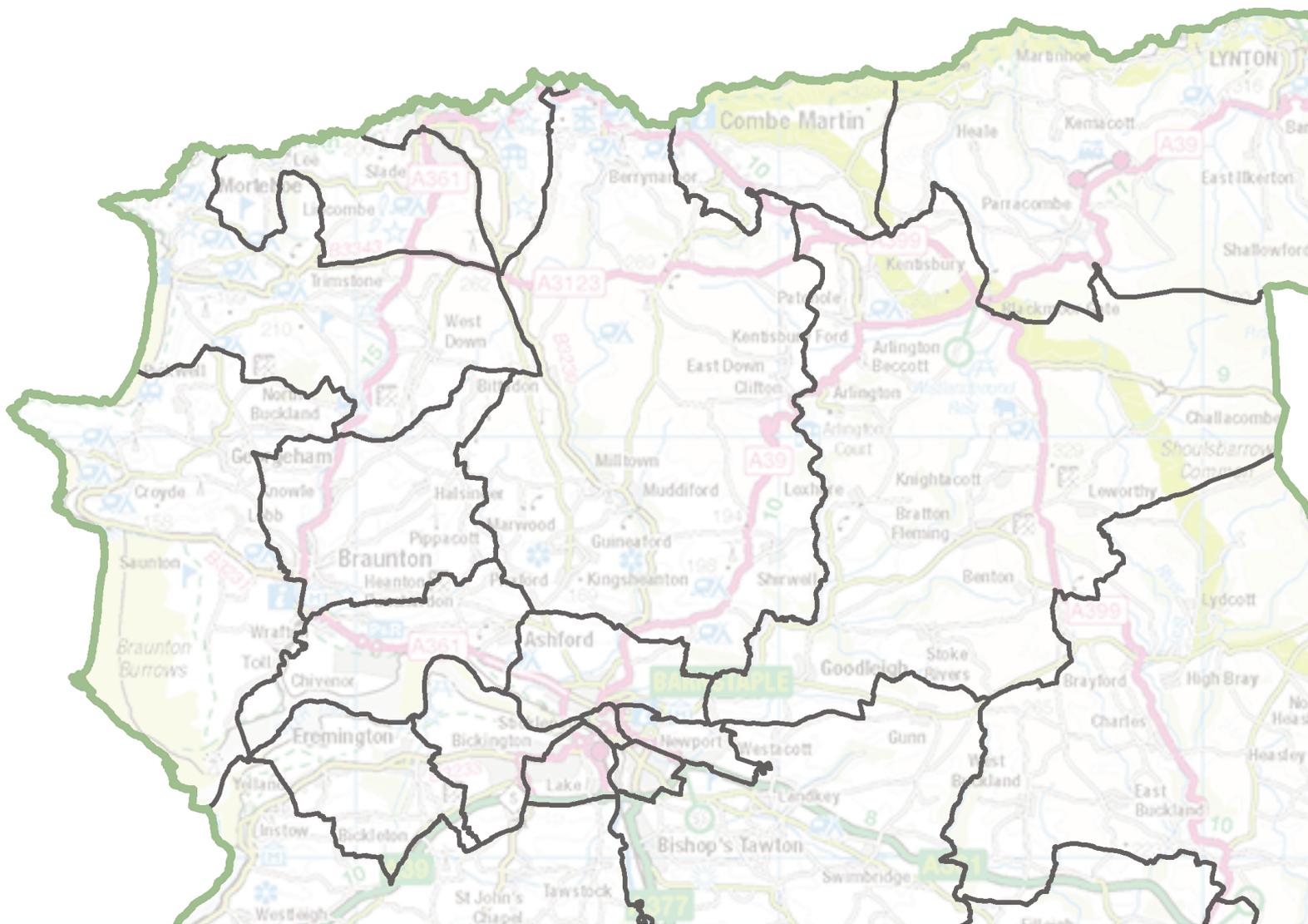


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for
North Devon District Council
Final recommendations

May 2018

Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version, please contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why North Devon?

4 We are conducting a review of North Devon District Council as the value of each vote in district council elections varies depending on where you live in North Devon. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for North Devon

- North Devon District Council should be represented by 42 councillors, one fewer than there are now.
- North Devon District Council should have 25 wards, two fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of 22 wards will change, five will stay the same.

5 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for North Devon District Council.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

7 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Steve Robinson
- Andrew Scallan CBE

- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

8 This electoral review was carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in North Devon District Council are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

What is an electoral review?

9 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

10 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

11 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for North Devon District Council. We then held two periods of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft and final recommendations.

12 This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
18 July 2017	Number of councillors decided
25 July 2017	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
2 October 2017	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
5 December 2017	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
19 February 2018	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
8 May 2018	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish or town council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

14 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

15 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

16 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2017	2023
Electorate of North Devon	75,293	83,869
Number of councillors	42	42
Average number of electors per councillor	1,793	1,997

17 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. The majority of our proposed wards for North Devon District Council will have good electoral equality by 2023. Two wards will produce variances over 10%.

18 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

19 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

20 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2023, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2018. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 11% by 2023.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

21 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

Number of councillors

22 North Devon District Council currently has 43 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and initially concluded that decreasing the number of members by two would make sure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

23 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 41 councillors – for example, 41 one-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

24 During the development of our draft recommendations, we could not identify a warding pattern for 41 councillors that would achieve good electoral equality and would reflect the community evidence we received from across the authority. We therefore proposed a 42 councillor warding pattern, which we considered would better reflect community identities and interests, particularly in the area surrounding Barnstaple Town. This approach is consistent with our guidance where we state it may be necessary to increase or decrease the council size by one or two members to ensure better boundaries or the better reflection of community identity.

25 During this consultation we did not receive any further comments on the proposed council size of 42. We are therefore confirming a warding pattern that is based on North Devon District Council having 42 councillors.

Ward boundaries consultation

26 We received 64 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two detailed district-wide proposals from the Council. Both proposals were based on a council size of 41 and were identical across the majority of the district, only differing in the areas of Barnstaple and Braunton.

27 Our draft recommendations were largely based on the Council's proposed rural wards. In some areas of the district we also incorporated the proposals put forward by parish councils and local residents where they provided evidence of community links. We did this notably in the areas of Georgeham, Knowle and Braunton – the majority of the submissions we received related to these areas. The submissions did not provide us with specific warding arrangements for the areas but were very clear about where the community links were. We therefore sought to create our own wards in these areas that we considered reflected the evidence received.

28 Our draft recommendations were for six three-councillor wards, eight two-councillor wards and eight one-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

29 We received 63 submissions in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. The majority of these submissions focused on the proposed Braunton North and Braunton South wards. The Council stated that it was generally supportive of the draft recommendations but proposed some modifications in Barnstaple; Braunton/Heanton Punchardon; Bishop's Nympton/Witheridge; George Nympton; Queens Nympton; and Combe Martin. It also provided the representations it had received directly from individuals, community organisations and parish and town councils. We have adopted the majority of the alternative warding patterns that the Council has proposed.

30 We received 31 submissions relating to our proposed Braunton North and Braunton South wards. Nine submissions focused on retaining all of Georgeham parish within the same ward. The other 22 submissions referred to how the draft recommendations warding pattern would affect Braunton parish. The District Council proposed an alternative ward boundary in Braunton which Braunton Parish Council supported, and which largely reflected the views of the other respondents in this area who opposed our draft recommendations.

31 We have chosen to adopt the proposed Braunton East and Braunton West & Georgeham wards proposed by the Council as they are locally generated, reflect the community interests in the area and create wards that would produce good variances by 2023. We are also adopting the Council's proposed ward to the south of Braunton comprising Heanton Punchardon and Ashford parishes.

32 We received a mixed response to our warding pattern in Barnstaple Town. While there was support for specific wards, there was also opposition to the distribution of councillors across wards. The Council did propose an alternative warding pattern; however, we were not minded to adopt these alterations as we were not persuaded that these wards would provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria in this area.

33 Respondents opposed our South Molton ward, as it combined the parishes of George Nympton and Queens Nympton within the same ward as South Molton Town. We received persuasive evidence that the community within these parishes would be better represented if they were included within the same rural ward as Bishop's Nympton.

34 We received five submissions that opposed our draft recommendations to create a large rural two-councillor Bishop's Nympton & Witheridge ward. The majority of the submissions requested that the area be represented by two one-councillor wards, on the basis that smaller wards would allow for better representation by councillors and reflect the majority of the shared community interests. We only received one submission which supported the creation of a two-councillor ward. We consider that two one-councillor wards will better meet our statutory criteria in this area and we have therefore chosen to amend our draft recommendations. Our warding pattern is largely based on the Council's proposal for a one-councillor Witheridge ward and a one-councillor Bishop's Nympton ward. Our proposed Witheridge ward is exactly the same the Council's proposal. We are

proposing to alter the Council's proposed Bishop's Nympton ward to include the parishes of George Nympton, Queens Nympton and not to include Romansleigh parish.

35 Our draft recommendation for the Lynton & Lynmouth ward was based on the Council's proposal that received support across both consultations. However, at during the consultation on our draft recommendations we received a submission from Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council, requesting that the grouped parish council be split and that the parish of Trentishoe be included within the proposed Lynton & Lynmouth ward, as these parishes all form part of Exmoor National Park. The Council had proposed retaining the whole of the grouped parish within the same ward; however, we have been persuaded by Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council that transferring Trentishoe parish would better reflect the community identity and geography of the area.

36 In total, we received five submissions in relation to creating a Combe Martin ward that retains just Combe Martin parish. We have been persuaded to create a one-councillor Combe Martin ward and a one-councillor Marwood ward that will produce variances of 12% and 2% by 2012, respectively. We are content to adopt a Combe Martin ward that will produce a 12% variance, on the basis that the two areas do not have a shared community identity and this will justify creating a ward with a poor variance.

37 We received a number of other submissions about the review more generally. Councillor Yabsley supported the Council's proposal. Councillor Luggar opposed the Council's proposal on the basis that he does not agree with the methodology used when creating its proposed warding patterns.

Final recommendations

38 Pages 10–25 detail our final recommendations for each area of North Devon District Council. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

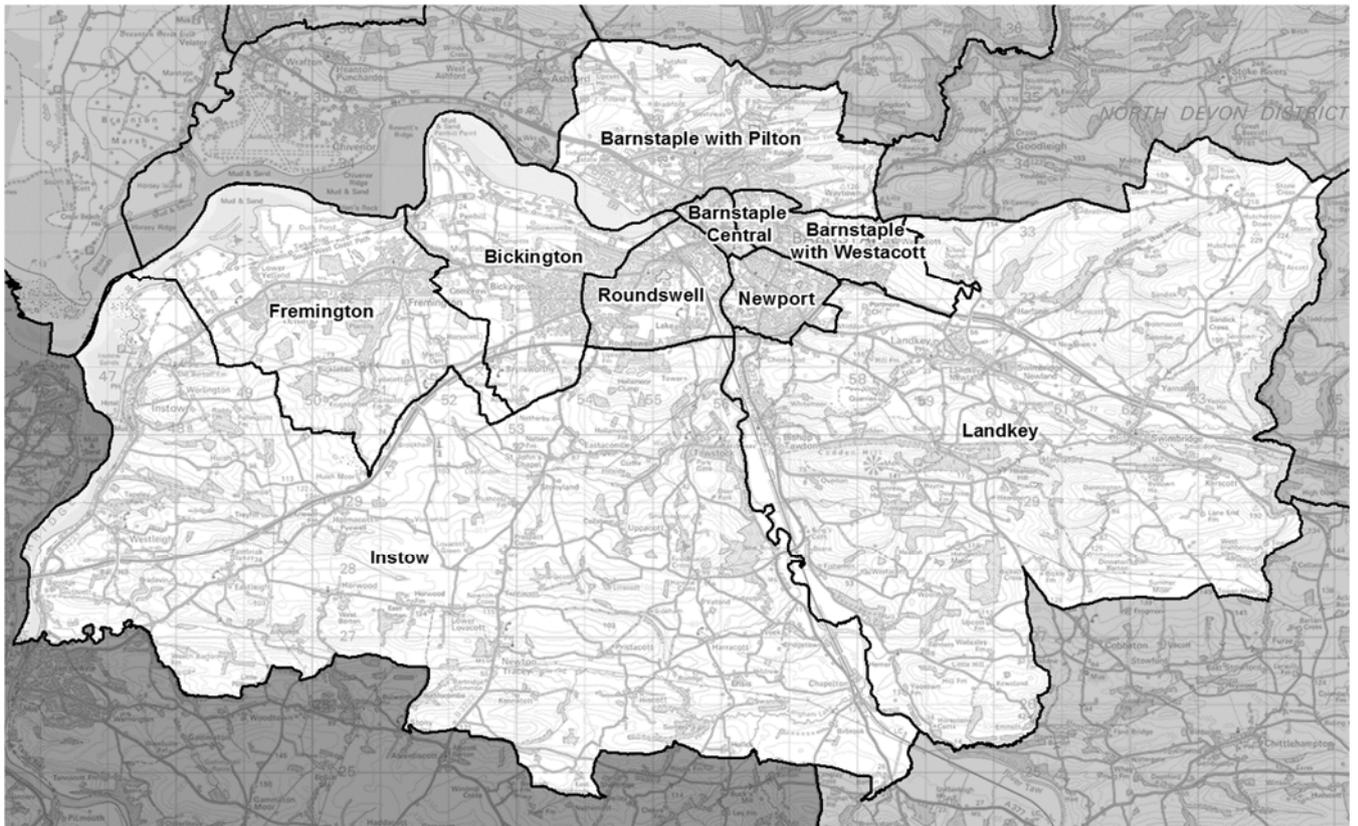
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

39 Our final recommendations are for five three-councillor wards, seven two-councillor wards and 13 one-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

40 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on pages 32-36 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Barnstaple



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Barnstaple Central	1	-7%
Barnstaple with Pilton	3	6%
Barnstaple with Westacott	3	8%
Bickington	3	-5%
Fremington	2	9%
Instow	1	-5%
Landkey	2	-7%
Newport	2	6%
Roundswell	2	5%

Barnstaple Central, Barnstaple with Pilton, Barnstaple with Westacott, Bickington, Fremington, Instow, Landkey, Newport and Roundswell

41 Our draft recommendations for Barnstaple Town were based on our own warding patterns for the area. During this consultation period we received mixed responses on our warding patterns in this area. The Council and Barnstaple Town Council did not support our warding pattern on the basis that we had not appropriately allocated councillors across the town. There was opposition to our recommendation to include the rural parish of Pilton West within our Barnstaple wards. However, we also received support for specific wards that we have proposed in this area.

42 The Council proposed an alternative warding pattern for Barnstaple Town to provide for a more 'even spread' of councillors. Barnstaple Town is entitled to nine councillors in total; our draft recommendations were for two three-councillor wards, one two-councillor ward and one one-councillor ward. The Council's alternative warding pattern at this stage was for one three-councillor ward and three two-councillor wards and was based on polling districts with no evidence of community identity in support of them.

43 Barnstaple Town Council considered that our proposed three-councillor wards of Barnstaple with Pilton and Barnstaple with Westacott were too large to allow for effective governance and accountability, further stating that these wards did not reflect the community identity in the area. It also opposed our one-councillor Barnstaple Central ward, on the basis that this area covers Barnstaple town centre and would require an additional councillor to help address the diverse issues in the area.

44 Barnstaple Town Council also opposed the creation of parish wards for Barnstaple parish; however, as a result of our warding patterns for the area, we are required by legislation to create new parish wards where district ward boundaries cross a parish.

45 Landkey Parish Council requested that the ward boundaries reflect the parish boundaries, as it considers that the transfer of land between wards will be to the detriment of the parish. It also considered that the parish ward boundaries be retained. However, as noted in relation to Barnstaple Town, where a parish is divided between district wards, the Commission is required by legislation to create parish wards. The Commission cannot amend the external boundaries of the parish and has not made any recommendations to amend the boundary of either Barnstaple or Landkey parish.

46 Pilton West Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to include the parish within the same ward as Barnstaple. It requested to be included with Ashford parish on the basis that they have more in common than they do with Barnstaple.

47 Ashford Parish Council requested not to be included within the same ward as Braunton, and instead that a rural ward be created that comprises the parishes of Ashford, Heanton Punchardon and Pilton West. It considered that these parishes share a cultural identity and reflect a separate identity to the area of Braunton.

48 We received a submission from a local resident who supported our draft recommendations in the area of Pilton, as it retained all of the houses around Pilton within the same ward.

49 We received a submission from a local resident which supported our draft recommendations for the creation of a Newport ward in Barnstaple. They considered that the ward reflects the community in the area.

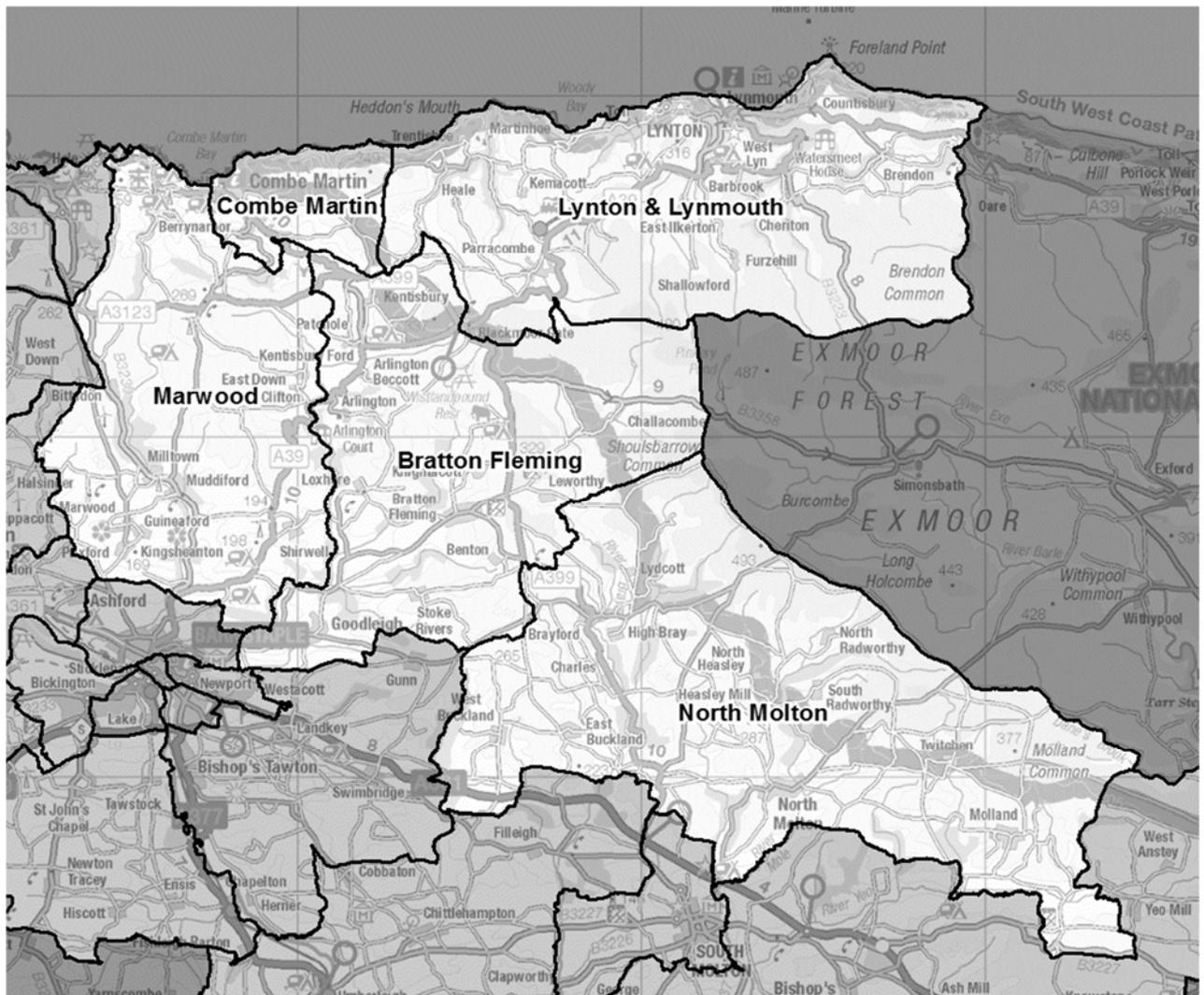
50 We recognise the opposition that we have received in response to our draft recommendations for Barnstaple Town and we note that the Council's alternative warding pattern does create wards that would produce good variances by 2023. However, the Council's proposal in this area was supported by limited evidence and did not convince us that its proposed alternatives would better meet our statutory criteria. As a result, we were not persuaded by the evidence provided to move away from our draft recommendations and adopt the alternative warding pattern proposed.

51 We considered including Pilton West parish within a rural ward, instead of including it within a Barnstaple ward. However, our draft recommendations included the parish within our northern Barnstaple ward, as there is very limited access from the eastern area of Pilton West parish to the parishes of Ashford and Heanton Punchardon. We also note that there is development occurring over the parish boundary that will look towards Barnstaple and therefore should not be included within a rural ward. Accordingly, we were not persuaded by the evidence that we have received to remove Pilton West parish from our proposed Barnstaple with Pilton ward, as we consider this ward is logical and provides good internal connectivity.

52 Accordingly, while we recognise the opposition to our draft recommendations in this area, we were not persuaded by the evidence provided that we should move away from our draft recommendations. Therefore, we are confirming our draft recommendations as final for Barnstaple Town and the surrounding area.

53 Barnstaple Town Council and a local resident also recommended alternative ward names. Barnstaple Town Council opposed the inclusion of the prefix 'with' within wards names for Barnstaple, on the premise that this does not reflect the local identities within Barnstaple. The local resident recommended that we rename the proposed Roundswell ward to 'Sticklepath' ward. He explained that our draft recommendations have split the area locally known as 'Roundswell' across our proposed Roundswell and Bickington wards, and as a result the majority of the area within our proposed Roundswell ward is known as Sticklepath. However, we were not persuaded by the evidence provided to amend the ward names proposed with our draft recommendations and, therefore, we are confirming our draft recommendation ward names as final.

Eastern



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bratton Fleming	1	2%
Combe Martin	1	12%
Lynton & Lynmouth	1	-5%
Marwood	1	2%
North Molton	1	-1%

Bratton Fleming and Lynton & Lynmouth

54 Our draft recommendations in this area are based on the Council's proposed wards, which we have received support for across both consultations. During this consultation we received two submissions that provided support for our draft recommendations in this area. Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council requested an alteration to the boundary between these wards. We also received a submission from a local resident who requested alternative boundaries in this area.

55 Lynton & Lynmouth Parish Council noted their full support for the Lynton & Lynmouth ward proposed in our draft recommendations.

56 We received a submission from a local resident, who supported our proposed Lynton & Lynmouth ward on the basis that this ward better reflects the pattern of the community life in the area. He noted that those living within the smaller parishes of Lynmouth, Parracombe, Martinhoe and Brendon all look towards the town of Lynton for their school services, churches and voluntary groups. He also noted how this ward reflected the communication channels in the local area, via periodicals.

57 Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council requested that Trentishoe parish be included within the Lynton & Lynmouth ward, on the basis that the constituent parishes are closely linked and all form part of Exmoor National Park.

58 We received a submission from a local resident who opposed the boundary between the wards of Bratton Fleming and Lynton & Lynmouth, as they divided his property across the wards. In this area, our proposed district ward boundaries have followed the parish boundaries and, if we were to retain all of his property within the same ward, we would have to re-allocate a whole parish to a different ward to accommodate it. Unfortunately, we have not been persuaded by the evidence provided to move away from our draft recommendations in this area.

59 During the warding consultation, the Council recommended that the parishes of Kentisbury & Trentishoe be retained within the same ward, as this would reflect their grouped parish status. However, during this stage of consultation, Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council proposed that the grouped parish be split across both wards. We are minded to adopt this alteration, as Trentishoe parish is better geographically linked with the other parishes in the Lynton & Lynmouth wards as they all form part of Exmoor National Park. Re-allocating the parish of Trentishoe from the Bratton Fleming ward to the proposed Lynton & Lynmouth ward will have little impact on the electoral variances of the wards.

60 Accordingly, our final recommendations are for a one-councillor Bratton Fleming ward that no longer includes the parish of Trentishoe and will produce a variance of 2% by 2023. We are also confirming that the one-councillor Lynton & Lynmouth ward will now include the parish of Trentishoe and will produce a variance of -5% by 2023.

Combe Martin and Marwood

61 We received two submissions in relation to our proposed two-councillor Combe Martin & Marwood ward with respondents generally considering that Combe Martin parish should form its own district ward.

62 The Council received three submissions directly, all of which requested that the parish of Combe Martin be retained within a ward on its own, with boundaries that are coterminous with the parish boundary. The Council acknowledged that this would create a ward that would produce a poor variance of 12%. However, it noted that the parish shares little in common with the parishes in the south of the ward.

63 Combe Martin Parish Council wrote directly to the Council and highlighted that the parish has a strong internal community identity, with its own Coastal Community Team, community shops and tourist industry. The Combe Martin Tourism Association also wrote directly to the Council, opposing the inclusion of Combe Martin parish within a ward that borders Barnstaple Town in the south. It also supported the request to create a one-councillor Combe Martin ward.

64 We received a submission from a local resident who opposed our draft recommendations to combine the areas of Combe Martin and Marwood within the same ward. He noted that these areas represent two different communities and are geographically different.

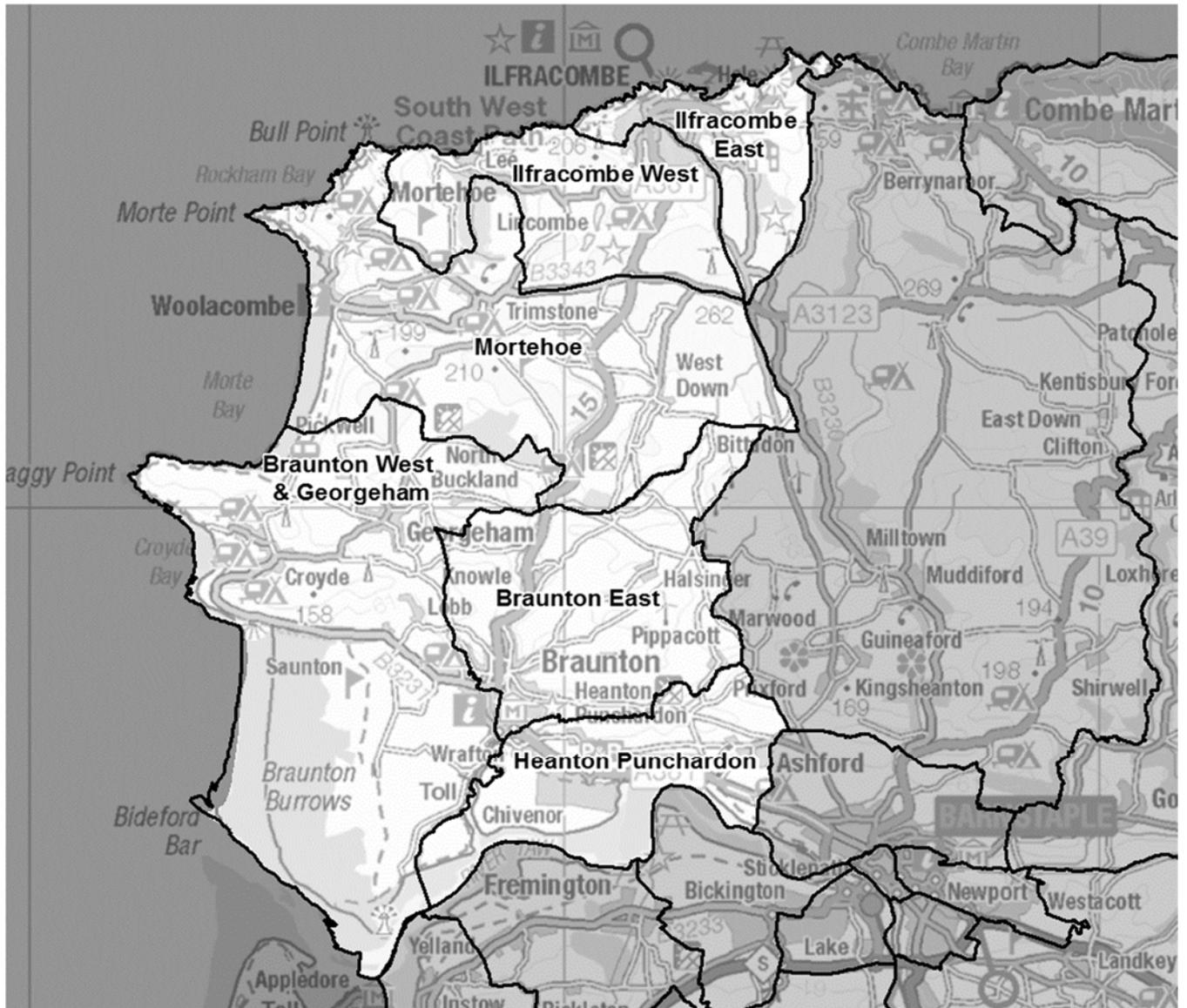
65 When determining our draft recommendations, we were minded not to adopt this proposal as we considered that we had not received enough evidence of community identity to justify a variance of 12%. However, having considered the evidence that we have received during this consultation, we are persuaded to alter our draft recommendations in this area. We have chosen to create two one-councillor wards in this area, as we consider this warding pattern to better reflect the community identities.

66 Our final recommendations in this area are for a one-councillor Combe Martin ward that will be coterminous with the parish boundaries and will produce a variance of 12% by 2023. The remaining parishes in this area will be retained within a one-councillor Marwood ward with a variance of 2% by 2023.

North Molton

67 We received no submissions that related directly to the North Molton ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. This will create a one-councillor North Molton ward that will produce a variance of -11% by 2023.

North Western



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Braunton East	2	0%
Braunton West & Georgeham	2	1%
Heanton Punchardon	1	-8%
Ilfracombe East	3	-5%
Ilfracombe West	2	2%
Morte Point	1	-1%

Ilfracombe East and Ilfracombe West

68 Our draft recommendations in this area were based on the Council's proposal for retaining the existing Ilfracombe West ward and combining the existing Ilfracombe Central and Ilfracombe East wards into an Ilfracombe East ward. We have received four submissions in this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations.

69 During this consultation we received two submissions from local residents, requesting that the existing Ilfracombe Central ward be retained. The submissions expressed concern that combining these areas into one ward might have a negative impact on the area. One submission noted that the area of Ilfracombe Central would be better represented if it were retained within its own ward. The other submission argued that if Ilfracombe is only represented by an East and West ward, this would impact negatively on funding allocations for the town.

70 We received a submission from a local resident that supported the draft recommendations to create an Ilfracombe West ward. We also received a submission from a local resident who supported our draft recommendations for both of the proposed Ilfracombe wards.

71 When creating warding patterns, we do not take into account the impact that it will have on local funding allocations and we have not been persuaded by the limited evidence to retain the existing wards in Ilfracombe.

72 Our draft recommendations are based on the Council's proposals and create wards that will produce good variances by 2023. We have not received any evidence to persuade us to alter our draft recommendations in this area and we are therefore confirming them as final. This will create a three-councillor Ilfracombe East ward and a two-councillor Ilfracombe West ward that will produce variances of -5% and 2%, respectively, by 2023.

Braunton East, Braunton West & Georgeham and Heanton Punchardon

73 During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received 31 submissions relating to this area. Nine of the submissions focused on retaining all of Georgeham parish within the same ward. The other 22 submissions referred to how the draft recommendations warding pattern would affect Braunton parish.

74 Our draft recommendations in this area were based on our own warding pattern; we were persuaded by the arguments put forward to retain the whole of Georgeham parish in one ward and we were also persuaded to include Knowle in a ward with part of the built-up area of Braunton parish. Because we did not receive any locally generated proposals recommending this arrangement we identified our own warding pattern.

75 Our draft recommendations were for a three-councillor Braunton South ward that comprised the southern area of Braunton parish with the parishes of Heanton Punchardon and Ashford. We also created a two-councillor Braunton North ward that comprised the northern part of the built-up area of Braunton parish, Knowle, and the whole of Georgeham parish. On our tour of the area we noted that the B2321 and

the A361 provided strong and clear boundaries and we therefore divided the Braunton parish north/south.

76 During our initial consultation on warding patterns we received 21 submissions in relation to the Braunton area, which provided strong evidence of shared community interests between the built-up part of Braunton parish and Knowle. We received a number of requests for the existing warding pattern to be retained in this area; however, that would create a ward that would produce a variance of -17% by 2023 and we were not persuaded by the evidence to adopt this. Braunton Parish Council considered that Knowle village should be retained within the same ward as Braunton Town. We also received 28 submissions which were in support of keeping all of Georgeham parish within the same ward. Respondents, including Georgeham Parish Council, considered that this would ensure that the strong community identity shared between the villages of Croyde and Georgeham, which form Georgeham parish, is maintained.

77 The Council proposed an alternative warding pattern to the draft recommendations, stating that it considered that the existing east/west division of Braunton should be retained and that there should be 'a separate ward for Heanton Punchardon'. It proposed a Braunton East ward that would combine the eastern part of the built-up area of Braunton and Knowle village and would have a variance of 1% by 2023. The Council also proposed a Braunton West & Georgeham ward that would comprise the remaining part of Braunton parish with the whole of Georgeham parish. This ward would produce a variance of 0% by 2023.

78 It recommended that the parishes of Heanton Punchardon and Ashford not be included in a ward with any part of Braunton and that instead they be combined to create a one-councillor Heanton Punchardon ward, which would produce a variance of -8% by 2023. We received a submission from Ashford Parish Council which requested that the parish be combined into a ward with Heanton Punchardon parish and Pilton West parish. It noted that these parishes share a rural identity and are separate from Braunton.

79 We created our own draft recommendations in this area because the warding patterns initially proposed did not reflect the strong evidence of community identities as they either divided Georgeham parish or separated Knowle from the rest of Braunton. Our draft recommendations were based on boundaries that we had identified on our tour of the area and which we considered, in the absence of local knowledge, reflected the community identity within Braunton. The Commission notes, however, that the alternative provided by the Council has stronger support locally and is more likely to reflect community identities. We note that the Council's proposal is supported by Braunton Parish Council, the Love Braunton Community Forum and six local residents, who support the east/west divide as opposed to the north/south split.

80 We received three submissions that proposed an alternative to the Council's east/west division of Braunton Town. However, this alternative was supported by very little evidence and if implemented would provide significantly poorer levels of electoral equality of -9% and 10%.

81 We also received a submission from a local resident who noted that recent planning permission has been granted in the area of South Park, Park Farm and Lower Park Road. We recognise that these developments will have an impact on the forecast electorate. However, in the preliminary stages of conducting a review we agree the current electorate and forecast electorate with the Council. The Commission acknowledges that these figures might change while the review is still ongoing, but we consider that the figures set at the beginning of the review are reliable and the Commission does not update the forecast electorate once the review has started.

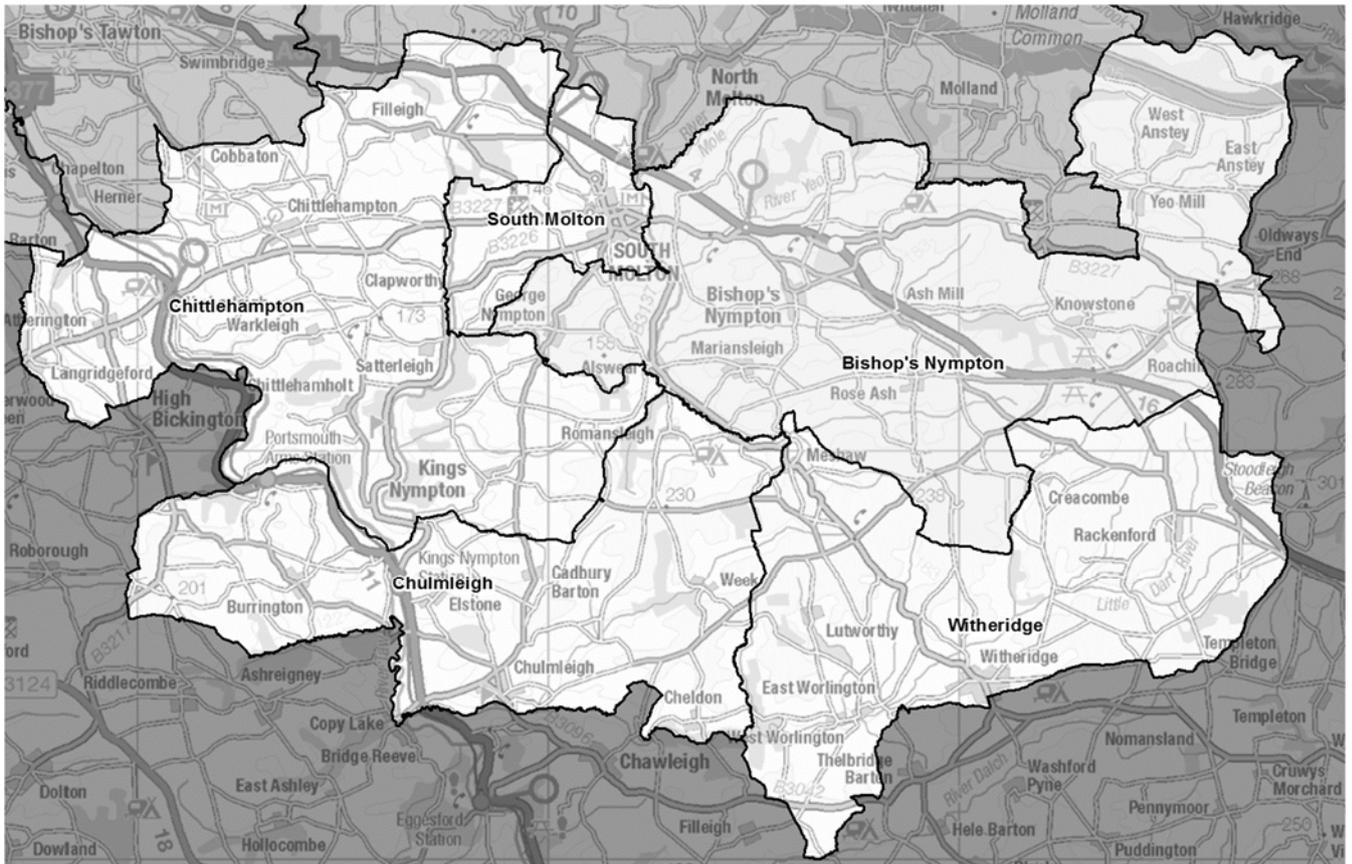
82 We are minded to adopt the Council's alternative proposal in this area as it is a locally generated scheme, reflects the community identities and is supported by other submissions. We acknowledge that the Council's proposal does not include the village of Pilton West within its Heanton Punchardon ward as proposed by Ashford Parish Council. However, we are in support of the Council's recommendation in this area as we consider that Pilton West parish is better connected with Barnstaple than with the neighbouring rural parishes.

83 We are adopting the Council's proposed Braunton East, Braunton West & Georgeham and Heaton Punchardon wards as our final recommendations in this area. The two-councillor Braunton East ward will comprise the eastern part of Braunton Town and Knowle village. This ward will produce a variance of 1% by 2023. The two-councillor Braunton West ward will comprise the western part of Braunton Town and the whole of Georgeham parish. This ward is forecast to have a variance of 0% by 2023. The third ward in this area is a one-councillor Heaton Punchardon ward that will combine the parishes of Heaton Punchardon and Ashford, producing a variance of -8% by 2023.

Mortehoe

84 The Council and Mortehoe Parish Council supported our draft recommendations to include the parish within a one-councillor ward. We are confirming our draft recommendations as final for a one-councillor Mortehoe ward that will produce a variance of -1% by 2023.

Southern



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bishop's Nympton	1	-2%
Chittlehampton	1	5%
Chulmleigh	1	-3%
South Molton	3	-11%
Witheridge	1	-1%

South Molton

85 During this consultation we received eight submissions that requested the parishes of George Nympton and Queens Nympton be removed from the proposed South Molton ward and instead be included within a Bishop's Nympton ward.

86 The District Council and George Nympton & Queens Nympton Parish Council both proposed that George Nympton and Queens Nympton parishes should not be included in the same ward as South Molton. They considered that the rural parishes should be included in a rural Bishop's Nympton ward.

87 George Nympton & Queens Nympton Parish Council explained how the parishes have a very strong individual community identity that is distinct from its neighbouring parishes. However, it noted that the struggles that the rural villages face, such as poor broadband and phone coverage, along with transportation issues, are shared with other rural parishes. The Commission were persuaded that it had a stronger community identity with rural parishes than South Molton.

88 We received submissions from five local residents who supported the removal of George Nympton and Queens Nympton parishes from the South Molton ward and the inclusion of the parishes within a Bishop's Nympton ward. We received mixed evidence of the level of shared community interests between the areas; however, the majority of the submissions provided evidence that the parishes of George Nympton and Queens Nympton would be better served within a Bishop's Nympton ward. A local resident explained that children from George Nympton parish attend the primary school in Bishop's Nympton and that local residents from both areas sit on various committees and attend regular hall share meetings. Respondents generally noted that the rural settlements of George Nympton and Queens Nympton share little in common with the town of South Molton.

89 Councillor Allen also supported this alteration as he believed the parishes would be better represented if they were to be included within a rural ward with Bishop's Nympton.

90 We have been persuaded by the evidence received at this stage of consultation to amend our draft recommendations in this area to remove the parishes of George Nympton and Queens Nympton from the proposed South Molton ward. We were persuaded by the evidence received that these parishes would be better represented if they were included within a Bishop's Nympton ward and that this justifies a South Molton ward that would produce a variance of -11% by 2023.

91 Our final recommendation in this area is for a three-councillor South Molton ward that will produce a variance of -11% by 2023. We are making some other changes to the Bishop's Nympton ward which are explained below.

Bishop's Nympton and Witheridge

92 We received five submissions which requested that our two-councillor Bishop's Nympton & Witheridge ward be divided into two single-councillor wards.

93 During our initial warding consultation, the Council proposed a one-councillor Bishop's Nympton ward and a one-councillor Witheridge ward. However, we took

into account the four other submissions that we had received in this area and in order to accommodate all of the views expressed we created a two-councillor Bishop's Nympton & Witheridge ward. At this stage the Council proposed similar wards to its previous proposal, with the removal of the George Nympton and Queens Nympton parishes and the addition of Romansleigh parish.

94 Councillor Ley provided direct support for the Council's proposal to create two one-councillor wards, as he believed the draft recommendations created a ward that is too large geographically.

95 East Worlington Parish Council requested to be included within a one-councillor Witheridge ward as it felt the draft recommendations created a ward that would be too large to allow for effective representation.

96 Knowstone Parish Council opposed the two-councillor warding arrangement in this area, on the basis that it would create a fractured representation for the area and would increase the travelling involved for the councillor.

97 West Anstey Parish Council strongly supported the retention of a one-councillor Bishop's Nympton ward, on the basis that one councillor would have a smaller number of parishes to manage and therefore would be able to better represent each parish.

98 Rose Ash Parish Council was in support of our draft recommendations to combine the parishes in the area into a large two-councillor ward.

99 We have taken into account all of the evidence over both rounds of consultation and have been persuaded to divide our two-councillor ward into two one-councillor wards in this area. We have been persuaded by the evidence that this will create smaller wards that reflect the majority of the shared community interests that we have heard about.

100 As outlined above, as part of our final recommendations in the South Molton area we have chosen to include the parishes of George Nympton and Queens Nympton within a Bishop's Nympton ward. We are also proposing to include the parishes of Bishop's Nympton, Mariansleigh, Rose Ash, Knowstone, East Anstey and West Anstey in our Bishop's Nympton ward. Our Witheridge ward will comprise the parishes of Rackenford, Witheridge, Meshaw and East Worlington. We note that the Council proposed to include the parish of Romansleigh into a Witheridge ward. However, we were not persuaded to adopt this change because this ward reflects the Council's original proposal to include Romansleigh parish within its Chulmleigh ward. We were not persuaded by the limited evidence received at this stage to alter our draft recommendations in this area.

101 We acknowledge that Rose Ash Parish Council supported the draft recommendations and stated that it considered Rose Ash parish should be included within a Witheridge ward. We are departing from our draft recommendations because we believe the persuasive evidence in support of dividing the two-councillor

wards will better reflect the statutory criteria for the remaining parishes in the area. We considered including Rose Ash parish into the one-councillor Witheridge ward but noted this would create a variance of -16% by 2023 and we were therefore not persuaded to adopt such a ward.

102 Our final recommendations for this area are for a one-councillor Bishop's Nympton ward and a one-councillor Witheridge ward that will produce variances of -2% and -1% by 2023, respectively.

Chittlehampton and Chulmleigh

103 The only submission that we received in this area was the Council's proposal to remove Romansleigh parish from the Chulmleigh ward and include it within its proposed Bishop's Nympton ward. However, there was very little evidence provided to support this alteration and we are not minded to adopt it. Accordingly, we are confirming our draft recommendations for a one-councillor Chittlehampton ward and one-councillor Chulmleigh ward that will produce variances of 5% and -3% by 2023, respectively.

Conclusions

104 The table below shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2017 and 2023 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2017	2023
Number of councillors	42	42
Number of electoral wards	25	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,793	1,997
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0

Final recommendation

North Devon District Council should be made up of 42 councillors serving 25 wards representing 13 single-councillor wards, seven two-councillor wards and five three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for North Devon District Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for North Devon District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

105 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

106 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, North Devon District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

107 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Barnstaple parish, Bishop's Nympton parish, Braunton parish, Fremington parish, Ilfracombe parish, Landkey parish and Tawstock parish.

108 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Barnstaple parish.

Final recommendation	
Barnstaple Parish Council should comprise 24 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central Town	2
Forches	4
Fort Hill	4
Longbridge	1
Newport	5
Pilton & Yeo Valley	7
Victoria	1

109 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bishop's Nympton parish.

Final recommendation	
Bishop's Nympton Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Mill on the Mole	2
Newtown	8

110 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Braunton parish.

Final recommendation Braunton Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Braunton East	7
Braunton West	6

111 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Fremington parish.

Final recommendation Fremington Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Anchor Wood	1
Bickington	6
Fremington & Yelland	6
Maple	1
Roundswell & Woodville	1

112 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ilfracombe parish.

Final recommendation Ilfracombe Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Ilfracombe East	11
Ilfracombe West	7

113 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Landkey parish.

Final recommendation Landkey Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Mount Sandford Green	1
Newlands	7
Westacott	1

114 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Tawstock parish.

Final recommendation	
Tawstock Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Tawstock Northern Urban	4
Tawstock Rural	2
Tawstock Southern Urban	5

3 What happens next?

115 We have now completed our review of North Devon District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2019.

Equalities

116 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendix A

Final recommendations for North Devon District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barnstaple Central	1	1,743	1,743	-3%	1,853	1,853	-7%
2	Barnstaple with Pilton	3	5,834	1,945	8%	6,370	2,123	6%
3	Barnstaple with Westacott	3	6,119	2,040	14%	6,486	2,162	8%
4	Bickington	3	4,531	1,510	-16%	5,682	1,894	-5%
5	Bishop's Nympton	1	1,822	1,822	2%	1,954	1,954	-2%
6	Bratton Fleming	1	1,900	1,900	6%	2,041	2,041	2%
7	Braunton East	2	3,920	1,960	9%	3,974	1,987	0%
8	Braunton West & Georgeham	2	3,943	1,972	10%	4,042	2,021	1%
9	Chittlehampton	1	1,988	1,988	11%	2,102	2,102	5%
10	Chulmleigh	1	1,767	1,767	-1%	1,943	1,943	-3%
11	Combe Martin	1	2,207	2,207	23%	2,236	2,236	12%
12	Fremington	2	3,749	1,875	5%	4,358	2,179	9%
13	Heanton Punchardon	1	1,569	1,569	-12%	1,828	1,828	-8%

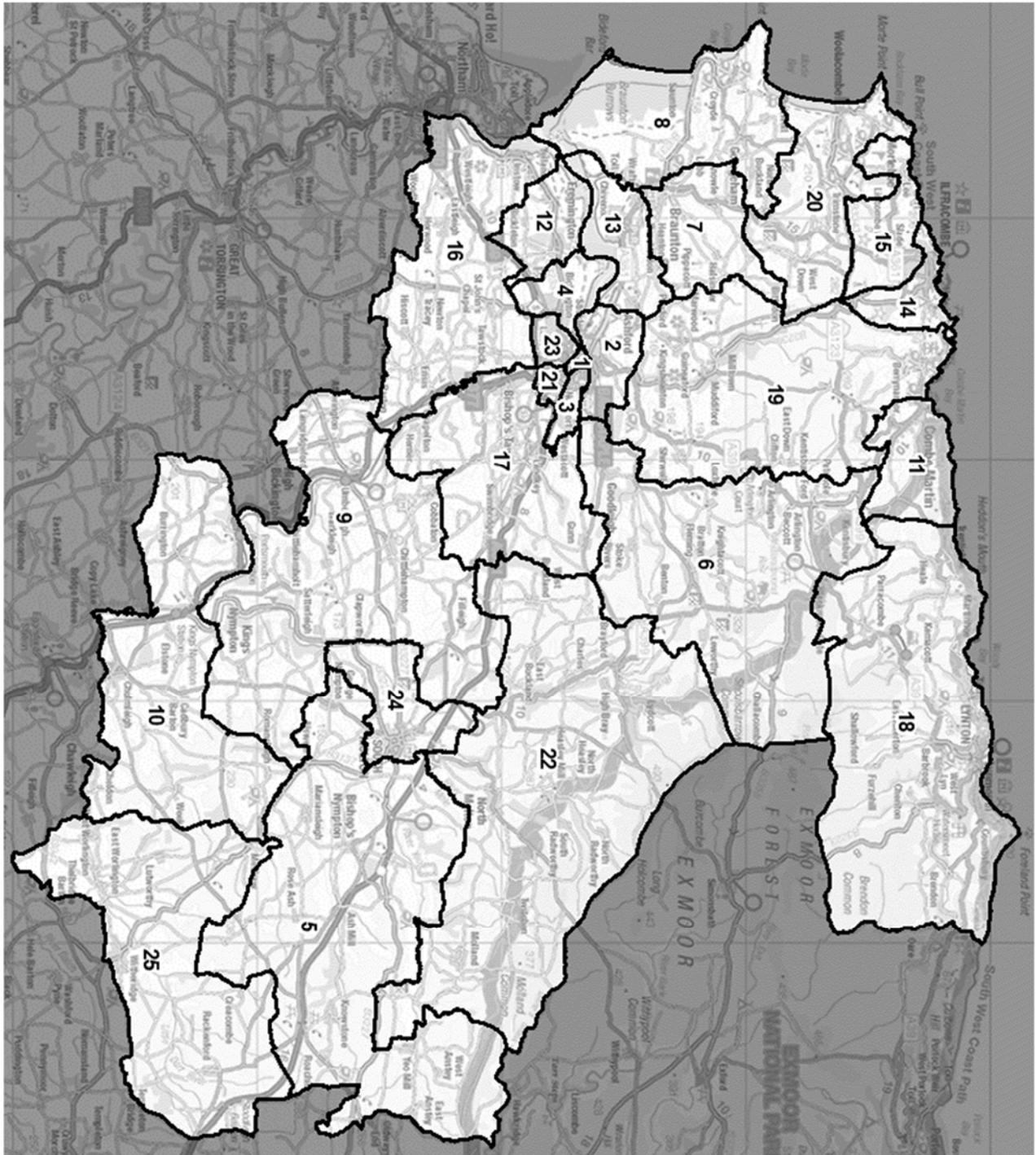
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14 Ilfracombe East	3	5,306	1,769	-1%	5,690	1,897	-5%
15 Ilfracombe West	2	3,566	1,783	-1%	4,061	2,031	2%
16 Instow	1	1,835	1,835	2%	1,896	1,896	-5%
17 Landkey	2	3,387	1,694	-6%	3,732	1,866	-7%
18 Lynton & Lynmouth	1	1,844	1,844	3%	1,898	1,898	-5%
19 Marwood	1	1,973	1,973	10%	2,045	2,045	2%
20 Morteohoe	1	1,786	1,786	0%	1,986	1,986	-1%
21 Newport	2	3,952	1,976	10%	4,214	2,107	6%
22 North Molton	1	1,781	1,781	-1%	1,970	1,970	-1%
23 Roundswell	2	2,802	1,401	-22%	4,209	2,105	5%
24 South Molton	3	4,178	1,393	-22%	5,320	1,773	-11%
25 Witheridge	1	1,791	1,791	0%	1,979	1,979	-1%
Totals	42	75,293	-	-	83,869	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,793	-	-	1,997	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Devon District Council.

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

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/devon/north-devon>

Key

1. Barnstaple Central
2. Barnstaple with Pilton
3. Barnstaple with Westacott
4. Bickington
5. Bishop's Nympton
6. Bratton Fleming
7. Braunton East
8. Braunton West & Georgeham
9. Chittlehampton
10. Chulmleigh
11. Combe Martin
12. Fremington
13. Heanton Punchardon
14. Ilfracombe East
15. Ilfracombe West
16. Instow
17. Landkey
18. Lynton & Lynmouth
19. Marwood
20. Morteheo
21. Newport
22. North Molton
23. Roundswell
24. South Molton
25. Witheridge

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/devon/north-devon>

Local Authority

- North Devon District Council

Councillors

- Councillor T Allen
- Councillor E Ley
- Councillor D Luggar
- Councillor T Meakin
- Councillor J Patrinos
- Councillor E Wood
- Councillor J Yabsley

Local Organisations

- Love Braunton Community Forum

Parish and Town Council

- Ashford Parish Council
- Barnstaple Town Council
- Braunton Parish Council
- East Worlington Parish Council
- George Nympton & Queens Nympton Parish Council
- Kentisbury & Trentishoe Parish Council
- Knowstone Parish Council
- Landkey Parish Council
- Morteohoe Parish Council
- Pilton West Parish Council
- Rose Ash Parish Council
- West Anstey Parish Council

Local Residents

- 42 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
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 a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority 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 electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward

A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas.

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