

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Worthing in West Sussex

Report to The Electoral Commission

July 2002

© Crown Copyright 2002

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by The Electoral Commission with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 305

CONTENTS

	page
WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?	5
SUMMARY	7
1 INTRODUCTION	11
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	13
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	17
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	19
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	21
6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	35

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Worthing is inserted at the back of this report.

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke
Kru Desai
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M. Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

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 and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Worthing.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Worthing's electoral arrangements on 10 July 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 February 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received during consultation on the draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

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

- **in two of the 12 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent;**
- **this level of representation is expected to continue over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in one ward by 2006;**
- **the existing arrangements provide for unequal distribution of councillors within Worthing, with the area to the north of the railway line being slightly under-represented and the area to the south of the railway line being slightly over-represented.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 105 – 106) are that:

- **Worthing Borough Council should have 37 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 13 wards, instead of 12 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of nine of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In 12 of the proposed 13 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 5 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

All further representations on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission at the address below, and should reach the Commission by 20 August 2002:

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Broadwater	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – Broadwater ward
2	Castle	3	Castle ward; part of Tarring ward
3	Central	3	Part of Central ward; part of Heene ward; part of Selden ward
4	Durrington	2	Part of Durrington ward
5	Gaisford	3	Part of Gaisford ward; part of Offington ward
6	Goring	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – Goring ward
7	Heene	3	Part of Heene ward
8	Marine	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – Marine ward
9	Northbrook	2	Part of Durrington ward
10	Offington	3	Part of Gaisford ward; part of Offington ward
11	Salvington	3	Part of Durrington ward; part of Offington ward; Salvington ward
12	Selden	3	Part of Central ward; part of Selden ward
13	Tarring	3	Part of Tarring ward

Notes: 1 The whole borough is unparished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Worthing

	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	Broadwater	3	6,460	2,153	2	6,591	2,197	2
2	Castle	3	6,306	2,102	-1	6,188	2,063	-4
3	Central	3	5,944	1,981	-6	6,190	2,063	-4
4	Durrington	2	4,519	2,260	7	4,529	2,265	5
5	Gaisford	3	6,732	2,244	6	6,704	2,235	4
6	Goring	3	6,751	2,250	6	6,743	2,248	5
7	Heene	3	6,143	2,048	-3	6,288	2,096	-2
8	Marine	3	6,427	2,142	1	6,390	2,130	-1
9	Northbrook	2	3,453	1,727	-18	4,425	2,213	3
10	Offington	3	6,141	2,047	-3	6,086	2,029	-5
11	Salvington	3	6,851	2,284	8	6,775	2,258	5
12	Selden	3	6,197	2,066	-2	6,222	2,074	-3
13	Tarring	3	6,390	2,130	1	6,293	2,098	-2
	Totals	37	78,314	-	-	79,424	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,117	-	-	2,147	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Worthing Borough Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Worthing in West Sussex. The seven districts in West Sussex have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Worthing's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1978 (Report no. 304). The electoral arrangements of West Sussex County Council were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 473). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Worthing was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so 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.

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Worthing is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did 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.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 10 July 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Worthing Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, the Local Government Association, West Sussex Association of Local Councils, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations,

the end of Stage One, was 15 October 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 26 February 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Worthing in West Sussex*, and ended on 22 April 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 Worthing is the largest town in West Sussex and is situated on the south coast, between the districts of Adur to the east and Arun to the west. The borough is a growing resort at the foot of the Sussex Downs, with five miles of beach at its southernmost point. The borough is divided by the railway line, which runs east–west, parallel to the coastline. Covering some 3,244 hectares, and with a population of some 99,565, Worthing has a population density of almost 31 persons per hectare. The borough is unparished.

11 The electorate of the borough is 78,314 (February 2001). The Council presently has 36 members who are elected from 12 wards, most of which are urban, with the two northernmost wards being relatively rural. Each of the wards is represented by three councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

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

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,175 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,206 by the year 2006 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 two of the 12 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Durrington ward where each of the three councillors represents 27 per cent more electors than the borough average. However, while there is a generally high level of electoral equality in Worthing, the existing arrangements provide for an imbalance in the allocation of councillors either side of the railway line.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Worthing

Table 3: 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	Broadwater	3	6,460	2,153	-1	6,591	2,197	0
2	Castle	3	6,106	2,035	-6	5,988	1,996	-10
3	Central	3	5,704	1,901	-13	5,949	1,983	-10
4	Durrington	3	8,289	2,763	27	9,276	3,092	40
5	Gaisford	3	6,533	2,178	0	6,502	2,167	-2
6	Goring	3	6,751	2,250	3	6,743	2,248	2
7	Heene	3	6,359	2,120	-3	6,504	2,168	-2
8	Marine	3	6,427	2,142	-2	6,390	2,130	-3
9	Offington	3	6,349	2,116	-3	6,292	2,097	-5
10	Salvington	3	6,525	2,175	0	6,449	2,150	-3
11	Selden	3	6,221	2,074	-5	6,247	2,082	-6
12	Tarring	3	6,590	2,197	1	6,493	2,164	-2
	Totals	36	78,314	-	-	79,424	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,175	-	-	2,206	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Worthing Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' columns show by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Central ward were relatively over-represented by 13 per cent, while electors in Durrington ward were relatively under-represented by 27 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received six representations, including three borough-wide schemes from Worthing Borough Council, Worthing Liberal Democrat Group and a local resident, and representations from West Sussex County Council, Worthing Labour Party and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Worthing in West Sussex*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, the LGCE moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting seven wards, to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries and improved levels of electoral equality. It proposed that:

- Worthing Borough Council should be served by 37 councillors, compared with the current 36, representing 13 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of nine of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries.

Draft Recommendation

Worthing Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors, serving 13 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 13 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 5 per cent from the average from the borough in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, five representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Worthing Borough Council.

Worthing Borough Council

18 The Borough Council supported the draft recommendations in full and proposed that they should become the final recommendations.

West Sussex County Council

19 The County Council objected to the draft recommendations, as it considered that “the achievement of coterminous boundaries when the county review is undertaken will be particularly problematic in Worthing”. However, it proposed that the proposed Northbrook ward be named Durrington West ward, and that the revised Durrington ward be named Durrington East ward.

Other Representations

20 A further three representations were received in response to the draft recommendations from a local political group and two residents. The Durrington Branch of the West Worthing Conservative Association supported two two-member wards in the Durrington area, and welcomed the fact that all of Roedean Road would be in the revised Salvington ward. However, it proposed an alternative transfer of properties from Durrington ward to Salvington ward to that proposed in the draft recommendations.

21 A local resident proposed that each ward be “sub-divided into areas” and that “each sub-divided ward would vote every three years with an electorate of only 2,047 for each of the candidates to canvas”. He considered that this would increase voter turnout. Finally, another local resident objected to the fact that there may be all-out elections in May 2003 in order to implement the new boundaries which would mean that any councillors elected in 2002 would only serve for one year.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

22 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Worthing 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 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

23 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

24 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.

25 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 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

26 Since 1975 there has been an increase of approximately 7 per cent in the electorate of Worthing borough. At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1 per cent from 78,314 to 79,424 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Durrington ward, although a notable amount of growth is also expected in Central ward. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. At Stage One, the Liberal Democrats questioned the Borough Council’s projected electorate, with particular reference to the development expected in the West Durrington area. The LGCE sought clarification from the Borough Council on this issue, and was content to accept the Borough Council’s projected electorate figures. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

27 No comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts were received during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

28 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

29 Worthing Borough Council presently has 36 members. The Borough Council, having put its scheme out to public consultation, proposed a council of 37 members, an increase of one, as it considered that the current council size was effective and convenient. The addition of an extra councillor and the division of the existing Durrington ward into two two-member wards would correct the allocation of councillors north and south of the railway line, which at present is unbalanced, and would therefore result in a revised council size of 37.

30 The Liberal Democrats, who also put their scheme out for public consultation, proposed a reduction in council size from 36 to 35, also considering that the current council size was convenient and effective. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed council size of 35, the imbalance of representation either side of the railway line would also be rectified.

31 A local resident proposed a reduction in council size to 30, contending that the Council should be able to run with fewer councillors. His proposed council size would also correct the imbalance of representation either side of the railway. Finally, a local resident stated that he understood "that there is a move toward less numbers of representatives at local council level" and that he did not support this, although he acknowledged that this would not affect his preference for single-member wards.

32 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One regarding council size and noted that there was a disparity of opinion regarding the appropriate council size for Worthing. Notwithstanding the reasonable levels of electoral equality achieved, the borough-wide proposal from a local resident, which proposed a significant reduction in council size, had not been subject to scrutiny or consultation on a wider scale within the borough. In contrast, it was noted that there was broad agreement between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats that a change in council size was necessary, in order to rectify the current imbalance of councillors north and south of the railway line and to accommodate the significant growth expected in Durrington ward, but that any change should be kept to a minimum. While all three of these proposals would have improved electoral equality, the LGCE was not aware of any wide support for the significant change in council size as proposed by the local resident. It was not persuaded by the argument provided that a reduction of six councillors was justified.

33 On balance, the LGCE concluded that there was consensus between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats that the existing council size be broadly retained. However, neither the Borough Council nor the Liberal Democrats provided any further argumentation for either of their proposed minor changes in council size. As stated earlier, both schemes achieved good levels of electoral equality, while addressing the current imbalance of representation north and south of the railway line. However, while the LGCE was aware of the view that an option based on minimal change is not necessarily the most appropriate basis for re-warding, in assessing both schemes in their entirety it considered that the Borough Council's scheme utilised more identifiable boundaries than those in the Liberal Democrats' scheme, as it was based upon strong geographical features such as main arterial roads. Furthermore, it considered that the Liberal Democrats' scheme was significantly weaker in three areas than that of the Borough Council and as such, weakened the scheme as a whole. Their proposed Downs ward in the north of the borough would comprise two large residential areas which are only connected by a narrow path in the north of the ward, and are otherwise distinct from each other. They also proposed that the boundary between their proposed Northbrook and Maybridge wards would follow Palatine Road, which would not give the properties between Palatine Road and Littlehampton Road direct access to the remainder of the proposed Northbrook ward.

Furthermore, they proposed dividing two seafront wards into four wards, which the LGCE did not consider to be a good reflection of community identity.

34 Accordingly, the LGCE decided to base its draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme of 37 members. While it acknowledged that both schemes had merit, it was not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. In addition, the LGCE recognised that there had been limited public interest in this review, providing it with little evidence in relation to the communities in Worthing. It therefore based its conclusions on the appropriateness and strength of boundaries which, as detailed above, it considered to be a better reflection of the identities and interests of the local community under the Borough Council's proposals. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, it concluded that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 37 members.

35 During Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendation for a council size of 37 members.

36 Having carefully considered the representations received, and in view of the support for the proposed council size of 37 members, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for a council size of 37 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

37 Having carefully considered all the submissions received, the LGCE noted that there was consensus between all three borough-wide schemes that the railway line was a natural boundary that should not be breached.

38 There was no consensus, however, on the subject of single and multi-member wards in Worthing. The Borough Council, in proposing to retain most of the existing wards, proposed 11 three-member wards, with two two-member wards serving the existing Durrington area. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a mixed pattern of two and three-member wards. The local resident who submitted a borough-wide scheme proposed a uniform pattern of three-member wards. West Sussex County Council stated that "it would be preferable to have two-member wards" to help achieve its aim of coterminosity between borough wards and county divisions when the county review is carried out later this year. However, the purpose of this review is to secure the best electoral arrangements for Worthing at the current time and by 2006, rather than in anticipation of what will be the best electoral arrangements for West Sussex County Council in the future. Finally, a local resident advocated a uniform pattern of single-member wards in Worthing, which he believed "would lead to ... a more democratic system of election" and "would to some measure help to lessen 'voter apathy' at local elections". The LGCE was not prescriptive on this issue; however, on balance it noted that there was a general consensus for a mixed pattern of two and three-member wards.

39 Having proposed a council size of 37, the LGCE's capacity to endorse the local resident's proposals based on a 30-member scheme was limited. It recognised that the scheme did achieve good electoral equality but, as discussed earlier, it was not persuaded that there would be sufficient public support for such a considerable reduction in council size.

40 As stated earlier, the LGCE was of the view that the schemes submitted by both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats had merit; however, in view of the strong boundaries and good levels of electoral equality achieved by the Borough Council's proposals, it based its recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme, which it considered would provide for a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, it made minor boundary amendments to seven of the proposed 13 wards to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries and improved levels of electoral equality.

41 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations, and two other representations commented on specific aspects of the proposals. The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Durrington, Offington and Salvington wards;
- (b) Castle and Tarring wards;
- (c) Broadwater and Gaisford wards;
- (d) Goring and Marine wards;
- (e) Central, Heene and Selden wards.

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

Durrington, Offington and Salvington wards

43 These three wards are situated in the north and west of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 27 per cent above the borough average in Durrington ward (40 per cent above by 2006), 3 per cent below in Offington ward (5 per cent below by 2006) and equal to the average in Salvington ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

44 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing three-member Offington ward. It then proposed dividing the existing Durrington ward into two two-member wards and amending the boundary between Durrington and Salvington wards in order to achieve good levels of electoral equality. The area in the north-east of the existing Durrington ward, broadly those properties to the east of Ivydore Avenue and to the north of Bramble Lane, would be transferred to a revised three-member Salvington ward. The remainder of the existing Durrington ward would be split into two wards. Those properties broadly to the south of New Road, to the west of Pond Lane Recreation Ground and to the north of the centre of Edmonton Road, Chesley Close, the northern part of Halifax Drive and Shelby Road, together with those properties broadly to the south of the centre of Columbia Drive and to the west of Durrington Lane, would form part of the proposed two-member Northbrook ward. The remainder of the existing Durrington ward, reflecting the boundary amendment with Salvington ward, would form a revised two-member Durrington ward.

45 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the borough average in Durrington ward (5 per cent above by 2006), 17 per cent below in Northbrook ward (5 per cent above by 2006), equal to the average in Offington ward (2 per cent below by 2006) and 7 per cent above in Salvington ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

46 The Liberal Democrats proposed combining the northern parts of the existing Offington and Salvington wards to create a new two-member Downs ward, with Arundel Road and Crockhurst Hill forming most of its southern boundary. From Offington Corner, the Liberal Democrats' preferred option would result in the boundary following the rear of properties on Hurston Close, Mayfield Close and the Golf Cottages on Worthing Golf Course. However, they also proposed an alternative option, which would achieve better electoral equality, under which the boundary would follow the centre of Findon Road and then the rear of properties on Hurston Close, Mayfield Close and the Golf Cottages on Worthing Golf Course.

47 They also proposed dividing the existing Durrington ward. That part of the ward broadly to the west of Ivydore Avenue, Pond Lane Recreation Ground, Edmonton Road, Sherbrooke Close, Hudson Close and Durrington Lane would form the proposed three-member Northbrook ward. It would also be extended southwards to incorporate that part of the existing Castle ward north of the centre of Palatine Road. The remainder of the existing Durrington ward would form

a revised two-member Durrington ward, along with the south-western part of the existing Salvington ward.

48 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the remainder of the existing Salvington ward and the majority of the south-western part of the existing Offington ward together form a two-member Salvington & Offington ward. Finally in this area, the Liberal Democrats proposed that part of the remainder of the existing Offington ward and the northern part of the existing Broadwater ward form a new two-member Broadwater North ward. The remaining parts of Offington ward would form part of their proposed Becket and Broadwater South wards, as detailed below.

49 Under the Liberal Democrats' scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the borough average in Broadwater North ward, both now and by 2006, 9 per cent above in Downs ward (6 per cent above by 2006) or 3 per cent above using the least preferred option (4 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Durrington ward (3 per cent above by 2006), 8 per cent below in Northbrook ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and equal to the average in Salvington & Offington ward (2 per cent below by 2006) or 6 per cent above using the least preferred option (2 per cent above by 2006).

50 West Sussex County Council and Worthing Labour Party supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

51 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As stated earlier, it did not consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Downs ward was a good reflection of community identity, as it brought together two distinct residential areas separated by the area known as The Gallops. Nor did it consider that their proposed Northbrook ward adequately reflected community identity, as the area to the south of Littlehampton Road would not have direct access to the remainder of the proposed ward. Therefore, given the stronger boundaries and better reflection of community identity provided by the Borough Council's scheme in this area, the LGCE adopted the Borough Council's proposals as part of its draft recommendations. However, it proposed a number of minor amendments in order to provide more identifiable boundaries and improved electoral equality in a number of areas.

52 It made minor amendments to the boundary between the Borough Council's proposed Durrington and Northbrook wards in order to avoid the arbitrary division of a number of roads. First, it proposed that the boundary to the south-west of Pond Lane Recreation Ground should follow the rear of properties on Tavy Road to avoid dividing a cul-de-sac unnecessarily. This resulted in the transfer of properties on Edmonton Road, Chesley Close and Halifax Drive to the proposed Durrington ward. It also proposed a minor boundary amendment involving two properties on New Road. Additionally, it made two small amendments to the boundary between the proposed Durrington and Salvington wards. It proposed that the western boundary of its proposed Salvington ward should follow the rear of properties on Bramble Crescent in order to give those properties vehicular access to the remainder of the ward. Further south, the LGCE proposed that the properties on Roedean Road currently in the existing Durrington ward be transferred to the revised Salvington ward to unite the whole road in the same ward and in order to improve electoral equality.

53 The LGCE also made two minor amendments to the boundary between the proposed Salvington and Offington wards, in order that the six properties on Mill Lane currently in Offington ward be transferred to the proposed Salvington ward, where they have their vehicular access and in order that part of the existing boundary to be retained in The Gallops area adhere to firm ground detail, affecting no electors. One further amendment to the LGCE's proposed Offington ward would be that its southern boundary would follow the rear of properties on Broomfield Avenue, currently in Gaisford ward, and then the centre of Ardsheal Road in order to transfer the properties in the 'triangular' area in the south of Offington ward to its proposed Gaisford ward, in order to create a more identifiable boundary. This ward will be discussed in detail below.

54 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the borough average in Durrington ward (5 per cent above by 2006), 18 per cent below in Northbrook ward (3 per cent above by 2006), 3 per cent below in Offington ward (5 per cent below by 2006) and 8 per cent above in Salvington ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

55 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area. West Sussex County Council proposed that the proposed Northbrook ward be named Durrington West ward and that the revised Durrington ward be named Durrington East ward.

56 The Durrington Branch of the West Worthing Conservative Association supported the two two-member wards proposed in the Durrington area, and the proposal that all of Roedean Road should be transferred to the revised Salvington ward. However, it stated that it did “not think the transfer of Durrington’s north-eastern corner (Ivydore Avenue to Bramble Lane) is the best way of obtaining the numerical adjustment sought”. It considered that it would be more inconvenient for voters to use a polling station in Salvington ward and would therefore reduce the tendency to vote. Instead, it proposed that the area bounded by numbers 1–87 and 2–58 Greenland Road (but not including Franklin Road) be transferred from the revised Durrington ward to the revised Salvington ward. However, it stated that “we see no reason why the western side of Durrington Hill should not be included in Salvington as all houses there access directly on to that dangerous road”.

57 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. We note the Durrington Branch of the West Worthing Conservative Association’s alternative boundary proposal. However, we note that the proposed Durrington and Salvington wards were supported by the Borough Council at Stage Three. Furthermore, we do not consider that the position of polling stations is sufficient evidence to justify amending the draft recommendations, particularly given the weaker boundary which would have resulted from the Conservatives’ alternative proposal. Furthermore, we have not been persuaded by West Sussex County Council’s proposal to rename the two Durrington wards as Durrington West and Durrington East wards. We note that at Stage One both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats agreed that the wards should be named Northbrook and Durrington, with the Liberal Democrats stating that the name Northbrook was “derived from the historic farm within the area, and also the college which is a major focal site in the area”. No evidence has been supplied by the County Council as to why its proposed ward names would be a better reflection of community identity in the area. In the light of this, we propose confirming the draft recommendations in this area as final without amendment.

58 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Durrington, Northbrook, Offington and Salvington wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Castle and Tarring wards

59 These two wards are situated in the west of the borough, north of the railway line, and are both represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below the borough average in Castle ward (10 per cent below by 2006) and 1 per cent above in Tarring ward (2 per cent below by 2006).

60 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed modifying the boundary between these two wards, but retaining the other boundaries in their entirety. The new boundary between the two wards would follow southwards along the centre of Ringmer Road from its northern boundary.

Both wards would retain their existing names and continue to be represented by three councillors each.

61 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the borough average in Castle ward (4 per cent below by 2006) and 1 per cent above in Tarring ward (2 per cent below by 2006).

62 As described earlier, the Liberal Democrats proposed transferring part of the existing Castle ward to its proposed Northbrook ward. Most of the remainder of the existing Castle ward (the area to the west of the centre of The Boulevard) would form their proposed two-member Maybridge ward. The remainder of the existing Castle ward would be combined with the majority of the existing Tarring ward (the area to the west of the centre of Rectory Road and South Street) to form their proposed three-member West Tarring ward. The remainder of the existing Tarring ward would form part of a new two-member Becket ward, to be discussed below.

63 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the borough average in Maybridge ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and 2 per cent below in West Tarring ward (5 per cent below by 2006).

64 West Sussex County Council and Worthing Labour Party supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

65 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As stated earlier, it did not consider the transfer of the area between Littlehampton Road and Palatine Road to the proposed Northbrook ward under the Liberal Democrats' proposals to be a good reflection of community identity, as those properties do not have direct access to the remainder of the ward. Therefore, given the stronger boundaries of these two wards achieved by the Borough Council's proposals and the better reflection of community identity, the LGCE adopted the Borough Council's revised Castle and Tarring wards in their entirety.

66 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Castle and Tarring wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals.

67 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

68 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. Given the support received for the proposed Castle and Tarring wards, we have decided to adopt these two wards in full as part of our final recommendations.

69 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Castle and Tarring wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Broadwater and Gaisford wards

70 These two wards are situated in the east of the borough, north of the railway line, and both are represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent below the borough average in Broadwater ward (equal to the average by 2006) and equal to the average in Gaisford ward (2 per cent below by 2006).

71 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing Broadwater and Gaisford wards.

72 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the borough average in Broadwater ward, both now and by 2006, and 3 per cent above in Gaisford ward (1 per cent above by 2006).

73 As detailed earlier, the Liberal Democrats proposed a new two-member Becket ward. This ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Tarring ward (those properties to the east of the centre of South Street), part of the remainder of the existing Offington ward (those properties to the south of Poulter's Lane) and approximately half of the existing Gaisford ward (the area to the west of those properties on the west side of South Farm Road). Its proposed three-member Broadwater South ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Gaisford ward, the remainder of the existing Offington ward and the remainder of the existing Broadwater ward, broadly to the south of Southfield Road, Penfold Road and Dominion Way West. The remainder of the existing Broadwater ward would form part of a new two-member Broadwater North ward, as detailed above.

74 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the borough average in Becket ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 3 per cent below in Broadwater South ward (4 per cent below by 2006).

75 West Sussex County Council and Worthing Labour Party supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

76 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As already indicated, it was of the view that, on balance, the proposals submitted by the Borough Council were a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the Liberal Democrats' proposals, and therefore based the draft recommendations for this area on the Borough Council's proposals. However, the LGCE made two minor amendments. As stated earlier, it modified the boundary between the Borough Council's proposed Offington and Gaisford wards in order to achieve a more identifiable boundary, a better reflection of community identity and better electoral equality. It considered that the transfer of the area bounded by Ardsheal Road, Broadwater Street West, Carnegie Road and South Farm Road was a logical one, and provided a stronger boundary than the existing boundary which the Borough Council proposed retaining. As a consequence, it also proposed that those properties on the southern side of Broomfield Avenue should be transferred to the proposed Offington ward to improve electoral equality. It proposed retaining the existing Broadwater ward, as proposed by the Borough Council.

77 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the borough average in Broadwater ward, both now and by 2006, and 6 per cent above in Gaisford ward (4 per cent above by 2006).

78 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

79 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. Given the support received for the proposed Broadwater and Gaisford wards, we have decided to adopt these two wards in full as part of our final recommendations.

80 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Broadwater and Gaisford wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Goring and Marine wards

81 These two wards are situated in the west of the borough, south of the railway line on the coast, and both are represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent above the borough average in Goring ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and 2 per cent below in Marine ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

82 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing Goring and Marine wards.

83 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the borough average in Goring ward (5 per cent above by 2006) and 1 per cent above in Marine ward (1 per cent below by 2006).

84 The Liberal Democrats proposed extending the existing Goring ward eastwards to include those properties from the existing Marine ward broadly to the west of Elm Grove, Wallace Avenue and Bernard Road. They then proposed dividing the area into two, so that the dividing boundary would run west-east along the centre of Fernhurst Drive and along the rear of properties on the south side of Ilex Way and Goring Road. The northern ward would be named Goring North ward and would be represented by two councillors, and the southern ward would be named Goring-by-Sea ward and would also be represented by two councillors.

85 The remainder of the existing Marine ward would be extended eastwards to include the majority of the existing Heene ward, so that the eastern boundary would run along the rear of properties on the eastern side of Shakespeare Road and Wordsworth Road. Again, this area would be divided into two, so that the dividing boundary would run along the centre of Lansdowne Road and Richmond Road. The northern ward would be named Heene North ward and would be represented by two councillors, and the southern ward would be named Heene South ward and would also be represented by two councillors.

86 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the borough average in Goring-by-Sea ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 2 per cent below in Goring North ward (4 per cent below by 2006), equal to the average in Heene North ward, both now and by 2006, and 4 per cent above in Heene South ward (3 per cent above by 2006).

87 West Sussex County Council and Worthing Labour Party supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

88 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As stated earlier, it did not consider the Liberal Democrats' proposals to divide the area broadly covered by the existing Goring, Marine and Heene wards into four new wards would be an adequate reflection of the identities and interests of the local community. In the Liberal Democrats' own submission, they identified the existing Goring ward as having "a strong community identity", and therefore the LGCE did not consider the decision to enlarge and then divide the ward to be an appropriate reflection of community identity. Having considered the Borough Council's scheme, it retained the existing three-member Goring and Marine wards, as proposed by the Borough Council. The LGCE considered that these wards already utilised strong boundaries and provided a good reflection of local communities.

89 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Goring and Marine wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals.

90 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

91 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. Given the support received for the proposed Goring and Marine wards, we have decided to adopt these two wards in full as part of our final recommendations.

92 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Goring and Marine wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Central, Heene and Selden wards

93 These three wards are situated in the centre and east of the borough, south of the railway line on the coast, and are each currently represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors is 13 per cent below the borough average in Central ward (10 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent below in Heene ward (2 per cent below by 2006) and 5 per cent below in Selden ward (6 per cent below by 2006).

94 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed modifying the boundary between the existing Heene and Central wards so that it would continue to follow the centre of Shakespeare Road as far as Richmond Road, where it would follow the centre of that road until rejoining the existing boundary. It also proposed retaining the existing Selden ward. Each of these wards would retain their existing names and would continue to be represented by three councillors.

95 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillors would be 7 per cent below the borough average in Central ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent below in Heene ward (2 per cent below by 2006) and 2 per cent below in Selden ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

96 As described earlier, the Liberal Democrats proposed that the majority of the existing Heene ward form two new wards, Heene North and Heene South. The remainder of the existing Heene ward would be joined with the majority of the existing Central ward to form a revised three-member Central ward. This would incorporate the area broadly to the west of Broadwater Road, south of Newland Road and along the rear of properties on the western side of Park Road. The remainder of the existing Central ward would be joined with the existing Selden ward to form a revised three-member Selden ward.

97 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the borough average in Central ward (1 per cent above by 2006) and 1 per cent below in Selden ward, both now and by 2006.

98 West Sussex County Council and Worthing Labour Party supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

99 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As stated earlier, it was not persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposed Goring North, Goring-by-Sea, Heene North and Heene South wards, and was therefore limited in its ability to adopt their proposed Central and Selden wards. Having considered the Borough Council's proposals, which provide for revised Central and Heene wards while retaining the existing Selden ward, the LGCE considered that these wards utilised strong boundaries and had been appropriately adjusted to improve electoral equality. The proposed Central and Selden wards were also broadly similar to those proposed by the Liberal Democrats. However, the LGCE proposed two minor amendments between the revised Central ward and the existing Selden ward to tie the boundary to firm ground detail. It proposed that Chesswood School be transferred to the proposed Selden ward, and that the boundary should continue to follow the centre of Homefield Road, instead of cutting through the hospital grounds. These amendments would have a negligible effect on electoral equality.

100 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the borough average in Central ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent below in Heene ward (2 per cent below by 2006) and 2 per cent below in Selden ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

101 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

102 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. Given the support received for the proposed Castle, Heene and Selden wards, we have decided to adopt these wards in full as part of our final recommendations.

103 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Castle, Heene and Selden wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

104 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycles.

Conclusions

105 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided to endorse its draft recommendations in full.

106 We conclude that, in Worthing:

- there should be a increase in council size from 36 to 37;
- there should be 13 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of nine of the existing wards should be modified.

107 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	36	37	36	37
Number of wards	12	13	12	13
Average number of electors per councillor	2,175	2,117	2,206	2,147
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	2	1	1	0
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

108 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from two to one, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with no wards expected to vary by more than 5 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Worthing Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Worthing

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

109 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in Worthing and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

110 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 20 August 2002.

111 Any further representations concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission at the address below, to arrive no later than 20 August 2002.

The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW