

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
St Edmundsbury 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. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the borough.

© 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>27</i> |
| APPENDICES | |
| A Draft Recommendations for St Edmundsbury: Detailed Mapping | <i>29</i> |
| B St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements | <i>33</i> |
| C The Statutory Provisions | <i>35</i> |

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for St Edmundsbury 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 St Edmundsbury:

- **in 23 of the 33 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and 13 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 22 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 18 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 90-91) are that:

- **St Edmundsbury Borough Council should have 45 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 31 wards, instead of 33 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 26 of the proposed 31 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 29 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Fornham All Saints, Haverhill and Honington.**

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
St Edmundsbury 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 | Map reference |
|----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | Abbeygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> | Large map |
| 2 | Bardwell | 1 | Barningham ward (part – the parish of Coney Weston); Honington ward (part – the parishes of Barnham, Euston, Fakenham Magna, Sapiston and the Village parish ward of Honington); Ixworth ward (part – the parish of Bardwell) | Maps 2 and A2 |
| 3 | Barningham | 1 | Barningham ward (part – the parishes of Barningham, Hopton, Knettishall, Market Weston and Thelnetham); Stanton ward (part – the parish of Hepworth) | Map 2 |
| 4 | Barrow | 1 | Barrow ward (part – the parishes of Barrow, Denham, The Saxhams and Westley) | Map 2 |
| 5 | Cavendish | 1 | Cavendish ward (the parishes of Cavendish, Denston, Hawkedon, Poslingford and Stansfield); Chevington ward (part – the parish of Brockley) | Map 2 |
| 6 | Chedburgh | 1 | Chevington ward (part – the parishes of Chedburgh, Chevington, Rede and Whepstead); Whelnetham ward (part – the parish of Hawstead) | Map 2 |
| 7 | Clare | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> | Map 2 |
| 8 | Eastgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 1 | Eastgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 9 | Fornham | 1 | Fornham ward (part – the parishes of Fornham St Genevieve, Fornham St Martin and the Village parish ward of Fornham All Saints) | Map 2 and large map |
| 10 | Great Barton | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> | Map 2 |
| 11 | Haverhill East | 3 | Chalkstone ward; St Mary's & Helions ward (part) | Large map |
| 12 | Haverhill North | 3 | Cangle ward (part); Castle ward (part) | Large map |
| 13 | Haverhill South | 2 | Clements ward; St Mary's & Helions ward (part) | Large map |
| 14 | Haverhill West | 2 | Cangle ward (part); Castle ward (part) | Large map |
| 15 | Hundon | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> | Map 2 |
| 16 | Ixworth | 1 | Ixworth ward (part – the parishes of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe) | Map 2 |
| 17 | Kedington | 1 | Kedington ward (the parish of Kedington); Withersfield ward (part – the parish of Barnardiston) | Map 2 |

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Map reference |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 18 | Minden (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | Sextons ward; Westgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 19 | Moreton Hall (Bury St Edmunds) | 3 | Eastgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 20 | Northgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 1 | Northgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 21 | Pakenham | 1 | Pakenham ward (the parishes of Ampton, Great Livermere, Little Livermere, Pakenham, Timworth and Troston); Honington ward (part – the Honington Station parish ward of Honington); Fornham ward (part – the parish of Ingham) | Maps 2 and A2 |
| 22 | Risby | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> | Map 2 |
| 23 | Risbygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | Risbygate ward; Eastgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 24 | Rougham | 1 | Rougham ward (the parishes of Bradfield St Clare, Bradfield St George and Rushbrooke with Rougham); Whelnetham ward (part – the parish of Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield) | Map 2 |
| 25 | Stanton | 1 | Stanton ward (part – the parish of Stanton) | Map 2 |
| 26 | St Olaves (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | St Olaves ward; Northgate ward (part); Fornham All Saints parish ward | Large map |
| 27 | Southgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | Southgate ward; Westgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 28 | Westgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | Horringer Court ward; Westgate ward (part) | Large map |
| 29 | Whelnetham | 1 | Whelnetham ward (part – the parishes of Nowton, Great Whelnetham and Little Whelnetham); Horringer ward (part – the parishes of Horringer and Ickworth) | Map 2 |
| 30 | Wickhambrook | 1 | Wickhambrook ward (part – the parishes of Depden, Lidgate, Ousden and Wickhambrook); Barrow ward (part – the parish of Hargrave) | Map 2 |
| 31 | Withersfield | 1 | Withersfield ward (part – the parishes of Great Bradley, Little Bradley, Great Thurlow, Little Thurlow, Great Wrattling, Little Wrattling and Withersfield); Wickhambrook ward (part – the parish of Cowlinge) | Map 2 |

Notes: 1 Bury St Edmunds is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the nine wards indicated above.

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

3 All proposed ward boundaries are based upon the revised parish boundaries which come into effect in April 2001.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for St Edmundsbury

| | 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 | Abbeygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,218 | 1,609 | -3 | 3,472 | 1,736 | -4 |
| 2 | Bardwell | 1 | 1,873 | 1,873 | 13 | 1,961 | 1,961 | 8 |
| 3 | Barningham | 1 | 1,983 | 1,983 | 19 | 2,091 | 2,091 | 15 |
| 4 | Barrow | 1 | 1,644 | 1,644 | -1 | 1,794 | 1,794 | -1 |
| 5 | Cavendish | 1 | 1,595 | 1,595 | -4 | 1,675 | 1,675 | -8 |
| 6 | Chedburgh | 1 | 1,657 | 1,657 | 0 | 1,776 | 1,776 | -2 |
| 7 | Clare | 1 | 1,682 | 1,682 | 1 | 1,694 | 1,694 | -7 |
| 8 | Eastgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 1 | 1,708 | 1,708 | 3 | 1,747 | 1,747 | -4 |
| 9 | Fornham | 1 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1 | 1,722 | 1,722 | -5 |
| 10 | Great Barton | 1 | 1,769 | 1,769 | 7 | 1,793 | 1,793 | -1 |
| 11 | Haverhill East | 3 | 5,187 | 1,729 | 4 | 5,610 | 1,870 | 3 |
| 12 | Haverhill North | 3 | 4,932 | 1,644 | -1 | 5,785 | 1,928 | 6 |
| 13 | Haverhill South | 2 | 3,214 | 1,607 | -3 | 3,714 | 1,857 | 2 |
| 14 | Haverhill West | 2 | 3,000 | 1,500 | -10 | 3,868 | 1,934 | 6 |
| 15 | Hundon | 1 | 1,686 | 1,686 | 2 | 1,753 | 1,753 | -3 |
| 16 | Ixworth | 1 | 1,665 | 1,665 | 0 | 1,699 | 1,699 | -6 |
| 17 | Kedington | 1 | 1,504 | 1,504 | -9 | 1,602 | 1,602 | -12 |
| 18 | Minden (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,663 | 1,832 | 10 | 3,750 | 1,875 | 3 |
| 19 | Moreton Hall (Bury St Edmunds) | 3 | 3,567 | 1,199 | -28 | 5,550 | 1,850 | 2 |
| 20 | Northgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 1 | 1,813 | 1,813 | 9 | 1,845 | 1,845 | 2 |
| 21 | Pakenham | 1 | 1,892 | 1,892 | 14 | 1,981 | 1,981 | 9 |
| 22 | Risby | 1 | 1,577 | 1,577 | -5 | 1,668 | 1,668 | -8 |

| 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 % |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 23 Risbygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,017 | 1,509 | -9 | 3,459 | 1,730 | -5 |
| 24 Rougham | 1 | 1,792 | 1,792 | 8 | 1,838 | 1,838 | 1 |
| 25 Stanton | 1 | 1,893 | 1,893 | 14 | 1,927 | 1,927 | 6 |
| 26 St Olaves (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,536 | 1,768 | 6 | 3,605 | 1,803 | -1 |
| 27 Southgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,415 | 1,708 | 3 | 3,527 | 1,764 | -3 |
| 28 Westgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,581 | 1,791 | 8 | 3,654 | 1,827 | 1 |
| 29 Whelnetham | 1 | 1,723 | 1,723 | 4 | 1,767 | 1,767 | -3 |
| 30 Wickhambrook | 1 | 1,650 | 1,650 | -1 | 1,733 | 1,733 | -5 |
| 31 Withersfield | 1 | 1,580 | 1,580 | -5 | 1,678 | 1,678 | -8 |
| Totals | 45 | 74,726 | - | - | 81,738 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,661 | - | - | 1,816 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on St Edmundsbury 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.

All proposed ward boundaries are based upon the revised parish boundaries which come into effect in April 2001.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of St Edmundsbury 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 St Edmundsbury. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1978 (Report No. 279). 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 C).

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. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

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

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in 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 St Edmundsbury Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Suffolk County Council,

Suffolk Police Authority, the local authority associations, Suffolk Local Council Association, parish and town councils in the borough, 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 St Edmundsbury contains the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and a large rural hinterland. The borough covers 65,697 hectares and has a population of around 97,000. The borough contains 67 parishes, but Bury St Edmunds town itself is unparished. Bury St Edmunds town comprises 36 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

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 74,726 (February 2000). The Council presently has 44 members who are elected from 33 wards, 14 of which are relatively urban in nature and the remaining 19 being predominantly rural. 11 wards are each represented by two councillors and 22 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in St Edmundsbury borough, with around 23 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,698 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,858 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 23 of the 33 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, 13 wards by more than 20 per cent and seven wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Castle ward where the councillor represents 121 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in St Edmundsbury

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 Abbeygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,218 | 1,609 | -5 | 3,445 | 1,723 | -7 |
| 2 Barningham | 1 | 1,892 | 1,892 | 11 | 1,994 | 1,994 | 7 |
| 3 Barrow | 1 | 1,442 | 1,442 | -15 | 1,571 | 1,571 | -15 |
| 4 Cangle (Haverhill) | 2 | 4,173 | 2,087 | 23 | 4,999 | 2,500 | 35 |
| 5 Castle (Haverhill) | 1 | 3,759 | 3,759 | 121 | 4,641 | 4,641 | 150 |
| 6 Cavendish | 1 | 1,363 | 1,363 | -20 | 1,426 | 1,426 | -23 |
| 7 Chalkstone (Haverhill) | 2 | 4,652 | 2,326 | 37 | 4,981 | 2,491 | 34 |
| 8 Chevington | 1 | 1,621 | 1,621 | -5 | 1,745 | 1,745 | -6 |
| 9 Clare | 1 | 1,682 | 1,682 | -1 | 1,694 | 1,694 | -9 |
| 10 Clements (Haverhill) | 2 | 2,404 | 1,202 | -29 | 2,845 | 1,423 | -23 |
| 11 Eastgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 5,640 | 2,820 | 66 | 7,616 | 3,808 | 105 |
| 12 Fornham | 1 | 2,325 | 2,325 | 37 | 2,379 | 2,379 | 28 |
| 13 Great Barton | 1 | 1,769 | 1,769 | 4 | 1,793 | 1,793 | -3 |
| 14 Honington | 1 | 1,193 | 1,193 | -30 | 1,259 | 1,259 | -32 |
| 15 Horringer | 1 | 1,186 | 1,186 | -30 | 1,233 | 1,233 | -34 |
| 16 Horringer Court (Bury St Edmunds) | 1 | 1,875 | 1,875 | 10 | 1,907 | 1,907 | 3 |
| 17 Hundon | 1 | 1,686 | 1,686 | -1 | 1,753 | 1,753 | -6 |
| 18 Ixworth | 1 | 2,234 | 2,234 | 32 | 2,277 | 2,277 | 23 |
| 19 Kedington | 1 | 1,387 | 1,387 | -18 | 1,476 | 1,476 | -21 |
| 20 Northgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 2,228 | 1,114 | -34 | 2,269 | 1,135 | -39 |
| 21 Pakenham | 1 | 1,366 | 1,366 | -20 | 1,438 | 1,438 | -23 |
| 22 Risby | 1 | 1,577 | 1,577 | -7 | 1,668 | 1,668 | -10 |
| 23 Risbygate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 2,682 | 1,341 | -21 | 3,134 | 1,567 | -16 |
| 24 Rougham | 1 | 1,361 | 1,361 | -20 | 1,395 | 1,395 | -25 |

| 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 % |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 25 Sextons (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 2,752 | 1,376 | -19 | 2,849 | 1,425 | -23 |
| 26 Southgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 3,283 | 1,642 | -3 | 3,373 | 1,687 | -9 |
| 27 St Mary's & Helions (Haverhill) | 1 | 1,345 | 1,345 | -21 | 1,511 | 1,511 | -19 |
| 28 St Olaves (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 2,809 | 1,405 | -17 | 2,855 | 1,428 | -23 |
| 29 Stanton | 1 | 2,288 | 2,288 | 35 | 2,347 | 2,347 | 26 |
| 30 Westgate (Bury St Edmunds) | 2 | 2,749 | 1,375 | -19 | 2,848 | 1,424 | -23 |
| 31 Whelnetham | 1 | 1,645 | 1,645 | -3 | 1,696 | 1,696 | -9 |
| 32 Wickhambrook | 1 | 1,672 | 1,672 | -2 | 1,756 | 1,756 | -5 |
| 33 Withersfield | 1 | 1,468 | 1,468 | -14 | 1,565 | 1,565 | -16 |
| Totals | 44 | 74,726 | - | - | 81,738 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,698 | - | - | 1,858 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by St Edmundsbury 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 Northgate ward were relatively over-represented by 34 per cent, while electors in Castle ward were substantially under-represented by 121 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 St Edmundsbury Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

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 20 representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

23 The Borough Council proposed a council of 45 members, one more than at present, serving 31 wards, compared to the existing 33. The Council conducted an extensive consultation locally and amended proposals to accommodate the majority of the views expressed by parishes for a pattern of single-member wards in the rural area. The Borough Council proposed that 18 members should represent the rural area, 17 should represent Bury St Edmunds and 10 should represent Haverhill.

24 The scheme would provide improved levels of electoral equality and the correct level of representation in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the rural hinterland. 28 of the 31 wards would have an electoral variance of less than 10 per cent by 2005. The Council's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent Groups on the Borough Council

25 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council supported the proposals submitted by the Borough Council for the town of Bury St Edmunds and the rural area. However, these respondents proposed that 11 members should represent the town of Haverhill, resulting in a council size of 46.

Parish and Town Councils

26 Haverhill Town Council proposed that 11 members should represent the town council at borough ward level. Coney Weston Parish Council opposed forming part of a ward with the parishes of Euston and Bardwell. Kedington Parish Council stated a preference for no change. Ingham Parish Council opposed being linked with Pakenham ward and preferred to continue to be part of the Fornhams. Fornham All Saints Parish Council wished to form a ward with Fornham St Martin and Fornham St Genevieve. The Parish Council of Fornham St Martin cum Fornham St Genevieve proposed that the three Fornham parishes of St Martin, St Genevieve and All Saints remain as a single-member ward.

27 Bardwell Parish Council supported the Borough Council's proposed Bardwell ward. Bradfield St George Parish Council proposed a two-member Rougham ward, comprising the parishes of Bradfield St George, Bradfield St Clare, Little Welnetham, Nowton, Rushbrooke and Rougham. Hawstead Parish Council was opposed to any parish warding of its parish and proposed a two-member ward (comprising eleven parishes).

Other Representations

28 We received a further seven representations from a local political party, two local groups, two councillors and two local residents. Borough Councillor Thorndyke supported the Borough Council's proposals for a 45-member council with regard to Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, but proposed some alternative wards in the rural areas. Haverhill Town Councillor Dane proposed a three-member Chalkstone borough ward. The Town Council Debate Steering Group, Mildenhall Road Estate Residents' Association and one local resident proposed the creation of a Town Council for Bury St Edmunds. The Local Party Bury St Edmunds proposed a 44-member council based on a pattern of two-member wards. A local resident of Depden supported the Borough Council's proposed Wickhambrook ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for St Edmundsbury 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”.

30 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.

31 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.

32 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

33 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 9 per cent from 74,726 to 81,738 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in the town of Haverhill and the Eastgate ward in Bury St Edmunds. 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.

34 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

35 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.

36 St Edmundsbury Borough Council presently has 44 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 45 members. It stated that it had originally explored options ranging from 43 to 46, however, it ultimately concluded that the optimum balance between electoral equality and the recognition of local community identities and interests would best be met under a council size of 45.

37 The Local Party Bury St Edmunds proposed a 44-member council based on a pattern of two-member wards and Councillor Thorndyke supported a 45-member council size. The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups proposed 46 members; their proposal was identical to the Borough Council's scheme, except that they proposed an extra member for Haverhill. These respondents contended that Haverhill is currently under-represented and that is the case. The town presently has eight members and under the Borough Council's proposals the town is entitled to two extra members. Alternatively, allocating 11 members to the town could be devised. However, this would result in a change of council size and therefore would have an adverse affect on other wards proposed in the borough, in particular Barningham ward, which would vary from the borough average by 19 per cent under a 46-member council. We have to consider the borough as a whole and believe that the proposals from the respondents arguing for 11 members for Haverhill have not considered this. Therefore, we believe that a council size of 45 for the borough and the allocation of 10 members to Haverhill is correct.

38 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 45 members.

Electoral Arrangements

39 The Local Party Bury St Edmunds proposed a pattern of two-member wards throughout the borough, however this is not supported by the parishes in the rural area; indeed following the Borough Council's own consultation only single-member rural wards have been proposed by the Council. Councillor Thorndyke submitted some alternative warding arrangements in the rural area, but did support the Borough Council's proposed wards of Clare, Fornham, Great Barton, Ixworth, Risby, Rougham and Stanton. Neither of these submissions have been consulted on widely and we are therefore taking forward the majority of the Borough Council's proposals in the rural areas.

40 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than

the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in three areas; Haverhill and the proposed wards of Risby and Pakenham. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Bury St Edmunds
 - Abbeygate, Eastgate, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves wards;
 - Horringer Court, Sextons, Southgate and Westgate wards.

- (b) Haverhill
 - Cangle, Castle, Chalkstone, Clements and St Mary's & Helions wards.

- (c) The rural area
 - Barningham, Honington, Ixworth and Stanton wards;
 - Fornham, Great Barton, Pakenham and Risby wards;
 - Barrow, Chevington, Horringer, Rougham and Whelnetham wards;
 - Cavendish, Clare and Hundon wards;
 - Kedington, Wickhambrook and Withersfield wards.

41 Details of our draft recommendations, including changes to borough ward boundaries as a consequence of amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in The St Edmundsbury (Parishes) Order 2000, are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, at Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Bury St Edmunds

42 The town of Bury St Edmunds is the only unparished area of the borough and comprises 36 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

Abbeygate, Eastgate, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves wards

43 These five wards are situated in the centre and to the north of the town and are each represented by two members. The wards of Abbeygate, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves are over-represented. The number of electors per councillor vary from the borough average by 5 per cent, 34 per cent, 21 per cent and 17 per cent respectively (7 per cent, 39 per cent, 16 per cent and 23 per cent by 2005). Eastgate ward is under-represented; the number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 66 per cent (105 per cent by 2005).

44 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Abbeygate ward. In order to achieve better electoral equality in the remainder of the town the Borough Council proposed slight modifications to reflect recent and proposed development, and proposed creating a single-member Eastgate ward from the western part of the existing Eastgate ward. The

Borough Council also proposed a new three-member Moreton Hall ward, comprising the recent and projected development to the east of Bury St Edmunds (following the recent parish review). The Borough Council proposed that the number of electors in the existing Northgate ward be reduced and the remainder should form a revised single-member Northgate ward. The Borough Council proposed that apart from a slight modification (the transfer of some electors from the existing Eastgate ward) to improve electoral equality overall for the town, the existing two-member Risbygate ward should be retained. The Borough Council also proposed a new two-member St Olaves ward, comprising the existing ward, electors from Northgate ward and a proposed Town parish ward of Fornham All Saints parish, covering the recently built properties on the edge of the town.

45 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Abbeygate, Eastgate, Moreton Hall, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves would vary from the borough average by 3 per cent, 3 per cent, 28 per cent, 9 per cent, 9 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (4 per cent, 4 per cent, 2 per cent, 2 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent by 2005).

46 The proposals for the wards of Abbeygate, Eastgate, Moreton Hall, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves were supported by the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council and Borough Councillor Thorndyke. The Local Party Bury St Edmunds proposed alternative warding arrangements and ward names to the Borough Council (based on a council size of 44). However, it did support the proposal to include part of Fornham All Saints parish in the proposed St Olaves ward. Fornham All Saints Parish Council was opposed to including those electors on the edge of the town in the proposed St Olaves ward. We also received representations from the Town Council Debate Steering Group and Mildenhall Road Estate Residents Association and one local resident proposing the creation of a town council for Bury St Edmunds. However, this is not something we can consider as part of a periodic electoral review.

47 We note the opposition from Fornham All Saints Parish Council to the proposed warding of its parish, however it is clear to us that the electors in the proposed Town parish ward look more towards the town, and coupled with the improved level of electoral equality achieved in the proposed St Olaves ward and indeed the modified Fornham ward (discussed later in this chapter), we are content to accept this proposal. Therefore, given the general support received for the Borough Council's proposals and the resulting levels of electoral equality, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Abbeygate, Eastgate, Moreton Hall, Northgate, Risbygate and St Olaves as part of our draft recommendations. Details of the proposals for these wards can be found on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Horringer Court, Sextons, Southgate and Westgate wards

48 These four wards are located in the southern part of the town. Horringer Court is represented by a single member and varies from the average number of electors per councillor by 10 per cent (3 per cent by 2005). The two-member wards of Sextons, Southgate and Westgate are over-represented, with an electoral variance of 19 per cent, 3 per cent and 19 per cent respectively (23 per cent, 9 per cent and 23 per cent by 2005).

49 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a new two-member Minden ward, formed from the existing Sextons ward and part of the existing Westgate ward. The Borough Council proposed combining the existing Southgate ward and 133 electors from the existing Westgate ward. Finally, the Borough Council proposed that the existing Horringer Court ward be included with the majority of the existing Westgate ward to form a new two-member Westgate ward.

50 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Minden, Southgate and Westgate would vary from the borough average by 10 per cent, 3 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent by 2005).

51 The proposals for the wards of Minden, Southgate and Westgate were supported by the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council and Borough Councillor Thorndyke. The Local Party Bury St Edmunds proposed alternative warding arrangements and ward names to the Borough Council (based on a council size of 44). However given the general support received for the Borough Council's proposals and the resulting levels of electoral equality, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Minden, Southgate and Westgate as part of our draft recommendations. Details of the proposals for these wards can be found on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Haverhill

Cangle, Castle, Chalkstone, Clements and St Mary's & Helions wards

52 The town of Haverhill covers the area of Haverhill Town Council and is currently represented by eight members serving five wards. The single-member Castle ward and two-member Cangle and Chalkstone wards are under-represented. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 121 per cent, 23 per cent and 37 per cent respectively (150 per cent, 35 per cent and 34 per cent by 2005). The two-member Clements ward and the single-member St Mary's & Helions ward are over-represented, with electoral variances of 29 per cent and 21 per cent respectively (23 per cent and 19 per cent by 2005).

53 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the Haverhill town area should be represented by ten members elected from four wards. The Borough Council contended that the problems in producing a scheme for Haverhill (10 or 11 members) was "finding a logical way of dealing with self-contained housing developments, without straying into others, or across strong natural boundaries; this problem is, numerically, most acute in the existing Chalkstone and Cangle wards".

54 The Borough Council stated that its proposals for 10 members for the town build "upon dominant themes which came forward during consultation with Haverhill Town Council, particularly that the Chalkstone Estate should not be split between wards and that Burton End/Camps Road is a strong boundary between communities".

55 The Borough Council proposed two three-member wards, one ward comprising the existing two-member Chalkstone ward and part of the existing St Mary's and Helions ward, while the other ward would comprise parts of Cangle and Castle wards. The Borough Council did not

propose ward names, stating a preference for Haverhill Town Council naming the wards as part of the consultation on the Commission's draft recommendations. However, to avoid confusion and for the purpose of consultation we propose naming these wards Haverhill East and Haverhill North respectively.

56 The Borough Council also proposed two two-member wards, the first comprising the existing Clements ward and the majority of St Marys & Helions ward. We propose naming this ward Haverhill South. The other two-member ward would comprise parts of the existing Cangle and Castle wards and for consultation purposes we propose naming this ward, Haverhill West.

57 The Borough Council contended that the "adjustment of the current boundary between the Cangle and Castle wards in the vicinity of Cambridge Way is required to reflect the layout of new development since the last electoral review. Another perceived strength of the proposed scheme is that, by merging the majority of the St Mary's & Helions ward and the existing Clements ward, the existing ward boundaries are only slightly modified".

58 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Haverhill East, Haverhill North, Haverhill South and Haverhill West would vary from the borough average by equal to, 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 16 per cent respectively (1 per cent, 10 per cent, 8 per cent and 1 per cent by 2005).

59 Town Councillor Dane proposed a three-member Chalkstone ward. Borough Councillor Thorndyke and the Local Party Bury St Edmunds supported the allocation of 10 members to Haverhill. The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council and Haverhill Town Council opposed the Borough Council's recommendations for Haverhill. These respondents contended that a 46-member council size should be adopted and Haverhill should be represented by 11 members. Indeed, if a 46-member council size was adopted the town would be entitled to 11 members, however under a council size of 45 the town warrants 10 members.

60 As stated earlier, we concluded that we should adopt the Borough Council's proposed council size as part of our draft recommendations. Therefore, the town of Haverhill is entitled to ten members. We accept the arguments from respondents that the town is presently under-represented with eight members. However, the Borough Council's proposal clearly addresses this while also allocating the correct number of members to the other distinct parts of the borough. Therefore, we continue to believe that a council size of 45 for the borough and the allocation of 10 members to Haverhill is correct.

61 We are generally content with the boundaries proposed by the Borough Council for the town of Haverhill. However, we propose relatively minor boundary modifications between the proposed wards of Haverhill East and Haverhill North and Haverhill South and Haverhill West to secure improved levels of electoral equality overall for the town. We propose to transfer 202 from Cambridge Close and Cambridge Way from the proposed Haverhill North ward to the proposed Haverhill West ward, and 116 electors from Eden Road, Duddery Road, Duddery Court, Waveney Terrace and the High Street and 94 electors from Bumpstead Road, Ashlea Close and Ashlea Road from the proposed Haverhill South ward to the proposed Haverhill East ward. Under our proposals the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Haverhill East, Haverhill,

North, Haverhill South and Haverhill West would have electoral variances of 4 per cent, 1 per cent, 3 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 6 per cent, 2 per cent and 6 per cent by 2005). We welcome further comment on these proposals during Stage Three and in particular the proposed ward names. Details of the proposals for these wards can be found on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

The Rural area

Barningham, Honington, Ixworth and Stanton wards

62 These four wards are located in the north of the borough and are each represented by a single member. Barningham ward comprises the parishes of Barningham, Coney Weston, Hopton, Knettishall, Market Weston and Thelnetham. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 11 per cent (7 per cent by 2005). Honington ward comprises the parishes of Barnham, Euston, Fakenham Magna, Honington and Sapiston and is significantly over-represented, varying from the borough average by 30 per cent (32 per cent by 2005). Ixworth ward, comprising the parishes of Bardwell, Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe, and Stanton ward, comprising the parishes of Hepworth and Stanton, are significantly under-represented, varying from the borough average by 32 per cent and 35 per cent respectively (23 per cent and 26 per cent by 2005).

63 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a single-member Barningham ward comprising the parishes of Barningham, Hepworth, Hopton cum Knettishall (grouped Parish Council), Market Weston and Thelnetham. A single-member Ixworth ward comprising the parishes of Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe, and a single-member Stanton ward, comprising the parish of the same ward name, were also proposed.

64 The Borough Council also proposed a single-member Bardwell ward, comprising the parishes of Bardwell, Barnham, Coney Weston, Euston, Fakenham Magna and Sapiston together with a new parish ward in Honington parish, encompassing the village and all of the electors in the existing WAZ1 polling district. The Borough Council stated that it had amended its original proposals in this area following representations received from parishes, community groups and individuals. It stated that the proposed ward “offers reasonable electoral equality, allows the retention of strong community links and provides the opportunity to clarify the representation of service voters at RAF Honington”.

65 Under the Borough Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Bardwell, Barningham, Ixworth and Stanton would vary from the borough average by 13 per cent, 19 per cent, equal to the average and 14 per cent respectively (8 per cent, 15 per cent, 6 per cent and 6 per cent by 2005).

66 The Borough Council stated that for electoral equality and geographical reasons, it would be more appropriate to transfer Coney Weston to the proposed Bardwell ward. However, the revised single-member Barningham ward would still vary from the average number of electors per councillor by 15 per cent by 2005. The Borough Council contended that this is justified on the grounds that, geographically, these parishes cannot be reconfigured in any other way without creating two-member wards, which are strongly opposed locally.

67 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council fully supported the recommendations with regards to these wards. Bardwell Parish Council supported the proposal regarding the parish. Coney Weston Parish Council opposed forming part of a ward with the parishes of Euston and Bardwell.

68 We accept the argument from the Borough Council regarding the transfer of Coney Weston and the level of electoral imbalance in the proposed Barningham ward. The ward is located in the extreme north of the borough and any alternative to improve the 15 per cent variance would result in parish warding or the creation of two-member rural wards, which is strongly opposed. We therefore propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Bardwell, Barningham, Ixworth and Stanton as part of our draft recommendations, particularly as the proposals are generally supported and result in improved levels of electoral equality for the proposed wards. Details of our recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Fornham, Great Barton, Pakenham and Risby wards

69 These four wards stretch from the town of Bury St Edmunds towards the north of the borough and are each represented by a single member. Fornham ward comprises the parishes of Fornham All Saints, Fornham St Genevieve, Fornham St Martin and the detached parish of Ingham. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 37 per cent (28 per cent by 2005). Great Barton comprises the parish of the ward name, varying from the borough average by 4 per cent (3 per cent by 2005). Pakenham ward comprises the parishes of Ampton, Great Livermere, Little Livermere, Pakenham, Timworth and Troston and varies from the borough average by 20 per cent (23 per cent by 2005). Risby ward comprises the parishes of Culford, Flempton, Hengrave, Ingham, Lackford, Risby, West Stow and Wordwell. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 7 per cent (10 per cent by 2005).

70 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a single-member Pakenham ward comprising the parishes of Ampton, Little Livermere and Timworth (grouped Parish Council), Great Livermere, Pakenham and Troston and a new parish ward in Honington parish encompassing the RAF Station (polling district WAZ2). The Borough Council proposed a single-member Fornham ward comprising the parishes of Fornham St Genevieve and Fornham St Martin, which together form a grouped Parish Council, and a parish ward containing the village of Fornham All Saints. The Borough Council proposed no change to the existing single-member Great Barton ward.

71 During the Borough Council's own consultation scheme it proposed including the parish of Ingham in Pakenham ward to improve electoral equality. However, the Borough Council concluded following consultation that it would be more appropriate to move Ingham from Fornham ward to Risby ward and to leave Barnham in the proposed Bardwell ward. Another issue the Borough Council wished to address was the RAF Station at Honington.

72 The issue for the Borough Council is that the Station straddles a parish council and borough ward boundary which means that its electors are represented by two borough councillors. The Borough Council stated that while "the existing councillors have reached an informal agreement to deal with this situation, it was felt by the Borough Council that it would still be advantageous

to enclose the whole Station (in terms of electorate) within one borough ward”.

73 The Borough Council felt that the best option would be to create a new parish ward for the RAF Station (and the electors in the current WAZ2 polling district) and then locate the parish ward in the proposed Pakenham ward. This respects the spirit of the principle of not splitting grouped parishes (as the two villages would stay in the same borough ward) and the RAF Station would remain in the Parish Council’s area and therefore its relationship with the Station would not be affected.

74 The Borough Council contended that this would provide more effective local government and recognise the special characteristics of this community. It further added that “the number of electors at RAF Honington is also set to grow in coming years as it takes on a joint specialist training role for the armed forces, and staff/families are relocated to the Station. As they will be occupying existing properties (many of which are currently unoccupied), these electors cannot be included in the 2005 electorate projections, since the agreed methodology adopted uses the 2000 Electoral Register, adjusted only to account for projections of newly built properties. Nevertheless, it is expected that the electoral equality of the ward will improve as a result”.

75 The Borough Council also proposed a single-member Risby ward comprising the parishes of Culford, West Stow and Wordwell (grouped Parish Council), Flempton and Hengrave (grouped Parish Council), Ingham, Lackford and Risby.

76 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council fully supported the recommendations with regards to these wards. Ingham Parish Council opposed being linked with Pakenham ward and preferred to continue to be part of the Fornhams. Fornham All Saints Parish Council opposed the Borough Council’s proposal to ward the parish and proposed that the three Fornham parishes of St Martin, St Genevieve and All Saints remain as a single-member ward. The Parish Council of Fornham St Martin cum Fornham St Genevieve also supported this recommendation.

77 As discussed earlier we note the opposition of Fornham All Saints to the warding of the parish for borough warding purposes. However, we remain convinced that the location of the proposed Town parish ward clearly reflects local community identities. We therefore propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for Fornham and Great Barton as part of our draft recommendations, particularly as it results in good levels of electoral equality and in our view reflects local community identities. We are generally content with the proposed wards of Risby and Pakenham, however to further improve the level of electoral equality overall for the two wards we propose including the parish of Ingham in the Borough Council’s proposed Pakenham ward. We note the opposition to this proposal from Ingham Parish Council, however this proposal further improves electoral equality overall in this part of the borough. Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Fornham, Great Barton, Risby and Pakenham would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent, 7 per cent, 5 per cent and 14 per cent respectively (5 per cent, 1 per cent, 8 per cent and 9 per cent by 2005). Details of our recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Barrow, Chevington, Horringer, Rougham and Whelnetham wards

78 These five wards are centrally located in the borough and are each represented by a single member. Barrow ward comprises the parishes of Barrow, Denham and Hargrave and varies from the borough average by 15 per cent both initially and by 2005. Chevington ward comprises the parishes of Brockley, Chedburgh, Chevington, Rede and Wkepstead. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 5 per cent (6 per cent by 2005). Horringer ward comprises the parishes of Horringer, Ickworth, The Saxhams and Westley and varies from the borough average by 30 per cent (34 per cent by 2005). Rougham ward comprises the parishes of Bradfield St Clare, Bradfield St George and Rushbrooke with Rougham. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 20 per cent (25 per cent by 2005). Whelnetham ward comprises the parishes of Hawstead, Great Whelnetham, Little Whelnetham, Nowton and Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 3 per cent (9 per cent by 2005).

79 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a single-member Barrow ward comprising the parishes of Barrow, Denham, The Saxhams and Westley, and a single-member Chedburgh ward comprising the parishes of Chedburgh, Chevington, Hawstead, Rede and Wkepstead. The Borough Council also proposed a single-member Rougham ward comprising the parishes of Rushbrooke with Rougham (combined parish), Bradfield St George, Bradfield St Mary and Bradfield Combust with Stanningfield (combined parish). Finally the Borough Council proposed a single-member Whelnetham ward comprising the parishes of Horringer and Ickworth which together form a grouped Parish Council, Nowton and Great and Little Whelnetham, a further grouped Parish Council. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Barrow, Chedburgh, Rougham and Whelnetham would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent, equal to, 8 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (1 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent by 2005).

80 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council fully supported the recommendations with regard to these wards. Bradfield St George Parish Council proposed a two-member Rougham ward, comprising the parishes of Bradfield St George, Bradfield St Clare, Little Welnetham, Nowton, Rushbrooke and Rougham. Hawstead Parish Council was opposed to any warding of its parish and Bradfield St George. Hawstead Parish Council was opposed to any parish warding of its parish and proposed a two-member borough ward (comprising eleven parishes).

81 We have carefully considered the two-member wards proposed by Bradfield St George and Hawstead Parish Councils. Two-member rural wards have been strongly opposed by the rural parishes, indeed we have received no support from any other parishes, including those with whom Bradfield St George and Hawstead are proposing to combine. Therefore we can see no reason to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in this area. In conclusion we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Barrow, Chedburgh, Rougham and Whelnetham as part of our draft recommendations, particularly as the proposals are generally supported and result in improved levels of electoral equality. Details of our recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2.

Cavendish, Clare and Hundon wards

82 These single-member wards are located in the south of the borough. Cavendish ward comprises the parishes of Cavendish, Denston, Hawkedon, Polingsford and Stansfield. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 20 per cent (23 per cent by 2005). Clare ward, comprising the parish of the same name, varies from the borough average by 1 per cent (9 per cent by 2005). Hundon ward comprises the parishes of Hundon, Stoke-by-Clare, Stradishall and Wixoe and the number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 1 per cent (6 per cent by 2005).

83 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a single-member Cavendish ward comprising the parishes of Brockley, Cavendish, Denston, Hawkendon, Poslingford and Stansfield. The Borough Council also proposed no change to the existing Clare ward and the existing Hundon ward. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Cavendish, Clare and Hundon would vary from the borough average by 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (8 per cent, 7 per cent and 3 per cent by 2005).

84 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council fully supported the recommendations with regard to these wards and we received no other representations. We therefore propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Cavendish, Clare and Hundon as part of our draft recommendations, particularly as the proposals are generally supported and result in improved levels of electoral equality for the proposed wards. Details of our recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2.

Kedington, Wickhambrook and Withersfield wards

85 These three wards are in the south west of the borough and are each represented by a single member. Kedington ward comprises the parish of the ward name and the number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 18 per cent (21 per cent by 2005). Wickhambrook ward comprises the parishes of Cowlinge, Depden, Lidgate, Ousden and Wickhambrook and varies from the borough average by 2 per cent (5 per cent by 2005). Withersfield ward comprises the parishes of Barnadiston, Great Bradley, Little Bradley, Great Thurlow, Little Thurlow, Great Wrating, Little Wrating and Withersfield. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 14 per cent (16 per cent by 2005).

86 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a single-member Kedington ward comprising the parishes of Kedington and Barnadiston, a single-member Wickhambrook ward comprising the parishes of Depden, Hargrave, Lidgate, Ousden and Wickhambrook, and a single-member Withersfield ward comprising the parishes of Cowlinge, Great Bradley, Little Bradley, Great Thurlow, Little Thurlow, Withersfield, Great Wrating and Little Wrating. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in the single-member wards of Kedington, Wickhambrook and Withersfield would vary from the borough average by 9 per cent, 1 per cent and 5 per cent respectively (12 per cent, 5 per cent and 8 per cent by 2005).

87 The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Borough Council fully supported the recommendations with regards to these wards. Kedington Parish Council stated a preference for no change. A local resident of Depden supported the Borough Council's proposed

Wickhambrook ward.

88 We note the wish of Kedington Parish Council to remain a single-member ward. However, this would result in an electoral variance of 16 per cent (19 per cent by 2005) and necessitate a reconfiguration of neighbouring parishes. We are unable to look at any area in isolation from the rest of the borough and therefore endorse the Borough Council's modified Kedington ward. We are also content to adopt the Borough Council's proposed wards of Wickhambrook and Withersfield as part of our draft recommendations as they result in good electoral equality and command general support. Details of our recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

89 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed no change to the current cycle of whole-council elections. No other submissions regarding the electoral cycle were received. We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 44 to 45;
- there should be 31 wards;
- the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

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

- in Haverhill we propose further boundary modifications to further improve electoral equality;
- we propose including the parish of Ingham in the Borough Council's proposed Pakenham ward;
- there should be no change to Risby ward.

92 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 | 44 | 45 | 44 | 45 |
| Number of wards | 33 | 31 | 33 | 31 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 1,698 | 1,661 | 1,858 | 1,816 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 23 | 5 | 22 | 2 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 13 | 1 | 18 | 0 |

93 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for St Edmundsbury Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from 23 to five. By 2005 only two wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

Draft Recommendation

St Edmundsbury Borough Council should comprise 45 councillors serving 31 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

95 The parish of Fornham All Saints is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. The Borough Council proposed warding the parish for borough warding purposes. The proposed Village parish ward, to be represented by six councillors, would form part of the proposed Fornham borough ward, and the proposed Town parish ward, to be represented by one parish councillor, would form part of the proposed St Olaves borough ward. We are content to endorse this recommendation.

Draft Recommendation

Fornham All Saints Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Town parish ward, returning one councillor and Village parish ward, returning six councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

96 The parish of Haverhill is currently served by 16 councillors representing five wards: Cangle, Chalkstone and Clements (each represented by four councillors) and Castle and Clements wards (each represented by two councillors). As part of our draft recommendations we propose that the parish should continue to be represented by 16 councillors, but representing four wards, reflecting the proposed borough ward boundaries for the town of Haverhill.

Draft Recommendation

Haverhill Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Haverhill East and Haverhill North parish wards (each returning five councillors) and Haverhill South and Haverhill West parish wards (each returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

97 The parish of Honington is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. The Borough Council proposed warding the parish for borough warding purposes. The proposed Station parish ward, to be represented by two councillors, would form part of the proposed Pakenham borough ward, and the proposed Village parish ward, represented by five parish councillors, would form part of the proposed Bardwell borough ward. We are content to endorse this recommendation.

Draft Recommendation

Honington Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Station parish ward, returning two councillors and Village parish ward, returning five councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

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

Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for St Edmundsbury

5 NEXT STEPS

100 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.

101 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
St Edmundsbury 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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for St Edmundsbury: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Honington parish.

The **large maps** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for St Edmundsbury: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Honington Parish

APPENDIX B

St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

Figure B1: St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

| Ward name | Constituent areas |
|-----------------|---|
| Haverhill East | Chalkstone ward; St Mary's & Helions ward (part) |
| Haverhill North | Cangle ward (part); Castle ward (part) |
| Haverhill South | Clements ward; St Mary's & Helions ward (part) |
| Haverhill West | Cangle ward (part); Castle ward (part) |
| Risby | Risby ward (the parishes of Culford, Flempton, Hengrave, Lackford, Risby, West Stow and Wordwell); Fornham ward (part – the parish of Ingham) |
| Pakenham | Pakenham ward (the parishes of Ampton, Great Livermere, Little Livermere, Pakenham, Timworth and Troston); Honington ward (part – the Station parish ward of Honington) |

Figure B2: St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Haverhill East | 3 | 4,977 | 1,659 | 0 | 5,399 | 1,800 | -1 |
| Haverhill North | 3 | 5,145 | 1,715 | 3 | 5,993 | 1,998 | 10 |
| Haverhill South | 2 | 3,424 | 1,712 | 3 | 3,925 | 1,963 | 8 |
| Haverhill West | 2 | 2,787 | 1,394 | -16 | 3,660 | 1,830 | 1 |
| Risby | 1 | 1,910 | 1,910 | 15 | 2,012 | 2,012 | 11 |
| Pakenham | 1 | 1,559 | 1,559 | -6 | 1,637 | 1,637 | -10 |

Source: Electorate figures are based on St Edmundsbury 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.

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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