

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
EAST DEVON

*Report to the Secretary of State for the
Environment, Transport and the Regions*

January 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for East Devon.

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Local Government Commission for England

12 January 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 13 January 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of East Devon under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 1998 and undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations in a number of areas in the light of further evidence (see paragraphs 103-104). This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in East Devon.

We recommend that East Devon District Council should be served by 59 councillors representing 32 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that elections should continue to take place every four years.

We note that you have now set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government - In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO) legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of East Devon on 13 January 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 30 June 1998, after which we undertook a 10 week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and offers our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in East Devon because:

- **in 21 of the 35 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **this level of electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly over the next five years.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 103-104) are that:

- **East Devon District Council should be served by 59 councillors, one less than at present;**
- **there should be 32 wards, three less than at present;**
- **the boundaries of all but six of the existing wards should be modified;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 30 of the 32 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for Exmouth and Honiton town councils and Gittisham Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 23 February 1999:

**The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment,
Transport and the Regions
Local Government Review
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

*Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Axminster Rural	1	Axminster Hamlets ward (Raymonds Hill and Weycroft wards of Axminster Town Council); Upper Axe ward (part – Hawkchurch parish)	Map 2
2 Axminster Town	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Town ward of Axminster Town Council)	Map 2
3 Beer & Branscombe	1	Beer ward (Beer parish); Eden Vale ward (part – Branscombe parish)	Map 2
4 Broadclyst	2	Broadclyst ward (the parishes of Broadclyst, Clyst Hydon, Clyst St Lawrence and Poltimore); Clystbeare ward (part – the parishes of Clyst Honiton and Rockbeare)	Map 2
5 Budleigh	3	Budleigh Salterton ward (Budleigh Salterton parish); Raleigh ward (part – East Budleigh parish)	Map 2
6 Clyst Valley	1	Clyst Valley ward (the parishes of Clyst St George, Clyst St Mary and Sowton); Clystbeare ward (part – Farringdon parish)	Map 2
7 Coly Valley	2	Colyton ward (Colyton parish); Eden Vale ward (part – the parishes of Farway, Northleigh, Offwell, Southleigh and Widworthy)	Map 2
8 Dunkeswell	1	Otterhead ward (part – the parishes of Combe Raleigh, Luppitt and Sheldon)	Map 2
9 Exe Valley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Brampford Speke, Huxham, Nether Exe, Rewe, Stoke Canon and Upton Pyne)	Map 2
10 Exmouth Brixington	3	Exmouth Brixington ward (part – Brixington ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))	Large map
11 Exmouth Halsdon	3	Exmouth Brixington ward (part – Brixington ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Halsdon ward (Halsdon ward of Exmouth Town Council); Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh ward (part – Withycombe Raleigh ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))	Large map

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
12 Exmouth Littleham	3	Exmouth Littleham Rural ward (Littleham Rural ward of Exmouth Town Council); Exmouth Littleham Urban ward (part – Littleham Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Withycombe Urban ward (part – Withycombe Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))	Large map
13 Exmouth Town	3	Exmouth Littleham Urban ward (part – Littleham Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Withycombe Urban ward (part – Withycombe Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))	Large map
14 Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	3	Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh ward (part – Withycombe Raleigh ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))	Large map
15 Feniton & Buckerell	1	Patteson ward (part – the parishes of Buckerell and Feniton and Gittisham Village ward of Gittisham parish as proposed)	Map A3
16 Honiton St Michael's	3	Honiton St Michael's ward (part – St Michael's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Honiton St Paul's ward (part – St Paul's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Patteson ward (part – Gittisham Vale ward of Gittisham parish as proposed)	Map A3
17 Honiton St Paul's	2	Honiton St Michael's ward (part – St Michael's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Honiton St Paul's ward (part – St Paul's ward of Honiton Town Council (part))	Map A3
18 Newbridges	1	Newbridges ward (the parishes of Kilmington, Musbury and Shute; Yarty ward (part – Dalwood parish)	Map 2
19 Newton Poppleford & Harpford	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Newton Poppleford parish)	Map 2

continued overleaf

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
20	Ottery St Mary Rural	2	Ottery St Mary Rural ward (part – North, Tipton St John and West Hill wards of Ottery St Mary Town Council); Clystbeare ward (part – Aylesbeare parish)	Map 2
21	Ottery St Mary Town	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Town ward of Ottery St Mary Town Council)	Map 2
22	Otterhead	1	Eden Vale ward (part – Cotleigh parish); Otterhead ward (part – the parishes of Luppitt, Monkton and Upottery); Yarty ward (part – Stockland parish)	Map 2
23	Raleigh	1	Raleigh ward (part – the parishes of Bicton, Colaton Raleigh and Otterton); Woodbury ward (part – Woodbury Salterton ward of Woodbury parish)	Map A4
24	Seaton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Seaton parish)	Map 2
25	Sidmouth Rural	1	Sidmouth Rural ward (part – Salcombe Regis and Sidbury wards of Sidmouth Town Council)	Map A2
26	Sidmouth Sidford	3	Sidmouth Rural ward (part – Primley and Sidford Village wards of Sidmouth Town Council); Sidmouth Woolbrook ward (part – North ward of Sidmouth Town Council)	Map A2
27	Sidmouth Town	3	Sidmouth Town ward (East and South wards of Sidmouth Town Council); Sidmouth Woolbrook ward (part – West ward of Sidmouth Town Council)	Map A2
28	Tale Vale	1	Patteson ward (part – Awliscombe parish); Tale Vale ward (part – the parishes of Broadhembury, Payhembury and Plymtree)	Map 2
29	Trinity	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Axmouth, Combpayne Rousdon and Uplyme)	Map 2

*Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
30 Whimple	1	Ottery St Mary Rural ward (part – Whimple parish); Tale Vale ward (part – Talaton parish)	Map 2
31 Woodbury & Lympstone	2	Lympstone ward (Lympstone parish); Woodbury ward (part – Exton and Woodbury wards of Woodbury parish)	Map A4
32 Yarty	1	Upper Axe ward (part – the parishes of All Saints and Chardstock); Yarty ward (part – the parishes of Membury and Yarcombe)	Map 2

Note: 1 The district is entirely parished.

2 Map 2 and the maps in Appendix A illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of East Devon. We have now reviewed all the districts in Devon as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

3 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996, supplemented in September 1996 and updated in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 13 January 1998, when we wrote to East Devon District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to Devon County Council, Devon & Cornwall Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Devon Association of Parish Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published notices in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 20 April 1998. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three began on 30 June 1998 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for East Devon*, and ended on 7 September 1998. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

⁶ The district of East Devon covers an area of some 81,000 hectares, and is bounded by the districts of Mid Devon to the north, Exeter and Teignbridge to the west, and the counties of Dorset and Somerset to the east. Although the district is predominantly rural in character, it also contains several market and coastal towns. A significant proportion of the district's population live in these settlements, the largest of which, Exmouth, lies at the south-western corner of the district. The other main towns are Axminster, Honiton and Sidmouth. The district is fully parished, and has a total of 68 parishes.

⁷ To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

⁸ The electorate of the district (February 1998) is 99,131. The Council presently has 60 councillors, 38 of whom represent the urban areas and 22 of whom represent the rural area (Map 1 and Figure 2). The district is divided into 35 wards, eight of which are each represented by three councillors, nine wards are each represented by two councillors, while the remaining 18 are each represented by a single councillor. The Council holds whole-council elections every four years.

⁹ Since the last electoral review in East Devon, there has been an increase in population in the district, with around 18 per cent more electors than 1978. In particular, there has been significant growth in the Colyton, Feniton and Woodbury areas. As a result, the number of electors per councillor in 21 of the 35 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, and in eight wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Otterhead ward, which has 54 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Axminster Hamlets	1	1,361	1,361	-18	1,389	1,389	-20
2 Axminster Town	2	3,194	1,597	-3	3,455	1,728	0
3 Beer	1	1,131	1,131	-32	1,158	1,158	-33
4 Broadclyst	2	2,640	1,320	-20	2,806	1,403	-19
5 Budleigh Salterton	3	4,171	1,390	-16	4,219	1,406	-19
6 Clyst Valley	1	1,610	1,610	-3	1,636	1,636	-5
7 Clystbeare	1	1,486	1,486	-10	1,597	1,597	-8
8 Colyton	1	2,471	2,471	50	2,555	2,555	48
9 Eden Vale	1	1,698	1,698	3	1,737	1,737	1
10 Exe Valley	1	1,579	1,579	-4	1,627	1,627	-6
11 Exmouth Brixington	3	6,387	2,129	29	6,914	2,305	33
12 Exmouth Halsdon	3	4,074	1,358	-18	4,217	1,406	-19
13 Exmouth Littleham Rural	3	4,203	1,401	-15	4,328	1,443	-13
14 Exmouth Littleham Urban	2	2,864	1,432	-13	3,171	1,586	-4
15 Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	3	4,565	1,522	-8	4,583	1,528	-8
16 Exmouth Withycombe Urban	2	3,181	1,591	-4	3,194	1,597	-8
17 Honiton St Michael's	2	3,985	1,993	21	4,666	2,333	35
18 Honiton St Paul's	2	3,688	1,844	12	3,836	1,918	16

continued overleaf

Figure 2 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Lympstone	1	1,422	1,422	-14	1,445	1,445	-13
20 Newbridges	1	1,545	1,545	-6	1,580	1,580	-4
21 Newton Poppleford & Harpford	1	1,645	1,645	0	1,707	1,707	3
22 Otterhead	1	2,542	2,542	54	2,629	2,629	52
23 Ottery St Mary Rural	2	3,926	1,963	19	4,205	2,103	22
24 Ottery St Mary Town	2	3,349	1,675	1	3,681	1,841	6
25 Patteson	1	2,500	2,500	51	2,623	2,623	52
26 Raleigh	1	1,771	1,771	7	1,798	1,798	4
27 Seaton	3	5,517	1,839	11	5,746	1,915	11
28 Sidmouth Rural	3	4,727	1,576	-5	4,767	1,589	-8
29 Sidmouth Town	2	2,899	1,450	-12	2,984	1,492	-14
30 Sidmouth Woolbrook	3	3,802	1,267	-23	3,983	1,328	-23
31 Tale Vale	1	1,856	1,856	12	1,937	1,937	12
32 Trinity	1	1,836	1,836	11	1,901	1,901	10
33 Upper Axe	1	1,493	1,493	-10	1,545	1,545	-11
34 Woodbury	1	2,285	2,285	38	2,325	2,325	35
35 Yarty	1	1,728	1,728	5	1,756	1,756	2
Totals	60	99,131	—	—	103,700	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,652	—	—	1,728	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on East Devon District Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Beer ward were relatively over-represented by 32 per cent, while electors in Otterhead ward were relatively under-represented by 54 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

10 During Stage One we received representations from East Devon District Council, 13 parish and town councils, and one local resident. In the light of the representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for East Devon*.

11 Our draft recommendations were based on the District Council's scheme, which we considered achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, provided good boundaries and maintained the present mix of single- and multi-member wards. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in two areas. First, in order to improve electoral equality in Newbridges ward, we proposed that Dalwood parish should be included in Otterhead ward. As a consequence, we proposed that Luppitt parish should be included in Dunkeswell ward, and that Combe Raleigh parish be included in Honiton St Paul's ward. Second, we proposed that the District Council's proposed Axminster Rural and Axminster Town wards should be combined to form a new Axminster ward, to be represented by three councillors. We therefore proposed that:

- (a) East Devon District Council should be served by 59 councillors representing 31 wards;
- (b) the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified, while six wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (c) the Council should continue to be elected together every four years;
- (d) there should be new warding arrangements for Exmouth and Honiton town councils and Gittisham Parish Council.

12 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 30 of the 31 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to remain constant over the next five years.

Draft Recommendation

East Devon District Council should comprise 59 councillors, serving 31 wards. The Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

13 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 46 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of East Devon District Council and the Commission.

East Devon District Council

14 The District Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations. In particular, it welcomed our recommendations for a council size of 59, a continuation of whole-council elections, a total of 31 wards and revised warding arrangements for Exmouth and Honiton town councils and Gittisham Parish Council.

15 The District Council also commented in more detail on several of our proposed wards. It argued that several of our modifications to its original proposals could not be justified in terms of community identity. In particular, it opposed our draft recommendations for the parishes of Combe Raleigh, Luppitt and Dalwood. The Council contended that the parish of Combe Raleigh is centred on a “small, deeply rural village”, that it had few (if any) ties with Honiton, and that it should therefore form part of a revised Dunkeswell ward with similar parishes to its north with which it shares a number of community ties. It also argued that that Dalwood parish should form part of Otterhead ward rather than Newbridges ward as its community ties are with parishes to its south. As a consequence of these proposals, it proposed that Luppitt parish should form part of the revised Otterhead ward, in the interests of electoral equality.

16 The Council also opposed our proposal for a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Axminster and Hawkchurch, and proposed instead two separate wards – Axminster Town would cover the Axminster Town Council ward of the same name and would be represented by two councillors, while Axminster Rural would comprise the Axminster Town Council wards of Weycroft and Raymonds Hill together with Hawkchurch parish, and would be represented by a single councillor. It

argued that while this proposal would mean that the rural parish of Hawkchurch would be included in a district ward with part of the built-up area of Axminster, such an arrangement would be preferable to our draft recommendation, which would not satisfactorily reflect community identities. The Council also acknowledged the concerns expressed to it during Stage Three regarding the proposed Raleigh ward, but noted that there was an “absence of satisfactory alternative proposals”.

Members of Parliament

17 Sir Peter Emery, MP, opposed our draft recommendation for a revised Raleigh ward. He supported the views of Otterton Parish Council, and argued that the proposed ward failed to recognise the character of local communities in the area.

Parish and Town Councils

18 We received a total of 13 submissions during Stage Three from parish and town councils in the district, and two from local associations. Sidmouth Town Council opposed our draft recommendations for the town. It argued that the villages of Salcombe Regis, Sidbury and Sidford maintained a separate identity from Sidmouth itself, and that our proposed Sidmouth Rural ward would cover a large geographic area and would be “impractical” for a single councillor. Accordingly, it proposed an alternative configuration of town council wards as the basis for district wards in the area.

19 Axminster Town Council requested that its area be represented by three district councillors on account of recent growth, while it also supported Hawkchurch parish remaining in a rural ward. Hawkchurch Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation that it should form part of a three-member ward with Axminster, and contended that its ties with the town had become “increasingly tenuous”. It expressed concern at the possible loss of its rural identity and therefore supported a warding arrangement which would link the parish with outlying areas of Axminster.

20 Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting opposed the proposal to include it in a revised Honiton St Paul's ward, which it argued would not satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of the local community. Dunkeswell Parish Council expressed concern that the rural identity of Combe Raleigh parish would be lost should it be included in a Honiton district ward, and reiterated its support for the parish to be included in Dunkeswell ward. Dalwood Parish Council contended that its community ties lay with other parishes to its south, and not with parishes in the Otter Valley, and therefore supported the District Council's proposal for the parish to form part of Newbridges ward. This view was endorsed by Shute Parish Council. Stockland Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation that it should be included in the revised Otterhead ward. It argued that the parish shared a degree of common identity with the surrounding parishes of Cotleigh, Dalwood and Yacombe, and that it would prefer the retention of its existing arrangements.

21 Colyton Parish Council supported our proposals to expand Colyton ward by including several parishes from the existing Eden Vale ward, although it stated it would prefer the name Coly Valley in order to reflect the composition of the new ward. This proposal was supported by Farway Parish Council. Broadclyst Parish Council supported our draft recommendation for a revised Broadclyst ward, although it expressed concern over the size of the proposed ward. Rockbeare Parish Council opposed its inclusion in Broadclyst ward, stating that it would prefer to be included in a district ward with Whimble parish.

22 Otterton and Woodbury parish councils opposed our draft recommendation for a revised Raleigh ward. They argued that our proposals were "totally driven by arithmetic in neighbouring wards", and that they ignored the characteristics of communities in the area. Furthermore, they contended that the proposed Raleigh ward would separate the parishes of Otterton and East Budleigh with Bicton, both of which share close and historic community ties, while it would include part of Woodbury parish which was physically separated from the rest of the ward by Woodbury Common. East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council stated that our proposal would be a "retrograde step", and supported the retention of its existing arrangements. Lympton Parish

Council reaffirmed its support for its Stage One proposals, which would link the parish with the villages of Exton and Ebford to its north, which lie in Woodbury and Clyst St George parishes respectively.

23 The Axminster Area Committee of the Devon Association of Parish Councils supported the District Council's proposal that Dalwood parish be combined with other Axe Valley parishes in a new Newbridges ward. The Clyst Vale Group of Parish Councils opposed our draft recommendation that Woodbury Salterton parish ward of Woodbury parish form part of the revised Raleigh ward, and argued that Woodbury Salterton was isolated from the rest of the ward and that the proposal would appear to be "on the grounds of balancing the figures" rather than reflecting communities.

Other Representations

24 A further 22 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from Devon County Council, local councillors and residents.

25 Devon County Council, on behalf of the local county councillor, expressed concern over our proposals for Woodbury parish, as it considered that there were "no natural community links" between Woodbury Salterton and the proposed Raleigh ward. Councillor Gold supported our proposal for a revised Yarty ward, although he also proposed that Dalwood parish should be included in Newbridges ward, with which he considered it had greater affinity and communications links. Councillor Blackman supported our draft recommendation that part of Gittisham parish be transferred to a revised Honiton St Michael's ward, although he opposed the inclusion of Combe Raleigh parish in the revised Honiton St Paul's ward. He argued that the two areas had little or no shared identity, and was concerned that the identity of Combe Raleigh would be "lost completely". Councillor Ash also supported the District Council's proposal to include Combe Raleigh parish in the new Dunkeswell ward. She expressed concern that the small community of Combe Raleigh would be overshadowed by the larger community of Honiton, and that the parish would be better served by its inclusion in an exclusively rural district ward. The Joint Advisory Committee

of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty also proposed that the parish of Combe Raleigh should be included in Dunkeswell ward. It argued that the parish had historic links with other rural parishes which would form Dunkeswell ward, and that it was separated from Honiton by the River Otter and the A303.

²⁶ Five residents of Combe Raleigh also opposed our draft recommendation to include Combe Raleigh parish in the revised Honiton St Paul's ward. They argued that the parish had no community of interest with the larger community of Honiton, and that the identity of the parish should be an equal consideration alongside electoral equality. Eight residents from Hawkchurch opposed our proposal that the parish form part of a new three-member Axminster ward. Several of these respondents argued that the parish was essentially of a rural nature, and that it was distinct to the market town of Axminster, while others contended that it faced different problems and issues to the town, and supported the retention of the existing Upper Axe ward. Three residents of Rockbeare parish opposed our draft recommendation to include the parish in a revised Broadclyst ward. They considered that the proposed ward would prove too large to ensure effective representation, and therefore proposed an alternative warding arrangement. One resident from East Budleigh opposed our proposal to include the parish in a new Budleigh ward with Budleigh Salterton parish. He argued that the two areas had no common characteristics, and that the Budleigh Salterton community would dominate the ward by virtue of its greater size.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

27 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for East Devon is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

28 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. First, 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 ensuing five years. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

29 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.

30 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in,

or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

Electorate Forecasts

31 At Stage One East Devon District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of just under 5 per cent from 99,131 to 103,700 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

32 We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

33 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a borough or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

34 East Devon District Council is at present served by 60 councillors. At Stage One, the District Council proposed a reduction in the number of councillors to 59. In devising a scheme which would address the electoral inequality that currently exists in the district as a whole, the Council proposed to reduce the number of councillors representing the urban area by one. In particular, the Council proposed a reduction of one councillor each for Exmouth and Sidmouth, and an additional councillor for Honiton.

35 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council size of 59. We have not received evidence during Stage Three to persuade us to move away from this view. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 59 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

36 Having considered all representations received during Stages One and Three of the review, we have further considered our draft recommendations. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

(a) The Urban Areas

- Exmouth Brixington, Exmouth Halsdon and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh wards;
- Exmouth Littleham Rural, Exmouth Littleham Urban and Exmouth Withycombe Urban wards;
- Sidmouth Rural, Sidmouth Town and Sidmouth Woolbrook wards;
- Axminster Hamlets and Axminster Town wards;
- Honiton St Michael's and Honiton St Paul's wards;
- Ottery St Mary Rural and Ottery St Mary Town wards;
- Seaton ward.

(b) The Rural Area

- Broadclyst, Clyst Valley, Clystbeare and Exe Valley wards;
- Budleigh Salterton, Lypstone, Raleigh and Woodbury wards;
- Newton Poppleford & Harpford ward;
- Patteson and Tale Vale wards;
- Newbridges, Otterhead, Upper Axe and Yarty wards;
- Beer, Colyton, Eden Vale and Trinity wards.

37 Details of our final recommendations for the future electoral arrangements in East Devon are summarised in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on

Map 2, the maps at Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report.

The Urban Areas

Exmouth Brixington, Exmouth Halsdon and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh wards

38 Exmouth Brixington, Exmouth Halsdon and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh wards cover the northern part of the town, and are all represented by three councillors. Exmouth Halsdon and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh wards are currently over-represented, with 18 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. In contrast, Exmouth Brixington ward has experienced significant growth in its electorate since the last review of the district, and currently contains 29 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

39 At Stage One, the District Council proposed addressing the electoral inequality in the area by transferring parts of Exmouth Brixington ward to Exmouth Halsdon ward and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh ward respectively. All three wards would continue to be represented by three councillors. These proposals would provide for improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in Exmouth Brixington, Exmouth Halsdon and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh wards varying from the district average by 5 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality would further improve over the next five years.

40 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the District Council's proposals, which we considered had significant merit. While we noted that the Brixington area is distinctive from much of the rest of Exmouth, largely consisting of new residential development, its recent growth has led to the ward having a significant level of electoral inequality. We also noted that the areas which the Council proposed transferring to neighbouring wards would appear to share some community ties, and that the proposals would secure good electoral equality. In addition, we considered that the proposed boundaries would follow sensible and clearly identifiable ground detail.

41 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations were supported by the District Council. No other representations were received. Given the absence of views expressed at Stage Three, we remain satisfied

that our draft recommendations would strike the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Exmouth Littleham Rural, Exmouth Littleham Urban and Exmouth Withycombe Urban wards

42 Exmouth Littleham Rural, Exmouth Littleham Urban and Exmouth Withycombe Urban wards cover the town centre, the area surrounding the harbour and the Littleham area on the southern edge of the town. Exmouth Littleham Urban and Exmouth Withycombe Urban are both represented by two councillors and have 13 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while Exmouth Littleham Rural is represented by three councillors and has 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

43 At Stage One, the District Council proposed significant modifications to the existing electoral arrangements in this area. It proposed expanding Exmouth Littleham Rural ward westwards to include part of Exmouth Littleham Urban ward and a small section of Exmouth Withycombe Urban ward. The revised ward, which it proposed should be known as Exmouth Littleham, would continue to be represented by three councillors. The Council also proposed merging the remaining part of Exmouth Littleham Urban and Exmouth Withycombe Urban wards to form a new Exmouth Town ward, to be represented by three councillors. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Exmouth Littleham and Exmouth Town would vary by 4 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average.

44 As part of our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council's proposals represented a significant departure from the existing arrangements. However, we further noted that as a consequence of the reduction in council size, the three existing wards would only be entitled to six councillors. We considered that the Council's proposals would create two new wards which would satisfactorily reflect community ties, and commanded the support of the Town Council, and therefore concluded that we should endorse them as our draft recommendations.

45 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Exmouth Littleham and Exmouth Town wards. No other

representations were received. In the absence of views to the contrary, we confirm our draft recommendations as final. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Sidmouth Rural, Sidmouth Town and Sidmouth Woolbrook wards

46 Sidmouth Rural, Sidmouth Town and Sidmouth Woolbrook wards cover the town of Sidmouth and its surrounding hinterland. Sidmouth Rural ward comprises the town council wards of Salcombe Regis, Sidbury, Sidford Village and Primley, and covers the largely rural area to the north and east of the town. It is represented by three councillors, and currently contains 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Sidmouth Town ward covers the East and South wards of the Town Council (effectively the town centre), while Sidmouth Woolbrook ward covers the town council wards of North and West. Sidmouth Town and Sidmouth Woolbrook wards, which are represented by two and three councillors respectively, currently contain 12 per cent and 23 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

47 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a reconfiguration of the town council wards in order to secure a good level of electoral equality across the town. It proposed new wards of Sidmouth Salcombe Regis & Sidbury (which would comprise the town council wards of Salcombe Regis and Sidbury), Sidmouth Town & West (the town council wards of East, South and West) and Sidmouth North, Sidford & Primley (the town council wards of North, Sidford Village and Primley), to be represented by one, three and three councillors respectively. These proposals would achieve a much improved level of electoral equality, with all three wards varying by no more than 7 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district, both now and in 2003.

48 Sidmouth Town Council proposed an alternative configuration of town council wards for district warding purposes. It proposed that the town council wards of North, West and Primley form a three-member district ward, and that the town council wards of Sidford, Sidbury and Salcombe Regis form a two-member district ward. Both these wards would vary by 9 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district. It further proposed that the town

council wards of South and East should form a two-member district ward, which would have 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

49 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that both sets of proposals for the town would appear to satisfactorily reflect community identities in the town. However, we also noted that the proposals put forward by the District Council achieved a better level of electoral equality, and therefore considered that they offered the most appropriate solution. Accordingly, we adopted the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

50 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Sidmouth. However, Sidmouth Town Council expressed concern over our proposals. It argued that our draft recommendation for a revised Sidmouth Rural ward would cover an area too large to be represented by a single councillor, and that this would prove to be "impractical". It further argued that the outlying villages of Salcombe Regis, Sidbury and Sidford all continued to have separate identities to the built-up area of Sidmouth itself, and that the community identity of the area would be better served by a two-member district ward comprising these three town council wards. The Town Council also reaffirmed its support for its original proposals for the remainder of the Sidmouth area.

51 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that the Town Council remains concerned over the proposed Sidmouth Rural ward satisfactorily reflecting community identities in the town. While we acknowledge that the proposed Sidmouth Rural ward covers a relatively large area, we note that there are several other single-member wards in the district that cover larger geographic areas. Furthermore, we consider that the proposed ward groups together areas with a clear sense of affinity, and that the proposed district wards elsewhere in the town also share a degree of common identity. In addition, our draft recommendations achieve a better level of electoral equality than the arrangements proposed by the Town Council. Given these factors, we have decided that we should confirm our draft recommendations for the Sidmouth area as final. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map A2 at Appendix A.

Axminster Hamlets and Axminster Town wards

52 Axminster Hamlets ward is represented by one councillor and covers the Axminster Town Council wards of Raymonds Hill and Weycroft. It currently contains 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Axminster Town ward covers the Town Council ward of the same name, and is represented by two councillors. It currently enjoys reasonable electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 3 per cent from the district average.

53 As part of its Stage One submission, the District Council proposed a new Axminster Rural ward, which would comprise the Raymonds Hill ward of Axminster Town Council (which is currently part of Axminster Hamlets district ward), part of Axminster Town district ward (for which no precise boundaries were provided) and the neighbouring parish of Hawkchurch (currently in Upper Axe ward). It also proposed a revised Axminster Town district ward, which would also include the Weycroft ward of Axminster Town Council. Under these proposals, the wards of Axminster Rural and Axminster Town would be represented by one and two councillors respectively. They would achieve reasonable electoral equality, with both wards having variances of no more than 4 per cent from the district average. However, this level of electoral equality would be dependent on the identification of a suitable boundary between the two wards.

54 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that while the proposed warding arrangements put forward by the District Council would secure reasonable electoral equality, they failed to identify the boundaries of the new town council ward necessary to achieve this. We considered that the District Council's proposals were over-complicated, and may have involved an arbitrary boundary which would not satisfactorily reflect community ties in the town. We therefore concluded that the most appropriate solution would be to create a three-member ward comprising both Axminster and the neighbouring parish of Hawkchurch. This ward would have good electoral equality, with 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average now, and approximately equal to the average by 2003. We invited further views during Stage Three.

55 At Stage Three, the District Council opposed our draft recommendation for a three-member

Axminster ward. It considered that this proposal could lead to the Hawkchurch community “being swamped by the whole of the parish of Axminster”, and therefore proposed an alternative warding arrangement. It proposed the retention of the existing Axminster Town ward, with a new single-member Axminster Rural ward being created by combining the existing Axminster Hamlets ward (Weycroft and Raymonds Hill wards of Axminster Town Council) with Hawkchurch parish. Although this would mean that Hawkchurch parish would be included in a district ward with part of Axminster, the Council argued that it was preferable to its merger with the whole of the town.

56 Hawkchurch Parish Council also opposed our draft recommendation for the area. It argued that its community ties with Axminster were “tenuous”, and that in contrast to the market town of Axminster, Hawkchurch is a small, rural community based on agriculture. The Parish Council therefore supported the District Council’s Stage One proposal for a single-member ward comprising the parish and part of Axminster itself. Axminster Town Council supported a three-member ward covering the Town Council area only.

57 We received a further eight submissions regarding this area from residents of Hawkchurch parish. These respondents emphasised the different characteristics of the two areas, and argued that the rural identity of Hawkchurch parish should be preserved, either through its retention in the existing Upper Axe ward, or through an alternative arrangement which would place it in a district ward with similar areas.

58 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we note that our draft recommendation for a new three-member Axminster ward has drawn a degree of local opposition at Stage Three. We have noted the arguments of those respondents who have argued that our draft recommendation failed to properly reflect community interests and identities in the area, and that the rural identity of Hawkchurch parish should be reflected in its district warding arrangement. We have therefore examined a number of alternatives.

59 As we noted in our draft recommendations report, Hawkchurch lies at the extreme eastern edge of the district, abutting the county boundary

with Dorset, effectively restricting the number of available options. Given our recommendations for the surrounding area, which are discussed below, the only viable warding arrangement is to combine Hawkchurch parish with either all or part of Axminster. We therefore consider that the District Council’s Stage Three proposal to combine Hawkchurch with the Axminster Town Council wards of Raymonds Hill and Weycroft has merit. While we note that the Weycroft area shares a degree of affinity with the built-up area of Axminster, it also contains areas displaying similar rural characteristics to several parishes surrounding the town. We have therefore concluded that this proposal offers the best balance between the statutory criteria and electoral equality that is available, and have decided to endorse it as our final recommendation. These recommendations would mean that the wards of Axminster Rural and Axminster Town, represented by one and two councillors, would vary by 6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and 3 per cent and 2 per cent by 2003. They are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Honiton St Michael’s and Honiton St Paul’s wards

60 Honiton St Michael’s and Honiton St Paul’s district wards cover the Honiton Town Council wards of the same names, and are both represented by two councillors. Honiton St Michael’s ward covers the west of the town and currently has 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Honiton St Paul’s ward, to the east, contains 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the average.

61 As part of its Stage One submission, the District Council argued that residential development at the western end of Honiton has extended over the parish boundary into Gittisham parish, and therefore proposed that this area should form a new parish ward to be included in a revised Honiton St Michael’s district ward. It also proposed a boundary modification between Honiton St Michael’s and Honiton St Paul’s wards, with Honiton St Michael’s ward being represented by an additional councillor.

62 As part of our draft recommendations, we considered that there was merit to the District Council’s proposal to combine the residential area

of Gittisham parish adjoining the Honiton parish boundary with Honiton St Michael's district ward. We noted that such a proposal would significantly improve electoral equality, and that the development spans the existing boundary, while it is accessed from the Honiton side. We also concluded that we should adopt the District Council's proposals for modifications to the boundary between Honiton St Michael's and Honiton St Paul's wards as part of our draft recommendations, largely as a result of strong ground detail utilised as boundaries and the reasonable level of electoral equality achieved. However, to achieve better electoral equality, we proposed that Honiton St Paul's ward should be expanded to include Combe Raleigh parish.

63 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations for the Honiton area were supported by the District Council. No other representations were received. In light of the absence of views expressed at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to a modification to Combe Raleigh parish, which is discussed below. These recommendations would mean that Honiton St Michael's and Honiton St Paul's, represented by three and two councillors respectively, would both have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer by 2003). These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

Ottery St Mary Rural and Ottery St Mary Town wards

64 Ottery St Mary Town ward is represented by two councillors and covers the Ottery St Mary Town Council ward of the same name. Ottery St Mary Rural district ward covers the Town Council wards of North, Tipton St John and West Hill, together with the parish of Whimble and is represented by two councillors. Currently, Ottery St Mary Town ward enjoys reasonable electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 1 per cent from the district average. However, Ottery St Mary Rural ward has 19 per cent more electors per councillor than average.

65 At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to the existing Ottery St Mary Town ward. It argued that it achieved reasonable electoral

equality, and that this would be further improved as a result of the reduction in council size. It also proposed that Whimble parish be combined with Talaton parish to form a new Whimble ward, as it noted that the parish is expected to experience growth over the next five years. As a consequence of this proposal, the District Council proposed to expand Ottery St Mary Rural ward to include Aylesbeare parish. These proposals would mean that the district wards of Ottery St Mary Rural and Ottery St Mary Town, both represented by two councillors, would vary by no more than 3 per cent from the district average number of electors per councillor (no more than 5 per cent by 2003). The proposed single-member Whimble ward would vary by 9 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and 1 per cent by 2003. In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the District Council's proposals represented the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and therefore adopted them as our draft recommendations.

66 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, three local residents proposed that Rockbeare parish should form a district ward with Whimble. They argued that Rockbeare parish has a greater affinity with Whimble than with other parishes in the proposed Broadclyst ward.

67 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we have noted the views of those respondents who would prefer a district ward comprising Rockbeare and Whimble parishes. However, while this would create a ward with a clear sense of affinity and secure a reasonable level of electoral equality, it would also lead to a deterioration in the level of electoral equality in several of the surrounding wards. We therefore remain persuaded that our draft recommendation for a new Whimble ward represents the best balance between securing reasonable electoral equality and reflecting the identities and interests of communities in the area. While the level of electoral equality in the proposed ward would initially be less than ideal, we have noted that it is projected to improve significantly over the five-year period. Given these factors, and the support of the District Council, we have decided to confirm as final our draft recommendations for the wards of Ottery St Mary Rural, Ottery St Mary Town and Whimble. They are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Seaton ward

68 Seaton ward covers the coastal town of Seaton and is represented by three councillors. It currently has 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, a level of electoral equality that is projected to be maintained over the next five years.

69 At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to the existing ward. It noted that although the level of electoral equality was not ideal, it was “not sufficiently so ... to seek any alternative arrangements”. This proposal was supported by Seaton Town Council.

70 As part of our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the retention of the existing electoral arrangements for Seaton ward. We considered that the ward was compact and relatively self-contained, and that our draft recommendations for the district as a whole would result in the ward having a reasonable level of electoral equality.

71 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendation. No other representations were received. In the light of the absence of views expressed at Stage Three, we confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under this proposal, Seaton ward would vary by 9 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district, both now and in 2003. This recommendation is detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on Map 2.

The Rural Area

Broadclyst, Clyst Valley, Clystbeare and Exe Valley wards

72 Broadclyst and Exe Valley wards (which are represented by two councillors and one councillor respectively), lie in the rural north-western corner of the district, and currently have 20 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Clyst Valley and Clystbeare wards, which are both represented by one councillor, also cover a rural area at the eastern edge of the district, and currently have 3 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

73 At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to Exe Valley ward, largely as a result of the

existing level of electoral equality. However, the Council proposed expanding Broadclyst ward by including the parishes of Clyst Honiton and Rockbeare from Clystbeare ward. As already indicated, the Council proposed to transfer Aylesbeare parish to a revised Ottery St Mary Rural ward and Farringdon parish to Clyst Valley ward. The existing Clystbeare ward would be abolished. These proposals would mean that the wards of Broadclyst and Clyst Valley would have 3 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average now, and 5 per cent and 7 per cent more by 2003. Exe Valley ward, represented by one councillor, would have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent by 2003).

74 In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the Council’s proposals were an appropriate solution to the electoral inequality that exists. In particular, we noted that the existing Exe Valley ward satisfactorily reflected the communities in the area, and that the proposed Broadclyst and Clyst Valley wards built on the existing well-established community ties in the area. We therefore adopted the Council’s proposals as our draft recommendations.

75 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for the area. Broadclyst Parish Council also supported our draft recommendation for a revised Broadclyst ward, although it also expressed concern as to the size of the proposed ward. Rockbeare Parish Council opposed its inclusion in a revised Broadclyst ward, and stated its preference for a new ward comprising Rockbeare and Whimple parishes. Three residents of the parish also supported this arrangement, on the grounds that it would properly reflect the interests and identities of communities in the area.

76 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we are satisfied that our draft recommendations represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we have noted the views of those respondents who have argued that a ward comprising the parishes of Rockbeare and Whimple would better reflect community identities, we have also noted that this warding arrangement would provide a poorer level of electoral equality, and would also impact on electoral equality in surrounding wards. While we accept that the proposed Broadclyst ward would

cover a large area, we note that there are several other wards in the district which are of a comparable size. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Budleigh Salterton, Lympstone, Raleigh and Woodbury wards

77 These four wards lie in the south-western corner of the district, and surround the town of Exmouth. Lympstone and Woodbury wards are both represented by a single councillor and cover the parishes of the same name. Currently they have 14 per cent fewer and 38 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Raleigh ward, which comprises the parishes of Bicton, Colaton Raleigh, East Budleigh and Otterton and is also represented by one councillor, currently has 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Budleigh Salterton ward, which covers the coastal village of Budleigh Salterton and is represented by three councillors, currently has 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

78 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of East Budleigh from Raleigh ward to Budleigh Salterton ward, which would be renamed Budleigh ward. It argued that its own proposals for modifications to ward boundaries within Exmouth to the west, and the lack of crossing points over the River Otter to Otterton parish to the east constrained the number of available options, and that the only viable solution to the electoral inequality in Budleigh Salterton ward was to include the parish of East Budleigh. Additionally, it proposed that Woodbury Salterton ward of Woodbury parish be transferred to a revised Raleigh district ward, and that the remainder of Woodbury parish be merged with Lympstone parish to form a new Woodbury & Lympstone ward. These proposals would mean that the wards of Raleigh and Woodbury & Lympstone, represented by one and two councillors respectively, would have 8 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 10 per cent and 6 per cent fewer by 2003. Budleigh ward would be represented by three councillors, and would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average now, and 7 per cent fewer by 2003. In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the District Council's proposals

achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and therefore adopted them as our draft recommendations.

79 At Stage Three, the District Council acknowledged the concerns of several respondents who had made representations, either to us or direct to the Council, regarding our draft recommendation for a revised Raleigh ward. While the Council stated that it was sympathetic to these concerns (which are discussed below), it considered that there were no viable alternatives available in the area, and therefore concluded that it should make no further representation on this area.

80 As indicated, our draft recommendations met with a degree of local opposition at Stage Three. Otterton Parish Council, in a submission which was supported by Sir Peter Emery MP, argued that our draft recommendation for a revised Raleigh ward "failed to recognise the character of the local communities". In particular, it opposed our draft recommendation that East Budleigh and Bicton parishes should be placed in different district wards, and that the Woodbury Salterton area should be included in the revised Raleigh ward. The Parish Council contended that the existing Raleigh ward comprises parishes with historic community ties, while Woodbury Salterton is "totally divorced from the Otter Valley communities". It therefore supported the retention of the existing warding arrangements. East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council stated that there were few or no community ties between its area and Budleigh Salterton, and that to place East Budleigh and Bicton parishes in different district wards would be a "retrograde step". It also supported the retention of the existing ward.

81 Devon County Council commented on behalf of the County Councillor for the Woodbury area. It argued that there is "no natural community link" between Woodbury and Colaton Raleigh. Woodbury Parish Council expressed concern that the Woodbury Salterton area should form part of a revised Raleigh ward. It argued that the two areas were divided by Woodbury Common and, as a result, our draft recommendation would fail to secure effective local government. Lympstone Parish Council reaffirmed its support for its Stage One proposal, which would combine the parish with Exton ward of Woodbury parish. The Clyst Vale Group of Parish Councils supported the retention of the existing Woodbury ward. It expressed concern that our draft recommendations

for the area had been made on the basis of better electoral equality, and that this would result in the Woodbury Salterton area being represented by a councillor with no local knowledge of the area.

82 We have given careful consideration to those views expressed during Stage Three. We note that there is concern that our draft recommendations would not properly reflect community identities and interests in the area. However, as the District Council indicated in its Stage Three submission, there is an absence of viable alternatives to our draft recommendations. While several respondents have argued for the retention of the existing arrangements in the area, and have pointed to the reasonable level of electoral equality provided by existing wards, we note that this would impact on electoral equality in surrounding wards. We also note that the reduction in council size would lead to a deterioration in the level of electoral equality in the existing Budleigh Salterton ward.

83 Accordingly, we remain persuaded that the retention of the existing arrangements in this area would not provide a better solution than our draft recommendations. We also remain persuaded that the only alternative to the existing arrangements is to link Budleigh Salterton with an area to its north. Therefore, while we acknowledge that shared community identity in our proposed Budleigh and Raleigh wards may be somewhat limited, on the balance of evidence received at Stage Three, we propose to confirm our draft recommendations. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map A4 at Appendix A.

Newton Poppleford & Harpford ward

84 Newton Poppleford & Harpford ward covers the parish of the same name. It is represented by one councillor, and currently has approximately equal to the district average number of electors per councillor.

85 As part of its Stage One submission, the Council proposed no change to the electoral arrangements for the ward. In our draft recommendations report, we noted that under a council size of 59, Newton Poppleford & Harpford ward would contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 3 per cent fewer by 2003. Given this factor, and the absence of proposals for change to the current ward, we decided to adopt the Council's proposal for the retention of Newton Poppleford & Harpford ward as our draft recommendation.

86 At Stage Three, our draft recommendation was supported by the District Council. No other representations were received. Given this support, we have concluded that we should confirm our draft recommendation as final. Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Patteson and Tale Vale wards

87 Under present arrangements, the wards of Patteson and Tale Vale, which lie to the north-west of Honiton, currently have 51 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Both wards comprise a collection of rural parishes and are represented by one councillor.

88 In its Stage One submission, the District Council acknowledged the significant under-representation in Patteson ward, largely as a result of development that has occurred in the Feniton area. As already indicated, the Council proposed warding Gittisham parish, which is currently in Patteson ward, and transferring the proposed Gittisham Vale parish ward to a revised Honiton St Michael's district ward. Additionally, it proposed the transfer of Awliscombe parish to a revised Tale Vale district ward. Under these proposals the new district ward, to be named Feniton & Buckerell, would comprise the parishes of Feniton, Buckerell and the new Gittisham Village ward of Gittisham parish. It would be represented by one councillor and would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, a level of electoral equality that is projected to be maintained by 2003. The revised Tale Vale ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent more by 2003).

89 As part of our draft recommendations, we considered that the Council's proposals for this area represented the best balance between the statutory criteria and electoral equality. We noted that they grouped together areas which shared community identity and ties, and also provided reasonable electoral equality. We therefore adopted them as our draft recommendations.

90 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations. No other representations were received. Given this support, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. They are detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on Map 2.

Newbridges, Otterhead, Upper Axe and Yarty wards

91 Otterhead, Upper Axe and Yarty wards, all represented by a single councillor, comprise groups of rural parishes and lie in the north-eastern corner of the district, abutting the counties of Dorset and Somerset, and the district of Mid-Devon. Otterhead and Yarty wards currently have 54 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Upper Axe ward has 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than average. Newbridges ward, which is also represented by a single councillor, comprises the parishes of Kilmington, Musbury and Shute, and lies to the east of Axminster. It currently has 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

92 The District Council proposed a significant reconfiguration of parishes in this area. It proposed that the three parishes west of Luppitt Common, Combe Raleigh, Dunkeswell and Sheldon, should be transferred from Otterhead ward to form a new Dunkeswell ward, to be represented by one councillor. The remaining parishes in the existing Otterhead ward, Luppitt, Monkton and Upottery, would form a revised ward with the parishes of Cotleigh (from Eden Vale ward) and Stockland (from Yarty ward), also to be represented by one councillor. In addition to the transfer of Stockland parish, the proposed Yarty ward would include the parishes of All Saints and Chardstock from Upper Axe ward, while Dalwood parish would be transferred to a revised Newbridges ward (also represented by one councillor).

93 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council's proposals would provide reasonable electoral equality and would satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities in the area to a large extent. We considered that the Council's proposals had merit, particularly as we acknowledged the difficulties involved in reconciling the statutory criteria with the need for electoral equality in an area such as this, which chiefly consists of large rural parishes. However, we also considered that an opportunity existed for further improvements in the level of electoral equality, and therefore proposed the transfer of Combe Raleigh, Luppitt and Dalwood parishes to Honiton St Paul's, Dunkeswell and Otterhead wards respectively.

94 Our draft recommendations for this area encountered a degree of opposition during Stage Three. The District Council opposed our modifications to its original proposals. It argued that Combe Raleigh parish had "no realistic links" with Honiton, and that the village faced rural issues in common with other parishes to its north. Additionally, it contended that our draft recommendation that Dalwood parish should be included in the revised Otterhead ward rather than Newbridges ward would not properly reflect community identities. The Council argued that Dalwood had little in common with other parishes in the proposed Otterhead ward, and that its community ties and links were towards Axminster, and in particular with those parishes which comprise the existing Newbridges ward. It therefore reaffirmed its support for its Stage One proposals, which would result in Luppitt parish forming part of the revised Otterhead ward.

95 Dalwood Parish Council contended that the community ties of the parish were with other Axe Valley parishes, and that this should be reflected in the warding arrangements for the area. It therefore argued that the parish should form part of a revised Newbridges ward. Shute Parish Council supported the retention of the existing arrangements in Newbridges ward, although it also proposed that Dalwood parish should be included to better reflect the geography of the area. The Axminster Area Committee of the Devon Association of Parish Councils also supported this view. Combe Raleigh Parish Meeting stated that our draft recommendation to include it as part of a revised Honiton St Paul's ward ignored the wishes of the electorate in the area, while Stockland Parish Council supported the retention of its existing electoral arrangements.

96 Councillor Gold supported our draft recommendations for Yarty ward, although he also proposed that Dalwood parish should form part of Newbridges ward. Councillor Blackman proposed that the parish of Combe Raleigh should form part of the new Dunkeswell ward rather than Honiton St Paul's, as under our draft recommendations. He argued, as did Councillor Ash in a separate submission, that the two areas displayed very different characteristics and that the separate identity of the parish would be at risk under this proposal. The Joint Advisory Committee for the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural

Beauty endorsed this view. It argued that Combe Raleigh is a small, agricultural parish which has strong links with other parishes of a similar nature to its north, and that it is divided from Honiton by the A303 and the River Otter. Five residents also opposed our draft recommendation, and instead supported the District Council's proposal that the parish be included in Dunkeswell ward.

⁹⁷ Having analysed the submissions received during Stage Three, we have reconsidered our draft recommendations. While our draft recommendations achieve a better level of electoral equality than the District Council's proposals, it would appear that the majority of respondents do not consider that they satisfactorily reflect community identities in the area. In particular, we note that Combe Raleigh parish has little community of interest with Honiton, and that Dalwood parish has a greater degree of shared identity with parishes to its south than with parishes in the revised Otterhead ward. On balance, we are persuaded to endorse the District Council's scheme, as we consider that it achieves a better balance between securing electoral equality and reflecting the interests and identities of the constituent communities. Although the District Council's proposals would lead to a worse level of electoral equality overall, we consider that they would better reflect community identities and interests in the area. Under this recommendation, the number of electors per councillor in Dunkeswell and Newbridges wards would vary by 10 per cent and 14 per cent respectively now, and would both vary by 11 per cent by 2003. Otterhead ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average now and 4 per cent more by 2003. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Beer, Colyton, Eden Vale and Trinity wards

⁹⁸ Beer and Colyton wards cover the parishes of the same names, and are both represented by a single councillor. Beer ward lies on the coast, with Colyton ward immediately to its north. Currently, the two wards have a high level of inequality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 32 per cent and 50 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district respectively. Trinity ward covers the coastal parishes of Axmouth, Combyne Rousdon and Uplyme, and is represented by one councillor. It

currently has 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Eden Vale ward comprises seven parishes, and covers a thin rural ribbon, which stretches from Cotleigh parish in the north to Branscombe parish on the coast. It is represented by one councillor, and currently has 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

⁹⁹ As already indicated, at Stage One the Council proposed transferring the parish of Cotleigh to a revised Otterhead ward, while the remainder of the ward, with the exception of Branscombe parish, would be merged with the existing Colyton ward, to form a revised two-member Colyton ward. It further proposed that the parish of Branscombe should be combined with Beer ward to form a new single-member Beer & Branscombe ward. It proposed no change to Trinity ward. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Colyton and Trinity would vary by 5 per cent and 9 per cent from the district average currently (4 per cent and 8 per cent by 2003), while Beer & Branscombe ward would vary by 7 per cent from the district average (9 per cent by 2003).

¹⁰⁰ In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the District Council's proposals for this area provided an appropriate solution. In particular, we noted that they would group together parishes which share some affinity and ties. Accordingly, we adopted the District Council's proposals for the wards of Beer & Branscombe, Colyton and Trinity as our draft recommendations.

¹⁰¹ At Stage Three, the District Council and Colyton and Farway parish councils supported our draft recommendations. However, both parish councils proposed that Colyton ward should be named Coly Valley ward to better reflect the geography of the area and its constituent communities. Given this support, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to the change of name for Colyton ward to Coly Valley ward. These recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

¹⁰² In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the present system of whole-council elections should be maintained. No representations

were received on this issue during Stage Three. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

103 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) the retention of the existing Axminster Town ward, with the existing Axminster Hamlets ward being combined with Hawkchurch parish to form a new Axminster Rural ward;
- (b) the parishes of Combe Raleigh, Dalwood and Luppitt forming part of Dunkeswell, Newbridges and Otterhead wards respectively.

104 We conclude that, in East Devon:

- (a) there should be a decrease in council size from 60 to 59;
- (b) there should be 32 wards, three fewer than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified;

- (d) whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

105 Figure 3 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

106 As Figure 3 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 21 to two, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would remain relatively constant over the next five years. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

East Devon District Council should comprise 59 councillors serving 32 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

*Figure 3:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	59	60	59
Number of wards	35	32	35	32
Average number of electors per councillor	1,652	1,680	1,728	1,758
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	21	2	21	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	8	0

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

107 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Exmouth, Gittisham and Honiton parishes to reflect the proposed district wards.

108 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Exmouth Town Council should comprise 25 town councillors, and that the number of wards should be decreased from six to five. We proposed that the town wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Final Recommendation

Exmouth Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Brixington, Halsdon, Littleham, Town and Withycombe Raleigh, each represented by five councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the district wards in the area, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

109 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Gittisham parish should comprise seven councillors, and that there should be two parish wards. We proposed that the parish wards should reflect the new district ward boundaries. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Final Recommendation

Gittisham Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Gittisham Vale (represented by three councillors) and Gittisham Village (represented by four councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

110 As part of our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Honiton Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, representing two wards. We proposed that the town wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Final Recommendation

Honiton Town Council should comprise 18 parish councillors as at present, representing two wards: Honiton St Michael's and Honiton St Paul's, each represented by nine councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the district wards in the area, as illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for East Devon

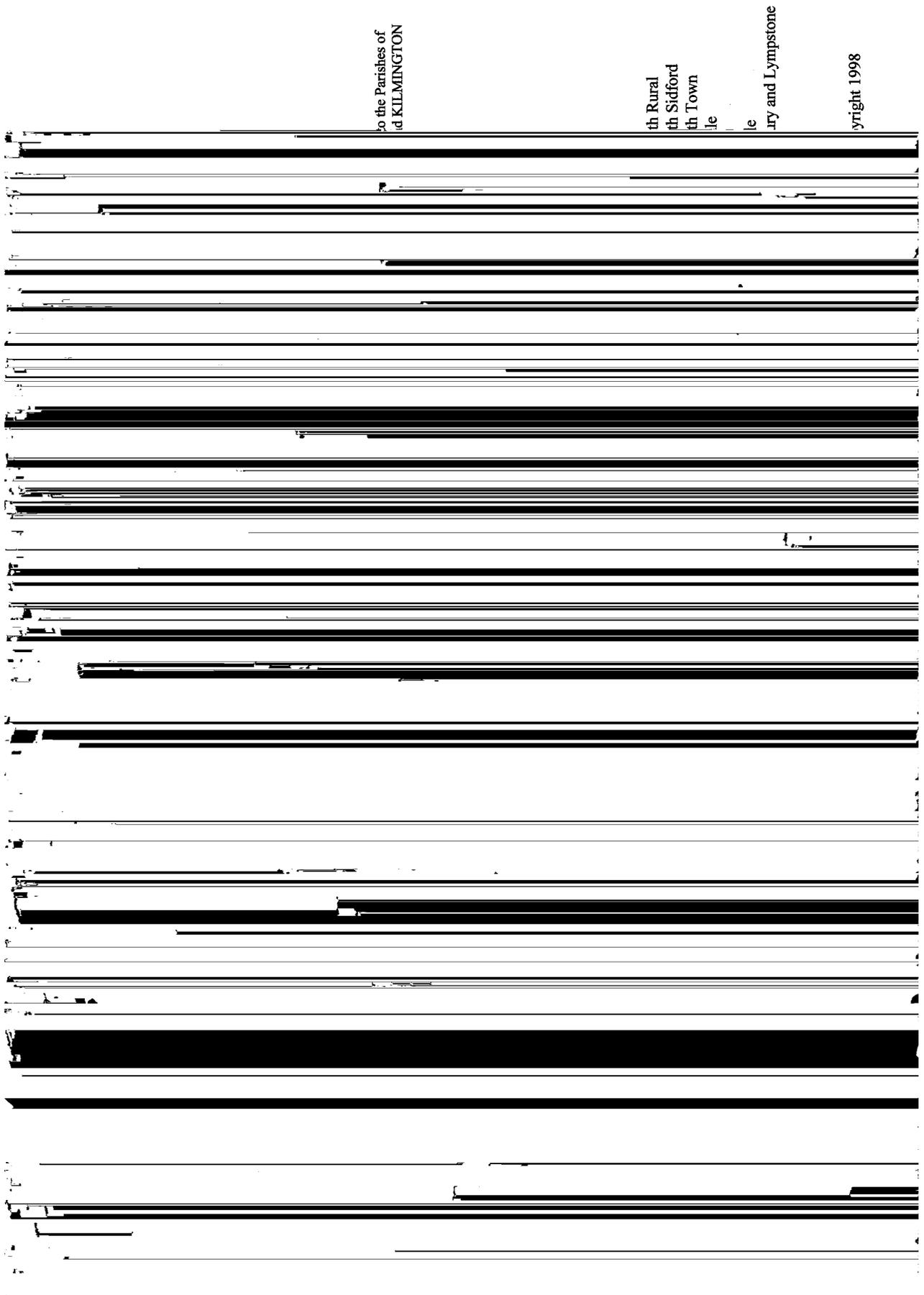


Figure 4:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for East Devon

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Axminster Rural	1	1,774	1,774	6	1,810	1,810	3
2	Axminster Town	2	3,194	1,597	-5	3,455	1,728	-2
3	Beer & Branscombe	1	1,569	1,569	-7	1,600	1,600	-9
4	Broadclyst	2	3,472	1,736	3	3,704	1,852	5
5	Budleigh	3	4,848	1,616	-4	4,901	1,634	-7
6	Clyst Valley	1	1,837	1,837	9	1,884	1,884	7
7	Coly Valley	2	3,526	1,763	5	3,644	1,822	4
8	Dunkeswell	1	1,505	1,505	-10	1,573	1,573	-11
9	Exe Valley	1	1,579	1,579	-6	1,627	1,627	-7
10	Exmouth Brixington	3	4,803	1,601	-5	5,236	1,745	-1
1	Exmouth Halsdon	3	5,103	1,701	1	5,271	1,757	0
12	Exmouth Littleham	3	5,263	1,754	4	5,395	1,798	2
13	Exmouth Town	3	4,985	1,662	-1	5,294	1,765	0
14	Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	3	5,120	1,707	2	5,211	1,737	-1
15	Feniton & Buckerell	1	1,797	1,797	7	1,873	1,873	7
16	Honiton St Michael's	3	4,788	1,596	-5	5,468	1,823	4
17	Honiton St Paul's	2	3,192	1,596	-5	3,346	1,673	-5
18	Newbridges	1	1,911	1,911	14	1,948	1,948	11
19	Newton Poppleford & Harpford	1	1,645	1,645	-2	1,707	1,707	-3

continued overleaf

Figure 4 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for East Devon

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Ottery St Mary Rural	2	3,245	1,623	-3	3,326	1,663	-5
21 Ottery St Mary Town	2	3,349	1,675	0	3,681	1,841	5
22 Otterhead	1	1,797	1,797	7	1,824	1,824	4
23 Raleigh	1	1,550	1,550	-8	1,579	1,579	-10
24 Seaton	3	5,517	1,839	9	5,746	1,915	9
25 Sidmouth Rural	1	1,728	1,728	3	1,745	1,745	-1
26 Sidmouth Sidford	3	4,993	1,664	-1	5,188	1,729	-2
27 Sidmouth Town	3	4,707	1,569	-7	4,801	1,600	-9
28 Tale Vale	1	1,828	1,828	9	1,932	1,932	10
29 Trinity	1	1,836	1,836	9	1,901	1,901	8
30 Whimble	1	1,532	1,532	-9	1,773	1,773	1
31 Woodbury & Lympstone	2	3,251	1,626	-3	3,307	1,654	-6
32 Yarty	1	1,887	1,887	12	1,950	1,950	11
Totals	59	99,131	—	—	103,700	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,680	—	—	1,758	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on East Devon District Council's submission.

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

111 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in East Devon and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

112 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

113 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for East Devon: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the East Devon area.

Map A1 illustrates in outline form, the proposed boundaries for East Devon and indicates the areas that are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of the report.

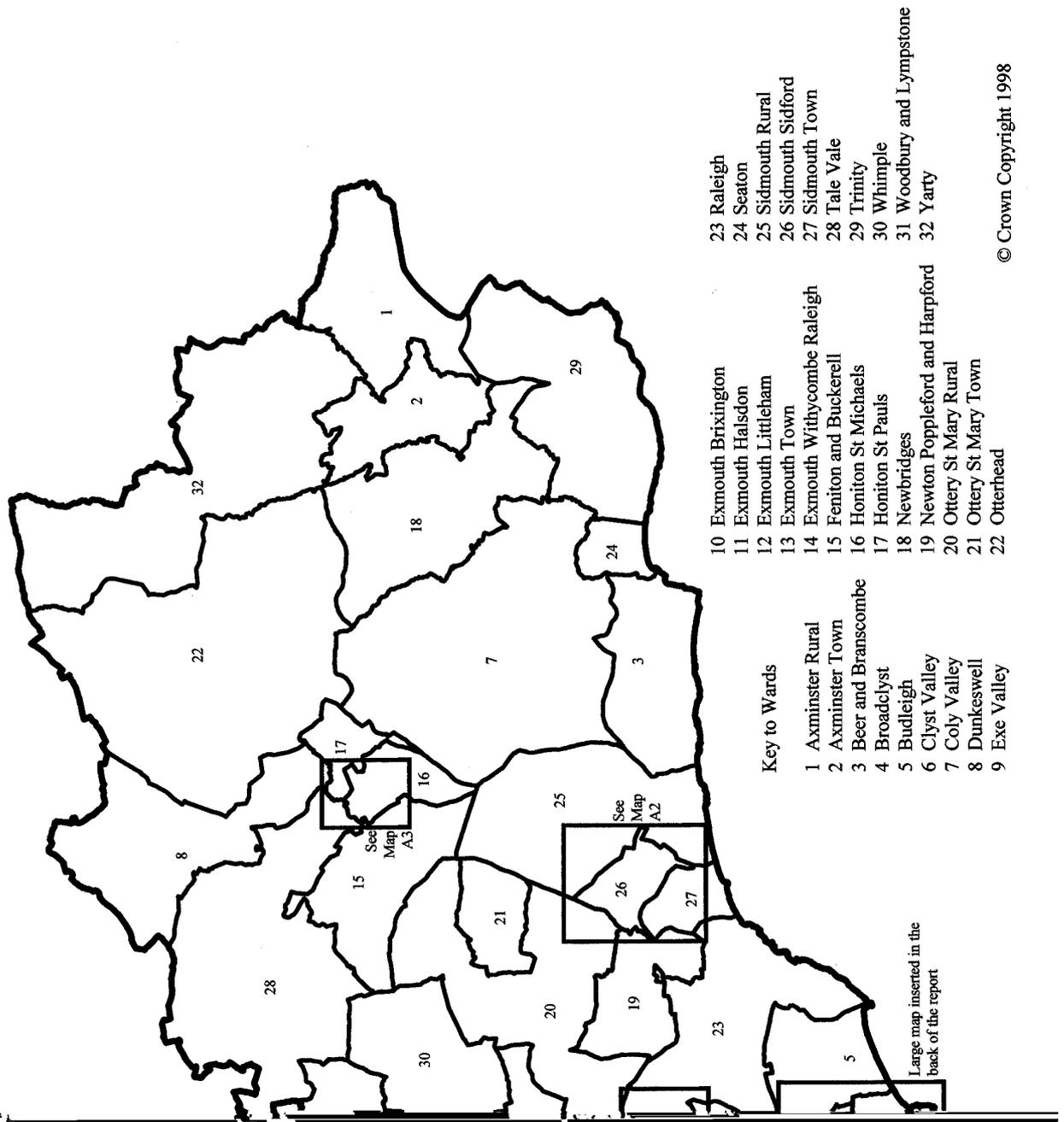
Map A2 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Sidmouth.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Honiton.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary between Raleigh and Woodbury & Lympstone wards.

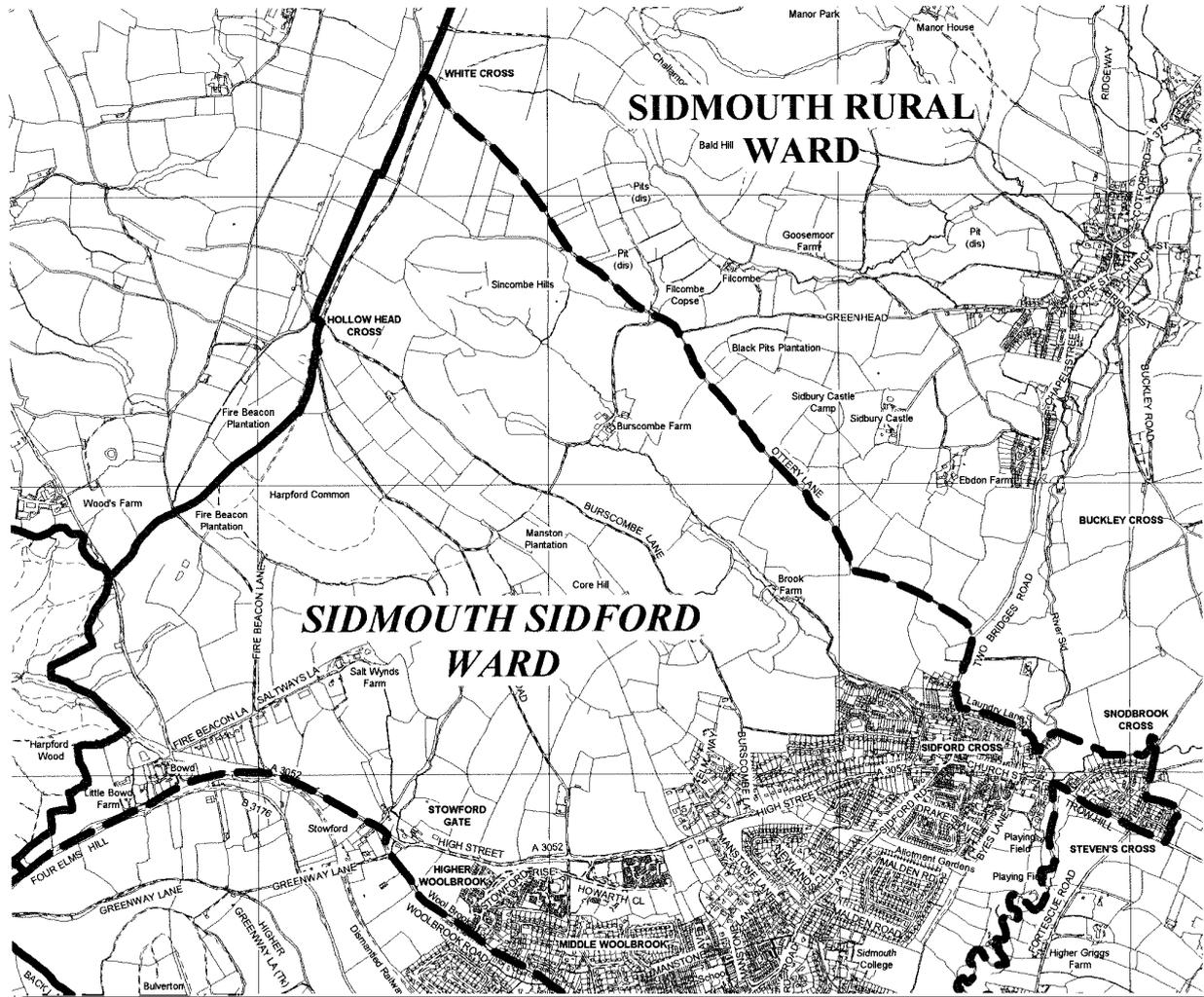
The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed ward boundaries in Exmouth.

Map A1:
Final Recommendations for East Devon: Key Map

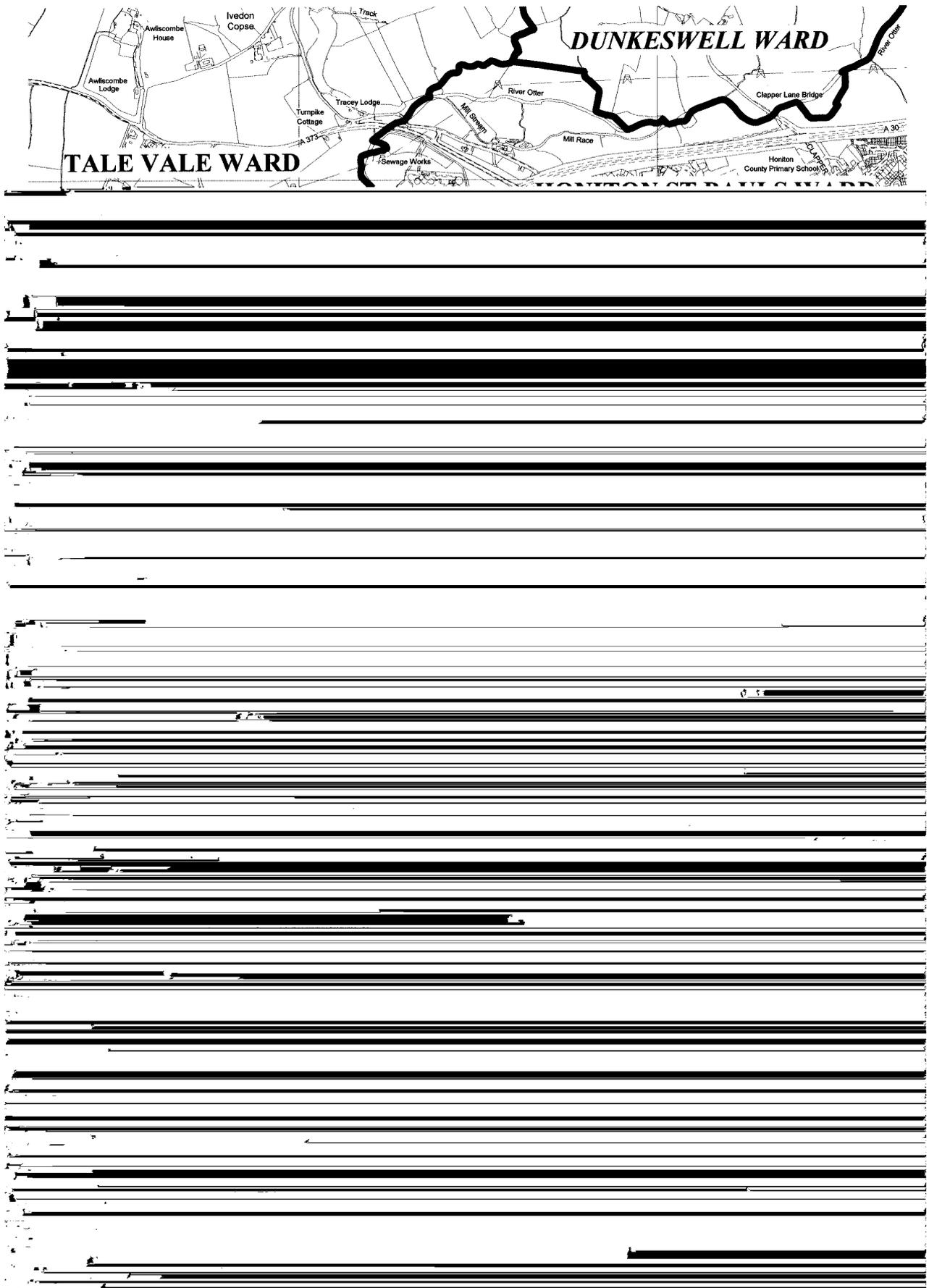


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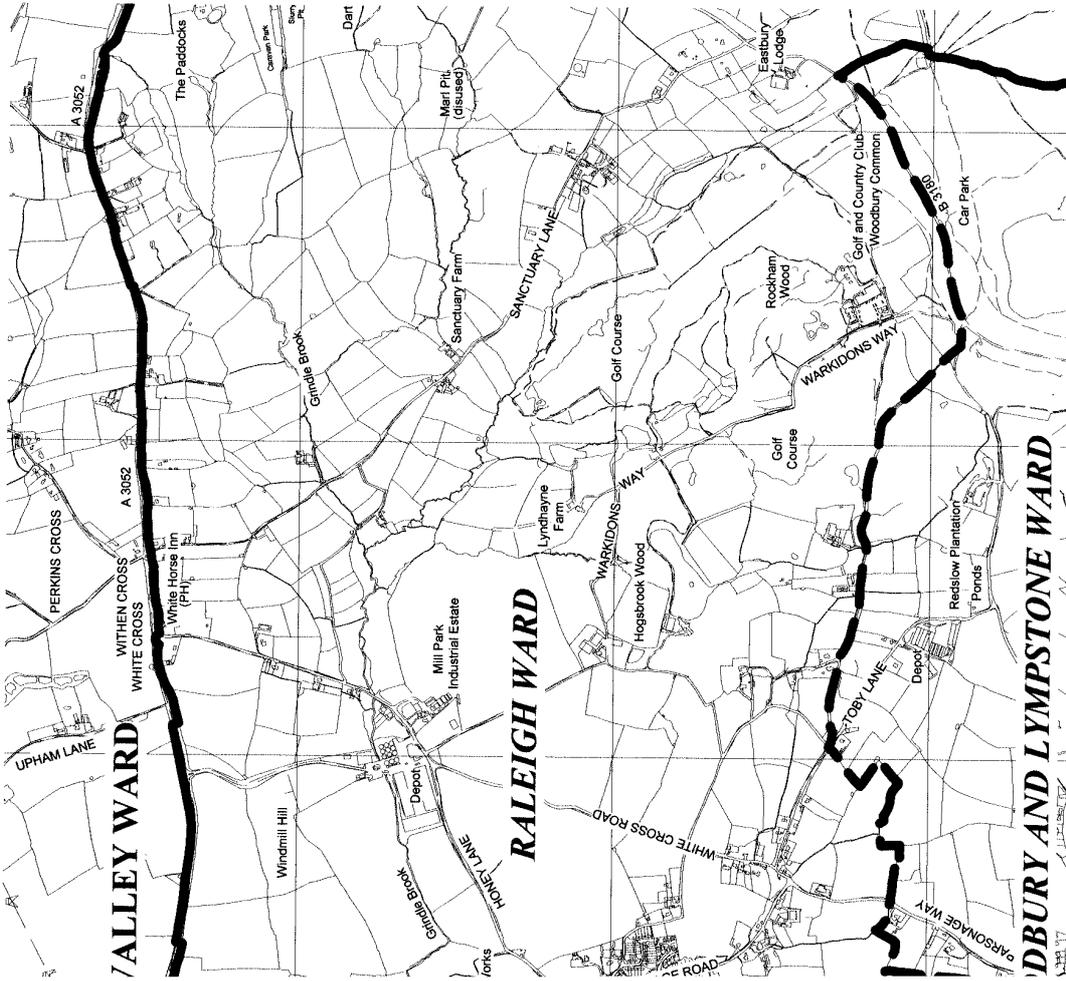
Map A2:
Proposed Boundaries in Sidmouth



Map A3:
Proposed Boundaries in Honiton



Map A4:
Proposed Boundary between Raleigh and Woodbury & Lymestone Wards



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APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for East Devon

Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1 Axminster	3	Axminster Hamlets ward (Raymonds Hill and Weycroft wards of Axminster Town Council); Axminster Town ward (Town ward of Axminster Town Council); Upper Axe ward (part – Hawkchurch parish)
2 Beer & Branscombe	1	Beer ward (Beer parish); Eden Vale ward (part – Branscombe parish)
3 Broadclyst	2	Broadclyst ward (the parishes of Broadclyst, Clyst Hydon, Clyst St Lawrence and Poltimore); Clystbeare ward (part – the parishes of Clyst Honiton and Rockbeare)
4 Budleigh	3	Budleigh Salterton ward (Budleigh Salterton parish); Raleigh ward (part – East Budleigh parish)
5 Clyst Valley	1	Clyst Valley ward (the parishes of Clyst St George, Clyst St Mary and Sowton); Clystbeare ward (part – Farrington parish)
6 Colyton	2	Colyton ward (Colyton parish); Eden Vale (part – the parishes of Farway, Northleigh, Offwell, Southleigh and Widworthy)
7 Dunkeswell	1	Otterhead ward (part – the parishes of Dunkeswell, Luppitt and Sheldon)
8 Exe Valley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Brampford Speke, Huxham, Nether Exe, Rewe, Stoke Canon and Upton Pyne)
9 Exmouth Brixington	3	Exmouth Brixington ward (part – Brixington ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))
10 Exmouth Halsdon	3	Exmouth Brixington ward (part – Brixington ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Halsdon ward (Halsdon ward of Exmouth Town Council); Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh ward (part – Withycombe Raleigh ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))

continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
11 Exmouth Littleham	3	Exmouth Littleham Rural ward (Littleham Rural ward of Exmouth Town Council); Exmouth Littleham Urban ward (part – Littleham Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Withycombe Urban ward (part – Withycombe Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))
12 Exmouth Town	3	Exmouth Littleham Urban ward (part – Littleham Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part)); Exmouth Withycombe Urban ward (part – Withycombe Urban ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))
13 Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	3	Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh ward (part – Withycombe Raleigh ward of Exmouth Town Council (part))
14 Feniton & Buckerell	1	Patteson ward (part – the parishes of Buckerell and Feniton and Gittisham Village ward of Gittisham parish as proposed)
15 Honiton St Michael's	3	Honiton St Michael's ward (part – St Michael's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Honiton St Paul's ward (part – St Paul's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Patteson ward (part – Gittisham Vale ward of Gittisham parish as proposed)
16 Honiton St Paul's	2	Honiton St Michael's ward (part – St Michael's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Honiton St Paul's ward (part – St Paul's ward of Honiton Town Council (part)); Otterhead ward (part – Combe Raleigh parish)
17 Newbridges	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Kilmington, Musbury and Shute)
18 Newton Poppleford & Harpford	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Newton Poppleford parish)
19 Ottery St Mary Rural	2	Ottery St Mary Rural ward (part – North, Tipton St John and West Hill wards of Ottery St Mary Town Council); Clystbeare ward (part – Aylesbeare parish)
20 Ottery St Mary Town	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Town ward of Ottery St Mary Town Council)
21 Otterhead	1	Eden Vale ward (part – Cotleigh parish); Otterhead ward (part – the parishes of Monkton and Upottery); Yarty ward (part – the parishes of Dalwood and Stockland)
22 Raleigh	1	Raleigh ward (part – the parishes of Bicton, Colaton Raleigh and Otterton); Woodbury ward (part – Woodbury Salterton ward of Woodbury parish)

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
23 Seaton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Seaton parish)
24 Sidmouth Rural	1	Sidmouth Rural ward (part – Salcombe Regis and Sidbury wards of Sidmouth Town Council)
25 Sidmouth Sidford	3	Sidmouth Rural ward (part – Primley and Sidford Village wards of Sidmouth Town Council); Sidmouth Woolbrook ward (part – North ward of Sidmouth Town Council)
26 Sidmouth Town	3	Sidmouth Town ward (East and South wards of Sidmouth Town Council); Sidmouth Woolbrook ward (part – West ward of Sidmouth Town Council)
27 Tale Vale	1	Patteson ward (part – Awliscombe parish); Tale Vale ward (part – the parishes of Broadhembury, Payhembury and Plymtree)
28 Trinity	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Axmouth, Combpyne Rousdon and Uplyme)
29 Whimble	1	Ottery St Mary Rural ward (part – Whimble parish); Tale Vale ward (part – Talaton parish)
30 Woodbury & Lympstone	2	Lympstone ward (Lympstone parish); Woodbury ward (part – Exton and Woodbury wards of Woodbury parish)
31 Yarty	1	Upper Axe ward (part – the parishes of All Saints and Chardstock); Yarty ward (part – the parishes of Membury and Yarcombe)

Figure B2:

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Axminster	3	4,968	1,656	-1	5,265	1,755	0
2 Beer & Branscombe	1	1,569	1,569	-7	1,600	1,600	-9
3 Broadclyst	2	3,472	1,736	3	3,704	1,852	5
4 Budleigh	3	4,848	1,616	-4	4,901	1,634	-7
5 Clyst Valley	1	1,837	1,837	9	1,884	1,884	7
6 Colyton	2	3,526	1,763	5	3,644	1,822	4
7 Dunkeswell	1	1,698	1,698	1	1,763	1,763	0
8 Exe Valley	1	1,579	1,579	-6	1,627	1,627	-7
9 Exmouth Brixington	3	4,803	1,601	-5	5,236	1,745	-1
10 Exmouth Halsdon	3	5,103	1,701	1	5,271	1,757	0
11 Exmouth Littleham	3	5,263	1,754	4	5,395	1,798	2
12 Exmouth Town	3	4,985	1,662	-1	5,294	1,765	0
13 Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	3	5,120	1,707	2	5,211	1,737	-1
14 Feniton & Buckerell	1	1,797	1,797	7	1,873	1,873	7
15 Honiton St Michael's	3	4,788	1,596	-5	5,468	1,823	4
16 Honiton St Paul's	2	3,363	1,682	0	3,524	1,762	0
17 Newbridges	1	1,545	1,545	-8	1,580	1,580	-10
18 Newton Poppleford & Harpford	1	1,645	1,645	-2	1,707	1,707	-3

Figure B2 (continued):

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Ottery St Mary Rural	2	3,245	1,623	-3	3,326	1,663	-5
20 Ottery St Mary Town	2	3,349	1,675	0	3,681	1,841	5
21 Otterhead	1	1,799	1,799	7	1,824	1,824	4
22 Raleigh	1	1,550	1,550	-8	1,579	1,579	-10
23 Seaton	3	5,517	1,839	9	5,746	1,915	9
24 Sidmouth Rural	1	1,728	1,728	3	1,745	1,745	-1
25 Sidmouth Sidford	3	4,993	1,664	-1	5,188	1,729	-2
26 Sidmouth Town	3	4,707	1,569	-7	4,801	1,600	-9
27 Tale Vale	1	1,828	1,828	9	1,932	1,932	10
28 Trinity	1	1,836	1,836	9	1,901	1,901	8
29 Whimble	1	1,532	1,532	-9	1,773	1,773	1
30 Woodbury & Lympstone	2	3,251	1,626	-3	3,307	1,654	-6
31 Yarty	1	1,887	1,887	12	1,950	1,950	11
Totals	59	99,131	—	—	103,700	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,680	—	—	1,758	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on East Devon District Council's submission.

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

