

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Forest Heath in Suffolk

January 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

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

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

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

- **in seven of the 15 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in eight wards and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 80 – 81) are that:

- **Forest Heath District Council should have 27 councillors, two more than at present;**
- **there should be 14 wards, a reduction of one;**
- **the boundaries of 10 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 11 of the proposed 14 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re -distribution of councillors for the parishes of Brandon, Freckenham, Mildenhall and Newmarket.**

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

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

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

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 All Saints	2	Granby ward (Granby parish ward of Newmarket parish)	Map 2 and Large map
2 Brandon East	3	Brandon East ward (Brandon East parish ward of Brandon parish and Santon Downham parish); Brandon West ward (part – part of Brandon West parish ward of Brandon parish); Icení ward (part – Elveden parish)	Map 2 and Large map
3 Brandon West	2	Brandon West ward (part – Wangford parish and part of Brandon West parish ward of Brandon parish)	Map 2 and Large map
4 Eriswell & The Rows	2	Great Heath ward (part – part of Great Heath parish ward of Mildenhall parish); Icení ward (part – Eriswell parish); The Rows ward (part – Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill parish and part of West Row parish ward of Mildenhall parish)	Map 2
5 Exning	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Exning parish)	Map 2
6 Great Heath	2	Great Heath ward (part – part of Great Heath parish ward of Mildenhall parish); Market ward (part – part of Market parish ward of Mildenhall parish); The Rows ward (part – part of West Row parish ward of Mildenhall parish)	Map 2 and Large map
7 Icení	1	Icení ward (part – Cavenham, Icklingham and Tuddenham parishes); Mill ward (part – Gazeley and Higham parishes)	Map 2
8 Lakenheath	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Lakenheath parish)	Map 2
9 Manor	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Barton Mills, Freckenham and Worlington parishes)	Map 2
10 Market	2	Great Heath ward (part – part of Great Heath parish ward of Mildenhall parish); Market ward (part – part of Market parish ward of Mildenhall parish)	Map 2 and Large map
11 Newmarket East	3	St Mary's ward (part – part of St Mary's parish ward of Newmarket parish); Severals ward (part – part of Severals parish ward of Newmarket parish); Studlands Park (part – part of Studlands Park parish ward of Newmarket parish)	Map 2 and Large map
12 Newmarket West	3	St Mary's ward (part – part of St Mary's parish ward of Newmarket parish); Severals ward (part – part of Severals parish ward of Newmarket parish); Studlands Park (part – part of Studlands Park parish ward of Newmarket parish)	Map 2 and Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
13	Red Lodge	2	Mill ward (part – Herringswell and Red Lodge parishes)	Map 2
14	South	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Dalham, Kentford and Moulton parishes)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Forest Heath

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 All Saints	2	2,510	1,255	0	2,665	1,333	-4
2 Brandon East	3	3,569	1,190	-5	3,906	1,302	-6
3 Brandon West	2	2,496	1,248	0	2,698	1,349	-2
4 Eriswell & The Rows	2	2,682	1,341	7	2,930	1,465	6
5 Exning	1	1,505	1,505	20	1,522	1,522	10
6 Great Heath	2	2,767	1,384	5	2,913	1,457	5
7 Icen	1	1,327	1,327	6	1,368	1,368	-1
8 Lakenheath	2	2,764	1,382	11	2,819	1,410	2
9 Manor	1	1,204	1,204	-4	1,244	1,244	-10
10 Market	2	2,491	1,246	0	2,866	1,433	4
11 Newmarket East	3	3,892	1,297	4	4,248	1,416	2
12 Newmarket West	3	4,128	1,376	10	4,241	1,414	2
13 Red Lodge	2	1,148	574	-54	2,572	1,286	-7
14 South	1	1,242	1,242	-1	1,326	1,326	-4
Totals	27	33,725	-	-	37,318	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,249	-	-	1,382	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Forest Heath. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1978 (Report No. 291). The electoral arrangements of Suffolk County Council were last reviewed in 1982 (Report No. 429). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, 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 (see Appendix C).

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

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

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in the district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

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

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 Situated in the west of the county of Suffolk, the district of Forest Heath covers the towns of Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon as well as a large rural area including Thetford Forest. It has the smallest population of any of the Suffolk districts. The area is also home to a large number of United States Air Force service personnel.

17 The district contains 23 parishes covering the whole of the district. Newmarket town is covered by four district wards and comprises around 29 per cent of the district's total electorate. The District's three towns have experienced significant population growth in the 1960s and 1970s and further growth is forecast over the coming five-year period.

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

19 The electorate of the district is 33,725 (February 2000). The Council presently has 25 members who are elected from 15 wards, eight of which cover the relatively urban areas of Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon, while the remainder are predominantly rural. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are each represented by two councillors and seven are single-member wards. The whole Council is elected together every four years.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Forest Heath district, with around 29 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Brandon East and Great Heath wards.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,349 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,493 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in seven of the 15 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in five wards by more than 20 per cent and in four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Great Heath ward where the councillor represents 72 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Forest Heath

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Brandon East	2	3,287	1,664	22	3,624	1,812	21
2 Brandon West	2	2,583	1,292	-4	2,785	1,393	-7
3 Exning	1	1,505	1,505	12	1,522	1,522	2
4 Granby	2	2,510	1,255	-7	2,665	1,333	-11
5 Great Heath	1	2,327	2,327	72	2,588	2,588	73
6 Icen	1	1,063	1,063	5	1,088	1,088	5
7 Lakenheath	2	2,764	1,382	2	2,819	1,410	-6
8 Manor	1	1,204	1,204	-11	1,244	1,244	-17
9 Market	2	2,931	1,466	9	3,191	1,596	7
10 Mill	1	1,786	1,786	32	3,226	3,226	116
11 Severals	3	4,324	1,441	7	4,520	1,507	1
12 South	1	1,242	1,242	-8	1,326	1,326	-11
13 St Mary's	3	2,787	929	-31	2,955	985	-34
14 Studlands Park	1	909	909	-33	1,014	1,014	-32
15 The Rows	2	2,503	1,252	-7	2,751	1,376	-8
Totals	25	33,725	-	-	37,318	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,349	-	-	1,493	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Studlands Park ward were relatively over-represented by 33 per cent, while electors in Great Heath ward were relatively under-represented by 72 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

23 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received seven representations during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Forest Heath District Council

24 The District Council proposed a council of 27 members, two more than at present, serving 15 wards, as at present. It proposed no change to the wards of Brandon West, Exning, Manor, South, Studlands Park and The Rows.

25 In Newmarket the Council proposed two boundary realignments, between the wards of St Mary's and Severals, and it suggested that Granby ward be renamed All Saints ward, but that it retain its current boundaries. In Mildenhall, it proposed two boundary modifications between the wards of Great Heath and Market. The Council proposed that Brandon East ward be extended southwards to include the parish of Elveden, and that Lakenheath ward include Eriswell parish. It also proposed that Mill ward be divided between a new Red Lodge ward and a modified Mill ward, which would additionally include the parishes of Icklingham, Higham and Tuddenham.

26 The Council's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Parish Councils

27 We received representations from five parish councils. Mildenhall Parish Council stated that its area should be represented by a single-member West Row ward and two two-member wards of Great Heath and Market. It further stated that district and parish wards should be coterminous. It also commented on the level of representation in Newmarket and Red Lodge and the parish council's electoral arrangements for Mildenhall which are discussed in the next chapter.

28 Eriswell Parish Council requested that the parishes of Eriswell, Elveden and Icklingham remain in a single ward, as together they form the Elveden Estate. Tuddenham St Mary Parish Council, which represents the parish of Tuddenham, requested that the name Icen be retained while Exning Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal for no change to Exning ward. Freckenham Parish Council made proposals for the parish council electoral arrangements which are discussed in the next chapter.

Other Representations

29 We received one further representation from a resident of Brandon, arguing that the level of representation for Newmarket was disproportionate to the size of the electorate and requesting that the situation be addressed.

30 As part of its Stage One submission the District Council provided copies of submissions which it had received in response to its own consultation exercise. Suffolk Constabulary stated that, since a review in 1999, the policing boundaries and district boundaries had been coterminous and considered that it was desirable that this situation be retained. Icklingham Parish Council strongly opposed the loss of Icení as a ward name; this was supported by 13 local residents.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

33 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

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

Electorate Forecasts

35 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 11 per cent from 33,725 to 37,318 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Mill ward, particularly in Red Lodge parish. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

36 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

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

38 Forest Heath District Council presently has 25 members. In its Stage One submission the District Council stated that it had first looked at producing a scheme based on the existing council size. However, the Council stated that in order to provide good levels of electoral equality under a 25-member scheme it would have to put forward "a number of ward boundaries [which] are rather contrived and communities of interest [would be] disregarded to an extent that major objections were likely to be forthcoming from a number of Parish Councils". The Council therefore considered a change to the existing council size, and concluded that a council size of 27 would provide high levels of electoral equality and strong boundaries while having regard to community identity.

39 We concur with the view that the existing council size of 25 does not facilitate a convenient distribution of councillors between the separate areas of the district. It is important to note that under a council size of 25 the electorate of Newmarket town entitles the area to 7.5 councillors, so that allocating either seven or eight councillors to the area (under a 25-member scheme) would result in an inherent level of electoral imbalance. The rural wards in the district (excluding Brandon East, Brandon West, Exning, Great Heath and Market wards) would be entitled to 8.4 councillors under a 25-member scheme and would therefore face similar levels of electoral imbalance. In such circumstances, the Commission would suggest that a small change in council size is considered locally. An increase in council size to 27, as proposed by the District Council, would entitle the town of Newmarket to eight councillors and the rural wards would be entitled to nine councillors. Consequently a council size of 27 would provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district as a whole, while facilitating coterminosity between district wards and parishes and a good reflection of community identities.

40 Additionally the Commission is pleased to note that widespread consultation was conducted on a 27-member scheme and that the proposals put forward by the Council enjoy cross-party consensus. We received no further representations regarding council size at Stage One.

41 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 27 members.

Electoral Arrangements

42 We have carefully considered all the representations received, including the district-wide scheme put forward by Forest Heath District Council.

43 The Commission has examined alternative configurations of parishes to those put forward by the District Council in order to assess whether further improvements to electoral equality could

be obtained. However, we have concluded that further improvements to electoral equality in the majority of the district's more rural wards would be at the expense of the statutory criteria, namely the need to reflect community identities and secure effective and convenient local government. We have also noted that, because overall there are a relatively low number of electors represented by each councillor, a small change in electorate can have a proportionately greater effect on the degree of electoral imbalance.

44 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the District Council's proposals for the town of Newmarket and for Eriswell parish. We have also put forward minor modifications to its proposals for the towns of Brandon and Mildenhall. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Granby, St Mary's, Severals and Studlands Park wards (Newmarket) and Exning ward;
- (b) Great Heath and Market wards (Mildenhall);
- (c) Brandon East and Brandon West wards;
- (d) Icen, Manor, Mill and South wards;
- (e) Lakenheath and The Rows wards.

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

Granby, St Mary's, Severals and Studlands Park wards (Newmarket) and Exning ward

46 These five wards lie in the south-west of the district and cover the parishes of Exning and Newmarket. The wards of Severals and St Mary's currently return three councillors, Granby ward returns two councillors and Exning and Studlands Park are single-member wards. Under the existing arrangements the wards of Exning and Severals are under-represented by 12 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (2 per cent and 1 per cent by 2005). The wards of Granby, St Mary's and Studlands Park are over-represented by 7 per cent, 31 per cent and 33 per cent respectively (11 per cent, 34 per cent and 32 per cent by 2005).

47 The District Council's scheme, based on a council size of 27, involved retaining the existing electoral arrangements for the wards of Exning and Studlands Park. The Council also proposed that Granby ward should retain its existing boundaries and level of representation, but it proposed a new ward name of All Saints, after the All Saints Church and All Saints School which are situated within the ward. The Council proposed a boundary realignment between the wards of St Mary's and Severals. It proposed transferring 228 electors, south of St Philips Road and west of Exning Road, currently in Severals ward, into St Mary's ward. It proposed transferring 131 electors, currently situated in St Mary's ward, north of the properties in Exeter Road, east of

Exning Road and west of the footpath known locally as the 'yellow brick road', into Severals ward. It also proposed that St Mary's ward should return two councillors, a reduction of one.

48 The Council noted the high levels of electoral inequality which would result from its proposal to leave Studlands Park ward unchanged. It stated that it had considered four options for Studlands Park: to include Studlands Park in a revised single-member ward with part of Severals ward; to include Studlands Park in a revised single-member ward with part of Exning parish; to include Studlands Park with the whole of Exning parish in a two-member ward; or to retain the existing Studlands Park ward. The Council concluded that "Studlands Park is a separate community with its own identity and characteristics" and therefore decided to propose the retention of the existing arrangements.

49 Under the District Council's proposals All Saints ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average (4 per cent below by 2005). The wards of Exning, St Mary's and Severals would have councillor:elector ratios 20 per cent, 15 per cent and 13 per cent above the district average respectively (10 per cent, 8 per cent and 9 per cent by 2005). Studlands Park would have a councillor:elector ratio 27 per cent below the district average both initially and in 2005.

50 We received three further submissions concerning these wards. Exning Parish Council stated that it supported the District Council's proposal to retain the existing arrangements of Exning ward. Mildenhall Parish Council stated that St Mary's and Studlands Park wards do not justify four members. A resident of Brandon stated that "Newmarket has had a disproportionate number of members" and he hoped that this imbalance would be addressed under our recommendations.

51 We have carefully considered all representations received for these five wards. We intend adopting the proposal put forward by the District Council, and supported by Exning Parish Council, to retain the existing arrangements of Exning ward. We have noted the geographical position of the ward on the edge of the district (surrounded on three sides by the county boundary) and the very strong existing boundary (the A14 Cambridge to Bury St Edmunds road) between the parishes of Exning and Newmarket. We have concluded that the existing arrangements provide a clear, cohesive ward, with strong community identity, and therefore consider that in order to provide a suitable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria a projected electoral variance of 10 per cent in 2005 is justifiable given the strength of the evidence for the retention of the existing arrangements. We are endorsing the District Council's proposal to retain the existing boundaries and level of representation of Granby ward, given that this will provide strong, clear boundaries and high levels of electoral equality. We have made a minor boundary modification to ensure that the ward boundary adheres to ground detail; this alteration would not affect any electors. We also support the District Council's proposal to rename Granby ward as All Saints.

52 However, we have put forward our own warding arrangements for the existing wards of St Mary's, Severals and Studlands Park. We concur with the District Council's proposal to reduce the representation of these three wards from seven councillors to six, which the wards are entitled to given their total electorate. However, we consider that the electoral equality provided under the District Council's scheme can be improved upon, especially the electoral variance of 27 per

cent in its proposed Studlands Park ward. We have noted the community identity arguments put forward by the District Council for the retention of the existing Studlands Park ward and we support the view that it should not be included in a ward with the parish of Exning. However, we see no reasonable justification for a ward that is situated in the relatively urban town of Newmarket to be over-represented by 27 per cent. We have looked at alternative electoral arrangements for the ward of Studlands Park and consequently the surrounding wards of St Mary's and Severals. We have concluded that the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria would be met by two three-member wards, both comprising parts of the existing wards of St Mary's, Severals and Studlands Park. We propose that the boundary between these two wards should run along the middle of Exning Road and Mill Hill, from the A14 to St Mary's Square. The boundary would then run along Rowley Drive, to the rear of the properties of Lowther Street and Fitzroy Street, and then follow Black Bear Lane in a southerly direction to the High Street. We consider that this would provide a very strong, clearly identifiable boundary while greatly improving electoral equality in Newmarket town as a whole. We propose naming the ward to the east of the Exning Road/Mill Hill boundary Newmarket East, and the ward to the west of the boundary Newmarket West. However, we would welcome further comments on these proposed ward names from local people during Stage Three.

53 Under our proposals All Saints ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average (4 per cent below by 2005). The wards of Exning, Newmarket East and Newmarket West would have councillor:elector ratios of 20 per cent, 4 per cent and 10 per cent above the district average respectively (10 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent by 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Great Heath and Market wards (Mildenhall)

54 These two wards cover the town of Mildenhall, which is situated in the centre of the district. Currently Great Heath ward is represented by a single member while Market ward is represented by two councillors. Under the existing arrangements both wards are under-represented, by 72 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (73 per cent and 7 per cent by 2005).

55 Forest Heath District Council proposed an amended boundary between these two wards, transferring 457 electors from Market ward into Great Heath ward. It proposed that the electors of Charles Melrose Gardens, Granville Gardens and numbers 42 to 76 Queensway, currently in Market ward, should be transferred into Great Heath ward. It suggested a transfer of the electors north of College Heath Road from Market ward into Great Heath ward. It proposed that the north-eastern boundary of Market ward should "continue to run along the centre of College Heath Road". The Council also proposed that Great Heath should become a two-member ward, an increase of one councillor.

56 Under the District Council's proposals the wards of Great Heath and Market would have councillor:elector ratios of 11 per cent and 5 per cent above the district average respectively (6 per cent and 5 per cent by 2005).

57 Mildenhall Parish Council stated that Great Heath ward should have "more representation", proposing that Great Heath and Market wards should each return two councillors. It put forward proposals for parish electoral arrangements which are outlined later in the chapter.

58 Having carefully considered all representations received for these two wards, we concur with the District Council's and Mildenhall Parish Council's proposal to increase the number of councillors representing Great Heath ward from one to two. We propose adopting the District Council's boundary between Great Heath and Market wards, with two modifications. We support the Council's proposal to unite the whole of Charles Melrose Close and Granville Gardens in Great Heath ward; however, we propose running the boundary along the rear of these properties and the edge of Nuttree Farm and Queensway Farm. This amendment would retain the electors of Queensway, between number 42 and Nuttree Farm, in Market ward. We consider that this would provide effective and convenient local government by retaining all the electors of Queensway in the same ward, while improving electoral equality in both wards. We are also putting forward a boundary modification between the wards of Great Heath and Market. We noted that the existing boundary currently divides Churchill Drive and that the electors of Churchill Drive who are currently in Market ward have no direct access to the ward in which they vote. We are proposing to transfer the part of Churchill Drive which is currently situated in Market ward, into Great Heath ward as we consider this will improve community identity and provide effective and convenient local government for the electors of Churchill Drive. To maintain a high level of electoral equality following this modification we propose that the electors of North Terrace (excluding numbers 37 to 41) and North Place should be united by transferring these electors from Great Heath ward into Market ward. We are also proposing a minor boundary realignment between our proposed wards of Great Heath and Eriswell & The Rows to ensure that the ward boundary adheres to ground detail; these modifications do not affect any electors. We conclude that our proposals will provide clear boundaries while providing effective and convenient local government and improved electoral equality in these two wards.

59 Under our proposals Market ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average (4 per cent above by 2005), while Great Heath ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 5 per cent above the district average both initially and in 2005. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Brandon East and Brandon West wards

60 These two wards lie in the north-east of the district. Brandon East ward covers the parish of Santon Downham and Brandon East parish ward of Brandon parish, while Brandon West ward covers the parish of Wangford and Brandon West parish ward of Brandon parish. Each of these wards currently returns two councillors. Brandon East ward is currently under-represented by 22 per cent (21 per cent by 2005), while Brandon West ward is over-represented by 4 per cent (7 per cent by 2005).

61 Forest Heath District Council proposed that there be no change to the electoral arrangements of Brandon West ward. It proposed the existing Brandon East ward be revised to include the parish of Elveden, currently in Icení ward, and that the level of representation be increased to three councillors.

62 Under the District Council's proposals Brandon East ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 7 per cent below the district average (8 per cent by 2005). Brandon West ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 3 per cent above the district average (1 per cent by 2005).

63 Eriswell Parish Council stated that “any new arrangements should acknowledge the fact that Eriswell, Elveden and Icklingham form one Estate” and should therefore be retained in a district ward together.

64 We have carefully considered the representations received for these two wards. We considered retaining the existing Icení ward, which would retain Eriswell, Elveden and Icklingham parishes together in the same ward; however, this would have a knock-on effect on electoral equality across the district as a whole. We therefore intend adopting the District Council’s proposals with one minor modification. We propose that the boundary between Brandon East and Brandon West wards should remain mostly unchanged, but propose that at the northern end of Rattler’s Road it should run along Church Road as far as the Bowling Green before running in a northerly direction and joining the district boundary. We consider that this minor modification provides a strong boundary while improving electoral equality in both wards.

65 Under our proposals Brandon West ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average (2 per cent below by 2005) and Brandon East ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 5 per cent below the district average (6 per cent by 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Icení, Manor, Mill and South wards

66 These four wards are situated in the south and east of the district and are each single-member wards. Icení ward comprises the parishes of Cavenham, Elveden, Eriswell, Icklingham and Tuddenham; Manor ward comprises the parishes of Barton Mills, Freckenham and Worlington; Mill ward comprises the parishes of Gazeley, Herringswell, Higham and Red Lodge; and South ward comprises the parishes of Dalham, Kentford and Moulton. Under the existing arrangements the wards of Icení and Mill are under-represented by 5 per cent and 32 per cent respectively (5 per cent and 116 per cent by 2005). Manor and South wards are over-represented by 11 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (17 per cent and 11 per cent by 2005).

67 Forest Heath District Council proposed that the wards of Manor and South should remain unchanged. It put forward a significant regrouping of parishes to create two new wards from the existing wards of Icení and Mill. It noted that the parish of Red Lodge is “the major centre for development within the district” and consequently proposed that the parishes of Herringswell and Red Lodge, currently in Mill ward, should comprise a new two-member Red Lodge ward. It proposed that the parishes of Gazeley and Higham form a revised single-member Mill ward with the parishes of Cavenham, Icklingham and Tuddenham, currently in Icení ward. It proposed that the remaining parishes of Icení ward, Elveden and Eriswell, be included in Brandon East and Lakenheath wards respectively. The District Council also provided copies of submissions which it had received in response to its own consultation exercise. Icklingham Parish Council argued that the District Council’s proposed Mill ward should be named Icení; this was supported by 13 local residents.

68 Under the District Council’s proposals the wards of Manor, Red Lodge and South would have councillor:elector ratios 4 per cent, 54 per cent and 1 per cent below the district average respectively (10 per cent, 7 per cent and 4 per cent by 2005). Mill ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 6 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below by 2005).

69 We received four further representations concerning these four wards. Eriswell Parish Council stated that it wished to remain in a district ward with the parishes of Elveden and Icklingham as “they form one estate, i.e. Elveden Estate”. It stated that the remainder of the ward should “be made up from small villages because such [villages] have common interests and concerns”. Tuddenham St Mary Parish Council stated that the ward name Icení should be retained. Mildenhall Parish Council stated that there be an increase in “the number of District Council seats in the [proposed] Red Lodge ward by two ... because of the confirmed development” in the area.

70 Freckenham Parish Council put forward new electoral arrangements for the parish which are outlined later in the chapter.

71 We have carefully considered all the representations received. We noted Eriswell Parish Council’s desire to remain in a ward with the parishes of Elveden and Icklingham. We considered retaining the existing Icení ward, which would have united these three parishes and provided good levels of electoral equality in Icení ward. However, this proposal would have resulted in considerably higher levels of electoral inequality in Manor and Mill wards. We are therefore adopting the District Council’s proposal to transfer Elveden parish into Brandon East ward, as outlined earlier in the chapter, and putting forward our own proposal to transfer Eriswell parish into a new Eriswell & The Rows ward, as outlined later in the chapter. We have concluded that the District Council’s proposals for these four wards provide the best levels of electoral equality currently available while having regard to the statutory criteria for the area as a whole. We have considered our own alternative warding patterns for this area; however, with the exception of including Eriswell parish in The Rows ward instead of Lakenheath ward, we have been unable to find a pattern of grouping whole parishes in district wards which would provide the same level of electoral equality in the rural area as a whole. We therefore intend adopting the Council’s proposals for these four wards, with one modification. We have noted that the proposed Red Lodge ward would initially have an electoral variance of 54 per cent, however due to a major housing development in Red Lodge parish there will be a marked improvement in the electoral variance, 7 per cent by 2005. Any proposal which would result in a high degree of electoral equality initially would, given this large projected growth, result in high levels of electoral inequality in 2005. We propose that the Council’s proposed Mill ward should be named Icení, as put forward by Tuddenham St Mary Parish Council and supported by Icklingham Parish Council and 13 local residents. We would welcome further comments on this proposed ward name from local people during Stage Three.

72 Under our proposals Icení ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 6 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below by 2005). Manor, Red Lodge and South wards would have councillor:elector ratios 4 per cent, 54 per cent and 1 per cent below the district average respectively (10 per cent, 7 per cent and 4 per cent by 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Lakenheath and The Rows wards

73 These two wards cover the north-west of the district, and currently return two councillors each. Lakenheath ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name; The Rows ward contains

Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill parish and West Row parish ward of Mildenhall parish. Under the existing arrangements Lakenheath ward is under-represented by 2 per cent (over-represented by 6 per cent by 2005) and The Rows ward is over-represented by 7 per cent (8 per cent by 2005).

74 Forest Heath District Council proposed that there be no change to the existing electoral arrangements of The Rows ward. It proposed that the existing Lakenheath ward should be included in a ward with the parish of Eriswell, currently in Icení ward, to form a modified two-member Lakenheath ward. Under the District Council's proposals The Rows ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average both now and in 2005. Lakenheath ward would have an councillor:elector ratio 18 per cent above the district average (8 per cent by 2005).

75 Eriswell Parish Council stated that it would like to remain in a district ward with the parishes of Elveden and Icklingham. The District Council also forwarded a representation they had received from Eriswell Parish Council, objecting to the proposal to link Eriswell parish with Lakenheath parish as it is "unhappy at [becoming] an appendage to such a large community as Lakenheath". Mildenhall Parish Council stated that a West Row ward should be created, returning one councillor.

76 We have carefully considered all representations received for these two wards. We have considered Mildenhall Parish Council's proposal for a single-member West Row ward, to be coterminous with the parish ward of the same name. However, this proposal would provide electoral variances of 20 per cent in both a new West Row ward and a modified The Rows ward (24 per cent in both by 2005). Consequently we are not intending to adopt Mildenhall Parish Council's proposals due to the high level of electoral inequality it would provide.

77 We concurred with the District Council's proposal to transfer Eriswell parish out of Icení ward, as the retention of the existing Icení ward would result in high levels of electoral inequality in the district as a whole. However, we have noted Eriswell Parish Council's opposition to the proposal to transfer it into a ward with the "large community" of Lakenheath. We are therefore proposing that the parish of Eriswell should be transferred into a new Eriswell & The Rows ward. This proposal would improve electoral equality in this area as a whole and would include Eriswell in a ward with a number of smaller communities – Beck Row, Holywell Row, Kenny Hill and West Row. We would welcome comments on this proposal from local people during Stage Three. We are also proposing a minor boundary realignment between our proposed wards of Great Heath and Eriswell & The Rows to ensure that the ward boundary adheres to ground detail; these modifications do not affect any electors.

78 Under our proposals the wards of Eriswell & The Rows and Lakenheath would have councillor:elector ratios above the district average by 7 per cent and 11 per cent respectively (6 per cent and 2 per cent by 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

79 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 25 to 27;
- there should be 14 wards;
- the boundaries of 10 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

81 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- in Newmarket we have put forward our own proposals for two three-member wards, Newmarket East and Newmarket West.
- we have made minor modifications to the District Council's proposals in Brandon and Mildenhall.
- we propose that Eriswell parish should be included with the existing The Rows ward in a new Eriswell & The Rows ward.
- there should be no change to Exning, Lakenheath, Manor and South wards.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	25	27	25	27
Number of wards	15	14	15	14
Average number of electors per councillor	1,349	1,249	1,493	1,382
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	3	8	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	1	5	0

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

Draft Recommendation
 Forest Heath District Council should comprise 27 councillors serving 14 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

85 The parish of Newmarket is currently served by 18 councillors serving four wards. The parish wards of Granby, St Mary’s, Severals and Studlands Park currently return four, five, seven and two parish councillors respectively. Forest Heath District Council proposed that Granby district ward be renamed All Saints; it also proposed that Granby parish ward should be renamed All Saints. The District Council also proposed a boundary alteration between St Mary’s and Severals district wards, outlined earlier in the chapter; it stated that “there will be consequential changes to the St Mary’s ward and Severals ward of the Newmarket Town Council”.

86 We propose putting forward our own district warding pattern for the town of Newmarket, as outlined earlier in the chapter. We are therefore also putting forward our own parish warding arrangements for Newmarket parish. We concluded that a Studlands Park district ward with an electoral variance of 27 per cent should not be adopted in our proposals; however, we have noted the community identity arguments put forward and we are consequently proposing a Studlands Park parish ward. We propose that the parish ward of Newmarket East comprise the remainder of the proposed Newmarket East district ward and that the boundaries for All Saints and Newmarket West parish wards be coterminous with the proposed district wards of the same names, outlined earlier in the chapter.

Draft Recommendation
Newmarket Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: All Saints ward (returning four councillors), Newmarket East ward (returning five councillors), Newmarket West ward (returning seven councillors) and Studlands Park ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries are illustrated on the large map inserted in the back of the report.

87 The parish of Mildenhall is currently served by 15 councillors serving three wards. The parish wards of Great Heath and Market return six councillors each, and West Row parish ward returns three councillors. Forest Heath District Council put forward two boundary modifications between the district wards of Great Heath and Market, outlined earlier in the chapter; it stated that “there will be consequential changes to the Great Heath and Market wards of the parish of Mildenhall”. Mildenhall Parish Council stated that it should retain a council size of 15 with each parish ward returning the existing number of councillors.

88 We propose broadly adopting the District Council’s proposals for boundary modifications between the district wards of Great Heath and Market; however, we are putting forward a number of minor modifications to the District Council’s proposed boundaries. We therefore propose that the parish ward boundaries for Mildenhall be coterminous with our proposed district ward boundaries for the same area, outlined earlier in the chapter.

Draft Recommendation
Mildenhall Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Great Heath ward and Market ward (each returning six councillors) and West Row ward (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

89 The parish of Brandon is currently served by 14 councillors serving two wards, the parish wards of Brandon East and Brandon West, returning seven councillors each. Forest Heath District Council proposed no change to the existing boundary between the district wards of Brandon East

and Brandon West; consequently it proposed no change to the electoral arrangements of Brandon parish. However, we propose a minor boundary modification between Brandon East and Brandon West district wards, and therefore we propose a consequential modification to the parish ward boundaries for Brandon, outlined earlier in the chapter. Having made this boundary modification we considered that the level of representation should be changed between the parish wards to provide greater electoral equality; however, we would welcome comments from Brandon Parish Council and any other interested parties during Stage Three of this review.

Draft Recommendation
Brandon Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Brandon East (returning eight councillors) and Brandon West (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

90 The parish of Freckenham is currently served by five councillors and is not warded. Freckenham Parish Council proposed that the parish be divided into five single-member wards, stating that “this arrangement will help electors to identify with their parish councillors and help councillors to focus on a given area”.

91 During Stage Two we contacted the Parish Council to clarify its boundary proposals, and in doing so noted that there would be a disproportionately high number of electors in its proposed East ward. We are consequently proposing a boundary modification between its proposed Central and East parish wards, which we understand will command the support of Freckenham Parish Council. We received no further representations concerning Freckenham parish.

Draft Recommendation
Freckenham Parish Council should comprise five councillors, as at present, representing five single-member wards: Central, Church, East, South and West parish wards. The boundaries of East parish ward should follow the Lee Brook to the east and Mildenhall Road to the south; all other boundaries proposed are shown on Map A2 in Appendix A.

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

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

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

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Forest Heath

5 NEXT STEPS

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

95 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Forest Heath 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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Forest Heath: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Freckenham parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Forest Heath: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Freckenham Parish

APPENDIX B

Forest Heath District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the District Council in 10 wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

Figure B1: Forest Heath District Council's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Brandon East	Brandon East ward (Brandon East parish ward of Brandon parish and Santon Downham parish); Icení ward (part – Elveden parish)
Brandon West	Brandon West ward (Wangford parish and Brandon West parish ward of Brandon parish)
Great Heath	Great Heath ward (part – part of Great Heath parish ward of Mildenhall parish); Market ward (part – part of Market parish ward of Mildenhall parish)
Lakenheath	Icení ward (part – Eriswell parish); Lakenheath ward (Lakenheath parish)
Market	Market ward (part – part of Market parish ward of Mildenhall parish)
Mill	Icení ward (part – Cavenham, Icklingham and Tuddenham parishes); Mill ward (part – Gazeley and Higham parishes)
St Mary's	St Mary's ward (part – part of St Mary's parish ward of Newmarket parish); Severals ward (part – part of Severals parish ward of Newmarket parish)
Severals	St Mary's ward (part – part of St Mary's parish ward of Newmarket parish); Severals ward (part – part of Severals parish ward of Newmarket parish)
Studlands Park	Studlands Park (Studlands Park parish ward of Newmarket parish)
The Rows	The Rows ward (Beck Row, Holywell Row & Kenny Hill parish and West Row parish ward of Mildenhall parish)

Figure B2: Forest Heath District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brandon East	3	3,482	1,161	-7	3,819	1,273	-8
Brandon West	2	2,583	1,292	3	2,785	1,393	1
Great Heath	2	2,784	1,392	11	2,930	1,465	6
Lakenheath	2	2,943	1,472	18	2,998	1,499	8
Market	2	2,474	1,237	5	2,849	1,425	5
Mill	1	1,327	1,327	6	1,368	1,368	-1
St Mary's	2	2,884	1,442	15	2,973	1,487	8
Severals	3	4,227	1,409	13	4,502	1,501	9
Studlands Park	1	909	909	-27	1,014	1,014	-27
The Rows	2	2,503	1,252	0	2,751	1,376	0

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

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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