

# Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight

Further electoral review

October 2007

## **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 or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones CBE  
Ann M. Kelly  
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 is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the county. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each county 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 forecast provided by Isle of Wight Council, this is forecast to increase to 23 electoral divisions by 2011. During the previous review the Council forecast the electorate to increase by 3% between 1996 and 2001. Between 1996 and 2006 the electorate has increased by 7%, causing imbalances in the electorate throughout the Island. The worst imbalance is in Gurnard electoral division where the councillor represents 33% fewer electors than the county average.

This review will be conducted in four stages:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
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

## Submissions received

We received 38 representations during Stage One, including county-wide schemes from the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. The majority of submissions received were in relation to the Bembridge and Sandown area where respondents wholly opposed the Council's proposed Bembridge and Sandown North electoral division.

## Analysis and draft recommendations

### Electorate figures

In taking into account the likely growth of the electorate in the Isle of Wight, we requested an electorate forecast from the Council for the period 2006–11. The Council provided 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. During Stage One the Labour Group queried the Council's projected figures for the existing Pan electoral division which it considered to be too low given housing development plans in the area. However, we are satisfied with the projections provided by the Council and confident that

the methodology used in arriving at the figures has taken reasonable account of all likely growth in the period between 2006 and 2011.

## Council size

We received separate proposals for council size from the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group for reductions from 48 to 40 members, 33 members and 30 members respectively. We considered the Council provided strong evidence for adopting a reduced council size. However, in light of the some of the issues raised by the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, we requested further information in support of its submission. We consider that the further information received justifies a council size of 40.

## General analysis

We are proposing 38 single-member divisions and one two-member division. Four of our proposed divisions – Brading, St Helens & Bembridge, Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Freshwater North and Arreton & Newchurch – will have poorer levels of electoral equality than others on the Island. However, we consider that the evidence of community identity we have received and the creation of clear boundaries justifies such variances. With the exception of these proposed electoral divisions, we are satisfied that our proposed warding arrangements will have good levels of electoral equality throughout the county.

## What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight contained in the report. We welcome views from all parts of the community and believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 17 January 2008. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decision for a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division to be difficult. We would particularly welcome local views on this area, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Review Manager**  
**Isle of Wight Review**  
**The Boundary Committee for England**  
**Trevelyan House**  
**Great Peter Street**  
**London SW1P 2HW**

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The full report is available to download at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

# 1 Introduction

1 This report contains our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the County of Isle of Wight, on which we are now consulting.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 the Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make ongoing assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a periodic electoral review (PER) had 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 County 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 May 2001.

6 In carrying out our work, the Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.<sup>1</sup> 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 work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

7 Details of the legislation under which the review of Isle of Wight is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by the Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful both in understanding the approach taken by

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

the Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

8 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council (council size), and the number, boundaries, 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 administrative boundaries 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. to ensure that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes that would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any electoral division will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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 nearly as possible, the same across a district or county. 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 district or 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, 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, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

12 As indicated in its *Guidance*, the Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and should not just address imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While 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, 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 that there is evidence for this.

13 In addition, 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 another's. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

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 the most 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 is in four stages (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Stages of the review**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
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 County 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 with constituency interests in the county, 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 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 25 October 2007 and will end on 17 January 2008, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation about them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

19 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It will then be 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 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 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 the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

**Table 2: Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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
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

**Table 2 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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
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

**Table 2 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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
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

**Table 2 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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
38	Shalfleet & 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

**Table 2 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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
48	Wroxall & Godshell	1	2,643	2,643	16	2,685	2,685	13
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>109,496</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>113,779</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,281</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,370</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Isle of Wight County 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 county 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 a county average of 2,281 electors (109,496 divided by 48), which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,370 by the year 2011 if the present number of councillors is maintained (113,779 divided by 48).



## 2 Analysis and draft recommendations

22 Before finalising our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight we invite views on our initial thoughts as expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from all those interested relating to the number of councillors, proposed electoral division boundaries, electoral division names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

23 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for 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), which defines 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.

24 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’. 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.

25 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.

26 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.

27 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. We are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Submissions received

28 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

29 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met with officers and members from the Council. Officers also met with representatives of parish councils on the island. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 38 representations during Stage One, including county-wide schemes from the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group.

30 All representations may also be viewed on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). Representations can also be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council.

## Electorate figures

31 During the last review, Isle of Wight Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 3% from 1996 to 2001. Between 1997 and the start of this review the electorate has actually increased by 7%. This has resulted in high levels of electoral inequality throughout 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 a further increase in the electorate of approximately 4% from 109,496 to 113,779 over the five-year period from 2006 to 2011.

32 During Stage One the Labour Group queried the electorate figures that the Council forecast in the existing Pan electoral division. The Labour Group stated that the Council 'is just two years away from seeing a major housing development take place ... [in] the Pan ward'. Consequently, we requested that the Council consider the accuracy of its forecast figures, in light of these comments.

33 The Council outlined its methodology and stated that 'the projected electorate for each polling district has been calculated using data provided by the Isle of Wight Council's Planning Policy section, and is based upon the number of units of new or converted properties which are expected to have been built and occupied by 1st December 2011'. The Council added that it 'recognises that some development areas will, over a longer period, eventually yield more units than are likely to be completed by December 2011, but have limited the projections to those which are realistically likely to be completed [by 2011], in line with guidance issued by the Electoral Commission'.

34 In requesting electorate figures from the Council, we requested the likely growth in the electorate during the five-year period 2006–11. While we acknowledge the Labour Group's assertion that there will be further growth in the electorate in the Pan area, we are satisfied that the Council has, so far as practicable, taken this into consideration within the five-year period. While growth in the electorate beyond the five-year period is likely, we cannot take this into consideration for the purposes of the review. We are satisfied that the Council's methodology has taken account of all electorate growth that is likely to be completed in the area by December 2011 and are content to accept the Council's projected figures.

35 We recognise that forecasting electorate figures is difficult and, having considered the County Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We judge that the Council has considered all

planning applications in the county and are satisfied that the electorate figures it has provided reflect the growth anticipated on the island by 2001. However, we will accept further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

## Council size

36 The Isle of Wight Council presently has 48 members. During Stage One we received three proposals for a reduced council size from the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group of 40 members, 33 members and 30 members respectively. The Council's proposed council size was consulted on locally and endorsed by Freshwater Parish Council, Bembridge Conservative Branch, Councillor Scoccia (Ventnor West) and Ryde Town Management Committee.

37 The Council argued that a council size of 40 would be 'the optimum number of councillors required to successfully discharge the duties expected and required' of the Council in the context of its internal political management structure of a leader and cabinet.

38 The Council added that, in recent years, a number of factors have tended towards a reduced workload for councillors and therefore made a reduced council size appropriate.

39 The Council took an evidence-based approach in its rationale for a reduction in council size to 40 members and outlined the allocation of members to responsibilities under which the proposed council size would function in achieving convenient and effective local government.

40 The Council stated that it 'currently has ten member executive, which includes the Leader of the Council, and is known as the Cabinet, which meets once a month, representing a considerable reduction in both meetings and members involved. Formerly, in the first year of executive governance (2001–2002), there were 28 meetings of a 10-member executive compared to 12 scheduled for the whole of 2007.'

41 The Council added that the number of appointments of members to outside bodies had reduced from 138 to 75 between 2003 and 2006 while the number of development control determinations had reduced from 626 applications to 123 between 1996 and 2006. The Council added that 'a further assessment of appointments to outside bodies has commenced and it is likely that this will reduce further the number of appointments, and therefore the demands on the time of elected members'.

42 The Labour Group proposed a council size of 33 members but did not provide evidence to support its proposal. The Labour Group stated that the 'ruling administration was elected on a manifesto commitment to seek a reduction by one-third from its existing 48 councillors, i.e. to 32 wards'. The Labour Group add that 'a Council with less than 40 members could operate effectively if it was not adhering to the existing committee set-up' but did not outline what the alternative would be.

43 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a council size of 30 members but, as with the Labour Group, did not provide evidence to support its proposal. However, it argued that the Council's comments in relation to the reduction of member

commitments to outside bodies ‘makes the case for an even greater reduction in seats than the modest number recommended [by the Council]’. The Liberal Democrat Group also opposed the role of Member Champions and felt that ‘a smaller council would eliminate the need’ for these roles.

44 We concluded that the Council had provided persuasive evidence for a reduction in council size. However, we also noted that a reduction in council size to 32 members had been mooted by the Council in its submission but dismissed as it was considered ‘there would simply be insufficient members to fill the roles required in an efficient manner’. However, the Council had not explained how it had reached such a conclusion. We also considered that the Labour and the Liberal Democrat Groups’ questions in relation to the role of ‘Member Champions’ should be clarified with the Council.

45 We therefore requested further information from the Council in relation to the mooted council size of 32 not being viable in ensuring convenient and effective local government. We also sought clarification from the Council on the role of Member Champions. In the context of the proposed council size, we considered the distinction between Member Champions and front-line members to be unclear from the Council’s submissions. Finally, we questioned the viability of two and a half days per week of community engagement by members, as stated by the Council, to be a consequence of a council size of 40.

46 In response the Council stated that a council size of 32 would be insufficient as the required allocation of roles within the Council would place considerable pressure on members. The Council outlined the number of meetings councillors would be expected to, and would need to, attend to achieve effective governance under a council size of 32. The Council stated that in some cases this would total 10 areas of responsibility for members under a council size of 32, ‘which would clearly be untenable and could adversely affect current performance levels of councillors’. This was in contrast to a viable number of five to seven commitments per member under a council size of 40.

47 The Council also differentiated the role of Member Champions from front-line members and provided justification of the likely time required for community engagement by members under a council size of 40 would be viable given the introduction of ‘evening meetings to reduce the burden on members’.

48 Having received further information from the Council, we are content to adopt a council size of 40 members as part of our draft recommendations. We are persuaded that the Council’s evidence-based approach in proposing a council size of 40 has provided sound reasoning to support this reduction. We are also confident that a council size of 40 would provide effective and convenient local government in the context of the Council’s internal political management structure and the representational role of councillors.

49 However, we welcome further evidence from interested parties on council size during Stage Three.

## Electoral equality

50 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%. Therefore when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where inadequate justification is provided for specific warding proposals we will look to improve electoral equality, seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as possible, provided 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 have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances 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 local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

51 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 proposals. Therefore the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,737 in 2006 and 2,844 in 2011.

## General analysis

52 We received county-wide schemes from the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. Given that we have proposed a reduction in council size to 40 members, as proposed by the Council, the average number of electors per councillors is 2,844 by 2011. The Labour and Liberal Democrat groups based their proposals on different council sizes, resulting in each electoral division having significantly more electors than under the council size of 40 that we are adopting. This has made it difficult to adopt any of their electoral divisions in their entirety because of the levels of electoral inequality that they would provide. While in some areas the proposed warding arrangements of the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group have informed the considerations which led to the formulation of our draft recommendations, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council based on a council size of 40.

53 We note that the Council's scheme has been locally consulted on and the Council has reflected the outcome of its consultation in its final proposals made to the Committee. The Council's proposed scheme would ensure that no electoral division would have a variance of more than 10% in the number of electors per councillor by 2011. We considered that these factors provided a good basis for our draft recommendations.

54 Where we considered the Council's proposals did not sufficiently reflect community identity, we have moved away from its scheme, seeking to reflect the evidence of community identity received during Stage One. In the parishes of Bembridge, Ventnor, Totland and Arreton the Council's proposed warding arrangements divided a handful of electors between electoral divisions in order to achieve good electoral equality. In these areas we considered that ensuring the parish boundary was coterminous with the electoral division boundary was a better

alternative than the Council's proposals, which would also require parish warding. In these electoral divisions our draft recommendations propose seven changes to the Council's proposed warding arrangements. We also propose minor modifications to seven of the Council's proposed electoral divisions as part of our draft recommendations which we consider will result in clearer boundaries.

55 In seeking to strike a balance between our statutory criteria and better reflect community identity, our proposed Brading, St Helens & Bembridge, Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Freshwater North and Arreton & Newchurch electoral divisions will have a variance of more than 10% in the number of electors per councillor by 2011. We consider that the community identity we have sought to reflect in these electoral divisions justifies these poorer levels of electoral equality.

56 We found the issues relating to the Brading, St Helens and Bembridge area particularly difficult. During Stage One many respondents opposed the Council's proposed Sandown North electoral division, which comprised a large area of Sandown parish and a number of electors from Bembridge parish. Respondents asserted that there was no shared community identity or commonality between Sandown and Bembridge. While we received limited evidence in support of this contention, we noted that the Council's proposed Sandown North electoral division was unsatisfactory in putting together electors from two areas that are geographically separate.

57 We sought instead to explore alternative warding arrangements for the area that might address the geographic separation of Bembridge and Sandown and the contention that the residents of these areas had little or no common community identity or interest, but that would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality. We considered but discounted a single-member Bembridge electoral division, based on the parish of the same name. This electoral division would have 24% more electors than the county average by 2011, a level of imbalance we considered to be unacceptably high in the absence of strong community identity evidence. Conversely, we noted that a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, comprising the parishes of the same names, would have 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While still resulting in a relatively high imbalance, we concluded that such an electoral division would reflect the considerations mentioned above.

58 In light of our draft recommendations, we have also proposed new parish warding arrangements in some areas to reflect the proposed changes at county level. These changes are outlined on pages 37–40.

59 Our draft recommendations also make a number of minor changes to the Council's scheme which we considered would provide clearer boundaries and a better reflection of community identity. These modifications have been made to the Council's proposed electoral divisions of Ventnor West, Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Totland, Freshwater North, Central Wight, Arreton & Newchurch, Ryde South, Ryde West, Binstead & Fishbourne, Cowes North, Gurnard, Parkhurst, Carrisbrooke, Lake North and Lake South.

60 Our proposals are a combination of 38 single-member electoral divisions and one two-member electoral division.

61 During Stage Three we welcome comments on our draft recommendations, particularly in the areas where we have not received any representations with the exception of the county-wide schemes submitted by the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We are also keen to receive comments and evidence in relation to our draft recommendations in the proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell, Freshwater North and Arreton & Newchurch electoral divisions where we have proposed electoral divisions that will have poorer electoral levels of equality than the Council's proposed electoral divisions.

**Table 3: Draft recommendations for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Arreton & Newchurch	1	3,086	3,086	13	3,147	3,147	11
2	Binstead and 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 North	1	2,736	2,736	0	2,981	2,981	5
8	Cowes South	1	3,022	3,022	10	3,101	3,101	9
9	East Cowes	1	2,985	2,985	9	3,125	3,125	10
10	Freshwater North	1	2,334	2,334	-15	2,446	2,446	-14
11	Freshwater South	1	2,453	2,453	-10	2,566	2,566	-10

**Table 3 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
12	Godshill & Wroxall	1	2,643	2,643	-3	2,658	2,658	-7
13	Gurnard	1	2,994	2,994	9	3,002	3,002	6
14	Lake North	1	2,867	2,867	5	2,892	2,892	2
15	Lake South	1	2,917	2,917	7	2,942	2,942	3
16	Nettlestone & Seaview	1	2,839	2,839	4	2,873	2,873	1
17	Newport Central	1	2,471	2,471	-10	2,801	2,801	-2
18	Newport East	1	2,447	2,447	-11	2,563	2,563	-10
19	Newport North	1	2,596	2,596	-5	2,613	2,613	-8
20	Newport South	1	2,618	2,618	-4	2,710	2,710	-5
21	Newport West	1	2,368	2,368	-13	2,632	2,632	-7
22	Northwood	1	2,863	2,863	5	2,899	2,899	2
23	Parkhurst	1	2,357	2,357	-14	2,611	2,611	-8

**Table 3 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Isle of Wight county**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2011)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
24	Ryde Central	1	2,734	2,734	0	2,848	2,848	0
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	2,711	2,711	-1	2,905	2,905	2
29	Ryde West	1	2,777	2,777	1	2,992	2,992	5
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

**Table 3 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Isle of Wight county**

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

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Isle of Wight County 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 county 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. Under our draft recommendations, each councillor would represent a county average of 2,737 electors (109,496 divided by 40), which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,844 by the year 2011 if the same number of councillors is maintained (113,779 divided by 40).

## Warding arrangements

62 For electoral 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 (page 24)
- Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions (page 27)
- Totland, Freshwater Afton, Freshwater Norton, Shalfleet & Yarmouth and Brighstone & Calbourne electoral divisions (page 29)
- Wroxall & Godshell, Newchurch and Central Rural electoral divisions (page 30)
- Newport town (seven electoral divisions) (page 32)
- Cowes town (seven electoral divisions), Northwood and Osbourne electoral divisions (page 33)
- Ryde town (six electoral divisions) Wootton, Nettlestone & Seaview, Binstead, Fairlee and Ashe electoral divisions (page 35)

63 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table 3 (pages 20-23), 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

64 Under the existing arrangements Bembridge North electoral division comprises part of Bembridge parish, while Bembridge South electoral division comprises the remainder of Bembridge parish. Brading & St Helens electoral division comprises the parishes of Brading and St Helens. Sandown North electoral division comprises part of Sandown parish, while Sandown South electoral division comprises the remainder of Sandown parish. Lake North electoral division comprises part of the parish of Lake and Lake South electoral division comprises the remainder. Shanklin North electoral division comprises part of the parish of Shanklin while Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions comprise the remainder. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing wards.

65 We received representations from 21 respondents, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, in relation to this area. Fifteen respondents opposed the Council's proposed warding arrangements in the Bembridge and Sandown area. Two respondents commented in relation to the Brading area while one respondent commented on Lake Parish Council's electoral arrangements, which are discussed in paragraphs 142-3.

66 We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council. This would achieve good electoral equality in the Council's proposed Brading & St Helens, Bembridge, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin North and Shanklin South electoral divisions, with 0% more, 7% more, 9% more, 8% more, 2% more, 3% more, 1% more and 3% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

67 The Council's proposed Lake North electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Lake, broadly north of Newport Road. The proposed Lake South electoral division would comprise the remainder of Lake parish together with part of the parish of Shanklin, broadly north of Sandy Lane and Witbank Gardens. Its proposed Shanklin North electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Shanklin, broadly north of Collingwood Road, and its proposed Shankin South electoral division would comprise the remainder of Shanklin parish. These electoral divisions would have excellent electoral equality and achieve variances of 2% more, 3% more, 1% more and 3% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011. While the evidence of community identity provided in support of these electoral divisions was limited, we noted that the Council's proposed electoral divisions in this area had been locally consulted on with one respondent, Lake Parish Council, making specific proposals in relation to parish electoral arrangements in Lake parish. These are discussed in paragraphs 142-3. We received no alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area with the exception of the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes, which under our proposed council size of 40 would have poor levels of electoral equality.

68 The Council's proposed Brading & St Helens electoral division would comprise the parishes of Brading and St Helens. The proposed Bembridge electoral division would comprise the majority of Bembridge parish, broadly north of Steyne Road. The proposed Sandown North electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Sandown with the remainder of Bembridge parish, broadly including electors south of Walls Road. The proposed Sandown South electoral division would comprise the remainder of Sandown parish.

69 The Council's proposed Bembridge, Sandown North and Sandown South electoral divisions would achieve good levels of electoral equality in the area. However, as mentioned above, a large number of respondents opposed the Council's proposals in the area.

70 The Council provided some evidence of community identity to support the proposed Bembridge electoral division. The Council cited the Bembridge Harbour and Marina in the proposed Bembridge electoral division and a number of 'community facilities such as a number of churches, the town council offices, medical centre, library and main post office' in the proposed Sandown South electoral division. However, the Council did not provide any evidence of community identity to support its proposed Sandown North electoral division which would combine approximately 2,500 electors from Sandown parish with approximately 500 electors from Bembridge parish.

71 Fifteen respondents, including local residents and community groups from Bembridge and Sandown, opposed including part of Bembridge with Sandown in a single-member Sandown North electoral division. These respondents argued that there is a lack of shared community identity between the two areas. Many respondents cited socio-economic arguments in support of their opposition to the Council's proposal. The Bembridge Business Association stated that 'there is a complete mismatch between the economies of Sandown North and Bembridge'. On their own, such factors are not particularly relevant in determining whether or not two areas should be combined within the same electoral division.

72 We considered the Council's proposed Bembridge and Sandown North electoral divisions in some detail and undertook a visit to the area. The two areas of Bembridge and Sandown are clearly geographically separate. Indeed, the Council state that Bembridge is 'unconnected from bordering towns and villages by a number of natural geographic features'. While both electoral divisions would achieve good electoral equality, we were persuaded by the representations received that the Council's proposals in this area do not reflect local perceptions of community identity. We therefore considered alternative warding arrangements.

73 We considered a single-member Bembridge electoral division comprising only the parish of Bembridge which would have 24% more electors than the county average by 2011. This division was proposed by some respondents who opposed the Council's proposed Bembridge and Sandown North electoral divisions, including the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. This electoral division would have clear boundaries. The knock-on effect to the Council's Sandown North division would result in it having 9% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. However, a 24% variance is extremely high and we would not normally recommend it without strong and compelling evidence of community identity. No such evidence was received. We therefore discounted this alternative.

74 We therefore considered the alternative of a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division comprising the parishes of Brading, St Helens and Bembridge. As with the proposal for a single-member Bembridge electoral division, we did not receive any evidence of community identity to support this option. However, we note from Brading Town Council's representation to the Council during its own consultation process that 'Brading works with St Helens and Bembridge on local issues and projects such as Marsh Farm and Brading Marshes' and that 'Brading is part of the planning cluster with Bembridge, St Helens and Nettlestone and Seaview'.

75 We also note that there are strong road links between the parishes of Brading, St Helens and Bembridge. While the River Yar separates the parishes of Brading and St Helens from Bembridge, Brading and Bembridge parishes share strong road links with Bully's Hill, Upper Adgestrone Road and Lower Adgestrone Road in Brading leading into Sandown Road in Bembridge. Similarly, the three parishes share strong links between Embankment Road, Station Road and Carpenters Road.

76 A two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division would have 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While we acknowledge that this variance is greater than we would usually seek to recommend, we consider that this electoral division would have a clear boundary with good linkages between the three parishes, in particular noting the evidence received from Brading Town Council by Isle of Wight Council during its own consultation.

77 We therefore propose a two-member Brading, St Helens & Bembridge electoral division, comprising the parishes of the same names, with 12% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While this would still result in a relatively high imbalance, we concluded that such an electoral division would provide a better reflection of community identity than the Council's proposals.

78 In the rest of Sandown, we propose adopting the remainder of the Council's proposed Sandown North electoral division, which would have 9% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. Our proposed Sandown South electoral division is identical to that proposed by the Council.

79 We also propose to adopt the Council's proposed Lake North and Lake South electoral divisions with two minor modifications. We propose a modification to the boundary on Sandown Road as we consider this modification would be helpful in ensuring neighbouring properties are in the same electoral division. For this reason, we also propose including all of Sunnyhill Close in our proposed Lake North electoral division. We propose to adopt the Council's Shanklin North and Shanklin South electoral divisions without amendment with the exception of naming the Council's proposed Shanklin North electoral division, Shanklin Central. This is to reflect the fact that this electoral division comprises Shanklin Central parish ward. We welcome further views on the naming of divisions during Stage Three.

80 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Brading, St Helens & Bembridge, Sandown North, Sandown South, Lake North, Lake South, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 8 and 9 accompanying this report.

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

81 Under the existing arrangements Ventnor East electoral division comprises part of Ventnor parish while Ventnor West electoral division comprises the remainder of the parish. Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division comprises the parishes of Chale and Niton & Whitwell. Table 2 (pages 7-11) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2006 and also the variances which the electoral divisions are forecast to have by 2011 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

82 We received representations from six respondents in relation to this area, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good electoral equality in their proposed Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions with 4% fewer, 8% fewer and 9% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

83 The Council's proposed Ventnor East electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Ventnor, broadly east of The Grove. Its proposed Ventnor West electoral division would comprise the remainder of Ventnor parish minus part of the St Lawrence area. The proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division would comprise the parishes of Chale and Niton & Whitwell plus part of the St Lawrence area of the parish of Ventnor.

84 The Council provided some evidence of community identity for its proposed Ventnor East and Ventnor West electoral divisions, referring to Ventnor Harbour and 'a number of primary schools and a middle school' in the proposed Ventnor West

electoral division. In support of the proposed Ventnor East electoral division, the Council stated, that it has a 'plethora of diverse community groups'.

85 The Council considered that the proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division reflected community identities. The Council stated that the 'village facilities of Niton and Whitwell are to be found more commonly in Niton, which has a GP's surgery, two public houses, a library, a recreation ground, a football field and a primary school'. We note that the Council did not provide any evidence to justify Niton & Whitwell parish being linked with the parish of Chale. However, we noted that the Council's proposals in this area have been locally consulted on; no responses were received.

86 The Council's proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell division would also include approximately 150 electors from part of the St Lawrence area of Ventnor parish. The remainder of St Lawrence would be included in its proposed Ventnor West division.

87 Two respondents opposed this part of St Lawrence being included in the proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division and instead proposed that the Ventnor East and Ventnor West electoral divisions wholly comprise the parish of Ventnor. We also note that the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals in this area retain St Lawrence wholly within the same electoral division. However, they did not provide any evidence of community identity in support of their proposal.

88 One of these respondents, Councillor Scoccia (Ventnor West), stated that 'St Lawrence is a spread out village along the Undercliff which, unfortunately, because of the constraints of the landscape, does not have a central or focal point to it'. Councillor Scoccia added that she believes the lack of a focal point for St Lawrence 'is what has hampered a strong sense of community belonging and participation over recent years'. Councillor Scoccia stated that she had 'formed a community association in the village to revive ... community cohesion, and, as can now be seen by the support of ... activities [by villagers]'. Such activities have included 'beach cleans ... partnership working with Wight Nature within Pelham Woods ... [and a] Village Day'. She considered that all of St Lawrence should be contained in Ventnor West electoral division.

89 We note that the transfer of part of the St Lawrence area would ensure good levels of electoral equality in the proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral division. However, we note that this warding pattern would only require approximately 150 electors to be transferred from Ventnor West electoral division into Chale, Niton & Whitwell division. We consider that although this would provide a good level of electoral equality, it divides Ventnor parish using a fairly unclear boundary. It would also require a parish ward to be established for these electors. We note that retaining all of St Lawrence in the Council's proposed Ventnor West division would result in Chale, Niton & Whitwell having 14% fewer electors than the county average and Ventnor West division having 3% fewer electors than the county average. While we acknowledge the poorer level of electoral equality than would be secured by the Council's proposed Chale, Niton & Whitwell division, we consider that uniting all of St Lawrence in Ventnor West, using the parish boundary, justifies this imbalance.

90 We propose to adopt the Council's proposed Ventnor East electoral division without amendment.

91 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Ventnor East, Ventnor West and Chale, Niton & Whitwell electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 9 accompanying this report.

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

92 Under the existing arrangements Totland electoral division comprises the parish of Totland; Freshwater Afton electoral division comprises part of the parish of Freshwater; and Freshwater Norton electoral division comprises the remainder of the parish of Freshwater. Shalfleet & Yarmouth electoral division comprises the parishes of Shalfleet and Yarmouth, while Brighstone & Calbourne electoral division comprises the parishes of Brighstone and Calbourne. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing warding arrangements in this area.

93 We received representations from five respondents in relation to this area, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good levels of electoral equality. Its proposed Totland, Freshwater North, Freshwater South and West Wight divisions would have variances of 10% fewer, 10% fewer, 10% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

94 The Council's proposed West Wight division would comprise the parishes of Yarmouth, Shalfleet and Calbourne, while the proposed Freshwater South electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Freshwater, broadly south of Hooke Hill and the River Yar. These divisions would have 7% more and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively by 2011. The Council's proposed Totland division would comprise the majority of the parish of Totland minus the area broadly north of Iylands Holiday Park and would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the county average. The proposed Freshwater North electoral division would comprise the remainder of the parish of Totland (approximately 120 electors) and the remaining part of Freshwater parish. This division would also have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While the evidence of community identity provided in support of these electoral divisions was limited, we note that the Council's proposals had been locally consulted on. We received no alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area with the exception of the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes which, under our proposed council size of 40, would have poor levels of electoral equality.

95 The Council provided some evidence of community identity in support of its proposed West Wight, Totland, Freshwater North and Freshwater South electoral divisions, referring to the village church and the village primary school in the proposed West Wight electoral division. In support of the proposed Totland electoral division, the Council said there was a 'thriving Parish Council ... [and] the Totland Community partnership, a flourishing group [which] works with the Parish Council'. In

support of the proposed electoral divisions of Freshwater North and Freshwater South, the Council referred to some local amenities. However, it did not provide evidence of a shared community identity between the area of Totland parish it proposed to transfer and its proposed Freshwater North electoral division.

96 Totland Parish Council opposed the Council's proposals and considered that the parish should be wholly contained within one division.

97 The Council's proposal would provide a good level of electoral equality across the area. However, we do not consider that the boundary it has proposed which requires just 120 electors from Totland parish to be transferred into the Freshwater North parish, is justified. We consider that uniting the parish in one division would provide a better reflection of community identity and we are therefore proposing to include all of Totland parish in Totland division.

98 Our proposed modification to the Council's proposed Totland and Freshwater North electoral divisions would result in variances of 6% fewer and 14% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011. We acknowledge that our modification would provide a lower level of electoral equality in Freshwater North electoral division than the Council's proposal. However, we consider that this is outweighed by the benefit of uniting the parish in one electoral division. Our proposal would also provide a clearer and stronger boundary along Colwell Chine Road.

99 We propose to adopt the Council's proposed West Wight and Freshwater South electoral divisions without amendment as they would provide good levels of electoral equality and we received no alternative proposals which would provide a similar level of electoral equality.

100 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Totland, Freshwater North, Freshwater South and West Wight electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

## Wroxall & Godshill, Newchurch and Central Rural electoral divisions

101 Under the existing arrangements Wroxall & Godshill electoral division comprises the parishes of Godshill and Wroxall, Newchurch electoral division comprises the parish of Newchurch, while Central Rural electoral division comprises the parishes of Shorwell, Garcombe, Rookley and Arreton. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing wards.

102 We received representations from six respondents in relation to this area, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. Specifically, three of the six respondents opposed the Council's proposed Arreton & Newchurch electoral division. We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good levels of electoral equality in its proposed Godshill & Wroxall, Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight divisions of 6% fewer, 6% more and 7% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

103 The Council's proposed Godshill & Wroxall electoral division would comprise the parishes of Godshill and Wroxall, with 6% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. While the evidence of community identity provided in support of this electoral division was limited, we note that the Council's proposed divisions in this area have been consulted on. We received no alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area with the exception of the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes which, under our proposed council size of 40, would have poor levels of electoral equality.

104 The Council's proposed Central Wight electoral division would comprise the parishes of Gatcombe, Shorwell, Brightstone, Rookley and the Blackwater area of Arreton parish. The proposed Arreton & Newchurch electoral division would comprise the parish of Newchurch and the parish of Arreton minus the Blackwater area included in the Central Wight division. These divisions would have 7% more and 6% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

105 We received submissions from three respondents who opposed the Council's proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions. They argued against the parish of Arreton being split between electoral divisions. They considered that Arreton parish should be united in the same parish, one local resident stated that this would improve 'the effectiveness of representation'. The Isle of Wight Council itself stated that 'Arreton Parish Council [is] a parish committed to gaining quality status, meeting regularly in the local, well used, community centre in the heart of the village', and did not explain how the area of Blackwater was any different to the rest of Arreton in this respect.

106 We note that the Council's proposals ensure good levels of electoral equality in the proposed Arreton & Newchurch and Central Wight electoral divisions. However, we also note that this warding pattern would require approximately 120 electors to be transferred from the parish of Arreton into the Central Wight electoral division. It would also require a parish ward to be established for the electors being transferred. We note that by including all of Arreton parish in the Arreton & Newchurch division the level of electoral equality would worsen to 11%. This variance is poorer than we would normally seek to recommend but we consider it justified in light of the representations we received and the improvement in the reflection of community identities. We therefore propose including all of Arreton parish in Arreton & Newchurch division.

107 Our proposed modification to the Council's proposed Central Wight and Arreton & Newchurch electoral divisions would result in variances of 3% more and 11% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

108 We propose to adopt the Council's proposed Godshill & Wroxall electoral division without amendment as it would provide a good level of electoral equality and we received no alternative proposals which would provide a similar level of electoral equality.

109 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Arreton & Newchurch, Central Wight and Godshill & Wroxall electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 6 accompanying this report.

## Newport town (seven electoral divisions)

110 Under the existing arrangements Newport town is unparished and comprises seven electoral divisions; Newport North, Newport South, Mount Joy, Carisbrooke East, Carisbrooke West, Parkhurst and Pan. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing wards.

111 We received representations from four respondents in relation to the Newport town area, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good levels of electoral equality in its proposed Newport East, Newport West, Newport Central, Newport South, Newport North, Parkhurst and Carrisbrooke electoral divisions, with 10% fewer, 7% fewer, 2% fewer, 5% fewer, 8% fewer, 9% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

112 The Council's proposed electoral divisions in the area are broadly based on the existing electoral divisions with modifications that improve electoral equality. The Council provided limited evidence of community identity in support of its proposals. However, we note that the Council's proposed electoral divisions have been consulted on. We received no alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area with the exception of the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes which, under our proposed council size of 40, would have poor electoral equality.

113 Councillor Whittaker (Carisbrooke East) proposed that the boundary between the Council's proposed Carisbrooke and Newport West electoral divisions be modified to include a small number of properties on Carisbrooke Road running east from the Wellington Road. Councillor Whittaker proposed that the 'properties ... be incorporated into the new ward of Newport West', which would split the northern side of Carisbrooke Road running from Wellington Road into two electoral divisions instead of three. Councillor Whittaker added that his proposal 'would make the administration much easier'.

114 While we acknowledge that Councillor Whittaker's proposal would reduce the number of electoral divisions sharing the north side of Carisbrooke Road from three (under the Council's proposals) to two, we have not received any evidence to support the inclusion of these properties in the proposed Newport West electoral division rather than the proposed Carisbrooke electoral division and do not propose adopting this amendment. However, we welcome further evidence to support Councillor Whittaker's proposal during Stage Three.

115 Elsewhere in Newport town, we did not receive any proposals in relation to the Council's proposals. While the Council provided limited evidence of community identity to support its proposed electoral divisions, we consider that the proposals have clear boundaries and achieve good levels of electoral equality in the area. We have decided therefore to accept the Council's proposals in Newport town with a minor modification to our proposed Newport West and Carisbrooke electoral division boundaries. To the west of Lukely Gardens, we propose making our proposed boundary coterminous with the Lukely Brook as we consider this to be a clearer boundary.

116 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Newport East, Newport West, Newport Central, Newport South, Newport North, Parkhurst and Carisbrooke electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 4, 5 and 6 accompanying this report.

### Cowes town, Northwood and Osborne electoral divisions

117 Under the existing arrangements Cowes Castle East electoral division, Cowes Castle West electoral division, Cowes Central electoral division and Cowes Medina electoral division each comprise part of the parish of Cowes. Osborne electoral division, East Cowes North electoral division and East Cowes South electoral division each comprise part of the parish of East Cowes. Gurnard electoral division comprises the parish of Gurnard, and Northwood electoral division is unparished. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing warding arrangements in this area.

118 We received representations from seven respondents in relation to this area, including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group.

119 We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good electoral equality in its proposed Cowes North, Cowes South, East Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood and Whippingham & Osborne electoral divisions of 8% more, 9% more, 10% more, 2% more, 2% more and 10% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

The Council's proposed East Cowes electoral division would comprise part of the parish of East Cowes, broadly north of Kent Avenue. The proposed Whippingham & Osborne electoral division would comprise the remainder of East Cowes. The proposed Northwood electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Cowes, broadly south of Park Road and east of Love Lane. The remainder of the electoral division would be unparished. These electoral divisions would have 10% more, 10% more and 2% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

120 Northwood Village Management Committee endorsed the Council's proposed Northwood electoral division. Northwood Village Management Committee stated that the electoral division would have 'local representation by both Cowes Town Council and Northwood Village Management Committee ... [which] supports greater community cohesion'. We did not receive further representations in relation to the Council's proposed Northwood electoral division.

121 The Council's proposed Cowes North electoral division and the proposed Cowes South electoral division would comprise part of the parish of Cowes. The proposed Gurnard electoral division would comprise the remainder of the parish of Cowes in the west of the parish, and the parish of Gurnard. These electoral divisions would have 8% more, 9% more and 2% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011. While the evidence of community identity provided in support of these electoral divisions was limited, we noted that the Council's proposed electoral divisions in this area had been locally consulted on, with three

respondents, Councillor Peacey-Wilcox, a local resident and Gurnard Parish Council, making comments in relation to the Cowes town area.

122 Councillor Peacey-Wilcox expressed concern at the reduction of councillors in the Cowes town area resulting in councillors 'not [having] ... enough time to deal professionally and fully with ... enquiries'. However, as discussed on pages 15-16, based on the evidence received from the Council, we have proposed a council size of 40 members and our proposed allocation of councillors to different parts of the Island reflects this council size. The allocation is based on the size of the electorate divided by the proposed number of councillors, and the Cowes town area is entitled to an allocation of four councillors. This is reflected in the Council's proposed electoral divisions in this area.

123 Councillor Peacey-Wilcox also referred to the split of electoral divisions between roads which she stated can cause 'much confusion, both with residents and councillors'. However, she did not make specific comments regarding the drawing of such boundaries which is often necessary given the geography of an area. Accordingly, in the absence of supporting community identity evidence, we have based our proposed electoral divisions in the Cowes area on electoral equality and clear boundaries.

124 A local resident opposed the proposals 'in so far as [they will result in] Cowes being fragmented' and will 'cut through three of the four Cowes Town Council [parish] wards'. However, when reviewing electoral arrangements we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different electoral divisions, it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single electoral division. Accordingly, the parish wards of Cowes Town Council will be amended to reflect the county divisions in the area. Paragraphs 148–9 discuss this further.

125 Gurnard Parish Council proposed that Gurnard parish should not be split between electoral divisions.

126 We propose adopting the Council's proposals for Cowes North, Cowes South, East Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood and Whippingham & Osborne electoral divisions with a minor modification to the proposed Northwood electoral division. We propose to make part of the boundary between Gurnard and North Cowes electoral divisions run along Park Road and Ward Avenue rather than the backs of houses. We consider this to be a stronger boundary, and the modification does not have an adverse impact on the electoral equality of the proposed electoral divisions. Under our proposals Gurnard and Cowes North electoral divisions will have 6% more and 5% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011.

127 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Cowes North, Cowes South, East Cowes, Gurnard, Northwood and Whippingham & Osborne electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

## Ryde town, Wootton, Nettlestone & Seaview, Binstead, Fairlee and Asheley electoral divisions

128 Ryde town is unparished and comprises Ryde North East, Ryde North West, Ryde South East, Ryde South West, St Johns East and St Johns West electoral divisions. Wootton electoral division comprises the parish of Wootton Bridge while Nettlestone & Seaview electoral division comprises the parish of Nettlestone & Seaview. Binstead and Fairlee electoral divisions both comprise part of the parish of Havenstreet & Asheley. The remaining areas of Binstead and Fairlee electoral divisions are unparished. Asheley electoral division comprises the remainder of Havenstreet & Asheley parish. Table 2 (pages 7-11) provides details of the electoral variances of the existing wards.

129 We received representations from four respondents in relation this area including the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We have developed proposals which are broadly based on the county-wide scheme of the Council which would achieve good levels of electoral equality.

130 The Council's proposed electoral divisions in Ryde town (Ryde North West, Ryde West, Ryde North East, Ryde East and Ryde Central) are unparished and the proposed Ryde South would comprise part of the parish of Havenstreet & Asheley. The proposals are based on existing divisions with some modifications. These electoral divisions would have 1% more, 1% more, 2% fewer, 1% more, 0% more and 7% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011. While the evidence of community identity provided in support of these electoral divisions was limited, we note that the Council's proposed electoral divisions in this area have been locally consulted on.

131 Ryde Town Management Committee proposed modifications to the Council's proposed electoral divisions in the area which they stated would 'better link similar communities'. However, we did not receive evidence from Ryde Town Management Committee to support these changes and we are therefore not inclined to adopt the proposed modifications.

132 The Council's proposed Wootton Bridge electoral division would comprise the parish of Wootton Bridge. The proposed Binstead & Fishbourne electoral division would comprise the parish of Binstead, with the remainder being unparished. The proposed Nettlestone & Seaview electoral division would comprise the parish of Nettlestone & Seaview. These electoral divisions would have 3% more, 2% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor respectively than the county average by 2011. We received no alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area with the exception of the Labour Group's and the Liberal Democrat Group's county-wide schemes which, under our proposed council size of 40, would have poor levels of electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting the Council's proposals in this area with a number of modifications to improve the boundaries.

133 In Ryde South we propose making a minor modification to the northern boundary of the Council's proposed division, using Corbett Road and Upton Road. This will provide a slightly clearer boundary between the proposed Ryde West and Ryde South electoral divisions. The knock-on effect of this modification is that Ryde

West will have a slightly poorer level of electoral equality, with 5% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011. We nonetheless consider this to be a good level of electoral equality and justified by the improvement to the boundary.

134 In Binstead & Fishbourne electoral division we propose making the entire southern boundary of the electoral division coterminous with the northern boundary of Havenstreet & Asheys parish. This modification involves less than 20 electors and would therefore have negligible impact on the level of electoral equality in both electoral divisions. The modification would have only a small effect on the level of electoral equality in Ryde South, which would have 2% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2011.

135 We have decided to adopt the Council's proposed electoral divisions for Ryde town, Wooton Bridge and Nettlestone & Seaview as we consider they would provide clear boundaries and excellent levels of electoral equality.

136 Table 3 (pages 20-23) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Ryde North West, Ryde West, Ryde North East, Ryde East, Ryde Central, Ryde South, Nettlestone & Seaview, Binstead & Fishbourne and Wooton Bridge electoral divisions. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 7 accompanying this report.

# Conclusions

137 Table 4 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2006 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2011.

**Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements**

	Current arrangements		Draft 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 of more than 10% from the average	20	23	9	4
Number of electoral divisions with a variance of more than 20% from the average	8	8	0	0

138 As shown in Table 4, our draft recommendations for Isle of Wight County Council 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%.

**Draft recommendation**

Isle of Wight County Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 39 electoral divisions, as detailed and named in Table 3 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

139 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the county 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 in FERs. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a

degree of consensus between the county 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 FER.

140 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies, in the case of the Isle of Wight, with the County Council.<sup>2</sup> If a county council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

141 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different county electoral divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single electoral division of the county. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Lake, Shanklin, Cowes, East Cowes and Freshwater to reflect the proposed electoral divisions. Our proposed consequential changes can be viewed on Maps 8, 9, 3, 3 and 2 respectively. In these areas the parish wards will become coterminous with the proposed electoral divisions.

142 During Stage One we received proposals for revised parish council electoral arrangements from Lake Parish Council. The parish of Lake is currently divided into two parish wards, Lake North and Lake South. Lake Parish Council proposed that the Parish Council be served by 10 parish councillors, thereby reducing the total number of councillors on the Parish Council from 12 to 10. We are content to support this reduction in council size and welcome views on the distribution of councillors within the parish.

143 As noted above, as a result of our revised electoral division boundaries and the need to comply with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, we are also proposing to alter the boundaries of the parish wards to reflect the county divisions in Lake.

**Draft recommendation**

Lake Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, instead of the current 12, representing two wards: Lake North parish ward, returning five councillors, and Lake South parish ward, returning five councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 8.

144 The parish of Shanklin is currently divided into three parish wards, Shanklin North, Shanklin Central and Shanklin South, each parish ward being represented by five councillors.

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<sup>2</sup> Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

145 We received no proposals for new parish electoral arrangements in this area. However, as a result of our revised electoral division boundaries and the need to comply with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shanklin parish.

**Draft 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 five councillors), Shanklin Central parish ward (returning five councillors) and Shanklin South parish ward (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Maps 8 and 9.

146 The parish of Freshwater is currently divided into two parish wards, Freshwater Norton and Freshwater Afton, each parish ward being represented by seven councillors.

147 We received no proposals for new parish electoral arrangements in this area. However, as a result of our revised electoral division boundaries and the need to comply with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Freshwater parish.

**Draft 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 2.

148 The parish of Cowes is currently divided into four wards, Cowes Castle East, Cowes Castle West, Cowes Central and Cowes Medina, each parish ward being represented by four councillors.

149 We received no proposals for new parish electoral arrangements in this area, However, as a result of our revised electoral division boundaries and the need to comply with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Cowes parish.

**Draft recommendation**

Cowes Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, instead of the current 16, representing three parish ward: Cowes Castle East parish ward (returning five councillors), Cowes Castle West parish ward (returning five councillors) and Cowes Medina parish ward (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed electoral division boundaries shown on Map 3.

150 The parish of East Cowes is currently divided into three wards, Osborne (returning two councillors), East Cowes North (returning three councillors) and East Cowes South (returning three councillors).

151 We received no proposals for new parish electoral arrangements in this area. However, as a result of our revised electoral division boundaries and the need to comply with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Cowes parish.

**Draft 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 3.

### 3 What happens next?

152 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Isle of Wight contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 17 January 2008. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

153 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed electoral division boundaries, number of councillors, electoral division names and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the Brading, St Helens and Bembridge area to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence about alternative options received from local interested parties who opposed the Council's proposals in the area during Stage One. In this case we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality while reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

154 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Manager  
Isle of Wight Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk**

Submissions can also be made online at  
[www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm)

155 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Isle of Wight County Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

156 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the

Electoral Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

## 4 Mapping

### Draft recommendations for Isle of Wight

157 The following maps illustrate our proposed electoral division boundaries for Isle of Wight county.

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed electoral divisions for Isle of Wight county, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Totand and Freshwater.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Cowes town.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Carisbrooke.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Newport town.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Carisbrooke and Newport town.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Ryde town.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Sandown, Lake and Shanklin parishes.
- **Sheet 9, Map 9** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Shanklin and Ventnor parishes.

# 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 on 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 mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
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 equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth

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 more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is: ‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation’s benefit and by appropriate national decision and action: – 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 the 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 Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories: a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a cabinet with a leader, or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
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 a electoral division varies in percentage terms from the county average
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## 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](http://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**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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.

