

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Ipswich 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
Kru Desai
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.

© Crown Copyright 2001

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 Local Government Commission for England 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.♻️

CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>31</i>
APPENDICES	
A Proposed electoral arrangements from: – Ipswich Borough Council – Ipswich Borough Council Conservative Group – Ipswich Liberal Democrats	 <i>33</i>
B The Statutory Provisions	<i>37</i>

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

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Ipswich 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 Ipswich:

- **In three of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.**
- **By 2005 this level of unequal representation is not expected to have improved, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in five wards, and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 104–105) are that:

- **Ipswich Borough Council should have 48 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 14 of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all 16 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2005.**

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:

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

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Bixley	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
2	Bridge	3	Bridge ward (part)
3	Broom Hill	3	Broom Hill ward (part); Town ward (part)
4	Castle Hill	3	Broom Hill ward (part); Castle Hill ward (part); White House ward (part)
5	Chantry	3	Chantry ward (part); Sprites ward (part); Town ward (part); White House ward (part)
6	Gainsborough	3	Gainsborough ward (part); Priory Heath ward (part)
7	Priory Heath	3	Gainsborough ward (part); Priory Heath ward (part)
8	Rushmere	3	Rushmere ward; St Margaret's ward (part)
9	St Clement's	3	Bridge ward (part); Gainsborough ward (part); Priory Heath ward (part); St Clement's ward (part)
10	St John's	3	St Clement's ward (part); St John's ward (part)
11	St Margaret's	3	Broom Hill ward (part); Castle Hill ward (part); St Margaret's ward (part)
12	Sprites	3	Chantry ward (part); Sprites ward (part); Stoke Park ward (part)
13	Stoke Park	3	Bridge ward (part); Sprites ward (part); Stoke Park ward (part)
14	Town	3	St Clement's ward (part); St John's ward (part); St Margaret's ward (part); Town ward (part)
15	White House	3	Castle Hill ward (part); White House ward (part)
16	Whitton	3	Castle Hill ward (part); St Margaret's ward (part); White House ward (part); Whitton ward (part)

Notes: 1 *The borough contains no parishes.*

2 *The large map inserted inside the back of the report illustrates the proposed wards outlined above.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Ipswich

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 Bixley	3	5,839	1,946	4	5,839	1,946	-1
2 Bridge	3	5,627	1,876	0	5,836	1,945	-1
3 Broom Hill	3	5,632	1,877	0	5,994	1,998	2
4 Castle Hill	3	6,123	2,041	9	6,123	2,041	4
5 Chantry	3	5,577	1,859	-1	5,643	1,881	-4
6 Gainsborough	3	6,212	2,071	11	6,262	2,087	6
7 Priory Heath	3	4,471	1,490	-20	5,703	1,901	-3
8 Rushmere	3	6,085	2,028	8	6,085	2,028	3
9 St Clement's	3	5,039	1,680	-10	5,875	1,958	0
10 St John's	3	5,767	1,922	3	5,993	1,998	2
11 St Margaret's	3	5,895	1,965	5	5,970	1,990	1
12 Sprites	3	5,601	1,867	0	5,601	1,867	-5
13 Stoke Park	3	5,565	1,855	-1	5,565	1,855	-5
14 Town	3	5,041	1,680	-10	5,602	1,867	-5
15 White House	3	5,469	1,823	-3	6,184	2,061	5
16 Whitton	3	5,883	1,961	5	5,892	1,964	0
Totals	48	89,826	-	-	94,167	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,871	-	-	1,962	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Ipswich Borough 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 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 draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Ipswich 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 Ipswich. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1978 (Report No. 280). 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, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix B).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

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

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

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

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

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

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

Constabulary, the local authority associations, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, 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 Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 2 October 2000.

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

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

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Ipswich is the county town of Suffolk, and lies in the south of the county on the Orwell estuary. It covers almost 4,000 hectares, and has a population of some 114,000. The borough comprises an almost entirely urban residential settlement, with a commercial centre and successful port and docks. Ipswich has excellent road and rail links with London and the rest of East Anglia. The borough contains no parishes.

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

18 The electorate of the borough is 89,826 (February 2000). The Council presently has 48 members who are elected from 16 wards. All 16 wards are each represented by three councillors, and the Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been a small increase in the electorate in Ipswich borough, with around 1 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increase has been in Town ward.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,871 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,962 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 three of the 16 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Chantry ward, where each councillor represents 20 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Ipswich

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 Bixley	3	5,839	1,946	4	5,839	1,946	-1
2 Bridge	3	5,761	1,920	3	5,970	1,990	1
3 Broom Hill	3	5,137	1,712	-8	5,383	1,794	-9
4 Castle Hill	3	5,750	1,917	2	5,750	1,917	-2
5 Chantry	3	4,515	1,505	-20	4,526	1,509	-23
6 Gainsborough	3	5,909	1,970	5	7,240	2,413	23
7 Priory Heath	3	5,381	1,794	-4	5,392	1,797	-8
8 Rushmere	3	6,080	2,027	8	6,080	2,027	3
9 St Clement's	3	5,846	1,949	4	6,622	2,207	13
10 St John's	3	6,103	2,034	9	6,370	2,123	8
11 St Margaret's	3	6,094	2,031	9	6,431	2,144	9
12 Sprites	3	5,323	1,774	-5	5,323	1,774	-10
13 Stoke Park	3	5,556	1,852	-1	5,556	1,852	-6
14 Town	3	6,209	2,070	11	6,638	2,213	13
15 White House	3	5,329	1,776	-5	6,044	2,015	3
16 Whitton	3	4,994	1,665	-11	5,003	1,668	-15
Totals	48	89,826	-	-	94,167	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,871	-	-	1,962	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ipswich Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Chantry ward were relatively over-represented by 20 per cent, while electors in Whitton ward were relatively under-represented by 11 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Ipswich Borough Council.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 10 representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, the Borough Council's Conservative Group and Ipswich Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission.

Ipswich Borough Council

23 The Borough Council proposed retaining the current council size of 48 members, serving 16 wards. Under the Council's proposals the existing pattern of three-member wards would be retained across the borough, and all 16 of the current wards would undergo change to their boundaries. As part of the review process the Council stated that it had undertaken its own consultation process intended to encourage participation in the review, and had invited views and representations from local residents.

24 The Borough Council's proposals would provide for improved levels of electoral equality across the borough. Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 14 of the 16 proposed wards. By 2005, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all 16 wards. The Council's proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

Ipswich Borough Council Conservative Group

25 The Borough Council's Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') proposed a significant reduction in council size to 32 members, 16 fewer than at present, serving 16 two-member wards. Their proposals for warding arrangements in Ipswich would involve minimal change to ward boundaries, and four wards would remain unchanged. The Conservatives proposed that any revised warding arrangements in the north-west of the borough should continue to reflect the existing parliamentary boundary between Ipswich and Central Suffolk & North Ipswich constituencies, arguing that voters have become used to the existing boundary and that "there would be no sense and very considerable disadvantage in replacing one very unusual division with another".

26 The Conservatives' proposals would also provide for improved levels of electoral equality for Ipswich. Under their proposals, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 13 of the 16 proposed wards. By 2005, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in 15 of the 16 wards. The Conservatives' proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

Ipswich Liberal Democrats

27 Ipswich Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') also proposed retaining the current council size of 48 members, serving 16 wards. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the existing pattern of three-member wards would be retained across the borough, and all but three of the current wards would experience changes to their boundaries.

28 The Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide for improved levels of electoral equality across the borough. Under their proposals, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 14 of the 16 proposed wards. By 2005, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all 16 wards. The Liberal Democrats' proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

Other Representations

29 We received seven further representations from local residents of Ipswich at Stage One of the review. Six residents of the White House Estate (currently in White House ward) expressed opposition to the Conservatives' proposal to transfer part of the estate to a revised Whitton ward. Another local resident expressed concern that the external administrative boundary of Ipswich Borough did not appropriately reflect local community ties, and requested that the external boundary of the borough and the Ipswich and Central Suffolk & North Ipswich parliamentary constituencies be reviewed.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

34 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 5 per cent from 89,826 to 94,167 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Gainsborough ward, on the site of the former Ipswich Airfield, although a significant amount of growth is also expected in St Clement’s and White House wards. 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 Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

36 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case. In particular, when considering proposals for a significant change in council size, we will look for some evidence of consensus and local consultation over the proposed increase or reduction.

37 Ipswich Borough Council presently has 48 members. The Borough Council proposed retaining a council of 48 members, serving 16 three-member wards. It stated that a Working Group had been established to consider proposals for warding arrangements in Ipswich. The Working Group concluded that the achievement of electoral equality in Ipswich would best be met by retaining the current council size and a pattern of 16 three-member wards. A proposed scheme based on a council size of 48, covering 16 three-member wards, was subsequently approved and adopted by the Council.

38 The Conservatives proposed a significant reduction in council size from 48 to 32 members. Although the existing pattern of 16 wards would be retained under their proposals, each ward would be represented by two councillors, rather than three as at present. The Conservatives stated that the Borough Council had recently implemented a modernised structure of political management, and they argued that in light of the new structure “three councillors per ward are simply no longer needed”. They contended that the proposed reduction in council size would provide for more efficient decision making by the Council, greater accountability and increased cost savings for the electorate.

39 The Liberal Democrats expressed support for retaining the current council size of 48. They stated that, while they had initially considered a pattern of 14 three-member wards and three two-member wards, they were subsequently content to support the Working Group’s proposal to retain the current pattern of 16 three-member wards. The Liberal Democrats objected to the Conservatives’ proposal to reduce the council size to 32, stating that they “value highly the representative role of the councillor”. They also noted that the ratio of electors to councillors in Ipswich under the current council size compares favourably with other large towns in East Anglia.

40 We have considered carefully all the representations and evidence received at Stage One of the review. As detailed above, the Commission will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size, but will be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. We recognise that there is some disagreement between the three borough-wide schemes received as to the most appropriate council size for the borough. However, while the proposals put forward by both the Council and the Conservatives were the subject of local public consultation, we have received no evidence at Stage One which would indicate that there is significant support for a radical change in council size. Furthermore, having carefully considered the Conservatives’ proposals, we have found no evidence to indicate that the existing council size fails to secure convenient and effective local government. We have also received no evidence as to how the Council would function more effectively under a decreased council size of 32, as opposed to the existing council size of 48.

41 As outlined in our *Guidance*, it is important that those proposing to change council size are able to demonstrate that such schemes have been properly researched and consulted on locally. It is especially important to establish what new structures they plan to put in place, and to explain the role of councillors in the proposed new structure. In addition, it is also important to demonstrate that proposed changes will have a reasonable degree of longevity.

42 We have considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We consider that the current council size provides for convenient and effective local government in Ipswich, and are content that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

Electoral Arrangements

43 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the three borough-wide schemes for electoral arrangements in Ipswich. From these representations, some considerations have emerged which have informed our draft recommendations. As outlined above, our proposals for Ipswich are based on a council size of 48, which we consider to be the most appropriate council size for the borough, having regard to the evidence submitted and to the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area. Notwithstanding the reduction in council size proposed by the Conservatives, we note that all three schemes were based on 16 wards, and that there are some areas where there is a degree of consensus regarding community boundaries in Ipswich. Wherever possible, we have attempted to reflect those areas of agreement.

44 Our draft recommendations are based largely on the Borough Council's proposals, although we have also drawn upon elements of the other borough-wide schemes submitted at Stage One of the review. We have also sought to build on those proposals in several areas in order to further improve electoral equality and reflect community identities and interests in the borough. All three borough-wide schemes are discussed in detail below, and are summarised in Appendix A. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) White House and Whitton wards;
- (b) Broom Hill and Castle Hill wards;
- (c) Chantry and Sprites wards;
- (d) Bridge and Stoke Park wards;
- (e) St Margaret's and Town wards;
- (f) St Clement's and St John's wards;
- (g) Gainsborough and Priory Heath wards;
- (h) Bixley and Rushmere wards.

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

White House and Whitton wards

46 White House and Whitton wards lie in the north-west of the borough and are each represented by three members. White House ward comprises the White House Estate and the community of Westbourne to the west of the A1156 Norwich Road, and has 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent more than the average by 2005). Whitton ward, which is bounded by Norwich Road to the west and Stratford Road and Fircroft Road to the south, has 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (15 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

47 Under the Borough Council's proposals the boundary between White House and Whitton wards would be amended to follow the A1156 Bury Road and the A14 northwards to the borough boundary. The Council proposed transferring the part of Castle Hill to the west of the A1156 Norwich Road, comprising Cromer Road, Deben Road, Kelvin Road, Lister Road, Rayleigh Road and Westbourne Road, to a revised White House ward, while Castle Road, Shrubland Avenue and Ravensfield Road would be transferred from White House ward to the revised Castle Hill ward. In order to improve electoral equality, Whitton ward would be enlarged to include the part of the current Castle Hill ward to the east of Congreve Road and north of the Ipswich to Woodbridge railway line. Under the Council's proposals, the boundary between the revised Whitton and Castle Hill wards would be amended to run to the north of Cedar Croft Road and Fircroft Road. Based on a council size of 48, the Council's three-member Whitton ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 1 per cent more than the average by 2005. White House ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (6 per cent more than the average by 2005).

48 The Conservatives proposed less significant amendments to the existing electoral arrangements of White House and Whitton wards. In order to improve electoral equality in Whitton ward, they proposed transferring the part of White House ward to the north of Kildare Avenue and White House Road to a new two-member Whitton White House ward. The remaining part of the current White House ward would form a new Westbourne ward, also represented by two councillors. Under the Conservatives' proposed council size of 32, Westbourne ward would have 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor initially, improving to 7 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Whitton White House ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

49 The Liberal Democrats also proposed broadly retaining the existing White House and Whitton wards. They noted that the current Whitton ward has an especially high level of electoral inequality and, in order to improve electoral equality, they proposed transferring the part of Castle Hill ward to the east of Congreve Road and north of the Ipswich to Woodbridge railway line to a revised Whitton ward, as also proposed by the Borough Council. The current White House ward would be retained without amendment. Based on a council size of 48, the Liberal Democrats' three-member White House ward would have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 3 per cent more than the average by 2005. Whitton ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (equal to the borough average by 2005).

50 We received six further representations in relation to warding arrangements in this area. Six residents of the White House Estate, currently in White House ward, opposed the Conservatives' proposal to divide the estate between a new Westbourne ward and an enlarged Whitton White House ward, arguing that the proposal would divide a well-established community.

51 We have carefully considered all the representations received and the evidence presented to us at Stage One of the review. Notwithstanding the improved levels of electoral equality which would be provided under the Conservatives' scheme, we have not been persuaded that their proposal to enlarge Whitton ward to include part of White House ward would adequately reflect community identities and interests in this area. We consider that the White House Estate, located to the west of the A1156 Norwich Road, forms a distinct and discrete community, and propose retaining the estate in its entirety within White House ward.

52 We note that the Borough Council's proposed White House ward would provide improved electoral equality and consider that it would reflect local community ties well. While Castle Road, Ravensfield Road and Shrubland Avenue lie to the west of the A1156 Norwich Road, we consider that they share few links with the Westbourne and White House communities which form the remaining parts of White House ward. We therefore propose putting forward the Council's for this area as part of our draft recommendations. We propose transferring the Castle Road area to a revised Castle Hill ward, as detailed below, and including the Westbourne Road area in our proposed White House ward. The boundary between White House and Whitton wards would be amended to follow the A1156 Bury Road and the A14.

53 We note that there is some consensus between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats concerning the transfer of part of the current Castle Hill ward to the east of Congreve Road and north of the Ipswich to Woodbridge railway line to an amended Whitton ward. We are content that this proposal would address the level of over-representation in the current Whitton ward and would reflect local community identities well, and propose putting it forward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that the area to the east of Congreve Road shares good communication links with the remaining part of Whitton ward, and that the Ipswich to Woodbridge Railway line would form a distinct boundary between Whitton and Castle Hill wards. We are also content to retain Meredith Road, Stratford Road and Garrick Way as the current boundary between Castle Hill and Whitton wards, although a minor amendment has been made in order to unite the whole of Castle Court within Castle Hill ward.

54 Under our draft recommendations, the proposed three-member Whitton ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average initially, improving to equal to the borough average by 2005. White House ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (5 per cent more than the average by 2005).

Broom Hill and Castle Hill wards

55 Broom Hill and Castle Hill wards cover the area to the north of the commercial centre of Ipswich and broadly to the west of Henley Road. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Castle Hill ward, which comprises residential areas to the east of the A1156 Norwich Road and

north of Dales View Road, has 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Broom Hill ward, located to the south of Castle Hill and White House wards, is bounded by Chevalier Street and Anglesea Road in the south and has 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

56 The Borough Council proposed revised warding arrangements for Broom Hill and Castle Hill wards. Under its proposals, the part of the current Castle Hill ward to the east of Congreve Road would be transferred to a revised Whitton ward, and the Westbourne Road area would be transferred from Castle Hill ward to the revised White House ward, as detailed above. The Council proposed enlarging Castle Hill ward to include the Castle Road area of White House ward, as detailed above, and the part of Broom Hill ward to the east of the A1156 Norwich Road and to the north of Sherrington Road, Pine View Road and Cotswold Avenue. It also proposed combining the part of Broom Hill ward to the west of Norwich Road with the part of Town ward to the north of London Road and Crown Street to form a revised Broom Hill ward. Under its proposals the remaining part of the current Broom Hill ward would be transferred to a revised St Margaret's ward, as detailed below. Under a council size of 48, the Council's proposed three-member Castle Hill ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 3 per cent more than the average by 2005. Broom Hill ward, also represented by three councillors, would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (2 per cent more than the average by 2005).

57 The Conservatives proposed retaining the existing boundaries of the current Broom Hill and Castle Hill wards without amendment. They noted that the southern and eastern boundaries of these wards are presently coterminous with the boundary between the Ipswich and Central Suffolk & North Ipswich parliamentary constituencies, and argued that "there would be no sense and considerable disadvantage in replacing one very unusual division with another". Under the Conservatives' proposed council size of 32, the two-member Broom Hill ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Castle Hill ward, also represented by two councillors, would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (2 per cent fewer than the average by 200).

58 As detailed above, the Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the part of the current Castle Hill ward to the east of Congreve Road and north of the Ipswich to Woodbridge railway line to a revised Whitton ward. Under their proposals, Castle Hill ward would be enlarged to include the part of Broom Hill ward to the north of Bramford Lane and west of Richmond Road, Norwich Road and Dales View Road. The remaining part of Broom Hill ward would be combined with the part of St Margaret's ward broadly to the west of Westerfield Road and Christchurch Park and the part of Town ward to the north of London Road and the west of Victoria Street, Rendlesham Road and Wellington Street, to form a revised Broom Hill ward. The Liberal Democrats opposed the Conservatives' proposal to retain coterminosity between district warding arrangements and the parliamentary constituency boundary in this area. While they expressed support for retaining the existing boundary in principle, the Liberal Democrats argued that the Conservatives' proposal to allocate eight councillors to the north-western area of the borough (based on a council size of 32) would not provide for improved levels of electoral equality in this area. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, the three-member Broom Hill ward would have 2 per cent more electors

per councillor than the borough average, improving to equal to the average by 2005. Castle Hill ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

59 We have not been persuaded that the Conservatives' proposed warding arrangements would provide an appropriate balance between community identity and electoral equality in the north-western part of Ipswich. Parliamentary constituency boundaries are not a factor which we take into account in our work. Indeed, the Parliamentary Boundary Commission in its Fifth General Review of parliamentary constituencies, which started in February 2000, will be basing its recommendations for new constituencies on the warding patterns which we recommend and the Secretary of State implements. We note that, based on our proposed council size of 48, the area comprising the current Broom Hill, Castle Hill, White House and Whitton wards is entitled to 11.3 councillors, rather than 12 as at present. While the Conservatives' scheme would minimise change to the existing arrangements, their proposals would not address the problem of over-representation in this area.

60 We consider that the A1156 Norwich Road forms a clearly identifiable community boundary which effectively delineates local communities to the north of the town centre, and we have not been persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Castle Hill and Broom Hill wards would reflect community identities in this area appropriately. In particular, we note that their proposed Broom Hill ward would encompass a number of disparate and diverse communities, extending from Yarmouth Road in the south to Westerfield Road in the north. We are content that the Council's proposed Castle Hill ward would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and propose putting it forward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to retaining part of the existing boundary between Whitton and Castle Hill wards, as detailed above.

61 We note that the boundaries of Broom Hill ward would be substantially modified under the Borough Council's proposals. We consider, however, that the A1156 Norwich Road and Anglesea Road form strong and clearly identifiable boundaries in this area, and we are content that the residential area to the north of Crown Street and London Road shares similar characteristics and strong communication links with the part of the current Broom Hill ward to the west of Norwich Road. Moreover, the Council's proposals would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality in Broom Hill ward, and we are content to put forward its proposed Broom Hill ward as part of our draft recommendations. Under our proposals, the part of the current Broom Hill ward to the east of Norwich Road and south of Sherrington Road, Pine View Road and Cotswold Avenue would be transferred to a revised St Margaret's ward, as detailed below.

62 Based on our proposed council size of 48, the three-member Castle Hill ward would have 9 per cent more electors than the borough average, improving to 4 per cent more than the average by 2005. Broom Hill ward, also represented by three councillors, would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (2 per cent more than the average by 2005).

Chantry and Sprites wards

63 Chantry and Sprites wards are located in the south-western part of the borough, to the south of the River Gipping, London Road and the Ipswich to Stowmarket railway line, and are each represented by three councillors. Chantry ward is significantly over-represented at present, with 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while Sprites ward has 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (23 per cent and 10 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

64 The Borough Council proposed enlarging Chantry ward to include the part of Town ward to the south of London Road and the west of Civic Drive and Princes Street, and the part of Sprites ward to the west of Mallard Way and north of Gannet Road, Sheldrake Drive and Tern Road. It also proposed transferring the part of the current Chantry ward to the east of Birkfield Drive and Birkfield Close and the part of Sprites ward to the east of Mallard Way to a revised Stoke Park ward, as detailed below. Under the Council's proposals for warding arrangements in this area, the remaining part of the current Sprites ward would be combined with the part of Chantry ward to the south of Pheasant Road, Partridge Road and Robin Drive, and the part of Stoke Park ward to the west of Birkfield Drive to form a revised three-member Sprites ward. Based on a council size of 48, the Council's three-member Chantry and Sprites wards would each have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

65 The Conservatives also proposed transferring part of Town ward to the south-western area of the borough in order to address the high level of electoral equality in the current Chantry ward. Under their proposals Chantry ward, less the area to the west of Robin Drive, would be combined with the part of Town ward to the south of London Road and the west of Portman Road and Princes Street to form a new Gippeswyk ward. The Conservatives' proposed a revised Sprites ward comprising the existing ward and the part of Chantry ward to the east of Robin Drive. The Conservatives' proposed Gippeswyk and Sprites wards, each represented by two councillors, would have 3 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent fewer than the average in both wards by 2005), based on a council size of 32.

66 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals for warding arrangements in this area, Chantry ward would be enlarged to include the part of Town ward bounded by London Road, Victoria Street, Rendlesham Road and Wellington Street to the west and the A1156 Norwich Road, Portman Road, Civic Drive and Princes Street to the east, and the part of Bridge ward to the west of Stoke Street and the north of Belstead Road. They proposed transferring the part of the current Chantry ward to the south of Chantry Lane, Orchid Close, Trefoil Close and Marigold Avenue to a revised Sprites ward. Under their proposals, the parts of the current Sprites ward to the south of Belmont Road and to the east of Mallard Way would be transferred to an amended Stoke Park ward, as detailed below. Based on a council size of 48, the Liberal Democrats' proposed three-member Sprites and Stoke Park wards would have 6 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

67 We note that there is some consensus among borough-wide submissions as to the most appropriate warding arrangements for the south-western part of Ipswich. While our draft recommendations for this area are broadly based on those put forward by the Borough Council, we have sought to build on those proposals in order to further improve electoral equality and reflect community identities and interests. We note that, at present, Chantry ward is significantly over-represented, and in order to improve electoral equality we propose transferring the part of the current Town ward to the south of London Road and the west of Civic Drive and Princes Street to a revised Chantry ward, as proposed by the Borough Council. This change would also broadly reflect the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposals.

68 We consider that the Borough Council's proposal to unite the Robin Drive and Kingfisher Avenue areas within Sprites ward has some merit, and we are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. However, we have not been persuaded that the Council's proposal to transfer the part of Sprites ward to the west of Mallard Way and north of Gannet Road, Sheldrake Drive and Tern Road to Chantry ward would adequately reflect local community ties in this area, and we propose retaining the area within Sprites ward. In order to ensure a reasonable level of electoral equality in Chantry ward, we propose transferring the part of the current Sprites ward to the east of Mallard way, including Chantry High School, to the revised Chantry ward. We note that Ellenbrook Road and Sheldrake Drive are currently divided between borough wards, and we propose transferring the eastern side of Ellenbrook Road and the southern side of Sheldrake Drive from Stoke Park ward to revised Sprites ward, thereby uniting the whole of each road within one ward. We also propose transferring the part of Mallard Way to the south of Tern Road from Sprites ward to a revised Stoke Park ward, as detailed below.

69 Based on our proposed council size of 48, the three-member Chantry and Stoke Park wards would each have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. By 2005, Chantry ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average, while Stoke Park ward would have 5 per cent fewer than the average.

Bridge and Stoke Park wards

70 Bridge and Stoke Park wards lie in the south of the borough, to the west of the Orwell estuary, and are each represented by three councillors. Bridge ward comprises the communities of Maidenhall and Stoke, and has 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent more than the average by 2005). Stoke Park ward comprises the area to the south of Stone Lodge Lane, including the Stoke Park development, and has 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

71 The Borough Council proposed broadly retaining the existing Bridge and Stoke Park wards, with some amendments to provide for improved electoral equality. The Council proposed amending the boundary between Bridge and Stoke Park wards to include the whole of Stoke Park Drive and the roads leading from it (Crowland Close, Hexham Close, Buckfast Close, Tintern Close and Woodspring Close) within Stoke Park ward. As detailed above, it also proposed enlarging Stoke Park ward to include parts of the current Chantry and Sprites wards, and transferring the part of the current Stoke Park ward to the west of Birkfield Drive to a revised Sprites ward. The proposed Bridge and Stoke Park wards would each retain three councillors.

Based on a council size of 48, the Council's Bridge and Stoke Park wards would each have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (1 per cent and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

72 The Conservatives proposed only minor amendments to the existing ward boundaries in this area, transferring the part of Bridge ward to the west of Fernhayes Close and Broomhayes and to the north of and including Chatsworth Crescent to a revised Stoke Park ward. Under the Conservatives' proposed council size of 32, the two-member Stoke Park ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. Bridge ward would also be represented by two councillors, and would have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

73 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals for warding arrangements in this area, Stoke Park ward would be enlarged to include the parts of the current Sprites ward to the south of Belmont Road and to the east of Mallard Way. They proposed transferring the part of Bridge ward to the west of Stoke Street and the north of Belstead Road to a revised Chantry ward, as detailed above, and amending the eastern boundary of Bridge ward to follow the centre of the Orwell estuary, rather than the docks as at present. Based on a council size of 48, the Liberal Democrats' three-member Stoke Park ward would have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Their proposed Bridge ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

74 We note that the borough-wide schemes submitted at Stage One all proposed only minor changes to the existing Bridge and Stoke Park wards, and we are content to largely retain the existing warding arrangements for this area. As discussed previously, we have proposed uniting properties on both sides of Ellenbrook Road and Sheldrake Drive within Sprites ward, and transferring part of Mallard Way to the revised Stoke Park ward. We note that there is some consensus between the Borough Council and the Conservatives to unite those roads leading from Stoke Park Drive within Stoke Park ward, and we consider that the proposal has some merit. We therefore propose amending the boundary between Bridge and Stoke Park wards to follow to the rear of the properties on Crowland Close, Hexham Close, Buckfast Close, Tintern Close and Woodspring Close. We also propose amending the eastern boundary of Bridge ward to follow the centre of the Orwell estuary, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. This change would affect no electors.

75 Under our proposed council size of 48, the three-member Bridge ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Stoke Park ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

St Margaret's and Town wards

76 St Margaret's and Town wards cover the central area of Ipswich to the north of the docks and to the west of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, and are each represented by three

councillors. St Margaret's ward comprises the primarily residential areas to the north and east of Christchurch Park, and has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, both now and in 2005. Town ward covers the main commercial centre of the borough, but also contains some residential settlements to the north and west of the town centre. Town ward has 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, increasing to 13 per cent more than the average by 2005.

77 Under the Borough Council's proposals for warding arrangements in this area, parts of the current Town ward would be transferred to revised Broom Hill and Chantry wards, as detailed above. The Council proposed a revised Town ward comprising the remaining part of Town ward, plus the part of St John's ward to the west of Cauldwell Hall Road and to the north of Spring Road and the part of St Clement's ward to the west of Holywells Park, White Elm Street and Devonshire Road, including the small area to the north of Weymouth Road and east of St John's Road. The proposed Town ward would also include the part of the current St Margaret's ward to the south and east of Finchley Road, Arthur's Terrace and Woodbridge Road. The remaining part of the current St Margaret's ward would be combined with the part of Broom Hill ward to the east of the A1156 Norwich Road and the south of Sherrington Road, Pine View Road and Cotswold Avenue to form a revised St Margaret's ward. The Council also proposed amending the boundary between St Margaret's and Rushmere wards to follow the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, thereby uniting both sides of Tuddenham Road within the proposed Rushmere ward. Based on a council size of 48, the Council's proposed three-member St Margaret's and Town wards would have 4 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 1 per cent more than the average in both wards by 2005.

78 The Conservatives proposed a revised Town ward, and proposed retaining the existing St Margaret's ward without amendment. Under their proposals, Town ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area to the south of London Road and to the west of Portman Road and Princes Street, which they proposed transferring to a new Gippeswyk ward in order to improve electoral equality in the south-western part of the borough. Based on the Conservatives' proposed council size of 32, the two-member Town ward would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 8 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. St Margaret's ward, also represented by two councillors, would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, both now and in five years' time.

79 The Liberal Democrats proposed revised three-member St Margaret's and Town wards. In order to improve electoral equality in the north-western part of the borough, the Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the part of the current St Margaret's ward broadly to the west of Westerfield Road and Christchurch Park to a revised Broom Hill ward, as detailed above. This proposal would also result in electoral equality in the amended St Margaret's ward. As detailed above, the Liberal Democrats also proposed transferring parts of the current Town ward to revised Broom Hill and Chantry wards. In order to improve electoral equality in the centre of Ipswich, they proposed enlarging Town ward to include the part of St Clement's ward to the north of Patteson Road and Cavendish Street, to the west of Fuchsia Avenue and to the south of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed council size of 48, Town ward would have 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. The proposed St Margaret's ward would

have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (equal to the average by 2005).

80 As detailed above, we have proposed enlarging St Margaret's ward to include the part of the current Broom Hill ward to the east of the A1156 Norwich Road and south of Sherrington Road, Pine View Road and Cotswold Avenue. We have also proposed transferring parts of the current Town ward to revised Chantry and Broom Hill wards. In order to improve electoral equality in the revised Town ward, we propose enlarging the ward eastwards to include parts of the current St Clement's, St Margaret's and St John's wards. We consider that the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the part of the current St Margaret's ward to the south and east of Finchley Road, Arthur's Terrace and Woodbridge Road has some merit, and propose putting it forward as part of our draft recommendations. We are content that the residential area between Spring Road and Woodbridge Road, bounded by the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line in the east, shares good communications links and some community of interest with areas to the south of St Helen's Street and Spring Road. We also propose amending the boundary between St Margaret's and Rushmere wards to follow the railway line, as proposed by the Council, in order to unite both sides of Tuddenham Road within Rushmere ward.

81 We have not been persuaded that the Borough Council's proposed amendments to the eastern and southern boundaries of Town ward would adequately reflect community ties in this area. In particular, we note that the area of St John's ward between Woodbridge Road and Spring Road shares only limited communication links with the current Town ward to the west of the railway line. We recognise, however, that in order to improve electoral equality the boundaries of Town ward may need to be amended to include areas to the east of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line. As part of our draft recommendations for this area, we propose transferring the part of St John's ward to the south of Spring Road and west of Cauldwell Hall Road and the part of St Clement's ward to the north of Foxhall Road to a revised Town ward. We are content that Foxhall Road forms a strong and clearly identifiable community boundary in this area, and that the Cauldwell Hall Road and St John's Road areas share good communication links with the remaining parts of our proposed Town ward. We also propose retaining Back Hamlet and Coprolite Street as the southern boundary of Town ward.

82 Based on our proposed council size of 48, the three-member Town ward would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. St Margaret's ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (1 per cent more than the average by 2005).

St Clement's and St John's wards

83 St Clement's and St John's wards lie to the south and east of the town centre respectively. St Clement's ward, which is represented by three councillors, covers the Holywells Park and Rose Hill areas. St John's ward comprises the community of California to the north-east of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, and is also represented by three councillors. St Clement's ward has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, increasing to 13 per cent more than the average over the next five years. St John's ward has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent more than the average by 2005).

84 As detailed above, the Borough Council proposed transferring parts of the current St Clement's and St John's wards to a revised Town ward. Under its proposals for this area, the revised St John's ward would be enlarged to include the part of the current Bixley ward to the west of Cherry Lane and to the south of Rushmere Road. The Council proposed transferring the part of St John's ward to the east of Fernleigh Road and Halliwell Road to a revised Bixley ward, as detailed below. The part of St Clement's ward to the east of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line would also be transferred to the amended St John's ward. The Council proposed combining the remaining part of the current St Clement's ward with the part of Gainsborough ward to the north of Greenwich Road and the part of Priory Heath ward to the west of Murray Road and north of Powling Road to form a revised St Clement's ward. Under the Council's proposals for a council size of 48, the three-member St Clement's and St John's wards would have 3 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005).

85 The Conservatives proposed minimal change to the existing warding arrangements in this area. Under their proposals, the part of St Clement's ward to the east of Derby Road, comprising Pearce Road, Stanley Avenue and Orwell Road, would be transferred to a revised St John's ward. Lattice Avenue, currently in St John's ward, would be transferred to an amended Bixley ward, as detailed below. Based on a council size of 32, the Conservatives' two-member St Clement's ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent more than the average by 2005). Their proposed St John's ward, also represented by two councillors, would have 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, both now and in five years' time.

86 The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the part of the current St Clement's ward broadly to the north of Cavendish Street to a revised Town ward, as detailed above. Under their proposals for warding arrangements in this area, St Clement's ward would be enlarged to include the part of Priory Heath ward to the west of and including Hatfield Road and Derby Road, and the part of St John's ward to the south of Spring Road and Ringham Road and the west of Cauldwell Hall Road, Kemball Street and Orwell Road. Under their proposals, the remaining part of St John's ward would form a revised three-member St John's ward. Based on a council size of 48, the Liberal Democrats' proposed three-member St Clement's ward would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). St John's ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor, both now and in five years' time.

87 As discussed previously, we have proposed transferring parts of the current St Clement's and St John's wards to the revised Town ward. We note that there is a degree of consensus between the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals to transfer part of Priory Heath ward to St Clements ward, and we consider that their proposals have some merit. However, as discussed below, we are proposing some amendments to Priory Heath ward in order to ensure electoral equality, and as a result we are unable to put forward these proposals in their entirety. We propose that the part of Priory Heath ward to the west of and including Derby Road and Levington Road, including those properties on the western side of Clapgate Lane to the north of Benacre Road, should be transferred to a revised St Clement's ward. We also propose enlarging St Clement's ward to include the part of Gainsborough ward to the north of Greenwich Road, as

also proposed by the Council. As discussed previously, we have proposed amending the boundary between St Clement's and Bridge wards to follow the centre of the Orwell estuary.

88 We are content that the boundary between the current Bixley and St John's wards continues to define community boundaries in this area well, and propose retaining it as part of our draft recommendations. As detailed above, we have proposed transferring part of the current St John's ward to the revised Town ward. We also propose transferring the Pearce Road, Stanley Avenue and Orwell Road area from St Clement's ward to St John's ward, as proposed by both the Borough Council and the Conservatives, thereby uniting those roads to the west of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line within the revised St John's ward.

89 Under a council size of 48, our proposed three-member St Clement's ward would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. As a result of developments which are forecast to take place in the area over the next five years, St Clement's ward is expected to have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole by 2005. St John's ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005.

Gainsborough and Priory Heath wards

90 Gainsborough and Priory Heath wards cover the south-eastern part of Ipswich, to the east of the Orwell estuary and broadly to the south of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line. The three-member Priory Heath ward comprises the Racecourse and Priory Heath areas, and has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Gainsborough ward, also represented by three councillors, includes the settlements of Greenwich and Gainsborough, and has 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. As a result of the large number of residential developments which are expected to be completed on the site of the former Ipswich Airfield over the next five years, Gainsborough ward is forecast to have 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the average by 2005.

91 Under the Borough Council's proposals for warding arrangements in this area, parts of the current Gainsborough and Priory Heath wards would be transferred to a revised St Clement's ward, as detailed above. The Council also proposed transferring the part of Priory Heath ward to the south of Powling Road to an amended three-member Gainsborough ward. The remaining part of the current Priory Heath ward would be combined with the former Ipswich Airfield site and those properties on the western side of Nacton Road to form a revised three-member Priory Heath ward. Based on a council size of 48, the Council's proposed Priory Heath ward would have 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 8 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Gainsborough ward would have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (2 per cent more than the average by 2005).

92 The Conservatives also proposed transferring the former Ipswich Airfield site from Gainsborough ward to a revised Priory Heath ward. Under their proposals for warding arrangements in this area, the part of the current Priory Heath ward to the south-west of Nacton Road, comprising Powling Road, Beatrice Close, Avondale Road, Normanton Crescent and Henstead Gardens, would be transferred to a revised Gainsborough ward. Each ward would be

represented by two councillors, rather than three as at present. Based on a council size of 32, the Conservatives' proposed Priory Heath ward would have 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. Gainsborough ward would have 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (12 per cent more than the average by 2005).

93 Under the Liberal Democrats proposals for warding arrangements in this area, parts of Priory Heath ward would be transferred to St Clement's ward, as detailed above. The part of Gainsborough ward to the south of Nacton Road, including the former Ipswich Airfield site, would also be transferred to the amended Priory Heath ward, and the remaining part of Gainsborough ward would form a revised Gainsborough ward. Based on a council size of 48, the Liberal Democrats' proposed three-member Gainsborough ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 1 per cent more than the average by 2005. Priory Heath ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 1 per cent more than the average by 2005.

94 We have carefully considered the representations and evidence received at Stage One. We note that while the current Gainsborough ward has a reasonable level of electoral variance at present, it is expected to be significantly under-represented by 2005. In order to address this high level of electoral inequality, all three borough-wide schemes proposed enlarging Priory Heath ward to include the Ravenswood development on the site of the former airfield, where some 700 properties are expected to be completed during the next five years. We note that there is consensus among respondents in relation to this area, and we are content to put forward this proposal as part of our draft recommendations for Ipswich.

95 We consider that Nacton Road forms a strong and clearly identifiable community boundary in this area, and we have not been persuaded that the Borough Council's proposal to unite properties on both sides of Nacton Road within Priory Heath ward would appropriately reflect patterns of community ties in this area. We note that the Conservatives' proposal to transfer the part of Priory Heath ward to the south-west of Nacton Road to the revised Gainsborough ward would unite the Avondale Road and Benacre Road areas within a single ward. We consider that their proposal has some merit, and we are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. As detailed above, we also propose transferring the part of the current Gainsborough ward to the north of Greenwich Road to St Clement's ward, and uniting both sides of Clapgate Lane to the north of Benacre Road within the revised St Clement's ward.

96 As discussed previously, the Borough Council proposed transferring the part of Priory Heath ward to the west of Murray Road to a revised St Clement's ward. However, in order to ensure electoral equality in the amended Priory Heath ward, we propose amending the boundary between Priory Heath and St Clement's wards to follow the rear of the properties on the eastern side of Levington, thereby retaining Murray Road and Hatfield Road within the proposed Priory Heath ward. Based on our proposed council size of 48, the three-member Gainsborough ward would have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Priory Heath ward, also represented by three councillors, would

have 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005.

Bixley and Rushmere wards

97 Bixley and Rushmere wards lie in the east of the borough, and are each represented by three councillors. Bixley ward, which centres on the A1189 Heath Road and Bixley Road and contains Ipswich Hospital, has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Rushmere ward comprises the area to the east of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line and north of Rushmere Road, and has 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent more than the average by 2005).

98 As detailed above, the Borough Council proposed enlarging the current Bixley ward to include Lattice Avenue, Goring Road, Fernleigh Road and Halliwell Road, currently located in St John's ward. It also proposed transferring the part of Bixley ward to the west of Cherry Lane and the south of Rushmere Road to the amended St John's ward, and uniting those properties to the south of Rushmere Road between Woodbridge Road and Cherry Lane within a revised Rushmere ward. The boundary between the Council's proposed Rushmere and St Margaret's wards would be amended to follow the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, rather than Tuddenham Road, as at present. Under the Council's proposed council size of 48, the three-member Rushmere ward would have 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 5 per cent more than the average by 2005. Bixley ward, also represented by three councillors, would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the borough as a whole (4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

99 Under the Conservatives' proposals for warding arrangements in this area, Lattice Avenue would be transferred from St John's ward to a revised Bixley ward, as detailed above. The current Rushmere ward would be retained without amendment. Based on a council size of 32, the Conservatives' proposed two-member Bixley and Rushmere wards would have 7 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 2 per cent and 3 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005.

100 The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing electoral arrangements of both Bixley and Rushmere wards without amendment. Under a council size of 48, the proposed three-member Bixley and Rushmere wards would have 4 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005).

101 Having carefully considered the representations received, we are content that existing warding arrangements in this area reflect local community ties well. We also note that the current Bixley and Rushmere wards would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality under a council size of 48, both now and in five years' time. We propose retaining the current Bixley ward without modification, and amending the boundary between the proposed Rushmere and St Margaret's wards to follow the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line, thereby uniting those properties to the east of the railway line within Rushmere ward, as proposed by the Borough Council. Under a council size of 48, our proposed three-member Rushmere ward would have 8

per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average initially, improving to 3 per cent more than the average by 2005. Bixley ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

Electoral Cycle

102 We received two representations regarding the Borough Council’s electoral cycle. The Borough Council argued that, in light of the proposal to retain a pattern of three-member wards across the borough, elections should continue to be held by thirds. However, it acknowledged that there could, in future, be a case for elections every two years and a pattern of two-member wards for the borough. The Conservatives proposed a change to whole-council elections every four years in Ipswich, arguing that “all out elections will increase accountability of the different political parties” and would result in greater voter participation.

103 We have carefully considered all representations. When considering proposals to change the electoral cycle of a district, we will look for some evidence of local consensus over the proposed change. We have not been persuaded that there is any significant local support for the Conservatives’ proposal to move to whole-council elections every four years in Ipswich. We therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of elections by thirds for the Borough Council.

Conclusions

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

- a council of 48 members should be retained;
- there should be 16 wards;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

105 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council’s proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- We propose retaining Meredith Road, Stratford Road and Garrick Way as part of the boundary between Castle Hill and Whitton wards.
- We propose some minor amendments to the boundaries of Chantry, Sprites and Stoke Park wards in order to reflect local community ties.

- We propose retaining the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway line as the eastern boundary of Town ward between Woodbridge Road and Spring Road, and transferring the part of St Clement's ward to the north of Foxhall Road to the revised Town ward in order to provide for improved electoral equality.
- We also propose transferring the part of St John's ward to the south of Spring Road and west of Cauldwell Hall Road to the proposed Town ward.
- We propose retaining the area to the south of Back Hamlet within the proposed St Clement's ward.
- We propose retaining Hatfield Road and Murray Road within Priory Heath ward, transferring the area to the south-west of Nacton Road to Gainsborough ward, and transferring the eastern side of Clapgate Lane from Priory Heath ward to St Clement's ward.
- We propose retaining the existing Bixley ward without amendment, and retaining Rushmere Road as the southern boundary of Rushmere ward.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	48	48	48	48
Number of wards	16	16	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,871	1,871	1,962	1,962
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	3	2	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	2	0

107 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Ipswich Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from three to two. By 2005, none of the 16 proposed wards are expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

Draft Recommendation

Ipswich Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

108 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Ipswich and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle and ward names. 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 Ipswich

5 NEXT STEPS

109 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 Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

110 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Ipswich 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

111 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

Ipswich Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure A1: Ipswich Borough Council's Proposal: 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 %
Bixley	3	5,623	1,874	0	5,623	1,874	-4
Bridge	3	5,635	1,878	0	5,847	1,949	-1
Broom Hill	3	5,599	1,866	0	5,980	1,993	2
Castle Hill	3	6,073	2,024	8	6,073	2,024	3
Chantry	3	5,574	1,858	-1	5,625	1,875	-4
Gainsborough	3	5,780	1,927	3	6,003	2,001	2
Priory Heath	3	4,379	1,460	-22	5,386	1,795	-8
Rushmere	3	6,184	2,061	10	6,184	2,061	5
St Clement's	3	5,767	1,922	3	5,974	1,991	2
St John's	3	6,073	2,024	8	6,214	2,071	6
St Margaret's	3	5,836	1,945	4	5,929	1,976	1
Sprites	3	5,584	1,861	-1	5,584	1,861	-5
Stoke Park	3	5,619	1,873	0	5,629	1,876	-4
Town	3	4,656	1,552	-17	5,954	1,985	1
White House	3	5,512	1,837	-2	6,222	2,074	6
Whitton	3	5,932	1,977	6	5,940	1,980	1
Totals	48	89,826	-	-	94,167	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,871	-	-	1,962	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Ipswich Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

Ipswich Borough Council Conservative Group's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure A2: Ipswich Borough Council Conservative Group's Proposal: 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 %
Bixley	2	6,023	3,012	7	6,023	3,012	2
Bridge	2	5,322	2,661	-5	5,531	2,766	-6
Broom Hill	2	5,137	2,569	-8	5,383	2,692	-9
Castle Hill	2	5,750	2,875	2	5,750	2,875	-2
Gainsborough	2	6,494	3,247	16	6,604	3,302	12
Gippeswyk	2	5,463	2,732	-3	5,528	2,764	-6
Priory Heath	2	4,796	2,398	-15	6,028	3,014	2
Rushmere	2	6,080	3,040	8	6,080	3,040	3
St Clement's	2	5,577	2,789	-1	6,353	3,177	8
St John's	2	6,188	3,094	10	6,455	3,228	10
St Margaret's	2	6,094	3,047	9	6,431	3,216	9
Sprites	2	5,551	2,776	-1	5,551	2,776	-6
Stoke Park	2	5,995	2,998	7	5,995	2,998	2
Town	2	5,033	2,517	-10	5,408	2,704	-8
Westbourne	2	4,733	2,367	-16	5,448	2,724	-7
Whitton White House	2	5,590	2,795	0	5,599	2,800	-5
Totals	32	89,826	-	-	94,167	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,807	-	-	2,943	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Ipswich Borough Council Conservative Group'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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

Ipswich Liberal Democrats' Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure A3: Ipswich Liberal Democrats' Proposal: 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 %
Bixley	3	5,839	1,946	4	5,839	1,946	-1
Bridge	3	5,571	1,857	-1	5,769	1,923	-2
Broom Hill	3	5,753	1,918	2	5,910	1,970	0
Castle Hill	3	5,741	1,914	2	5,741	1,914	-2
Chantry	3	5,714	1,905	2	5,861	1,954	0
Gainsborough	3	5,841	1,947	4	5,932	1,977	1
Priory Heath	3	4,734	1,578	-16	5,962	1,987	1
Rushmere	3	6,080	2,027	8	6,080	2,027	3
St Clement's	3	5,665	1,888	1	5,761	1,920	-2
St John's	3	5,615	1,872	0	5,874	1,958	0
St Margaret's	3	5,703	1,901	1	5,877	1,959	0
Sprites	3	5,935	1,978	6	5,945	1,982	1
Stoke Park	3	5,809	1,936	3	5,809	1,936	-1
Town	3	4,763	1,588	-15	5,846	1,949	-1
White House	3	5,308	1,769	-6	6,044	2,015	3
Whitton	3	5,879	1,960	5	5,888	1,963	0
Totals	48	89,950	–	–	94,138	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,874	–	–	1,961	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Ipswich Liberal Democrats' submission.*

Notes: *1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

2 There are a number of small anomalies in the electorate figures supplied, and as a result this table and other tables do not tally exactly. Minor changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

APPENDIX B

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.

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

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 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.