards the centre of the district and are both single-member wards. Coltishall ward comprises the parishes of Coltishall and Horstead with Stanninghall, and Hainford ward comprises the parishes of Crostwick, Frettenham and Hainford. Under the existing arrangements Aylsham, Buxton and Hevingham wards have 17 per cent, 17 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (16 per cent, 18 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Coltishall and Hainford wards have 1 per cent more and 28 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 28 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

61 At Stage One the District Council proposed a revised three-member Aylsham ward comprising the existing ward, Burgh & Tuttington parish from the existing Buxton ward and

Marsham parish from the existing Hevingham ward. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Hevingham ward be combined with Hainford parish in a revised single-member Hevingham ward and proposed that the remainder of Buxton ward be combined with Frettenham parish in a revised single-member Buxton ward. The District Council considered that its proposed warding arrangements in this area would provide good electoral equality and noted that no objections to its proposals had been received during its local consultation exercise.

62 The District Council also proposed a revised single-member Coltishall ward comprising the existing ward, Belaugh parish from the existing Wroxham ward and Crostwick parish from the existing Hainford ward. Under the District Council's proposals (and having regard to the 2001 Broadland Parishes Order), Aylsham and Buxton wards would have 8 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Coltishall and Hevingham wards would have 5 per cent more and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent more and 3 per cent more by 2006).

63 Oulton Parish Council made a submission with regard to parish council electoral arrangements in its area, which is discussed in detail below.

64 We have carefully considered the evidence received at Stage One and recognise that the District Council's proposals would ensure much improved electoral equality and have regard for community identities and interests. We are therefore content to adopt the District Council's proposed three-member Aylsham and single-member Hevingham wards as part of our draft recommendations.

65 We recognise that the District Council's proposed single-member Buxton and Coltishall wards would ensure improved electoral equality and maintain a pattern of single-member wards in this area. However, we consider that the proposed Buxton ward does not utilise sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundaries. In particular, we are not persuaded that Frettenham parish shares sufficiently clear communication links with the rest of the proposed Buxton ward. In order to provide a more clearly identifiable ward boundary and ensure the effective and convenient representation of communities in this area, we propose moving away from the District Council's proposals. For the purposes of consultation, we propose combining the District Council's proposed single-member Buxton and single-member Coltishall wards in a new two-member Buxton & Coltishall ward. We consider that our draft recommendations provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and will ensure the effective and convenient representation of these communities.

66 Under our draft recommendations (and having regard to the 2001 Broadland Parishes Order), Hevingham, Aylsham and Buxton & Coltishall wards would have 2 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 towards the back of the report.

Cawston, Foulsham, Great Witchingham and Reepham wards

67 The existing wards of Cawston, Foulsham, Great Witchingham and Reepham are situated in the north and west of the district and are all single-member wards. Cawston ward comprises the parishes of Brandiston, Cawston, Felthorpe and Haveringland, while Foulsham ward comprises

the parishes of Foulsham, Guestwick, Heydon, Salle, Themelthorpe and Wood Dalling. Great Witchingham ward comprises the parishes of Alderford, Attlebridge, Great Witchingham, Honingham, Little Witchingham, Morton on the Hill, Ringland, Swannington and Weston Longville, while Reepham ward comprises the parishes of Reepham and Booton. Under the existing arrangements Cawston and Foulsham wards have 5 per cent fewer and 40 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer and 41 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Great Witchingham and Reepham wards have 16 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more than the average by 2006).

68 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new single-member Eynesford ward comprising the existing Foulsham ward and the parish of Cawston. It acknowledged that the rural nature of this area presented a “difficult challenge in striking a balance between electoral equality and community identity”. However, it argued that the proposed ward took account of the views expressed by local interested parties during its consultation exercise. The District Council proposed a revised single-member Reepham ward whose boundaries would be coterminous with Reepham parish. It stated that Reepham, being one of the district’s historic market towns, was of sufficient size to warrant “a ward in its own right”. The District Council proposed combining the existing Great Witchingham ward with the parishes of Brandiston and Haverlingland from the existing Cawston ward and Booton parish from the existing Reepham ward in a revised single-member Great Witchingham ward. It argued that the expansion of Great Witchingham ward was necessary to facilitate improved electoral equality. As stated earlier, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of Felthorpe to a new two-member Horsford & Felthorpe ward.

69 Great Witchingham Parish Council supported retaining the existing warding arrangements in its area. It argued that the constituent communities of the existing Great Witchingham ward had different “requirements” to those communities situated on the “Norwich fringe”. As detailed earlier, Western Longville Parish Council argued for an increase in council size. It considered that this would secure the effective representation of urban areas while ensuring the maintenance of geographically compact single-member rural wards. It argued that increasing the size of district wards would have an adverse effect on the effective representation of rural communities in the district.

70 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and recognise that the District Council’s proposals would improve electoral equality for these wards. We are not persuaded to retain the existing Great Witchingham ward, as proposed by Great Witchingham Parish Council. Under our proposed council size of 47 the existing ward would have 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, with no improvement forecast over the course of the next five years. We consider that the District Council’s proposed Great Witchingham ward will ensure much improved electoral equality while not resulting in a significant change to the boundaries of the existing ward.

71 We have noted the views of Western Longville Parish Council. While we acknowledge that the establishment of more multi-member wards in the rural areas of the district will result in wards of larger geographical size, we are not persuaded that this will necessarily have a detrimental effect on the effective and convenient representation of rural electors. As stated earlier, we consider that a council size of 47 will ensure effective and convenient local government, while facilitating an equitable distribution of councillors between the primary areas

of the district. We have concluded that the District Council's proposals provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and consider that they have sufficient regard for the views expressed during the District Council's consultation exercise with local interested parties. In particular, we have noted the opposition to the Council's consultation proposal to combine Themelthorpe and Salle parishes with the more urban Reepham parish in a district ward and consider that the District Council's submitted proposals reflect local opinion in this area. We are therefore content to adopt the District Council's proposed Eynesford, Great Witchingham and Reepham wards as part of our draft recommendations.

72 Under our draft recommendations (and having regard to the 2001 Broadland Parishes Order), Eynesford, Great Witchingham and Reepham wards would have 11 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 towards the back of the report.

Drayton and Taverham wards

73 The existing wards of Drayton and Taverham are situated in the south west of the district and abut the boundary with the district of South Norfolk. Each ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name and has been the subject of significant residential development in recent years. Drayton ward is currently represented by a single councillor while Taverham is a two-member ward. Under the existing arrangements Drayton and Taverham wards have 95 per cent more and 110 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (95 per cent more and 104 per cent more than the average by 2006).

74 At Stage One the District Council proposed dividing the existing Taverham ward into two two-member wards. It proposed a new two-member Taverham North ward comprising that part of the existing ward broadly to the north of Fakenham Road and proposed that the remainder of the existing ward, to the south of Fakenham Road, form a new two-member Taverham South ward. The District Council stated that its proposals utilised the existing parish wards of Taverham for the purposes of district warding and noted that its proposals had the support of Taverham Parish Council. The District Council proposed a new single-member Drayton North ward comprising that part of the existing ward broadly to the north of Hall Lane and School Road and including the part of the Thorpe Marriott area that lies in Drayton parish. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Drayton ward form a new single-member Drayton South ward. The District Council argued that its proposals reflected the views of Drayton Parish Council and would resolve the issue of electoral equality in the area.

75 Under the District Council's proposals (and having regard to the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001), Drayton North and Drayton South wards would have 3 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, both now and in 2006. Taverham North and Taverham South ward would have 9 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (12 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more than the average by 2006).

76 Drayton Parish Council argued that the current district warding arrangements were inequitable and outlined near identical proposals to those put forward by the District Council. It argued that these proposals would ensure clearly defined boundaries and secure much improved electoral equality. Taverham Parish Council made two submissions during Stage One. It noted

that the existing two-member Taverham ward is significantly under-represented and supported the warding of Taverham into a Taverham North ward and a Taverham South ward. It was opposed to the warding of the parish into more than two district wards. The Parish Council also stressed the importance of revised electoral arrangements reflecting the amendment to the parish boundary between Taverham and Drayton parishes.

77 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and acknowledge that the District Council's proposals would secure improved electoral equality and have a degree of local support. However, we note that the District Council's proposals do not take account of the Broadland Parishes Order 2001. This has a significant effect in the Drayton and Taverham area, according to the electorate figures provided by the District Council, resulting in the transfer of some 280 electors in the Thorpe Marriott area from the District Council's proposed Taverham North ward to the proposed Drayton North ward. We note that the electoral variance in Taverham North would therefore be 12 per cent, which we consider too high for an urban district ward. Notwithstanding the revised parish boundary, we consider that the whole of the Thorpe Marriott area shares community identities and interests and consider that it should not be divided for the purposes of district warding. Moreover, we note that the southern boundary between the two parishes has become defaced over recent years and consider that it needs to be rationalised for the purposes of district warding. We have therefore concluded that the District Council's proposed warding arrangements do not secure the best balance achievable between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and are therefore not persuaded to adopt them as part of our draft recommendations.

78 We have therefore decided to put forward our own proposals for Drayton and Taverham. A number of considerations have emerged which have informed us in the formulation of an appropriate warding scheme for this area. Firstly, as emphasised by both Drayton and Taverham parish councils, due to recent housing development their respective areas have become severely under-represented. At present these two areas are represented by three district councillors. However, under our proposed council size of 47 they are entitled to six district councillors. Furthermore, as stated above, we consider that the Thorpe Marriott area should not be divided for the purposes of district warding. We therefore propose a new two-member Drayton ward comprising that part of the existing Drayton ward to the north of Fakenham Road and Drayton High Road up to the rear of properties on the west side of Fairview Close and Lodge Breck, and that part of the Thorpe Marriott area that lies in the existing Taverham ward. We propose that the remainder of the existing Drayton ward be combined with that part of the existing Taverham ward to the south of Fakenham Road and to the rear of properties on the south side of Lloyd Road and Maple Drive, and to the rear of properties on the west side of Beech Avenue in a new two-member Taverham South ward. We propose that the remainder of the existing Taverham ward form a new two-member Taverham North ward.

79 We consider that our draft recommendations provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria while securing the effective and convenient representation of local electors. We would emphasise that our draft recommendations in no way reflect a view as to revised parish boundaries in the Taverham and Drayton areas. It is for the District Council to conduct a parish review and no changes can be effected without consultation with local interested parties.

80 Under our draft recommendations Drayton, Taverham North and Taverham South wards would have 2 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than

the district average respectively (2 per cent more, 9 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

Hellesdon North, Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon West wards

81 The existing wards of Hellesdon North, Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon West comprise the town of Hellesdon, a town of some 9,000 electors that abuts the district boundary with the City of Norwich. Each ward is currently represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Hellesdon North, Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon West wards have 26 per cent, 26 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (29 per cent, 29 per cent and 14 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

82 At Stage One the District Council proposed a revised single-member Hellesdon North ward comprising that part of the existing ward to the north of Middleton Lane and east of Reepham Road. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Hellesdon North ward be combined with that part of Hellesdon South East ward broadly to the north of Brabazon Avenue, Bramble Avenue, Harlington Avenue and Sutherland Avenue and that part of Hellesdon West ward to the south of Middleton Avenue in a new single-member Hellesdon Central ward. The District Council proposed that the remainder of Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon West wards should each form revised single-member wards. The District Council stated that its proposals for this area were based on those of a district councillor for Hellesdon and emphasised that the District Council fully supported the proposal.

83 Under the District Council's proposals Hellesdon West and Hellesdon North wards would each have 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (8 per cent and 9 per cent more than the average by 2006). Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon Central wards would have 14 per cent more and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent more and 8 per cent more than the average by 2006).

84 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and recognise that the District Council's proposals would result in some improvement in electoral equality in the Hellesdon area. However, in attempting to establish a single-member ward pattern in the Hellesdon area, we are not persuaded that the District Council's proposals sufficiently address the issue of electoral equality. While we are not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, we find that electoral equality is often more achievable under a multi-member ward configuration. Moreover, we consider that the District Council's proposals will divide communities and not secure the effective and convenient representation of electors in Hellesdon. We have therefore not been persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations.

85 We have therefore decided to put forward our own proposals in Hellesdon. A number of factors have inform us in formulating appropriate warding arrangements for this area. We acknowledge that the District Council's proposals would provide the best electoral equality achievable under a single-member ward pattern and consider that by combining the District Council's proposed four single-member wards into two two-member wards the electoral variance in the Hellesdon area would be kept to a minimum. We therefore propose combining the District Council's proposed single-member Hellesdon South East and Hellesdon Central wards in a revised two-member Hellesdon South East ward. We also propose a new two-member Hellesdon North West ward comprising the District Council's proposed single-member Hellesdon North

and Hellesdon West wards. We consider that our proposals reflect community identities and interests while ensuring that electoral equality is the best achievable under our proposed council size of 47.

86 Under our draft recommendations, (and having regard to the Broadland Parishes Order 2001), Hellesdon North West and Hellesdon South East wards would have 13 per cent more and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Both wards would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. Our draft proposals are illustrated the large map at the back of the report.

Catton and Sprowston West wards

87 The existing two-member ward of Catton is coterminous with the parish of Old Catton which abuts the district boundary with the City of Norwich. Sprowston West ward is situated in the west of the town of Sprowston and is currently represented by a single councillor. Under the existing arrangements Catton and Sprowston West wards have 22 per cent more and 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

88 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing Catton ward but proposed that it be renamed Old Catton to reflect the parish of the same name. While acknowledging that the existing ward contained a high electoral variance, it argued that Old Catton is a distinct community and that any parish warding would “attract opposition from local residents”. As stated below, the District Council proposed combining the existing Sprowston West ward with the Wilk's Farm Drive area from the existing Sprowston Central ward in a new single-member Sprowston North West ward. Under the District Council's proposals Old Catton and Sprowston North West wards would have 17 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

89 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. While we recognise that the existing Catton ward would utilise a clear boundary that reflects the boundary of Old Catton parish, we note that the proposed ward would have an electoral variance of 18 per cent by 2006 which we consider to be unacceptably high. We have concluded that there is scope for improving electoral equality, particularly in an urban area such as Old Catton, and have therefore not been persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposed Old Catton ward as part of our draft recommendations.

90 We have therefore decided to put forward our own warding arrangements for this area. A number of considerations have emerged that have informed us in devising appropriate warding arrangements for this area. We note that the District Council had not considered the warding of either Old Catton or Sprowston parish in order to secure improved electoral equality. We accept that combining parts of more rural parishes to the north of Old Catton would be inappropriate as this would combine distinct areas that do not share particularly strong community identities or interests. We acknowledge that our ability to consider alternative warding arrangements in this area is limited due to the proximity of Old Catton to the district boundary. However, we note that by combining the existing single-member Sprowston West ward with the existing two-member Catton ward, electoral equality would be significantly improved while avoiding the division of established communities. We therefore propose a new three-member Old Catton & Sprowston

West ward comprising the existing Catton and Sprowston West wards. In order to secure improved electoral equality, we propose that properties on the west side of North Walsham Road that are currently situated in Sprowston West ward be transferred to our proposed two-member Sprowston Central ward (as discussed in detail below).

91 We consider that our draft recommendations for this area provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We would emphasise that our draft recommendations do not indicate a preference on our part as to the future boundaries of parishes in this area. Under our draft recommendations, Old Catton & Sprowston West ward would have an equal ratio of electors per councillor to the district average now and 8 per cent fewer than the average by 2006. Our draft proposals are illustrated the large map at the back of the report.

Sprowston Central, Sprowston East and Sprowston South wards

92 The existing wards of Sprowston Central, Sprowston East and Sprowston South comprise the central and eastern part of Sprowston, a settlement of some 12,000 electors that abuts the district boundary with the City of Norwich. All three wards are currently represented by two councillors each. Under the existing arrangements Sprowston Central, Sprowston East and Sprowston South wards have 8 per cent more, 9 per cent fewer and 39 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 41 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

93 At Stage One, the District Council put forward an entirely single-member ward pattern in the Sprowston area. It proposed a revised single-member Sprowston East ward comprising that part of the existing ward to the south of Linacre Avenue, and including Falcon Avenue East from the existing Sprowston South ward. It proposed a new single-member Sprowston North East ward comprising that part of the existing Sprowston East ward broadly to the north of Linacre Avenue, and including Falcon Road West from the existing Sprowston South ward. It proposed that the remainder of Sprowston South ward form a revised single-member ward. The District Council proposed a new single-member Sprowston West ward comprising that part of the existing Sprowston Central ward to the south of Edwards Road and Cozens Hardy Road. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Sprowston Central ward, less that area to the north of Barkers Lane, form a new single-member Sprowston North ward. As stated above, the District Council proposed that the Wilk's Farm Drive area be transferred to a new single-member Sprowston North West ward.

94 The District Council noted that its proposals would improve electoral equality in the area and that they were based on the proposals of interested parties received during its local consultation process. Under the District Council's proposals Sprowston North, Sprowston North East and Sprowston North West wards would have 2 per cent, 12 per cent fewer and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more than the average by 2006). Sprowston East and Sprowston South wards would have 2 per cent more and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

95 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and recognise that the District Council's proposed wards would secure improved electoral equality while utilising reasonably clear ward boundaries. However, we consider that in attempting to establish a wholly single-member ward pattern in Sprowston the District Council's proposals would result in the

division of established communities. As stated earlier, while we are not opposed to single-member wards in urban areas, we consider that multi-member wards would ensure further improvements in electoral equality while ensuring the effective and convenient representation of local electors. We have therefore not been persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

96 Accordingly, we intend putting forward our own warding arrangements for this area. We recognise that the District Council's proposed wards would utilise reasonably clear ward boundaries and note that by combining its proposed wards within a multi-member ward structure, electoral equality can be further improved. We therefore propose combining the District Council's proposed single-member Sprowston North East, Sprowston East and Sprowston South wards in a revised three-member Sprowston East ward. In respect of the central part of Sprowston, we note that the existing Sprowston Central ward would provide good electoral equality while adhering to clear and well-defined ward boundaries. As stated earlier, we propose combining the existing two-member Catton ward and single-member Sprowston West ward in a new three-member Old Catton & Sprowston West ward. However, to improve electoral equality we propose amending its eastern boundary to follow the rear of properties on the west side of North Walsham Road. We therefore propose a revised two-member Sprowston Central ward comprising the existing ward and properties on the west side of North Walsham Road that currently lie in the existing Sprowston West ward.

97 We consider that our draft recommendations will ensure improved electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests in this area. As stated earlier, our draft recommendations in the west of Sprowston do not reflect a view as to revised parish boundaries in this area. It is for the District Council to conduct a review of parish boundaries, and no amendments can be made without consultation with local interested parties.

98 Under our draft recommendations Sprowston Central and Sprowston East wards would have 6 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated the large map at the back of the report.

Thorpe St Andrew North East, Thorpe St Andrew North West and Thorpe St Andrew South wards

99 The existing wards of Thorpe St Andrew North East, Thorpe St Andrew North West and Thorpe St Andrew South together comprise Thorpe St Andrew, a settlement of some 11,000 electors that abuts the district boundary with the City of Norwich. Thorpe St Andrew North East and Thorpe St Andrew North West are two member wards while Thorpe St Andrew South is a single-member ward. Under the existing arrangements Thorpe St Andrew North East, Thorpe St Andrew North West and Thorpe St Andrew South wards have 44 per cent more, 18 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (52 per cent more, 21 per cent fewer and 12 per cent more than the average by 2006).

100 At Stage One the District Council proposed a revised single-member Thorpe St Andrew South ward comprising that part of the existing ward broadly to the south of Hilly Plantation along with some minor amendments to the existing ward boundary to ensure that the north boundary of the proposed ward adheres to clear ground detail. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Thorpe St Andrew South ward be combined with Thorpe St Andrew North West

ward and the Beechwood Drive area from the existing Thorpe St Andrew North East ward in a revised two-member Thorpe St Andrew North West ward. The District Council proposed a new two-member Thorpe St Andrews East ward comprising that part of the existing Thorpe St Andrew North East ward broadly to the east of Pound Lane, south of Laundry Lane and to the east of Birkbeck Way and Thomas Vere Road. The District Council proposed that the remainder of the existing Thorpe St Andrew North East ward, less the Dussindale housing estate, form a new single-member Thorpe St Andrew Central ward. The District Council stated that its proposed warding arrangements in this area were based on proposals put forward by the parish council and a district councillor, subject to some minor modifications.

101 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and note that the District Council's proposals would secure some improvement in electoral equality for this area. However, we consider that there is scope for further improvement in electoral equality and note in particular that the District Council's proposed Thorpe St Andrew East and Thorpe St Andrews North West wards are both projected to have 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. Furthermore, we are not persuaded that the Council's proposed Thorpe St Andrew North West ward adheres to a sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundary, particularly in the north of the proposed ward. We are therefore not persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposed warding arrangements as part of our draft recommendations and intend putting forward our own proposals for this area.

102 We note that further improvement in electoral equality can be achieved by combining the District Council's proposed Thorpe St Andrew South and Thorpe St Andrew East ward, and its proposed Thorpe St Andrew North West and Thorpe St Andrew Central wards in two three-member wards. Furthermore, we consider that this warding configuration would ensure clear and distinct ward boundaries and reflect community identities and interests. We therefore propose a new three-member Thorpe St Andrew South East ward comprising the District Council's proposed two-member Thorpe St Andrew East ward and single-member Thorpe St Andrew South ward. We also propose a revised three-member Thorpe St Andrew North West ward comprising the District Council's proposed two-member Thorpe St Andrew North West and single-member Thorpe St Andrew Central wards. We note that our proposed Thorpe St Andrew South East ward will comprise more recent housing development in the town, including the Dussindale Drive area, while our proposed Thorpe St Andrew North West ward will encompass the more established community of the parish.

103 Under our draft recommendations Thorpe St Andrew North West and Thorpe St Andrew South East wards would have 3 per cent fewer and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Electoral Cycle

104 We received one response regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council considered that the current electoral cycle would avoid substantial changes in the composition of the council every four years and would ensure stability during the forthcoming implementation of the Council's new constitution. It also considered that elections by thirds ensured greater accountability of councillors, particularly in multi-member wards. However, the District Council stated that it reserved the right to review its electoral cycle "in accordance with the current legislative provisions".

105 We considered carefully all the comments received. At present, the majority view appears to be that the present electoral cycle should be retained and we therefore propose no change.

Conclusions

106 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 49 to 47;
- there should be 25 wards;
- the boundaries of 33 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of ten, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

107 Our draft recommendations would involve modifying all but two of the existing wards in Broadland district, as summarised below:

- in the rural areas, we have decided to adopt the District Council's proposals subject to a minor amendment in the Buxton and Coltishall area;
- we have put forward our own proposals for a multi-member ward pattern in the Hellesdon, Old Catton, Sprowston and Thorpe St Andrew areas, using a number of the District Council's proposed single-member wards as a basis of our proposals;
- we have put forward our own proposals in the Drayton and Taverham areas.

108 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	49	47	49	47
Number of wards	35	25	35	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,949	2,032	2,036	2,123
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	26	6	28	1
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	20	0	20	0

109 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Broadland District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 26 to six. By 2006 only one ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Broadland District Council should comprise 47 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 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 elections by thirds.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

110 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states 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 parishes of Drayton, Hellesdon, Sprowston, Taverham and Thorpe St Andrew to reflect the proposed district wards. It should be noted that where appropriate, our proposals take account of the Broadland Parishes Order 2001 which is effective from April 2003.

111 The parish of Drayton is currently served by 13 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One Drayton Parish Council put forward near identical district warding arrangements to the District Council for the Drayton area. As part of our draft recommendations we propose substantial amendments to the district warding arrangements for the parish. We propose a new two-member Drayton ward, and a new Taverham South ward which would contain part of Drayton parish.

112 We intend that parish ward boundaries should reflect our proposed district ward boundaries in Drayton to secure the effective and convenient representation of local electors at both district and parish level. We therefore propose a consequential re-warding of the parish. We propose a new Drayton North parish ward, represented by 11 councillors, with boundaries reflecting that part of Drayton parish contained within our proposed Drayton district ward. We also propose a new Drayton South parish ward, represented by a two councillors, whose boundaries should reflect that part of Drayton parish contained with our proposed Taverham South ward.

113 We recognise that we have moved away from the district warding arrangements put forward to us at Stage One. We would therefore particularly welcome further comments on our draft recommendations for parish council electoral arrangements at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation
Drayton Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Drayton North (returning 11 councillors) and Drayton South (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

114 The parish of Hellesdon is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Hellesdon North ward, Hellesdon South East ward and Hellesdon West ward, each returning five councillors. As part of our draft recommendations we propose a new Hellesdon South East ward and a new Hellesdon North West ward. We intend that parish ward boundaries should reflect our proposed district ward boundaries in the Hellesdon area and therefore propose a consequential re-warding of the parish. We propose a new Hellesdon North West parish ward (returning eight councillors) and a new Hellesdon South East parish ward (returning eight councillors).

115 As stated earlier, we recognise that we have moved away from the district warding arrangements put forward to us at Stage One. We would therefore particularly welcome further comments on our draft recommendations for parish council electoral arrangements at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation
Hellesdon Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards: Hellesdon North West ward and Hellesdon South East ward, each returning eight councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

116 The parish of Sprowston is currently served by 15 councillors representing four wards: Sprowston Central ward and Sprowston East ward (returning five councillors each), Sprowston South ward (returning three councillors) and Sprowston West ward (returning two councillors).

117 As part of our draft recommendations we propose a revised Sprowston East district ward, a revised Sprowston Central district ward and a new Old Catton & Sprowston West district ward. We intend that parish ward boundaries should reflect our proposed district ward boundaries in

the Sprowston area and therefore propose a consequential re-warding of the parish. We therefore propose a revised Sprowston East parish ward (returning eight councillors) and a revised Sprowston Central parish ward (returning five councillors). We also propose a revised Sprowston West parish ward (returning two councillors) comprising that part of Sprowston parish contained within our proposed Old Catton & Sprowston West district ward.

118 We recognise that we have moved away from the proposed district warding arrangements put forward to us at Stage One. We would therefore particularly welcome further comments on our draft recommendations for parish council electoral arrangements at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Sprowston Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Sprowston East ward (returning eight councillors), Sprowston Central ward (returning five councillors) and Sprowston West ward (returning two councillors). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

119 The parish of Taverham is currently served by 15 councillors and is divided into two wards: Taverham North ward (returning seven councillors) and Taverham South ward (returning eight councillors). At Stage One Taverham Parish Council stressed the importance of revised district and parish council electoral arrangements that reflect the changes to parish boundaries in the Taverham area contained in the Broadland (Parishes) Order 2001. It also favoured the retention of two parish wards. As detailed earlier, we put forward our own district warding arrangements in the Taverham area. We propose a new two-member Taverham North ward and a new two-member Taverham South ward. We also propose a new two-member Drayton ward containing that part of the Thorpe Marriott area situated in Taverham parish.

120 We intend that parish ward boundaries should reflect our proposed district ward boundaries in the Taverham area to secure effective and convenient representation of local electors at both district and parish level. We therefore propose a consequential re-warding of the parish. We also consider that the parish contains several discrete areas that warrant separate representation on the Parish Council. We propose a revised Taverham North parish ward (returning seven councillors) with boundaries coterminous with the proposed district ward of the same name and a revised Taverham South parish ward (returning seven councillors) comprising that part of the parish contained within the proposed Taverham South district ward. We also propose a new Thorpe Marriott parish ward (returning a single councillor) comprising that part of Taverham parish contained within the proposed Drayton district ward.

121 As stated earlier, we recognise that we have moved away from the proposed district warding arrangements put forward to us at Stage One. We would therefore particularly welcome further comments on our draft recommendations for parish council electoral arrangements at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Taverham Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Taverham North ward (returning seven councillors), Taverham South ward (returning seven councillors) and Thorpe Marriott ward (returning a single councillor). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

122 The parish of Thorpe St Andrew is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Thorpe St Andrew North East ward (returning seven councillors), Thorpe St Andrew North West ward (returning five councillors) and Thorpe St Andrew South ward (returning three councillors). As part of our draft recommendations we propose a revised Thorpe St Andrew North West district ward and a new Thorpe St Andrew South East district ward. We intend that parish ward boundaries should reflect our proposed district ward boundaries in the Thorpe St Andrew area and therefore propose a consequential re-warding of the parish. We propose a new Thorpe St Andrew North West parish ward and a new Thorpe St Andrew South East parish ward (returning eight councillors each).

123 As stated earlier, we recognise that we have moved away from the proposed district warding arrangements put forward to us at Stage One. We would therefore particularly welcome further comments on our draft recommendations for parish council electoral arrangements at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Thorpe St Andrew Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards: Thorpe St Andrews North West ward and Thorpe St Andrews South East ward (returning eight councillors each). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

124 The parish of Freethorpe is served by seven councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, Freethorpe Parish Council supported an increase in the size of the parish council to reflect the substantial increase in electorate over recent years. However, it did not specify by how much.

125 We note that the current electorate of Freethorpe parish is 706 and is not forecast to significantly rise over the next five years. We are not persuaded that we have received sufficient evidence to recommend an increase in the size of the Parish Council. We consider a parish council of seven members to be an appropriate level of representation, but would welcome further evidence at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Freethorpe Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, elected from the whole parish.

126 The parish of Oulton is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. At Stage One Oulton Parish Council expressed concern at the possibility of a reduction in its size to five parish councillors and strongly supported retaining seven parish councillors. The District Council itself did not put forward any proposals for the electoral arrangements of Oulton parish. In the light of this, we do not propose any change to the number of parish councillors representing Oulton parish.

Draft Recommendation

Oulton Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, elected from the whole parish.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Broadland

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

128 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Broadland contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

129 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Broadland 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

www.lgce.gov.uk

130 In the light of responses 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Broadland: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Broadland 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 and A3 and the large map at the back of this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Taverham parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Drayton parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Hellesdon, Old Catton, Sprowston and Thorpe St Andrew

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Broadland: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Taverham Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Drayton Parish

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken..	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.