

Final recommendations

The
Boundary
Committee
for England

Part of the Electoral Commission



Future electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight

June 2008

Translations and other formats

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What is the Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission. It may also undertake administrative boundary reviews, making recommendations for any changes to the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Jane Earl
Robin Gray
Professor Ron Johnson
Joan Jones CBE
Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL
Professor Colin Mellors

Director:

Archie Gall

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to electoral division boundaries, the number of councillors and electoral division names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

Summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of the Isle of Wight has been undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the county. A further electoral review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 20 electoral divisions currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the county average. Based on the electorate forecasts provided by Isle of Wight Council, this is likely to increase to 23 electoral divisions by 2011. Between 1996 and 2006 the electorate increased by 7%, causing imbalances in the electorate in parts of the Island.

This review was conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage started	Description
One	13 February 2007	Submission of proposals to us
Two	5 June 2007	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	25 October 2007	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	18 January 2008	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed 38 single-member electoral divisions and one two-member electoral division. Our draft recommendations would provide good levels of electoral equality throughout the county, although four of our proposed electoral divisions would have poorer levels of electoral equality. We considered that the evidence of community identity we received and the creation of clear boundaries justified such variances.

Responses to consultation

We received 31 representations during Stage Three. These included three proposals for alternative council sizes to the 40-member scheme we had proposed in our draft recommendations. We also received proposals for modifications to our proposed electoral division boundaries and names. Finally, a number of respondents also made proposals for parish or town council electoral arrangements.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council provided electorate forecasts for the year 2011, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4% from 109,496 to 113,779 between 2006 and 2011. During Stage One the Labour Group queried the Council's projected figures.

However, upon receiving further evidence from the Council in support of their electorate figures, we were satisfied with the projections provided. During Stage Three we did not receive any specific comments on the electorate figures. We are therefore satisfied that these are the most accurate that can be provided at this time.

Council size

In our draft recommendations we proposed a council size of 40. During Stage Three, our proposed council size was endorsed by Isle of Wight Council, Cowes Town Council and three local residents. We received alternative proposals for council size from the Liberal Democrat Group, the Labour Group and the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils for 39, 33 and 42 members respectively.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we are proposing modifications to electoral division names in Ryde and Cowes and a minor boundary modification in the Newport area. With the exception of parish electoral arrangements, we are confirming the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

We looked especially closely at representations with regard to the Bembridge area. Nine respondents proposed a single-member Bembridge electoral division but this electoral division would have an exceptionally high variance of 24% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While we received evidence from Isle of Wight Council and St Helens Parish Council in support of a single-member scheme in this area, counter balancing views were expressed and, overall, we were not persuaded that there was sufficiently strong evidence to justify such a high variance, given that a good alternative is available.

What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission through the contact details below. The Commission will not make an Order implementing them before 30 July 2008. Any representations received by that date will be made publicly available once the Order has been made.

**The Secretary
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Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
Fax: 020 7271 0667
Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk**

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.
The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Table 1: Final recommendations for Isle of Wight Council

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arreton & Newchurch	1	3,086	3,086	13	3,147	3,147	11
2	Binstead & Fishbourne	1	2,749	2,749	0	2,800	2,800	-2
3	Brading, St Helens & Bembridge	2	6,339	3,170	16	6,389	3,195	12
4	Carisbrooke	1	2,572	2,572	-6	2,639	2,639	-7
5	Central Wight	1	2,886	2,886	5	2,924	2,924	3
6	Chale, Niton & Whitwell	1	2,404	2,404	-12	2,440	2,440	-14
7	Cowes Medina	1	3,022	3,022	10	3,101	3,101	9
8	Cowes North	1	2,736	2,736	0	2,981	2,981	5
9	Cowes South & Northwood	1	2,863	2,863	5	2,899	2,899	2

Table 1: Final recommendations for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10	Cowes West & Gurnard	1	2,994	2,994	9	3,002	3,002	6
11	East Cowes	1	2,985	2,985	9	3,125	3,125	10
12	Freshwater North	1	2,334	2,334	-15	2,446	2,446	-14
13	Freshwater South	1	2,453	2,453	-10	2,566	2,566	-10
14	Godshill & Wroxall	1	2,643	2,643	-3	2,658	2,658	-7
15	Havenstreet, Ashe & Haylands	1	2,711	2,711	-1	2,905	2,905	2
16	Lake North	1	2,867	2,867	5	2,892	2,892	2
17	Lake South	1	2,917	2,917	7	2,942	2,942	3
18	Nettlestone & Seaview	1	2,839	2,839	4	2,873	2,873	1

Table 1: Final recommendations for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19	Newport Central	1	2,471	2,471	-10	2,801	2,801	-2
20	Newport East	1	2,447	2,447	-11	2,563	2,563	-10
21	Newport North	1	2,596	2,596	-5	2,613	2,613	-8
22	Newport South	1	2,618	2,618	-4	2,710	2,710	-5
23	Newport West	1	2,368	2,368	-13	2,632	2,632	-7
24	Parkhurst	1	2,357	2,357	-14	2,611	2,611	-8
25	Ryde East	1	2,756	2,756	1	2,872	2,872	1
26	Ryde North East	1	2,734	2,734	0	2,784	2,784	-2
27	Ryde North West	1	2,855	2,855	4	2,872	2,872	1
28	Ryde South	1	2,734	2,734	0	2,848	2,848	0
29	Ryde West	1	2,777	2,777	1	2,992	2,992	5

Table 1: Final recommendations for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
30	Sandown North	1	2,439	2,439	-11	2,596	2,596	-9
31	Sandown South	1	2,855	2,855	4	3,061	3,061	8
32	Shanklin Central	1	2,715	2,715	-1	2,876	2,876	1
33	Shanklin South	1	2,837	2,837	4	2,936	2,936	3
34	Totland	1	2,429	2,429	-11	2,682	2,682	-6
35	Ventnor East	1	2,659	2,659	-3	2,742	2,742	-4
36	Ventnor West	1	2,639	2,639	-4	2,755	2,755	-3
37	West Wight	1	2,984	2,984	9	3,055	3,055	7
38	Whippingham & Osborne	1	2,924	2,924	7	3,127	3,127	10

Table 1: Final recommendations for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
39	Wootton Bridge	1	2,902	2,902	6	2,922	2,922	3
	Totals	40	109,496	-	-	113,779	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,737	-	-	2,844	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Isle of Wight Council.

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004, the Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a periodic electoral review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of electoral divisions in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average; or
- any single electoral division had a variance of more than 30% from the average

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 In the Isle of Wight we noted that such imbalances had occurred since the last PER was conducted. The number of electors per councillor in 20 of the 48 electoral divisions (42%) varies by more than 10% from the county average. The worst imbalance is in Gurnard electoral division where the councillor represents 33% fewer electors than the county average. Having noted that this level of electoral inequality is unlikely to improve, the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Isle of Wight Council on 11 July 2006.

5 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of the Isle of Wight Council. The last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in June 1997. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 26 August 1999 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in June 2001.

6 In carrying out our work, the Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.¹ This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure effective and convenient local government
- achieve equality of representation

In addition we are required to have regard to Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

7 Details of the legislation under which the review of the Isle of Wight is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Electoral Reviews: Technical Guidance* (published by the Boundary Committee in February 2008).

8 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council and the number, boundaries,

¹ As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962).

and names of electoral divisions. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for any parish and town councils in the county. We cannot consider changes to the external boundaries of either the county or of parish areas as part of this review.

9 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the county as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any electoral division have to be fully justified.

10 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a local authority. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend electoral divisions that are as close to the county average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

11 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors as community leaders.

12 As indicated in our *Guidance*, we take the view that council size should be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority. We will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas. However, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and is supported by evidence.

13 We do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from those of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the county.

14 Where multi-member electoral divisions are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each electoral division should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three

could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any electoral divisions with more than three councillors.

15 The review of the Isle of Wight was in four stages (see Table 2).

Table 2: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	13 February 2007	Submission of proposals to us
Two	5 June 2007	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	25 October 2007	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	18 January 2008	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

16 Stage One began on 13 February 2007, when we wrote to Isle of Wight Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire Police Authority, the Isle of Wight Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the county, the Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight, Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Isle of Wight Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 4 June 2007.

17 During Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

18 Stage Three began on 25 October 2007 with the publication of the report *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight*, and ended on 17 January 2008.

19 During Stage Four we reconsidered the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decided whether to modify them, and now submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It is now for the Commission to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an electoral changes Order. The Commission will also determine when any changes come into effect.

Equal opportunities

20 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

21 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashey	1	2,306	2,306	1	2,340	2,340	-1
2	Bembridge North	1	1,659	1,659	-27	1,667	1,667	-30
3	Bembridge South	1	1,865	1,865	-18	1,873	1,873	-21
4	Binstead	1	2,749	2,749	21	2,786	2,786	18
5	Brading & St. Helens	1	2,815	2,815	23	2,849	2,849	20
6	Brightstone & Calbourne	1	2,208	2,208	-3	2,258	2,258	-5
7	Carisbrooke East	1	2,431	2,431	7	2,695	2,695	14
8	Carisbrooke West	1	2,230	2,230	-2	2,297	2,297	-3

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
9	Central Rural	1	2,288	2,288	0	2,330	2,330	-2
10	Chale, Niton & Whitwell	1	2,404	2,404	5	2,440	2,440	3
11	Cowes Castle East	1	2,000	2,000	-12	2,208	2,208	-7
12	Cowes Castle West	1	2,188	2,188	-4	2,205	2,205	-7
13	Cowes Central	1	2,048	2,048	-10	2,068	2,068	-13
14	Cowes Medina	1	2,016	2,016	-12	2,095	2,095	-12
15	East Cowes North	1	1,657	1,657	-27	1,797	1,797	-24
16	East Cowes South	1	2,514	2,514	10	2,527	2,527	7
17	Fairlee	1	2,270	2,270	0	2,304	2,304	-3

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
18	Freshwater Afton	1	2,494	2,494	9	2,614	2,614	10
19	Freshwater Norton	1	2,286	2,286	0	2,398	2,398	1
20	Gurnard	1	1,518	1,518	-33	1,526	1,526	-36
21	Lake North	1	2,139	2,139	-6	2,164	2,164	-9
22	Lake South	1	2,013	2,013	-12	2,038	2,038	-14
23	Mount Joy	1	2,026	2,026	-11	2,043	2,043	-14
24	Newchurch	1	2,220	2,220	-3	2,254	2,254	-5
25	Newport North	1	1,939	1,939	-15	2,228	2,228	-6
26	Newport South	1	2,145	2,145	-6	2,261	2,261	-5
27	Northwood	1	1,845	1,845	-19	1,881	1,881	-21
28	Osborne	1	1,901	1,901	-17	2,091	2,091	-12
29	Pan	1	2,111	2,111	-7	2,227	2,227	-6

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
30	Parkhurst	1	2,202	2,202	-3	2,436	2,436	3
31	Ryde North East	1	2,457	2,457	8	2,507	2,507	6
32	Ryde North West	1	2,444	2,444	7	2,461	2,461	4
33	Ryde South East	1	2,457	2,457	8	2,672	2,672	13
34	Ryde South West	1	2,423	2,423	6	2,638	2,638	11
35	Sandown North	1	2,439	2,439	7	2,596	2,596	10
36	Sandown South	1	2,855	2,855	25	3,061	3,061	29
37	Seaview & Nettlestone	1	2839	2,839	24	2,873	2,873	21

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
38	Shalfleet and Yarmouth	1	2,240	2,240	-2	2,284	2,284	-4
39	Shanklin Central	1	2,346	2,346	3	2,466	2,466	4
40	Shanklin North	1	2,309	2,309	1	2,350	2,350	-1
41	Shanklin South	1	2,529	2,529	11	2,628	2,628	11
42	St Johns East	1	2,252	2,252	-1	2,368	2,368	0
43	St Johns West	1	2,133	2,133	-6	2,189	2,189	-8
44	Totland	1	2,443	2,443	7	2,682	2,682	13
45	Ventnor East	1	2,659	2,659	17	2,742	2,742	16
46	Ventnor West	1	2,639	2,639	16	2,755	2,755	16
47	Wootton	1	2,902	2,902	27	2,922	2,922	23

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council (continued)

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
48	Wroxall and Godshill	1	2,643	2,643	16	2,685	2,685	13
Totals		48	109,496	-	-	113,779	-	-
Averages		-	-	2,281	-	-	2,370	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Isle of Wight Council.

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

The average number of electors per councillor is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county by the total number of councillors representing them on the council. At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,281 electors (109,489 divided by 48), which the Council forecasts would increase to 2,370 by the year 2011 if the present number of councillors is maintained (113,779 divided by 48).

2 Draft recommendations

22 During Stage One, 38 submissions were received, including county-wide schemes from Isle of Wight Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. In light of the representations received and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight*.

23 Our draft recommendations were largely based on the proposals of Isle of Wight Council. These proposals achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the Council's proposals in a number of areas. In our proposed Brading, St Helens & Bembridge, Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Freshwater North and Arreton & Newchurch electoral divisions, we proposed electoral divisions that departed from the Council's proposals and would have poorer levels of electoral equality than others on the Island. However, we considered that the evidence of community identity we received and the creation of clear boundaries justified such variances. We proposed that:

- Isle of Wight Council should be served by 40 councillors, eight fewer than at present, representing 39 electoral divisions, nine fewer than at present
- Seven electoral divisions should retain their existing boundaries²; and
- There should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Lake, Shanklin, Freshwater, Cowes and Cowes East.

24 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 30 of the 39 electoral divisions varying by no more than 10% from the county average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only four electoral divisions forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average by 2011.

² We have proposed a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing division boundaries adhered to ground detail. These changes would not affect any electors. Where additional changes have not been proposed to these boundaries as part of our final recommendations, these minor boundary amendments are not considered as modifications.

3 Analysis and final recommendations

25 We have now finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight.

26 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972

27 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. This also applies to reviews where the electoral areas are referred to as electoral divisions, such as the Isle of Wight. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing clearly identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

28 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

29 If electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

30 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we were not, therefore, able to take into account any representations based on these issues.

Submissions received

31 During Stage Three, we received 31 submissions in response to our draft recommendations. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. Representations can also be viewed at both our offices and those of the Council.

32 We received a county-wide scheme from the Liberal Democrat Group whilst the Labour Group proposed modifications to our draft recommendations for electoral divisions in Newport town, Cowes town, East Cowes and in our proposed Shanklin, Lake and Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral divisions. Neither the Liberal Democrat Group nor the Labour Group provided any significant evidence of community identity to support their proposed modifications to our draft recommendations and the basis of some of their proposals were unclear. The Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group also proposed a council size of 33 and 39 members respectively.

33 Overall, we did not consider the evidence provided by the Liberal Democrat Group and the Labour Group sufficiently persuasive as to warrant us to depart from our draft recommendations.

34 Isle of Wight Council broadly supported our draft recommendations with the exception of some electoral division names and parish electoral division names. The Council also opposed our proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division.

35 Broadly speaking, other respondents either fully supported our draft recommendations or proposed relatively minor modifications to electoral division names and parish electoral arrangements and/or proposed electoral division boundaries. However, given the lack of evidence provided to support the latter, we were not persuaded to adopt these as part of our final recommendations.

Electorate figures

36 During the last electoral review, the Isle of Wight Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 3% from 1996 to 2001. Between 1996 and the start of this review in 2006 the electorate increased by around 7%. This has resulted in high levels of electoral inequality in certain parts of the island, particularly in the Bembridge and Sandown area and parts of Cowes town. As part of this review the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2011, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4% from 109,496 to 113,779 over the five-year period from 2006 to 2011.

37 During Stage One the Labour Group queried the electorate figures that the Council forecast in the Pan electoral division. Consequently, we requested that the Council consider the accuracy of its forecast figures. The Council outlined its methodology and we were satisfied that the Council's methodology had taken account of all electorate growth that is likely to be completed in the area by December 2011. We were therefore content to accept the Council's projected figures.

38 During Stage Three, we did not receive any specific representations in relation to the forecast electorate figures provided by the Isle of Wight Council during Stage One. Although Councillor Chapman (Ryde South East) raised the issue in general terms in respect of his division, he did not specifically query the electoral figures. Given the methodology provided by the Council during Stage One, we remain satisfied that the electorate projections represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

39 Isle of Wight Council presently has 48 members. At Stage One, the Council proposed a council of 40 members. It supported its proposal with evidence setting out how a council size of 40 would provide effective and convenient local government in the context of the Council's political management structure. Given the evidence received, we adopted a council size of 40 as part of our draft recommendations.

40 At Stage Three our proposed council size of 40 members was supported by Isle of Wight Council, Cowes Town Council and three local residents.

41 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a council size of 39. However, they provided no detailed evidence to support a further reduction from our draft recommendation for a council size of 40. Similarly, Isle of Wight Local Association of Local Councils proposed a council size of 42 but did not provide evidence to support this figure.

42 The Labour Group proposed a council size of 33 for which they provided some evidence in the context of the Council's political management structure. However, we did not consider this sufficiently persuasive to warrant us departing from our draft recommendations at this stage of the review.

43 We are therefore confirming as final our draft recommendations to reduce the number of councillors for Isle of Wight Council from 48 to 40.

Electoral equality

44 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. However, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where no justification is provided for specific electoral division proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any electoral division will need to be fully justified and evidenced in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend electoral divisions with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

45 The county average number of electors per councillor is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county (109,496 in 2006 and 113,779 in 2011) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 40 under our draft (and final) proposals. Therefore the average number of electors per councillor under our draft (and final) recommendations is 2,737 in 2006 and 2,844 in 2011.

General analysis

46 Our draft recommendations were broadly based on the proposals of Isle of Wight Council with a number of modifications to improve electoral equality, better reflect community identities and interests, or create better boundaries.

47 We proposed a council size of 40 comprising a combination of 38 single-member electoral divisions and one two-member division. In seeking to strike a balance between the statutory criteria and to better reflect community identities and interests, four electoral divisions would have variances of more than 10% by 2011. We considered that the community identity we sought to reflect in these electoral divisions justified these poorer levels of electoral equality.

48 We found the issues relating to our draft recommendations in the east of the Island particularly difficult. During Stage One, many respondents opposed the Council's proposed Bembridge, Sandown North and Sandown South electoral divisions. While these electoral divisions would have achieved good levels of electoral equality, it was argued that they did not reflect community identity and would have resulted in fairly arbitrary and unclear boundaries. We therefore considered an alternative warding pattern in this area.

49 We considered a single-member Bembridge electoral division which had been proposed by some respondents during Stage One. However, this electoral division would have 24% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011, a level of imbalance we considered to be unacceptably high in the absence of strong community identity evidence.

50 During Stage One, we received some evidence to support shared community identity between the parishes of Brading, St Helens and Bembridge. We therefore considered a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division. While we acknowledged this electoral division would have 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011, we concluded it would be able to reflect community identity and appeared to be the best option available in the area. We therefore proposed a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division as part of our draft recommendations. As a consequence, we proposed alternative Sandown North and Sandown South electoral divisions with good levels of electoral equality.

51 During Stage Three, our proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division was supported by Brading Parish Council and Bembridge Parish Council. The parish councils provided evidence to support the proposal. In relation to our draft recommendations for a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, we received opposition from respondents who proposed a single-member Bembridge electoral division. However, with the exception of Isle of Wight Council and St Helens Parish Council, respondents generally did not provide evidence to support their proposal. Indeed, many respondents' opposition to our proposed Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division was based on it being a two-member electoral division, rather than single-member.

52 Isle of Wight Council and St Helens Parish Council both proposed a single-member Bembridge electoral division, providing some evidence of community identity. However, while we acknowledged their views and evidence, on balance we did not consider it sufficiently strong, especially given other views, as to persuade us

to adopt a single-member Bembridge electoral division with 24% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. This is a level of electoral equality that we would only propose in exceptional circumstances where the evidence about community identity was overwhelming.

53 In the remainder of the Isle of Wight, we have confirmed most of our draft recommendations as final, although we do propose some modifications to the names of electoral divisions in the Ryde and Cowes areas. As discussed in paragraph 145, we also propose a number of parish council electoral arrangements. These are consequential to our electoral division boundaries and comments received during Stage Three.

54 Following the establishment of parishes by the Isle of Wight Council in Newport, Newchurch, Whippingham and Ryde since the commencement of this electoral review, we are also proposing parish electoral arrangements to reflect the boundaries of our proposed electoral divisions in those areas. These parish electoral arrangements are discussed on pages 40-43.

Warding arrangements

55 For warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing electoral divisions, are considered in turn:

- Bembridge North, Bembridge South, Brading & St Helens, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions (pages 27-32)
- Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions (pages 32-33)
- Totland, Freshwater Afton, Freshwater Norton, Shalfleet & Yarmouth and Brighstone & Calbourne electoral divisions (pages 33-34)
- Wroxall & Godshell, Newchurch and Central Rural electoral divisions (page 34-35)
- Newport town (seven electoral divisions) (pages 35-36)
- Cowes town (seven electoral divisions), Northwood and Osborne electoral divisions (pages 36-37)
- Ryde town (six electoral divisions), Wootton, Seaview & Nettlestone, Binstead, Fairlee and Ashe electoral divisions (pages 37-39)

56 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table 1 (on pages 5-9), and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Bembridge North, Bembridge South, Brading & St Helens, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions

57 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Bembridge North, Bembridge South, Brading & St Helens, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

58 During Stage One, we received representations from 21 respondents, including the Council's, the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes in this area. Fifteen respondents made comments opposing the Council's proposed warding arrangements in the Bembridge and Sandown area. Two respondents made comments in relation to the Brading area while one respondent made comments in relation to Lake Parish Council's electoral arrangements.

59 As outlined in paragraph 23, we broadly based our proposals on the Council's electoral division arrangements as it provided an island-wide scheme based on a council size of 40 as proposed in our draft recommendations. We therefore considered the Council's proposals in this area which would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Brading & St Helens, Bembridge, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North and Shanklin South electoral divisions.

60 We were broadly satisfied with the Council's proposed warding arrangements for the proposed electoral divisions of Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North and Shanklin South and adopted these as part of our draft recommendations. However, we considered the Council's proposals in the rest of the area to provide a poor reflection of community identity. This view was shared by many respondents. We therefore revisited these proposals and produced alternative proposals on which we consulted.

61 We proposed a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, comprising the parishes of the same name, which would have 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While we acknowledged this variance as greater than we would usually seek to recommend, we considered this electoral division to have clear boundaries and good linkages between the three constituent parishes. We also received some limited evidence of community identity to support linking the three parishes. We therefore decided to adopt this as part of our draft recommendations. As a consequence, we proposed a single-member Sandown North electoral division comprising the parish ward of the same name.

62 We did consider a single-member Bembridge electoral division, as proposed by some respondents, comprising Bembridge parish. However, this electoral division would have 24% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. In the absence of very strong and persuasive evidence of community identity to support such an extremely high variance, we were unable to adopt this electoral division as part of our draft recommendations.

63 During Stage Three, we received 13 submissions in relation to our proposals in this area. With the exception of our proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, our proposals in this area were broadly endorsed by respondents with minor modifications being proposed in the other electoral divisions.

64 Three respondents opposed the Lake South electoral division name. Our proposed Lake South electoral division would comprise Shanklin North parish ward of Shanklin parish and Lake South parish ward of Lake parish. Respondents opposing the electoral division name did not consider it reflected the area covered as it refers only to Lake parish. Respondents therefore provided alternative name proposals which they considered would be more representative.

65 Andrew Turner MP proposed the name Shanklin North & Lake South. This was supported by Shanklin Town Council. Lake Parish Council proposed the name Gatten & Lake South. Lake Parish Council stated the 'area of Lake South and Shanklin North already has a historic name which could satisfy both communities and is still used by the long established primary school known as Gatten and Lake'.

66 While we acknowledge that Lake South is not a wholly geographically representative name of the area, we do not consider the proposed alternative names are supported by any evidence of community identity that would better reflect the respective proposals for this electoral division. Furthermore, we consider the above proposals are consistent with the naming conventions used elsewhere in our final recommendations. Elsewhere, we have sought to reflect community identities in using constituent parishes, towns and settlements in the proposed electoral divisions and we consider both alternative proposed names deviate from this.

67 We acknowledge that Mr Turner's proposal would reflect the parishes comprising the electoral division. However, we consider the name Shanklin North and Lake South to deviate from the naming convention for electoral divisions adopted elsewhere in our draft recommendations. We also consider both Mr Turner's and Lake Parish Council's proposals lacked evidence of community identity to support a change from our draft recommendations and note that the name Lake South was supported by the Council. We therefore propose to confirm our draft recommendations for Lake North as final.

68 Sandown Town Council proposed a modification to our proposed boundary between Sandown North and Sandown South electoral divisions. We requested further information to clarify this proposed modification but did not receive a response from the Town Council.

69 With the exception of comments from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we did not receive further comments on our draft recommendations for Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions. With the exception of parish electoral arrangements for Lake and Shanklin parishes, which are discussed in paragraphs 147-151, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions as final.

70 Comments were received on the proposed Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division from 11 respondents, including the Isle of Wight Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. With the exception of Bembridge Parish Council and Brading Town Council, respondents opposed the proposed division.

71 Respondents opposing the draft recommendations in this area supported a single-member Bembridge electoral division and a single-member Brading & St Helens electoral division, as considered in our draft recommendations. As mentioned in paragraph 62, we did not adopt this as part of our draft recommendations due to the absence of strong community identity evidence to support the extremely high variance this electoral division would attract.

72 With the exception of Isle of Wight Council and St Helens Parish Council, respondents proposing a single-member Bembridge electoral division and a single-

member Brading & St Helens electoral division, did not provide specific evidence of community identity in support of their proposals.

73 Both Isle of Wight Council and St Helens Parish Council supported a single-member Bembridge electoral division and a single-member Brading & St Helens electoral divisions. Broadly speaking, the evidence they presented in support of this separation sought to refute the commonality of the parishes comprising the proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division. Both respondents asserted that the respective parishes had distinct and separate identities, both in community and geographic terms.

74 Isle of Wight Council stated that 'Bembridge is geographically isolated from the areas of St Helens by the tidal area of Bembridge harbour and from Brading by the extensive area of marshland'. The Council added that there are primary schools for each of the three parishes plus several local amenities including post offices, convenience stores and public houses. It argued 'each area is self-sufficient and does not rely on any of the other areas for locally provided services'.

75 In further support of a single-member Bembridge electoral division, the Council stated that 'due to its insular location, there are only two roads into or out of Bembridge [and]... it is noticeable that neither of these two routes actually pass through the centres of either St Helens or Brading'.

76 Having visited the area, however, we are of the view that the three parishes share accessible road links. Brading, St Helens and Bembridge parishes share road links between Carpenters Road, Station Road and Embankment Road respectively. Similarly, Bembridge and Brading parishes share road links between Sandown Road and Bully's Hill/Upper Adgestone Road and Lower Adgestone respectively. We also note that Rowborough Lane in Brading parish links the aforementioned routes, essentially completing an orbital linkage of the three parishes.

77 The Council argued that St Helens parish 'has a distinct and individual community identity evidenced primarily by the quintessential village green'. In providing evidence of community identity within St Helens parish, the Council added that 'St Helens can boast a thriving parish council... its own local doctors' surgeries and churches, together with the St Helens branch of the Women's Institute'.

78 St Helens Parish Council echoed the sentiments of Isle of Wight Council in opposing the lack of commonality between Bembridge, Brading and St Helens parishes. St Helens Parish Council cited 'the [village] green... the primary school, the medical centre, the public house, the newsagent, the Post Office, the garage, the restaurant, the book shop and the community centre and chapel' as examples of community identity within St Helens parish. However, in refuting any commonality with Bembridge parish, St Helens Parish Council provided limited evidence and merely stated that 'St Helens is only joined in common with Bembridge by the harbour' and 'enjoys complete self containment with no ribbon development to any neighbouring area'.

79 We considered both respondents had adopted evidence-based approaches in support of their proposals. Accordingly, we gave further detailed consideration to a single-member Bembridge electoral division. There is clearly supporting evidence for the separation and the Committee did not find it an easy decision. However, a single-

member Bembridge electoral division would have an extremely high variance of 24% more electors than the county average by 2011. This is a level of electoral equality that we would only be inclined to propose in the most rare and exceptional circumstances. Ultimately, despite the level of evidence received in support of this electoral division, we did not consider it was sufficient to justify such a high variance.

80 In arriving at this view, we were also mindful of those who supported the joined two-member division. Brading Town Council and Bembridge Parish Council both supported our draft recommendation for a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, providing evidence to support the proposal. Bembridge Parish Council stated that ‘Bembridge clearly links all three communities and shares far more with them than separates them.’ Brading Town Council reiterated the issues of commonality between the three parishes it had cited in its submission to the Isle of Wight Council’s own consultation during Stage One.

81 In considering the options for warding arrangements in this area, we do not believe the community arguments put forward in favour of a single-member Bembridge electoral division can justify such a high level of electoral inequality, particularly as two of the three constituent parish councils in the proposed two-member division support the draft recommendation. A two-member Brading, St Helens and Bembridge electoral division would have 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011, a relatively high imbalance itself.

82 We note also that much of the opposition to a two-member electoral division was based on the uniformity of the single-member warding pattern in the rest of the Isle of Wight and a two-member electoral division moving away from this. Indeed, the Isle of Wight Council stated that ‘electors are familiar with the “one division - one member” concept and treating one single area of the island differently from all the others does not appear to offer a consistent form of local government’. Many respondents echoed those sentiments; it was a recurring theme in the submissions received in opposition to the draft recommendation in this area.

83 We acknowledge our proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division will be the only two-member electoral division in the Isle of Wight. However, ensuring a uniformed warding pattern is not required by legislation. A preference for a single-member Bembridge electoral division must therefore be balanced against, among other things, our statutory requirement to seek to ensure electoral equality.

84 We also note that Isle of Wight Council cited the recent further electoral review of Barrow-in-Furness where we proposed a Barrow Island ward with 22% more electors than the borough average. In that review we received strong evidence of community identity that supported the lack of commonality between Barrow Island and other areas of the borough. However, in addition, we took into consideration the geographic factor of Barrow Island being, as the name implies, physically separate from the rest of the borough; an exceptional circumstance that justified such a high variance. It should also be noted that the proposed Barrow Island ward was consulted on and subsequently wholly endorsed by local residents during Stage Three of that review.

85 In the absence of alternative proposals with reasonable levels of electoral equality that are evidenced by community identity, we consider this to be best

warding pattern achievable in this area of the Isle of Wight. We are confident that our proposed two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division provides a reasonable reflection of the shared community identities of its constituent settlements and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this electoral division as final.

86 Table 1 (pages 5-9) provide details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Brading, St Helens & Bembridge; Sandown North; Sandown South; Lake North; Lake South; Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions

87 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (on pages 15-20).

88 During Stage One, we received representations from six respondents. Two respondents opposed the Council's proposals and provided evidence of community identity to oppose the Council's proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell and Ventnor West electoral divisions. Respondents instead proposed that the Ventnor East and Ventnor West electoral divisions wholly comprise the parish of Ventnor.

89 As outlined in paragraph 23, we broadly based our proposals on the Council's warding arrangements. We therefore considered the Council's proposals in this area, which would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions. However, given the unclear boundary between the proposed Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions and the community identity evidence we received in opposition to the Council's proposals, we were not inclined to adopt wholly the Council's scheme.

90 Despite the good level of electoral equality the Council's proposed Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions would achieve, the shared boundary appeared to us to be unclear and arbitrary. We therefore proposed a modification to the Council's proposed Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions.

91 Our proposed Ventnor West and Ventnor East electoral divisions would be coterminous with Ventnor parish. Consequently the boundary this electoral division would share with Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division would not breach the shared boundary of Niton & Whitwell and Ventnor parishes. This would result in a Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division having 14% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. However, in addition to the evidence we received to support this, we considered that avoiding an arbitrary split of Ventnor parish would provide a better reflection of community identities. Consequently, we adopted this as part of our draft recommendations. In the remainder of the area, we adopted the Council's proposals without modification.

92 During Stage Three, the Council endorsed our draft recommendations for this area. With the exception of comments from the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we did not receive further comments on our draft

recommendations for Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions. We have therefore decided to confirm as final our draft recommendations for Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions.

93 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Totland, Freshwater Afton, Freshwater Norton, Shalfleet & Yarmouth and Brighstone & Calbourne electoral divisions

94 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Totland, Freshwater Afton, Freshwater Norton, Shalfleet & Yarmouth and Brighstone & Calbourne electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

95 During Stage One, we received representations from five respondents. As outlined in paragraph 23, we broadly based our proposals on the Council's warding arrangements. We therefore considered the Council's proposals in this area, which would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed West Wight, Totland, Freshwater North and Freshwater South electoral divisions. However, given the unclear boundary between the proposed Totland and Freshwater North electoral divisions, we were not inclined to adopt wholly the Council's proposal.

96 Despite the good level of electoral equality the Council's proposed Totland and Freshwater North electoral divisions would achieve, the shared boundary appeared to us to be unclear and arbitrary. We proposed a modification to the Council's proposed Totland and Freshwater North electoral divisions.

97 Our proposed Totland electoral division would be coterminous with Totland parish. Consequently, the boundary this electoral division would share with Freshwater North would not breach the shared boundary of Totland and Freshwater parishes. This would result in a Freshwater North electoral division with 14% fewer electors than the county average by 2011, an imbalance we acknowledged to be poor. However, we considered uniting Totland parish in one electoral division would provide a better reflection of community identity. Consequently, we adopted this as part of our draft recommendations. In the remainder of the area, we adopted the Council's proposals without modification.

98 During Stage Three, the Council endorsed our draft recommendations for the area. Andrew Turner MP proposed retaining the existing names of Freshwater Norton and Freshwater Afton instead of Freshwater North and Freshwater South respectively, the latter being proposed in our draft recommendations. Shorwell Parish Council endorsed our proposed West Wight electoral division. Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils argued that the proposed West Wight electoral division is 'spread over a large geographical area' which could compromise 'equality of representation and community identity'.

99 With the exception of comments from the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we did not receive further comments on our draft

recommendations for the proposed West Wight, Totland, Freshwater North and Freshwater South electoral divisions.

100 Mr Turner MP argued the 'historical significance' of retaining the existing electoral division names. However, he did not explain how his proposal would reflect current community identities in the area. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt this modification to our draft recommendations for the area.

101 Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils made comments in relation to our proposed Arreton & Newchurch, Central Wight and West Wight electoral divisions and proposed an 'increase in the number of councillors serving these wards by three; but not necessarily, creating multi-member wards'. However, it did not provide evidence to support its comments and did not propose a specific alternative warding proposal. Furthermore, as discussed in paragraphs 39-43, we have confirmed a council size of 40 members. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils' proposals. We also note its proposals would have a knock-on effect to our warding pattern, which has been consulted on and broadly endorsed during Stage Three.

102 We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for West Wight, Totland, Freshwater North and Freshwater South electoral divisions as final.

103 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for West Wight, Totland, Freshwater North and Freshwater South electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Wroxall & Godshell, Newchurch and Central Rural electoral divisions

104 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Wroxall & Godshell, Newchurch and Central Rural electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

105 During Stage One, we received representations from six respondents. Three respondents opposed the Council's proposals and provided evidence of community identity to refute the Council's proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions. Respondents instead proposed that the Arreton and Newchurch parishes wholly comprise the proposed electoral division of Arreton & Newchurch.

106 We considered the Council's proposals in this area would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Arreton & Newchurch, Central Wight and Godshell & Wroxall electoral divisions. However, given the unclear boundary between the proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions and the community identity evidence we received in opposition to the Council's pattern of electoral divisions, we were not inclined to adopt wholly the Council's scheme in this area.

107 Despite the good level of electoral equality the Council's proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions would achieve, the shared boundary appeared to us to be unclear and arbitrary. We therefore proposed a

modification to the Council's proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions.

108 Our proposed Arreton & Newchurch electoral division would be coterminous with Arreton and Newchurch parishes. Consequently the boundary this electoral division would share with Central Wight would not breach the shared boundary of Arreton and Rookley parishes (the latter being the most eastern parish of our proposed Central Wight electoral division). This would result in an Arreton & Newchurch electoral division with 11% more electors than the county average by 2011, an imbalance we acknowledged to be poor. We considered that uniting Arreton parish in one electoral division would provide a better reflection of community identity. Consequently, we adopted this as part of our draft recommendations. In the remainder of the area, we adopted the Council's proposals without modification.

109 During Stage Three, the Council endorsed our draft recommendations for the area. Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils argued that the proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions were 'spread over a large geographical area' which could compromise 'equality of representation and community identity'. In addition to comments from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we received comments on our draft recommendations for the proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions from two respondents. However, we decided against modifying our proposals in this area due to the lack of evidence provided by these respondents to support their alternative proposals.

110 As discussed in relation to our proposed West Wight electoral division in paragraph 101, we decided not to modify our proposals based on the comments of Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils. We therefore propose to confirm as final our draft recommendations for Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions.

111 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Newport town (seven electoral divisions)

112 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Newport North, Newport South, Mount Joy, Carisbrooke East, Carisbrooke West, Parkhurst and Pan electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

113 During Stage One, we received representations from four respondents. One respondent proposed a modification to the Council's proposals but did not provide evidence of community identity to support his opposition. We were therefore not minded to adopt the respondent's proposals.

114 We considered the Council's proposals in this area would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Newport East, Newport West, Newport Central, Newport South, Newport North, Parkhurst and Carisbrooke electoral divisions. We adopted these proposals, with a minor modification, as part of our draft recommendations.

115 During Stage Three, the Council endorsed our draft recommendations for the area. Andrew Turner MP and the Newport Town Management Committee both proposed modifications to our draft recommendations. However, we decided against modifying our proposals due to the lack of community identity evidence provided in support of their proposals. In addition to comments from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we received comments on our draft recommendations for the proposed Newport North electoral division from a local resident.

116 The local resident opposed our proposed Newport North electoral division boundary as part of it, shared with our proposed Whippingham electoral division, would cut across land on Heathfield Farm. The resident also referred to Heathfield Farm and Alverstone Farm, the latter also part of our proposed Newport North electoral division, having historical and community ties to Whippingham.

117 We note the local resident's comments regarding the shared boundary of the proposed Newport North and Whippingham electoral divisions and, given this does not affect any electors, we propose modifying this boundary to reflect the integrity of the land surrounding Heathfield Farm.

118 In relation to the resident's comments regarding the historical and community ties of Heathfield Farm and Alverstone Farm to the Whippingham area, it should be noted that this area will remain in Whippingham parish. The modification of administrative parish boundaries is not a part of our remit as part of this review and both Heathfield Farm and Alverstone Farm will be in the Whippingham South parish ward of Whippingham parish.

119 In the remainder of the area, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

120 Following the creation of a new Newport parish since the start of our review, our proposed electoral divisions in Newport Town are reflected in the parish warding of Newport and Whippingham parishes. This is discussed in paragraphs 159-160.

121 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Newport East, Newport West, Newport Central, Newport South, Newport North, Parkhurst and Carisbrooke electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 3, 4 and 5 accompanying this report.

Cowes town (seven electoral divisions), Northwood and Osborne electoral divisions

122 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Cowes Castle East, Cowes Castle West, Cowes Central, Cowes Medina, Northwood, Osborne, East Cowes North, East Cowes South and Gurnard electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

123 During Stage One, we received representations from seven respondents. The Council's proposals were supported by two respondents. Two further respondents opposed the Council's proposals but did not provide evidence of community identity to support their opposition, nor did they provide specific alternative proposals. We therefore did not adopt these proposals.

124 We considered the Council's proposals in this area would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Cowes North, Cowes South, East Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood and Whippingham & Osborne electoral divisions. We adopted these proposals, with a minor modification, as part of our draft recommendations.

125 During Stage Three, the Council broadly endorsed our draft recommendations for the area with modifications to electoral division names we had proposed. Similarly, four other respondents proposed some name changes to our proposed electoral divisions in this area. A local resident opposed the shared boundary of our proposed Whippingham & Osborne and Newport North electoral divisions. His comments are discussed in paragraph 116.

126 With the exception of comments from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we received no further comments on our draft recommendations in this area.

127 Isle of Wight Council, Cowes Town Council, Andrew Turner MP, Gurnard Parish Council and Northwood Management Committee all proposed name changes for the electoral divisions in this area. There appeared to be a broad degree of consensus in the naming proposals from respondents. We also consider the proposals to be consistent in the naming convention throughout the rest of the Isle of Wight and to reflect the areas which they comprise. We therefore decided to modify our draft recommendations to reflect the name changes proposed during Stage Three.

128 The electoral division names of Gurnard, Northwood and Cowes South will instead be named Cowes West & Gurnard, Cowes South & Northwood and Cowes Medina respectively.

129 With the exception of proposals from the Council for parish electoral arrangements for Cowes parish, which are discussed in paragraphs 153-155, we confirm the remainder of our draft recommendations in this area as final.

130 Following the creation of a new Whippingham parish since the start of our review, our proposed Whippingham & Osborne and Newport North electoral divisions are reflected in the parish warding of Newport and Whippingham parishes. This is discussed in paragraphs 161-162.

131 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Cowes West & Gurnard, Cowes South & Northwood, Cowes Medina, Cowes North, East Cowes and Whippingham & Osborne electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and 2 accompanying this report.

Ryde town (six electoral divisions), Wootton, Seaview & Nettlestone, Binstead, Fairlee and Ashey electoral divisions

132 The existing electoral arrangements and the respective electoral variances for Ryde North East, Ryde North West, Ryde South East, Ryde South West, St Johns East, St Johns West, Wootton, Seaview & Nettlestone, Binstead, Fairlee and Ashey electoral divisions are outlined in Table 3 (pages 15-20).

133 During Stage One, we received representations from four respondents. One respondent proposed modifications to the Council's proposals, which we were not minded to adopt given the lack of evidence to support it.

134 We considered the Council's proposals in this area would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Ryde North West, Ryde West, Ryde North East, Ryde East, Ryde Central, Ryde South, Nettlestone & Seaview, Binstead & Fishbourne and Wootton Bridge electoral divisions. We adopted these proposals, with two minor modifications, as part of our draft recommendations.

135 During Stage Three, the Council broadly endorsed our draft recommendations for the area although it proposed modifications to electoral division names. Similarly, three other respondents proposed name changes to our proposed Ryde South electoral division. One respondent made general comments in support of retaining the status quo in Ryde Town but did not provide a specific alternative proposal.

136 A further respondent proposed modifications to our draft recommendations for the Wootton Bridge area. However, we are not minded to modify our proposals based on the respondent's comments due to the lack of community identity evidence provided.

137 With the exception of comments from the Liberal Democrat Group, as mentioned in paragraph 32, we received no further comments on our draft recommendations in this area.

138 Isle of Wight Council, Andrew Turner MP and Havenstreet & Ashey Parish Council all proposed name changes for the proposed Ryde South electoral division. Respondents also argued that 'Ryde South' did not reflect the rural nature of the proposed electoral division. We noted a degree of consensus in the proposals from all respondents in seeking to reflect the area which comprises the parish of Havenstreet & Ashey and the Haylands parish ward of Ryde parish. We therefore decided to modify our draft recommendations to reflect the name changes received proposed Stage Three.

139 We have also modified our draft recommendation so that the proposed Ryde South electoral division would instead be named Havenstreet, Ashey & Haylands. We note this is a slight variation from the exact names proposed by respondents who made proposals. However, we are confident it fully reflects the constituent areas of the electoral division that will be created. Additionally, and as proposed by the Council, we have decided to modify our draft recommendation so that the proposed Ryde Central electoral division would instead be named Ryde South.

140 In the remainder of the area, we propose to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

141 Following the creation of a new Ryde parish since the start of our review, our proposed Ryde North West, Ryde North East, Ryde South, Ryde West electoral divisions and part of our proposed Binstead & Fishbourne and Havenstreet, Ashey & Haylands electoral divisions are reflected in the parish warding of Ryde parish. This is discussed in paragraphs 157-158.

142 Table 1 (on pages 5-9) provide details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Ryde North West, Ryde West, Ryde North East, Ryde East, Ryde South, Havenstreet, Ashley & Haylands, Nettlestone & Seaview, Binstead & Fishbourne and Wootton Bridge electoral divisions. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and 6 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

143 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2006 and 2011 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Final recommendations	
	2006	2011	2006	2011
Number of councillors	48	48	40	40
Number of electoral divisions	48	48	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	2,281	2,370	2,737	2,844
Number of electoral divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	20	23	9	4
Number of electoral divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	8	8	0	0

144 As shown in Table 4, our draft recommendations for the Isle of Wight would result in a reduction in the number of electoral divisions with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 20 to nine. By 2011 only four electoral divisions are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%, with none with more than 20%.

Final recommendation

Isle of Wight Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 39 electoral divisions, as detailed and named in Table 1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

145 As part of an electoral review the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the principal council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish and town councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements where appropriate. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

146 As mentioned in paragraph 54, new parishes were created by the Isle of Wight Council for Ryde, Newport, Newchurch and Whippingham parishes, following the publication of our draft recommendations for the Isle of Wight. Consequently, we have ensured that our final recommendations for parish ward boundaries in these new parishes reflect the electoral division boundaries.

147 During Stage One we received proposals for revised parish council electoral arrangements from Lake Parish Council. Lake Parish Council proposed that the Parish Council be served by 10 parish councillors, reducing the total number of councillors on the Parish Council from 12 to 10. We were content to support this reduction and welcomed views on the distribution of councillors within the parish during Stage Three.

148 During Stage Three, we received proposals from Isle of Wight Council on the distribution of councillors within Lake parish. Lake parish comprises two parish wards, Lake North and Lake South. The Council proposed that Lake North parish ward return seven parish councillors and Lake South parish ward return three parish councillors. We did not receive further comments in relation to parish electoral arrangements for Lake parish and we are content to adopt this distribution, which broadly reflects the electorate distribution, as final.

Final recommendation

Lake Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, instead of the current 12, representing two wards: Lake North parish ward, returning seven councillors, and Lake South parish ward, returning three councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1.

149 During Stage Three, we received proposals from Isle of Wight Council and the Labour Group on the distribution of councillors within Shanklin parish. Shanklin parish comprises three parish wards: Shanklin North, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South.

150 The Labour Group proposed we rename our proposed Shanklin Central parish ward, Shanklin North. However, as proposed in our draft recommendations, we have decided that the most northern parish ward of Shanklin parish should be named Shanklin North parish ward. Furthermore, we have decided that Shanklin Central parish ward should be coterminous with the proposed Shanklin Central electoral division.

151 The Council proposed that Shanklin North parish ward return three parish councillors, Shanklin Central parish ward return six parish councillors and Shanklin South parish ward return six parish councillors. We did not receive further comments in relation to parish electoral arrangements for Shanklin parish and we are content to adopt this distribution, which broadly reflects the electorate distribution, as final.

Final recommendation

Shanklin Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing three parish wards: Shanklin North parish ward (returning three councillors), Shanklin Central parish ward (returning six councillors) and Shanklin South parish ward (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1.

152 During Stage Three, we did not receive any submissions in relation to parish electoral arrangements for Freshwater parish. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for parish electoral arrangements in Freshwater parish, including the existing parish ward names, as final.

Final recommendation

Freshwater Parish Council should comprise 14 parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing two parish wards: Freshwater Norton parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Freshwater Afton parish ward (returning seven councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1.

153 During Stage Three, we received proposals from Isle of Wight Council and Cowes Town Council on parish names within Cowes parish. We also received proposals from Isle of Wight Council on the distribution of councillors within Cowes parish.

154 Both Isle of Wight Council and Cowes Town Council proposed that the proposed parish wards of Cowes Castle East, Cowes Castle West and Cowes South West be named Cowes North parish ward, Cowes West parish ward and Cowes South parish ward respectively. Cowes Medina parish ward was proposed to remain unchanged.

155 Isle of Wight Council proposed that Cowes North parish ward return five parish councillors, Cowes West parish ward return three parish councillors, Cowes South parish ward return three parish councillors and Cowes Medina parish ward return five parish councillors. We did not receive further comments in relation to parish electoral arrangements for Cowes parish and we have decided to confirm these proposals, which broadly reflects the electorate distribution, as final.

Final recommendation

Cowes Town Council should comprise 16 parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing four parish wards: Cowes North parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Cowes West parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Cowes South parish ward (returning three parish councillors) and Cowes Medina parish ward (returning five parish councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1 and 2.

156 During Stage Three, we did not receive any submissions in relation to parish electoral arrangements for East Cowes parish. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for parish electoral arrangements in East Cowes parish as final.

Final recommendation

East Cowes Parish Council should comprise eight parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing two wards: Osborne parish ward (returning four councillors) and East Cowes North parish ward (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1 and 2.

157 Ryde parish was created after the publication of our draft recommendations for the Isle of Wight. Our proposed electoral divisions in the area covering Ryde parish will reflect the parish warding in the parish. The new Ryde Parish Council returns 16 councillors and comprises eight parish wards; Ashey, Binstead, Ryde North East, Ryde North West, Ryde South East, Ryde South West, St Johns East and St Johns West, each returning two members.

158 We propose that Ryde Parish comprise 16 parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements. However, our proposed electoral division boundaries will result in Ryde parish comprising seven parish wards; Binstead (returning two members), Ryde North West (returning three members), Ryde West (returning three members), Ryde South (returning two members), Ryde North East (returning two members), Ryde East (returning two members) and Haylands (returning two members). Isle of Wight Council has agreed to these electoral arrangements, which broadly reflect the electorate distribution in the parish.

Final recommendations

Ryde Parish Council should comprise 16 parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing seven wards: Binstead (returning two members), Ryde North West (returning three members), Ryde West (returning three members), Ryde South (returning two members), Ryde North East (returning two members), Ryde East (returning two members) and Haylands (returning two members). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1 and 6.

159 Newport parish was created after the publication of our draft recommendations for the Isle of Wight. Our proposed electoral divisions in the area covering Newport parish will reflect the parish warding in the parish. The new Newport Parish Council returns 16 councillors and comprises eight parish wards; Pan, Parkhurst,

Carisbrooke East, Carisbrooke West, Fairlee, Mount Joy, Newport North and Newport South, each returning two members.

160 We propose that Newport Parish comprises 14 parish councillors, instead of the current 16. Our proposed electoral division boundaries will result in Newport parish comprising seven parish wards; Parkhurst (returning two members), Carisbrooke (returning two members), Newport North (returning two members), Newport East (returning two members), Newport West (returning two members), Newport Central (returning two members) and Newport South (returning two members). Isle of Wight Council and Newport Parish Council have agreed to these electoral arrangements, which broadly reflect the electorate distribution in the parish.

Final recommendations

Newport Parish Council should comprise 14 parish councillors, instead of the current 16, representing seven wards: Parkhurst (returning two members), Carisbrooke (returning two members), Newport North (returning two members), Newport East (returning two members), Newport West (returning two members), Newport Central (returning two members) and Newport South (returning two members). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1, 3, 4, and 5.

161 Whippingham parish was created after the publication of our draft recommendations for the Isle of Wight. Our proposed electoral divisions in the area covering Whippingham parish will reflect the parish warding in the parish. The new Whippingham Parish Council returns six councillors and is unwarded.

162 We propose that Whippingham Parish comprise six parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements. Our proposed electoral division boundaries will result in Whippingham parish comprising two parish wards; Whippingham North and Whippingham South.

Final recommendations

Whippingham Parish Council should comprise six parish councillors, the same as under the existing arrangements, representing two wards: Whippingham North (returning five members) and Whippingham South (returning one member). Isle of Wight Council has consented to these electoral arrangements, which broadly reflect the electorate distribution in the parish. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 1, 2 and 4.

4 What happens next?

163 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in the Isle of Wight and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation.³

164 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether or not to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 30 July 2008 (six weeks after the publication of this report), and the Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date.

165 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

³ Under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI No. 2001/3962).

5 Mapping

Final recommendations for the Isle of Wight

166 The following maps illustrate our proposed electoral division boundaries for the Isle of Wight.

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed electoral divisions for the Isle of Wight, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Cowes town
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Newport town.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Newport town.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Newport town.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Ryde town.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one electoral division, expressed in parishes or existing electoral divisions, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It is up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether or not to endorse the Boundary Committee's recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order.
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth

Electoral division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever electoral division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the county
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member electoral division	An electoral division represented by either two or three councillors.
National Park	<p>The 14 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; – access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; – wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; – established farming use is effectively maintained’

Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in an electoral division than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single county enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England

Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a electoral division than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in an electoral division varies in percentage terms from the county average

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We comply with this requirement.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.

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The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. The Committee's main role is to conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England with the aim of ensuring the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Other duties include reviewing local authority boundaries and advising the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.