

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire

Report to The Electoral Commission

September 2004

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. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI No. 2001/3962). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
Ann M. Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. 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 the number of councillors elected to the council, division boundaries and division names.

This report sets out the Committee's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the county of Cambridgeshire.

Summary

We began a review of Cambridgeshire County Council's electoral arrangements on 11 March 2003. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 24 February 2004, after which we undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Cambridgeshire:

- **In 29 of the 59 divisions, each of which are currently represented by a single councillor, the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the county and 12 divisions vary by more than 20%.**
- **By 2007 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 31 divisions and by more than 20% in 15 divisions.**

Our main final recommendations for Cambridgeshire County Council's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 223 & 224) are:

- **Cambridgeshire County Council should have 69 councillors, 10 more than at present, representing 60 divisions.**
- **As the divisions are based on district wards which have themselves changed as a result of the recent district reviews, the boundaries of all divisions will be subject to change.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each county councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 33 of the proposed 60 divisions the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the average and only four divisions would vary by more than 20%.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only 12 divisions expected to vary by more than 10% from the average, with no division varying by more than 20% by 2007.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 26 October 2004. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

Division name (by district council area)	Number of Councillors	Constituent district wards
Cambridge City		
1 Abbey	1	Abbey ward
2 Arbury	1	Arbury ward
3 Castle	1	Castle ward
4 Cherry Hinton	1	Cherry Hinton ward
5 Coleridge	1	Coleridge ward
6 East Chesterton	1	East Chesterton ward
7 King's Hedges	1	King's Hedges ward
8 Market	1	Market ward
9 Newnham	1	Newnham ward
10 Petersfield	1	Petersfield ward
11 Queen Edith's	1	Queen Edith's ward
12 Romsey	1	Romsey ward
13 Trumpington	1	Trumpington ward
14 West Chesterton	1	West Chesterton ward
East Cambridgeshire		
15 Burwell	1	Burwell ward; The Swaffhams ward
16 Ely North East	1	Ely East ward; Ely North ward
17 Ely South West	1	Ely South ward; Ely West ward
18 Haddenham	1	Haddenham ward; Stretham ward
19 Littleport	1	Littleport East ward; Littleport West ward
20 Soham & Fordham Villages	2	Fordham Villages ward; Isleham ward; Soham North ward; Soham South ward
21 Sutton	1	Downham Villages ward; Sutton ward
22 Woodditton	1	Bottisham ward; Cheveley ward; Dullingham Villages ward
Fenland		
23 Chatteris	1	Birch ward; The Mills ward; Wenneye ward
24 Forty Foot	1	Doddington ward; Manea ward; Slade Lode ward; Wimblington ward

Division name (by district council area)	Number of Councillors	Constituent district wards
25 March East	1	March East ward; part of Elm & Christchurch ward (the parish of Christchurch)
26 March North	1	March North ward
27 March West	1	March West ward; part of Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward (the parish of Benwick)
28 Roman Bank & Peckover	1	Peckover ward; Roman Bank ward
29 Waldersey	1	Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary ward; part of Elm & Christchurch ward (the parish of Elm)
30 Whittlesey North	1	Bassenhally ward; Delph ward; Kingsmoor ward; St Andrews ward
31 Whittlesey South	1	Lattersey ward; St Marys ward; part of Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward (Whittlesey South parish ward of Whittlesey parish)
32 Wisbech North	1	Clarkson ward; Kirkgate ward; Waterlees ward
33 Wisbech South	1	Hill ward, Medworth ward; Staithe ward

Huntingdonshire

34 Brampton & Kimbolton	1	Brampton ward; Kimbolton & Staughton ward
35 Buckden, Gransden & The Offords	1	Buckden ward; Gransden & The Offords ward
36 Godmanchester	2	Godmanchester ward; Huntingdon East ward
37 Huntingdon	2	Alconbury & The Stukeleys ward; Huntingdon North ward; Huntingdon West ward
38 Norman Cross	2	Elton & Folksworth ward; Stilton ward; Yaxley & Farcet ward
39 Ramsey	1	Ramsey ward
40 Sawtry & Ellington	1	Ellington ward; Sawtry ward
41 Somersham & Earith	1	Somersham ward; part of Earith ward (the parishes of Bluntisham and Earith)
42 St Ives	2	St Ives East ward; St Ives South ward; St Ives West ward; part of Earith ward (the parish of Holywell-cum-Needingworth)
43 St Neots East	2	St Neots Eynesbury ward; St Neots Priory Park ward
44 St Neots West	2	Little Paxton ward; St Neots Eaton Ford ward; St Neots Eaton Socon ward
45 The Hemingfords & Fenstanton	1	Fenstanton ward; The Hemingfords ward
46 Warboys & Upwood	1	Upwood & The Raveleys ward; Warboys & Bury ward

Division name (by district council area)	Number of Councillors	Constituent district wards
South Cambridgeshire		
47 Bar Hill	1	Bar Hill ward; Girton ward
48 Bassingbourn	1	Bassingbourn ward; The Mordens ward
49 Bourn	1	Part of Bourn ward (the parishes of Bourn, Cambourne and Caxton)
50 Duxford	1	Duxford ward; The Abingtons ward; Whittlesford ward; part of Fowlmere & Foxton ward (the parish of Fowlmere)
51 Fulbourn	1	Fulbourn ward; Teversham ward; The Wilbrahams ward
52 Gamlingay	1	Gamlingay ward; Haslingfield & The Eversdens ward; Orwell & Barrington ward
53 Hardwick	1	Barton ward; Caldecote ward; Comberton ward; Hardwick ward
54 Histon & Cottenham	2	Cottenham ward; Histon & Impington ward
55 Linton	1	Balsham ward; Linton ward
56 Melbourn	1	Melbourn ward; Meldreth ward; part of Fowlmere & Foxton ward (the parish of Foxton)
57 Papworth & Swavesey	1	Papworth & Elsworth ward; Swavesey ward; part of Bourn ward (the parishes of Croxton and Eltisey)
58 Sawston	2	Harston & Hauxton ward; Sawston ward; The Shelfords & Stapleford ward
59 Waterbeach	1	Milton ward; Waterbeach ward
60 Willingham	1	Longstanton ward; Willingham & Over ward

Notes:

1. The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the five Cambridgeshire districts which were completed in 2002. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.
2. The large map inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed divisions outlined above.

Table 2: Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Cambridge City				
1 Abbey	1	6,269	6,269	0
2 Arbury	1	6,970	6,970	11
3 Castle	1	6,662	6,662	7
4 Cherry Hinton	1	6,293	6,293	1
5 Coleridge	1	5,724	5,724	-8
6 East Chesterton	1	5,730	5,730	-8
7 King's Hedges	1	6,129	6,129	-2
8 Market	1	6,352	6,352	2
9 Newnham	1	6,506	6,506	4
10 Petersfield	1	5,971	5,971	-5
11 Queen Edith's	1	6,326	6,326	1
12 Romsey	1	6,288	6,288	1
13 Trumpington	1	5,535	5,535	-11
14 West Chesterton	1	6,360	6,360	2
East Cambridgeshire				
15 Burwell	1	6,112	6,112	-2
16 Ely North East	1	6,758	6,758	8
17 Ely South West	1	5,352	5,352	-14
18 Haddenham	1	7,098	7,098	13
19 Littleport	1	5,392	5,392	-14
20 Soham & Fordham Villages	2	11,801	5,901	-6
21 Sutton	1	5,852	5,852	-6
22 Woodditton	1	7,527	7,527	20
Fenland				
23 Chatteris	1	5,378	5,378	-14
24 Forty Foot	1	5,984	5,984	-4

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Cambridge City				
1 Abbey	1	6,720	6,720	1
2 Arbury	1	6,990	6,990	5
3 Castle	1	7,050	7,050	6
4 Cherry Hinton	1	6,430	6,430	-3
5 Coleridge	1	6,180	6,180	-7
6 East Chesterton	1	6,230	6,230	-6
7 King's Hedges	1	6,400	6,400	-4
8 Market	1	6,660	6,660	0
9 Newnham	1	7,030	7,030	6
10 Petersfield	1	6,350	6,350	-4
11 Queen Edith's	1	6,360	6,360	-4
12 Romsey	1	6,330	6,330	-5
13 Trumpington	1	6,470	6,470	-3
14 West Chesterton	1	6,420	6,420	-3
East Cambridgeshire				
15 Burwell	1	6,050	6,050	-9
16 Ely North East	1	7,530	7,530	13
17 Ely South West	1	6,180	6,180	-7
18 Haddenham	1	7,000	7,000	5
19 Littleport	1	7,190	7,190	8
20 Soham & Fordham Villages	2	12,090	6,045	-9
21 Sutton	1	5,860	5,860	-12
22 Woodditton	1	7,350	7,350	11
Fenland				
23 Chatteris	1	5,990	5,990	-10
24 Forty Foot	1	6,750	6,750	2

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Fenland				
25 March East	1	5,943	5,943	-5
26 March North	1	4,907	4,907	-22
27 March West	1	5,803	5,803	-7
28 Roman Bank & Peckover	1	6,445	6,445	3
29 Waldersey	1	6,155	6,155	-2
30 Whittlesey North	1	5,987	5,987	-4
31 Whittlesey South	1	6,412	6,412	3
32 Wisbech North	1	6,953	6,953	11
33 Wisbech South	1	7,201	7,201	15
Huntingdonshire				
34 Brampton & Kimbolton	1	7,094	7,094	13
35 Buckden, Gransden & The Offords	1	6,031	6,031	-4
36 Godmanchester	2	11,282	5,641	-10
37 Huntingdon	2	10,580	5,290	-15
38 Norman Cross	2	11,763	5,882	-6
39 Ramsey	1	6,147	6,147	-2
40 Sawtry & Ellington	1	7,265	7,265	16
41 Somersham & Earith	1	7,218	7,218	15
42 St Ives	2	14,268	7,134	14
43 St Neots East	2	12093	6,047	-3
44 St Neots West	2	11,330	5,665	-9
45 The Hemingfords & Fenstanton	1	6,932	6,932	11
46 Warboys & Upwood	1	7,015	7,015	12

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Fenland				
25 March East	1	6,530	6,530	-2
26 March North	1	5,330	5,330	-20
27 March West	1	6,090	6,090	-8
28 Roman Bank & Peckover	1	6,840	6,840	3
29 Waldersey	1	6,830	6,830	3
30 Whittlesey North	1	7,630	7,630	15
31 Whittlesey South	1	6,500	6,500	-2
32 Wisbech North	1	7,460	7,460	12
33 Wisbech South	1	7,350	7,350	11
Huntingdonshire				
34 Brampton & Kimbolton	1	6,980	6,980	5
35 Buckden, Gransden & The Offords	1	7,710	7,710	16
36 Godmanchester	2	11,500	5,750	-13
37 Huntingdon	2	12,410	6,205	-7
38 Norman Cross	2	12,530	6,265	-6
39 Ramsey	1	6,280	6,280	-5
40 Sawtry & Ellington	1	7,240	7,240	9
41 Somersham & Earith	1	7,110	7,110	7
42 St Ives	2	14,290	7,145	8
43 St Neots East	2	12,070	6,035	-9
44 St Neots West	2	12,460	6,230	-6
45 The Hemingfords & Fenstanton	1	7,090	7,090	7
46 Warboys & Upwood	1	7,010	7,010	6

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
South Cambridgeshire				
47 Bar Hill	1	6,998	6,998	12
48 Bassingbourn	1	5,412	5,412	-13
49 Bourn	1	2,312	2,312	-63
50 Duxford	1	6,573	6,573	5
51 Fulbourn	1	7,610	7,610	22
52 Gamlingay	1	7,667	7,667	23
53 Hardwick	1	7,058	7,058	13
54 Histon & Cottenham	2	12,355	6,178	-1
55 Linton	1	7,168	7,168	15
56 Melbourn	1	7,034	7,034	12
57 Papworth & Swavesey	1	5,556	5,556	-11
58 Sawston	2	13,087	6,544	5
59 Waterbeach	1	7,108	7,108	14
60 Willingham	1	6,385	6,385	2
Totals	69	431,516	-	-
Average	-	-	6,254	-

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
South Cambridgeshire				
47 Bar Hill	1	7,050	7,050	6
48 Bassingbourn	1	5,410	5,410	-19
49 Bourn	1	6,660	6,660	0
50 Duxford	1	6,680	6,680	1
51 Fulbourn	1	7,470	7,470	13
52 Gamlingay	1	7,570	7,570	14
53 Hardwick	1	7,160	7,160	8
54 Histon & Cottenham	2	13,850	6,925	4
55 Linton	1	7,040	7,040	6
56 Melbourn	1	6,940	6,940	5
57 Papworth & Swavesey	1	6,170	6,170	-7
58 Sawston	2	12,890	6,445	-3
59 Waterbeach	1	7,070	7,070	6
60 Willingham	1	7,300	7,300	10
Totals	69	458,110	-	-
Average	-	-	6,639	-

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the county of Cambridgeshire. Our review of the county is part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI No. 2001/3962), i.e. the need to:
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- 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:
 - eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity; and
 - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

3 Details of the legislation under which we work are set out in The Electoral Commission's *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews* (Published by the EC in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of electoral divisions. In each two-tier county, our approach is first to complete the PERs of all the constituent districts and, when the Orders for the resulting changes in those areas have been made, then to commence a PER of the County Council's electoral arrangements. Orders were made for the new electoral arrangements in the districts in Cambridgeshire in September 2002 for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire; in October 2002 for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland; and in December 2002 for Huntingdonshire and we are now conducting our county review in this area.

5 Prior to the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000, each county council division could only return one member. This restraint has now been removed by section 89 of the 2000 Act, and we may now recommend the creation of county divisions. In areas where we are unable to identify single-member divisions that are coterminous with ward boundaries and provide acceptable levels of electoral equality we will consider recommending multi-member divisions if they provide a better balance between these two factors. However, we do not expect to recommend large numbers of multi-member divisions other than, perhaps, in the more urban areas of a county.

6 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements*. These statutory *Rules* state that each division

should be wholly contained within a single district and that division boundaries should not split unwarded parishes or parish wards.

7 In the *Guidance*, The Electoral Commission states that we should wherever possible, build on schemes that have been created locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local people are normally in a better position to judge what council size and division configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

8 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the local authority as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any 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.

9 Similarly, we will seek to ensure that each district area within the county is allocated the correct number of county councillors with respect to the district's proportion of the county's electorate.

10 The *Rules* provide that, in considering county council electoral arrangements, we should have regard to the boundaries of district wards. We attach considerable importance to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. The term "coterminosity" is used throughout the report and refers to situations where the boundaries of county electoral divisions and district wards are the same, that is to say, where county divisions comprise one or more whole district wards. Where wards or groups of wards are not coterminous with county divisions, this can cause confusion for the electorate at local elections, lead to increased election costs and, in our view, may not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

11 We recognise that it is unlikely to be possible to achieve absolute coterminosity throughout a county area while also providing for the optimum level of electoral equality. In this respect, county reviews are different from those of districts. We will seek to achieve the best available balance between electoral equality and coterminosity, taking into account the statutory criteria. While the proportion of electoral divisions that will be coterminous with the boundaries of district wards is likely to vary between counties, we would normally expect coterminosity to be achieved in a significant majority of divisions. The average level of coterminosity secured under our final recommendations for the first eleven counties that we have reviewed (excluding the Isle of Wight) is 70%. Therefore, we recommend that in formulating schemes, interested parties should seek to secure a level of coterminosity of around 60% to 80%.

12 Where coterminosity is not possible in parished areas, and a district ward is to be split between electoral divisions, we would normally expect this to be achieved without dividing (or further dividing) a parish between divisions. There are likely to be exceptions to this, however, particularly where larger parishes are involved.

13 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the

Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

14 A further area of difference between county and district reviews is that we must recognise that it will not be possible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse communities, for example, combining rural and urban areas. We have generally sought to avoid this in district reviews in order to reflect the identities and interests of local communities. Some of the existing county council electoral divisions comprise a number of distinct communities, which is inevitable given the larger number of electors represented by each councillor, and we would expect that similar situations would continue under our recommendations in seeking the best balance between coterminosity and the statutory criteria.

15 As a part of this review we may also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the county. However, we made some recommendations for new parish electoral arrangements as part of our district reviews. We therefore expect to put forward such recommendations during county reviews only on an exceptional basis. In any event, we are *not* able to review administrative boundaries *between* local authorities or parishes, or consider the establishment of new parish areas as part of this review.

The review of Cambridgeshire County Council

16 We completed the reviews of the five district council areas in Cambridgeshire in April 2002 and Orders for the new electoral arrangements have since been made. This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Cambridgeshire County Council. The last such review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1983 (Report No. 460).

17 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 11 March 2003, when we wrote to Cambridgeshire County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the five district councils in the county, Cambridgeshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Cambridgeshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the county, Members of Parliament with constituencies in the county, Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Cambridgeshire County Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 7 July 2003. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

18 Stage Three began on 24 February 2004 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council*, and ended on 26 April 2004. During this period we sought comments from the

public and any other interested parties on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

19 In preparing this report the Committee has had regard to the general duty under section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 to promote racial equality and to the approach set out in BCFE (03) 35, *Race Relations Legislation*, which the Committee considered and agreed at its meeting on 9 April 2003.

2 Current electoral arrangements

20 The county of Cambridgeshire comprises the five districts of Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. The electorate of the county is 431,516 (December 2002). The Council presently has 59 members, with one member elected from each division.

21 Cambridgeshire remains predominantly rural despite increased residential and commercial building in recent years. Its arable farming is internationally recognised, as is its reputation for scientific and technological research and development. It has a history dating back more than 3,000 years which is reflected in the wealth of historic buildings, houses, cathedrals and mansions. It is famous for its University and academic excellence as well as the rivers Cam and the Great Ouse.

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

23 At present, each councillor represents an average of 7,314 electors, which the County Council forecasts will increase to 7,765 by the year 2007 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration over the last two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 29 of the 59 divisions varies by more than 10% from the district average while 12 divisions have variances of more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Huntingdon & Godmanchester division where the councillor represents 64% more electors than the county average.

24 As detailed previously, in considering the County Council's electoral arrangements, we must have regard to the boundaries of district wards. Following the completion of the reviews of district warding arrangements in Cambridgeshire we are faced with a new starting point for considering electoral divisions. Our proposals for county divisions are based on the new district wards as opposed to those which existed prior to the recent reviews. In view of the effect of these new district wards, and changes in the electorate over the past twenty years which have resulted in electoral imbalances across the county, changes to most if not all of the existing county electoral divisions are inevitable.

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Variance from average %
Cambridge City			
1 Abbey	1	4,806	-34
2 Arbury	1	5,178	-29
3 Castle	1	7,038	-4
4 Cherry Hinton	1	5,462	-25
5 Coleridge	1	5,866	-20
6 East Chesterton	1	7,180	-2
7 Kings Hedges	1	4,832	-34
8 Market	1	6,768	-7
9 Newnham	1	7,788	6
10 Petersfield	1	7,841	7
11 Queen Edith's	1	6,137	-16
12 Romsey	1	6,017	-18
13 Trumpington	1	6,080	-17
14 West Chesterton	1	6,123	-16
East Cambridgeshire			
15 Burwell	1	8,327	14
16 Ely North & South	1	5,285	-28
17 Ely West	1	10,512	44
18 Littleport	1	7,206	-1
19 Soham	1	9,129	25
20 Sutton	1	7,449	2
21 Woodditton	1	7,984	9
Fenland			
22 Benwick & Doddington	1	7,471	2
23 Chatteris	1	7,025	-4

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Variance from average %
Cambridge City			
1 Abbey	1	4,900	-37
2 Arbury	1	5,200	-33
3 Castle	1	7,430	-4
4 Cherry Hinton	1	5,600	-28
5 Coleridge	1	6,320	-19
6 East Chesterton	1	7,920	2
7 Kings Hedges	1	4,870	-37
8 Market	1	7,080	-9
9 Newnham	1	8,320	7
10 Petersfield	1	8,690	12
11 Queen Edith's	1	6,180	-20
12 Romsey	1	6,060	-22
13 Trumpington	1	6,890	-11
14 West Chesterton	1	6,190	-20
East Cambridgeshire			
15 Burwell	1	8,230	6
16 Ely North & South	1	5,370	-31
17 Ely West	1	11,970	54
18 Littleport	1	8,980	16
19 Soham	1	9,460	22
20 Sutton	1	7,440	-4
21 Woodditton	1	7,800	0
Fenland			
22 Benwick & Doddington	1	8,370	8
23 Chatteris	1	7,750	0

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Variance from average %
Fenland			
24 Elm	1	6,674	-9
25 Leverington	1	8,098	11
26 March East	1	8,500	16
27 March West	1	6,896	-6
28 Whittlesey	1	6,652	-9
29 Wisbech North	1	6,839	-6
30 Wisbech South	1	9,013	23
Huntingdonshire			
31 Brampton	1	7,003	-4
32 Buckden	1	6,805	-7
33 Eaton	1	9,671	32
34 Eynesbury	1	6,351	-13
35 Houghton & Wyton	1	7,810	7
36 Huntingdon & Godmanchester	1	11,973	64
37 Huntingdon North	1	7,071	-3
38 Norman Cross	1	8,664	18
39 Priory Park	1	6,627	-9
40 Ramsey	1	8,924	22
41 Sawtry	1	7,546	3
42 Somersham	1	8,510	16
43 St Ives North & Warboys	1	8,847	21
44 St Ives South	1	7,120	-3
45 West Hunts	1	9,096	-17
South Cambridgeshire			
46 Bassingbourn	1	6,514	-11
47 Comberton	1	7,521	3

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Variance from average %
Fenland			
24 Elm	1	8,040	4
25 Leverington	1	8,710	12
26 March East	1	9,320	20
27 March West	1	7,170	-8
28 Whittlesey	1	7,350	-5
29 Wisbech North	1	7,370	-5
30 Wisbech South	1	9,180	18
Huntingdonshire			
31 Brampton	1	8,640	11
32 Buckden	1	9,820	26
33 Eaton	1	9,470	22
34 Eynesbury	1	6,250	-20
35 Houghton & Wyton	1	7,940	2
36 Huntingdon & Godmanchester	1	12,240	58
37 Huntingdon North	1	7,150	-8
38 Norman Cross	1	9,430	21
39 Priory Park	1	6,710	-14
40 Ramsey	1	9,110	17
41 Sawtry	1	7,450	-4
42 Somersham	1	8,340	7
43 St Ives North & Warboys	1	8,670	12
44 St Ives South	1	7,350	-5
45 West Hunts	1	6,120	-21
South Cambridgeshire			
46 Bassingbourn	1	6,520	-16
47 Comberton	1	7,620	-2

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Variance from average %
South Cambridgeshire			
48 Cottenham	1	7,440	2
49 Fulbourn	1	7,610	4
50 Gamlingay	1	8,712	19
51 Girton	1	7,494	2
52 Harston	1	7,382	1
53 Histon	1	6,424	-12
54 Linton	1	7,168	-2
55 Melbourn	1	7,554	3
56 Sawston	1	7,045	-4
57 Shelford	1	5,904	-19
58 Waterbeach	1	7,108	-3
59 Willingham	1	8,447	15
Totals	59	431,516	-
Averages	-	7,314	-

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2007)	Variance from average %
South Cambridgeshire			
48 Cottenham	1	8,300	7
49 Fulbourn	1	7,470	-4
50 Gamlingay	1	13,700	76
51 Girton	1	7,540	-3
52 Harston	1	7,470	-4
53 Histon	1	7,930	2
54 Linton	1	7,040	-9
55 Melbourn	1	7,450	-4
56 Sawston	1	6,890	-11
57 Shelford	1	5,860	-25
58 Waterbeach	1	7,070	-9
59 Willingham	1	8,400	8
Totals	59	458,110	-
Averages	-	7,765	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Note: Each division is represented by a single councillor, hence the electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor. The "variance from average" column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2002, electors in Abbey division in Cambridge City were relatively over-represented by 34%, while electors in Huntingdon & Godmanchester division in Huntingdonshire were significantly under-represented by 64%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Draft recommendations

25 During Stage One we received 19 representations, including county-wide schemes from Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire County Labour Party. We also received representations from the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party, the North West Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party and Huntingdonshire District Council as well as submissions from seven parish and three town councils and three county councillors. In light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions, which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council*.

26 Our draft recommendations were broadly based on the County Council's proposals in four districts and Huntingdonshire District Council proposals for Huntingdonshire district. However, we moved away from the County Council's scheme in a number of areas by making our own amendments to improve the balance between coterminosity and electoral equality. Using options generated by local parties during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals, we proposed that:

- Cambridgeshire County Council should be served by 69 councillors;
- there should be 61 electoral divisions, involving changes to the boundaries of all of the existing divisions.

Draft recommendation

Cambridgeshire County Council should comprise 69 councillors, serving 61 divisions.

27 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 32 of the 61 divisions varying by no more than 10% from the county average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only 12 divisions varying by more than 10% from the average in 2007.

4 Responses to consultation

28 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 59 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Cambridgeshire County Council

29 The County Council supported the increase in councillors from 59 to 69. It expressed disappointment at our proposed two-member divisions in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire, although it did acknowledge that such arrangements 'may be necessary in a small number of cases in the absence of an alternative proposal.' It supported our proposals for Cambridge City and Fenland. The County Council accepted our proposals for East Cambridgeshire, as it was unable to propose a better solution, and proposed amended divisions in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. The County Council also proposed a number of division name changes throughout the county.

District and borough councils

30 Cambridge City Council supported the draft recommendations for Cambridge City, but noted that the Labour group on the council considered that the County Labour Party should comment on the draft recommendations. Huntingdonshire District Council fully supported our draft recommendations for Huntingdonshire, but proposed name changes for three divisions.

Political Parties

31 We received seven submissions from political parties. South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats supported the increase in council size, and our draft recommendations for Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland. They also proposed one amendment to Fulbourn division in South Cambridgeshire. North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party considered that council size should remain at 59. Cambridgeshire County Labour Party considered that our draft proposals put too much emphasis on coterminosity at the expense of electoral equality. It supported our proposals for Cambridge City and opposed our proposals for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, although it did not provide alternative proposals for these areas. Cambridgeshire County Labour Party also proposed division amendments in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

32 North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association expressed broad agreement with our draft proposals in Fenland. In Huntingdonshire, Huntingdon Constituency Conservative Association supported our draft proposals for the district. North West Cambridgeshire Conservative Association also supported our draft recommendations but proposed two name changes to divisions. It also opposed proposals for a three-member division in the district. Huntingdon Constituency Labour Party proposed four single-member divisions to replace our proposed two-member Huntingdon and Godmanchester divisions and also proposed single-member divisions to replace our proposed two-member St Ives division.

Parish and town councils

33 We received 30 submissions from parish and town councils. Toft Parish Council approved of our draft recommendations. Stapleford Parish Council opposed multi-member divisions stating that electors ‘would not know which councillor to contact.’

34 In East Cambridgeshire, we received five submissions from parish and town councils. Soham Town Council opposed our draft recommendations for our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions and considered that Soham town should remain in a single division. Fordham, Isleham, Wicken and Chippenham parish councils also opposed our draft recommendations and considered that Soham town should be contained in a single division. Both Wicken and Chippenham parish councils provided some community identity evidence for this argument.

35 In Fenland, Chatteris Town Council opposed our proposal to include Slade Lode district ward in our proposed Forty Foot division and considered it should be included in our proposed Chatteris division. Manea Parish Council expressed its support for our proposed Forty Foot division. Christchurch Parish Council considered that it should be in a division with Elm in the interests of coterminosity.

36 In Huntingdonshire, we received nine submissions from parish and town councils. Huntingdon Town Council supported our draft recommendations with regards to the arrangements for Huntingdon town. Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council opposed our proposed St Ives division and considered that the parish should be included in a division with the rest of Earith district ward. It proposed a three-member division in the Huntingdon area to facilitate a scheme that would allow Holywell-cum-Needlingworth parish to be contained in a division with Earith district ward. Bluntisham Parish Council also considered that Holywell-cum-Needlingworth parish should be in a division with the rest of Earith district ward.

37 Warboys Parish Council supported our proposed Warboys & Bury & Upwood & The Raveleys division, but proposed renaming it Warboys. Woodhurst Parish Council considered that it should be in a division with Warboys parish, and proposed that Somersham and Warboys & Bury district wards be combined to make a two-member division.

38 St Neots Town Council opposed our proposed divisions for the St Neots area and considered that the boundary to divide the town should follow the River Ouse. Little Paxton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for its area and was pleased to be included in a division with St Neots town. Ramsey Town Council supported either of the County Council’s Stage One proposals and also considered that maintaining the status quo would be suitable. Buckden Parish Council had no objections to our proposals for Huntingdonshire, but proposed one division name change.

39 In South Cambridgeshire we received 11 submissions from parish councils. Swavesey Parish Council considered that it should be in a division north of the A14 with its neighbouring villages. Fen Drayton Parish Council opposed being included in our proposed Papworth & Swavesey division.

40 Sawston Parish Council suggested that our proposed two-member Sawston division be converted into two non-coterminous single-member divisions. Hauxton, Stapleford

and Little Shelford parish councils also proposed this single-member alternative. Great Shelford Parish Council did not support Sawston Parish Council's proposal and put forward an alternative arrangement for single-member divisions for the area. Little Abington Parish Council opposed its inclusion in our proposed Duxford division and considered that it should be combined in a division with Great Abington, Hildersham and Linton parishes.

41 Histon and Impington parish councils both considered that our proposed two-member Cottenham division should be amended to create two single-member divisions with one councillor representing Cottenham ward and the other representing Histon & Impington ward. Both suggested renaming our proposed Cottenham division if we did not adopt their proposed amendment. Rampton Parish Council considered that the current arrangements linking Rampton and Cottenham parishes should continue.

Other representations

42 A further 19 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, councillors and residents.

43 Councillor Leeke (West Chesterton division) supported both the proposed increase in council size and our draft recommendations for Cambridge City and Fenland. He proposed one amendment to the Soham area of East Cambridgeshire, and amendments to Waterbeach and Sawston divisions in South Cambridgeshire. He also put forward a partial scheme for Huntingdonshire based on seven of our proposed divisions and nine of his own. Malcolm Moss, MP, expressed his full support for our draft recommendations.

44 In East Cambridgeshire, the Strategic Development Committee on East Cambridge District Council suggested that our proposed Fordham division be renamed Soham South & Fordham. Councillor Powley (Soham division) opposed our proposed Soham and Fordham divisions and proposed a 'compromise' that the two divisions be combined in a two-member division. Councillor Dwyer also opposed our proposals for Soham town and referred to the advantages of two-member divisions. A local resident of Soham was also unhappy about our draft recommendations for Soham and proposed an alternative name for our proposed Fordham division.

45 In Huntingdonshire, Councillor Eddy (Somersham division) proposed a partial scheme in the east of the district using a three-member division, two two-member divisions and a single-member division so that Holywell-cum-Needlingworth parish would not be in a division with the town of St Ives. Councillors Souter (Upwood & The Raveleys ward) & Taylor (Warboys ward) opposed our proposed two-member Elton & Stilton division and repeated the proposal for two single-member divisions for the area in their Stage One submission. They also proposed six division name changes in the district. Councillor Barnes (St Neots Priory Park ward) opposed our proposed two-member Eaton Socon division, and considered that the two areas have no common interest. He considered that the division should be converted into two single-member divisions as he strongly opposed two-member divisions. Councillor Hansard (St Neots Eynesbury ward) also objected to our proposed Eaton Socon division, particularly the naming of the division. He considered that the town should be split along the River Ouse if two-member divisions 'must' be created.

46 We also received five submissions from local residents regarding Huntingdonshire. Three submissions considered that the two-member divisions of Huntingdon and Godmanchester would be better represented by single-member divisions. One of these respondents proposed an alternative arrangement for the areas within our proposed Huntingdon division. The remaining two submissions opposed our proposal to include Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish in St Ives division. One of these residents proposed an alternative arrangement in the east of the district using the three-member division we discussed in our draft recommendations.

47 In South Cambridgeshire, Councillor Orgee (Sawston division) proposed three alternative partial schemes in the areas covered by our proposed Duxford, Sawston and Melbourn divisions, but expressed a preference for his second scheme. Councillor Gooden (Histon division) opposed our two-member Cottenham division. Andrew Lansley, MP, supported the County Council's proposal for single-member divisions in place of our proposed two-member Sawston division. A local resident objected to our proposed Cottenham division and considered that it should be divided into two single-member divisions. He considered that if we proposed to endorse this two-member division then Histon should be included in its name.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

48 As with our reviews of districts, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire 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, and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). 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 division of the county’.

49 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 identifiable boundaries and maintaining local ties, and to the boundaries of district wards.

50 We have discussed in Chapter One the additional parameters which apply to reviews of county council electoral arrangements and the need to have regard to the boundaries of district wards to achieve coterminosity. In addition, our approach is to ensure that, having reached conclusions on the appropriate number of councillors to be elected to the county council, each district council area is allocated the number of county councillors to which it is entitled. It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every division of a county.

51 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, especially when also seeking to achieve coterminosity in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum. Accordingly, we consider that, 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 the boundaries of district wards and community identities. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be taken into account and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

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

Electorate forecasts

53 Since 1975 there has been an 13% increase in the electorate of Cambridgeshire county. At Stage One the County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year

2007, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 431,516 to 458,110 over the five-year period from 2002 to 2007. It expects most of the growth to be in South Cambridgeshire, although a significant amount is also expected in the remaining four districts. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. We accept that this is an inexact science, and having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

54 At Stage One Chatteris Town Council argued that the County Council's forecast figures for Chatteris were too low. We asked the County Council to respond to this query and it provided details of how the forecast electorate was calculated for Chatteris. It stated that the forecast was 'based on monitoring information supplied by the County Council Planning Department'. It continued that although more dwellings are likely to be built in Chatteris under the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan by 2016, figures relating to this 'cannot be used in the review as it is not possible to specify with any certainty where and when the new development will occur'.

55 We acknowledged that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered all the evidence received concerning electorate forecasts, we accepted that the County Council's figures were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at that time.

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

Council size

57 As explained earlier, we now require justification for any council size proposed, whether it is for an increase, decrease, or retention of the existing council size.

58 Cambridgeshire County Council presently has 59 members. At Stage One we received proposals for four different council sizes. The County Council proposed a council size of 68, an increase of nine, Cambridgeshire County Labour Party (The County Labour Party), North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party (the North East Labour Party), North West Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party (the North West Labour Party) and Farcet Parish Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 59, Huntingdonshire District Council proposed a council size of 69, an increase of 10, and Councillors Clarke and Eddy and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council proposed a council size of 70, an increase of 11.

59 The County Council proposed an increase in council size from 59 to 68 members. In its submission, the Council outlined the new 'Cabinet system of governance' that it had adopted from May 2001. It said that the Cabinet consists of a Leader and nine councillors who are each assigned a portfolio. The County Council stated that a report prepared for the Interim Scheme of Members Allowances from 1999 to 2001 found that under the old structure "average" leading Members [...] attended meetings on approximately 75 days a year' and estimated that 'under the new arrangements [...] an "average" leading Member would devote some 80 to 90 days per annum to Council business'.

60 The County Council went on to outline its structure in detail referring to its scrutiny committees, its service development groups (SDGs), its local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and other meetings and partnerships. The County Council stated that the Interim Scheme of Members' Allowances report 'identified that an "average" backbench member had attended Council meetings on approximately 44 days of the year in 1999/2000 and 2000/2001'. It continued, stating that 'comparing the increase for an "average" leading member, this results in a 15% increase for an "average" backbench member equating to approximately 51 days'. The County Council stated that it has introduced a 'corporate seminar programme to improve and enhance information flows/levels of awareness particularly of backbench members' and that these seminars are held on a monthly basis.

61 With regard to the representational role of councillors the County Council considered that 'given the increasing number of commitments for both Executive and Non-Executive councillors, the most effective way for all councillors to engage with their local communities is to increase the total number of councillors in Cambridgeshire'. As evidence for these increasing commitments the County Council pointed to the 'increase in consultation by County and District authorities [which] has subsequently resulted in an increase in workload'. It also stated that 'members representing rural parishes also highlighted the fact that they were expected to attend more meetings locally'.

62 The County Council concluded that 'the average workload of each councillor is greater than it was prior to the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000'. The County Council was of the opinion that 'if councillors are to engage effectively with their local electors, parish councils and community groups, the total number of councillors on the Council will need to increase to enable the current workload burden to be spread more evenly'.

63 Cambridgeshire County Labour Party proposed retaining the existing council size of 59 members. It considered that the County Council's proposed increase of nine seats 'appeared to be predicated upon the argument that as the workload of the individual councillors has increased, the council should be increased in size by 15%'. It continued, stating that 'it was not clear how they arrived at the figure of 15%'. The Labour Party stated that it 'can clearly accept that the workload of those who are now Cabinet Members has increased' but considered that 'surely the workload of those outside the Cabinet has decreased'. It went on to question whether the proposed increase was 'a fig leaf to construct an argument for 14 coterminous seats in Cambridge'.

64 Farcet Parish Council also proposed retaining the existing council size. It considered that 'the argument advanced in the [Council's] consultative document [...] does not set out in detail the reasons for the suggested increase in seats'. It considered that 'in the absence of a closely argued case for 68 councillors it must be assumed this is a strategy to ensure that the wards and electoral divisions in Cambridgeshire are coterminous'.

65 The North East Labour Party and the North West Labour Party also proposed retaining the existing council size but did not provide any argumentation.

66 Huntingdonshire District Council proposed an increase of council size from 58 to 69 members. It considered that 'the Panel [Huntingdonshire District Council's Elections Panel] were unclear as to the rationale behind the proposed growth in the number of

councillors to 68 and why an increase of 15% had been chosen which appeared to be somewhat arbitrary'. It went on to argue that 'the proportion of the County electorate in Huntingdonshire in 2008 [December 2007 projected electorate] at 27.22% results in an arithmetical number of councillors of 18.51. In each of the other districts, their [the County Council's] proposal rounds the number of members per district up or down to the nearest whole number. However, in Huntingdonshire this logic has not been followed and instead of rounding the percentage up to the nearest whole number of 19, it has been rounded down to 18.' It concluded that 'the Panel therefore recommends that if the size of County Council membership is to increase, it should do so to 69 members, with 19 members representing divisions in Huntingdonshire'.

67 Councillors Souter and Taylor considered that the County Council's proposals for an increase in council size were 'reasonable'. However, they proposed that Huntingdonshire be allocated a further councillor, in order to achieve the correct allocation between the districts, resulting in a council size of 69.

68 Councillors Clarke and Eddy, and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council proposed a council size of 70, an increase of 11, arguing that they could not 'accept the County Council's proposal that there should only be 68 members of the County Council and that Cambridge City will have 14 members'. They considered that 'it would appear that 14 members for Cambridge City is the County Council's real starting point, rather than their arbitrary proposal to restrict the increase in members to 15%'.

69 After considering the representations received on council size we did not consider that we had sufficient evidence and argumentation to make a decision on the most appropriate size for Cambridgeshire County Council. We therefore asked all parties who submitted a representation at Stage One regarding council size to provide further information as to why their proposed council sizes would provide for more effective and convenient local government for Cambridgeshire.

70 In the County Council's further evidence it stated that 'many cabinet members have commented on the increase in their workload as a result of the new internal political management arrangements' and said that 'the involvement of non-executive councillors, by appointing backbench members as "executive assistants" to work with portfolio holders, is likely to be one option the Council will be considering to relieve the pressure on the executive'. The County Council commented that many councillors are now holding surgeries and that this generates more responses and more workload.

71 The Council considered that as well as being appointed to a 'wide range of external bodies' [details of which were provided] new bodies are being developed which reflect the changes in the County and nationally, e.g. implementation structure vehicle to manage the development within the County and also the establishment of new bodies providing youth and adult services, combining Social Services and Education, and Social Services and Health where appropriate'. It was argued that more councillors were required to share the burden of these new bodies and to allow the 'long history of effective partnership working' to continue. It concluded by referring to the composition of the Council and stated that 'we hope that the opportunity to increase the number of councillors on the Council and consequently spread the workload evenly will attract more young people and people with jobs to stand for election'.

72 The North East Labour Party considered that ‘the present size of [the] County Council has worked satisfactorily in the past’. It considered that ‘the “cabinet” structure which has been introduced appears to be working so there would seem little point in changing and disrupting it while it is still relatively new’. It therefore considered that ‘an increase in the number of members cannot be justified’.

73 The County Labour Party also supplied further evidence in support of its proposal to retain the existing council size. It considered that two aspects of the councillors’ role, those of representing the interests of residents on the local authority and representing the interests of both residents and the local authority on and to a wide range of external bodies, have been unchanged by any ‘suggested increase in the functions of the council’ resulting from the implementation of the new political management structure.

74 It stated that ‘many “portfolio holders” are now full-time councillors and as such are adequately rewarded for their new “full-time” responsibilities’. However, it noted that ‘councillors who previously were committee and sub-committee members now have a perceived lower level of involvement in the day-to-day running of the local authority’ and considered that the proposal for an increase in council size is ‘based upon the desire of the Council to retain fourteen coterminous electoral divisions within the City of Cambridge’.

75 In its further evidence Huntingdonshire District Council ‘concluded that it is the Authority under review – in this case Cambridgeshire County Council – which is best placed to put forward the case on council size, bearing in mind the requirement to have regard to the political management structure it operates and the impact it has on the role of County Councillors’.

76 Both Councillor Clarke and Councillor Eddy responded to the request for further evidence regarding council size. Councillor Clarke stated that ‘I fully support the County Council’s reasons for an increase in council membership’ but went on to say that ‘the figures the County Council produced, do show that a council size [of] 69 members, which is an increase of 17%, would be more appropriate’. Councillor Clarke considered that ‘my County Council colleagues would not raise any objection if a council membership of 69 was used as a starting point by the Boundary Committee’.

77 Councillor Eddy asserted that a council size of 68 would be ‘clearly biased against Huntingdonshire’, and that he would prefer the starting point used by the Committee to be a council of 69 members.

78 We gave much consideration to the issue of council size in Cambridgeshire. We considered that the County Council provided good evidence for an increase in council size. We considered that the evidence provided by the County Council in justifying an increase in council size was sufficient. We noted that it referred at all times to the new political management structure used by Cambridgeshire County Council and cited evidence regarding the increased workloads of all councillors. It provided details of reports and studies into the new pressures on the ‘average’ councillor and the increase in hours devoted to council work. It addressed the new scrutiny arrangements employed, in particular in the field of health and social care, and the representational roles fulfilled by councillors on external bodies. It continued by citing reports which concluded that the ‘average’ backbench member’s commitment to the council had increased by some 15% since the implementation of the new political management

structure. Whilst it alluded to the expanse in population of Cambridgeshire in its subsequent evidence, its reference was in respect to the knock-on effects on the Council's Service Development Groups and the consequent increase on the workload of the councillors.

79 In addition to what we considered to be a well-argued case for an increase in council size, we further noted that this council size had been fully consulted on by the County Council and had received some level of local support. We examined the responses to the County Council's consultation and noted that only one submission opposing the increase was received, from the Cambridgeshire County Labour Party, using the arguments detailed above. We considered that the evidence provided by those parties supporting the retention of the existing council size (the North East Labour Party, the North West Labour Party and Farcet Parish Council) was based more on an opposition to the proposed increase to 68 and noted that little reference was made to councillors' representational roles or the impact on their workload of the new political management structure. Indeed, no supporting evidence was provided by two of the parties (the North West Labour Party and Farcet Parish Council) proposing the retention of the existing arrangements. In light of the *Guidance* offered to interested parties, specifically the point that it is no longer sufficient to assert that no change to the existing arrangements is required, we believed that there was insufficient evidence to justify the retention of the existing council size.

80 We noted the concerns of Councillors Clarke and Eddy, Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council and the County Labour Party that the County Council's submission may be based on retaining 14 single-member coterminous divisions in Cambridge City. However, we can only make our decision on the evidence before us and, in this instance, the evidence and argumentation for an increase in council size was more persuasive than that provided for a retention of the existing council size. Also, it should be stressed, that whilst we are aware that there might be perceived political implications of our reviews, we have no regard for these when formulating our recommendations.

81 Having concluded that the evidence provided by the County Council was sufficient to justify an increase in council size, we examined the allocation of councillors between the districts in Cambridgeshire, under a council size of 68. As mentioned earlier, we seek to ensure that each district area within the county is allocated the correct number of county councillors with respect to the district's proportion of the county's electorate. As argued by Huntingdonshire District Council and Councillors Clarke, Eddy, Souter and Taylor and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council during Stage One, the correct allocation of councillors between the five districts cannot be achieved under a council size of 68. The County Council's scheme left Huntingdonshire under-represented by one councillor. We therefore proposed an increase in council size to 69 members to provide the correct allocation of councillors between the five districts of the county.

82 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we concluded that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 69 members.

83 During Stage Three, we received general support for our proposed increase in council size. The County Council supported a council size of 69 but stated that it was 'surprised that once the Committee concluded a council of 69 members was more appropriate for Cambridgeshire that proposals were not then sought from the county

council for the divisions that the 69 members should represent.’ We would expect respondents to provide the correct allocation of councillors between the districts of a county. Where they fail to do so, we do not see it as our duty to seek new schemes based on the correct allocation of councillors. We also received specific support for the increase of 10 councillors from South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats and Councillor Leeke.

84 At Stage Three, we received one objection to our proposed council size of 69. The North East Labour Party maintained that the existing council size of 59 would adequately serve the interests of the county. However, it provided no further argumentation or evidence as to why the existing council size would provide for more effective and convenient local government, than the proposed council size of 69 members. Ramsey Town Council also commented on council size and considered that more councillors ‘are justified’ but ‘will increase administration costs.’

85 We have considered the representations received at Stage Three, and consider that we have not received any evidence to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendation. Therefore, in light of this, and the general support for our proposed council size, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 69 as final.

Electoral arrangements

86 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the countywide schemes from the County Council and the County Labour Party. The County Council’s proposals would improve electoral equality, compared with the existing arrangements, with the number of divisions where the number of electors would vary by more than 10% from the county average reduced from 31 to 26 by 2007. The County Council’s scheme would provide 78% coterminosity between district wards and county divisions across Cambridgeshire.

87 Having adopted a council size of 69 members as the most appropriate for Cambridgeshire, it was very difficult for us to adopt any of the divisions proposed by the County Labour Party as their scheme was based on a council size of 59. The County Labour Party’s scheme was based on a different council size from the one that we proposed adopting and therefore divisions in the scheme were of different sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members. Using the councillor:elector ratio from a council size of 69 results in higher levels of electoral inequality in the County Labour Party’s proposed divisions and thus made it very difficult to incorporate individual divisions from their scheme into a county-wide scheme based on a different council size.

88 We were concerned that in all of the submissions we received, there was generally little evidence and argumentation supporting the proposals, especially in relation to community identities and interests across the county. Under the Local Government Act 1992 we must have regard to the need to reflect the identities and interest of local communities. However, at Stage One this was difficult due to the lack of argumentation and evidence received regarding community identities and interests and, for the most part, we based our draft recommendations on proposals that provided a good balance between electoral equality and coterminosity with only a limited understanding of community identities and interests in the affected areas. We stated that we would

welcome further evidence regarding community identities and interests across Cambridgeshire at Stage Three.

89 As indicated above, we adopted a council size of 69, as proposed by Huntingdonshire District Council in order to address the County Council's incorrect allocation of councillors for Huntingdonshire district. At Stage One we adopted locally proposed schemes with some amendments in order to improve electoral equality across the county. In Cambridge City we adopted the County Council's scheme in its entirety. In East Cambridgeshire we adopted the County Council's proposals with our own amendments in two divisions. In Fenland we adopted the County Council's proposals in six divisions and our own in five divisions. In Huntingdonshire we adopted Huntingdonshire District Council's proposal in its entirety, and in South Cambridgeshire we broadly adopted our own scheme whilst retaining five of the County Council's proposed divisions. In each instance our amendments to the proposed schemes were to improve electoral equality.

90 As stated earlier in the report, following the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions. Six two-member divisions were proposed at Stage One in Huntingdonshire, which we adopted, along with two more of our own in South Cambridgeshire. We considered that these two-member divisions provided a better balance between the statutory criteria than either the existing arrangements or any of the proposals received at Stage One.

91 In response to our draft recommendations report, at Stage Three a number of respondents expressed opposition to the principle of two-member divisions. The County Council stated that it did not support two-member divisions 'as single-member divisions provide clearer representation leading to greater accountability and transparency'. However, it did acknowledge 'that [two-member divisions] may be necessary in a small number of cases in the absence of an alternative proposal.' With regards to the two-member divisions we proposed, the County Council only objected to St Ives and Sawston divisions as it considered that these divisions could be divided into single-member divisions that satisfied the statutory criteria.

92 Stapleford, Sawston, Hauxton, Little Shelford and Histon parish councils and Councillors Souter & Taylor and Councillor Gooden all opposed two-member divisions in their respective areas as they considered that such arrangements would cause confusion to the electorate. Huntingdon Constituency Labour Party, Cambridgeshire County Labour Party and Andrew Lansley, MP, also expressed a general preference for single-member divisions in the county.

93 We acknowledge the opposition to our proposed two-member divisions from a number of sources. However, we would point out that we only seek to adopt multi-member divisions where we have been unable to identify an arrangement of single-member divisions that provides a better balance between electoral equality and coterminosity, while reflecting community identity. We also do not consider that opposition to multi-member divisions purely on principle is in itself persuasive and would look, rather, for specific arguments relating to particular divisions before we would be persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations. This is especially true in Huntingdonshire where we have, in fact, received some support for our use of multi-member divisions, as well as a proposal for a three-member division. Similarly in East Cambridgeshire a two-member division has been locally proposed. Having looked at all

the representations received, we do not consider that sufficient evidence or argumentation has been provided to persuade us to move away from any of our proposed multi-member divisions. We are therefore endorsing all those multi-member divisions contained in the draft recommendations as final, along with an additional two-member division that we are proposing in Soham in East Cambridgeshire.

94 In county reviews we have the requirement to consider coterminosity between county divisions and borough and district wards. As outlined earlier, we seek to provide between 60% and 80% coterminosity between divisions and wards across the county as a whole. However, the level of coterminosity in each district will vary according to the particular nature of the district. In Cambridgeshire our final recommendations would achieve 83% coterminosity between district wards and county divisions.

95 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we are making amendments to our proposals in three districts in Cambridgeshire. These are predominantly to provide a better reflection of community identity, but in South Cambridgeshire our amendments slightly improve coterminosity while in East Cambridgeshire they slightly improve both electoral equality and coterminosity. We are also proposing to amend several division names. Our final recommendations would initially produce 27 divisions with electoral variances of more than 10% and four divisions with electoral variances of over 20% from the county average. This is forecast to improve with 12 divisions having electoral variances of over 10% and no division having a variance over 20% from the county average.

96 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For county division purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn, as follows:

- a. Cambridge City (pages 46 – 47)
- b. East Cambridgeshire district (pages 47 – 51)
- c. Fenland district (pages 51 – 54)
- d. Huntingdonshire district (pages 55 – 65)
- e. South Cambridgeshire district (pages 65 – 73)

97 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and are illustrated in Appendix A, the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Cambridge City

98 Under the current arrangements, the city of Cambridge is represented by 14 county councillors serving 14 divisions. Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton and Coleridge divisions are over-represented with 34%, 29%, 4%, 25% and 20% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (37%, 33%, 4%, 28% and 19% by 2007). King's Hedges, Market, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington and West Chesterton divisions are over-represented with 34%, 7%, 16%, 18%, 17% and 16% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (37%, 9%, 20%, 22%, 11% and 20% by 2007). Newnham and Petersfield divisions are under-represented with 6% and 7% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (7% and 12% by 2007). East Chesterton division is over-represented with 2% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average and will be under-represented by 2% by 2007.

99 At Stage One we received two submissions in relation to the city of Cambridge. The County Council and Cambridgeshire County Labour Party submitted city-wide schemes. The County Council's scheme was based on the number of councillors representing Cambridge remaining the same as at present at 14, which it would be entitled to under a council size of 69. The County Council proposed that each of the 14 district wards in Cambridge City be represented by a single county councillor, making 14 coterminous single-member divisions. The County Council considered that this was important as 'the City is unparished and the district wards are the main way different parts of the City are defined'.

100 Under the County Council's proposals, 100% coterminosity would be secured within the city. The proposed Arbury, Castle, Newnham and Market divisions would initially contain 11%, 7%, 4% and 2% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (5%, 6% and 6% more and equal to the county average by 2007). The proposed Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's, Romsey and West Chesterton divisions would initially contain 1%, 1%, 1% and 2% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (3%, 4%, 5% and 3% fewer by 2007). The proposed Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Petersfield and Trumpington divisions would initially contain 8%, 8%, 2%, 5% and 11% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (7%, 6%, 4%, 4% and 3% fewer by 2007). The proposed Abbey division would initially be equal to the county average and would contain more electors by 1% by 2007.

101 The County Labour Party's scheme was based on a decrease in the number of councillors representing Cambridge from 14 to 12 to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. It proposed 12 single-member divisions. However, as discussed previously we are proposing an increase in council size from 59 to 69 and it was therefore difficult to utilise any of the Labour Party's proposed divisions because divisions in the County Labour Party's scheme were of different sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members.

102 We carefully considered the representations we received at Stage One. We proposed to adopt the County Council's scheme in its entirety because of its excellent level of coterminosity and the good electoral equality that it provides. Under our draft recommendations the city of Cambridge would have 100% coterminosity between

district ward and county division boundaries. The electoral variances for our proposed divisions were as detailed above in the County Council's proposals.

103 At Stage Three, we received seven submissions in relation to our draft recommendations for Cambridge City. The County Council fully supported our draft recommendations. Cambridge City Council stated that both the Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups on the City Council supported our recommendations for the city. It noted that the Labour group 'declined to comment on the basis that it felt it was for the Labour group on the County Council to respond.' We also received support for our draft recommendations from the County Labour Party, Councillor Leeke and Malcolm Moss, MP. Toft Parish Council stated that it 'approved' of our draft recommendations. The North East Labour Party considered that Cambridge should be represented by 12 councillors, but did not provide any argumentation in support of this.

104 Having carefully considered the representations received and in light of the support for our draft recommendations for Cambridge city, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations as final. The level of coterminosity in Cambridge City would be 100% and the number of electors per councillor would be the same as at draft. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

East Cambridgeshire district

105 Under the current arrangements, the district of East Cambridgeshire is represented by seven county councillors serving seven divisions. Ely North & South and Littleport divisions are over-represented with 28% and 1% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (31% fewer and 16% more by 2007). Burwell, Ely West, Soham, Sutton and Woodditton divisions are under-represented with 14%, 44%, 25%, 2% and 9% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (6%, 54% and 22% more, 4% fewer and equal to the county average by 2007).

106 At Stage One we received three submissions in relation to the district of East Cambridgeshire, including district-wide schemes from the County Council and the Labour Party. The County Council's scheme was based on an increase in the number of councillors from seven to nine to which it would be entitled under a council size of 69.

107 The County Council proposed nine coterminous single-member divisions for East Cambridgeshire. In the south of the district it proposed a Burwell division comprising the district wards of Burwell and The Swaffhams, and a Woodditton division comprising the district wards of Bottisham, Cheveley and Dullingham Villages. In the north of the district the County Council proposed an Ely North East division comprising the district wards of Ely East and Ely North, an Ely South West division comprising the district wards of Ely South and Ely West, and a Littleport division comprising the district wards of Littleport East and Littleport West.

108 In the east of the district the County Council proposed a Fordham division comprising the district wards of Isleham and Fordham and a Soham division comprising the district wards of Soham North and Soham South. In the west of the district it proposed a Sutton division comprising the district wards of Downham Villages and Sutton, and a Haddenham division comprising the district wards of Haddenham and Stretham.

109 Under the County Council's proposals 100% coterminosity would be secured in the district. Its proposed Burwell, Ely South West, Fordham, Sutton and Littleport divisions would initially contain 2%, 14%, 31%, 6% and 14% fewer electors than the county average respectively (9%, 7%, 36% and 12% fewer and 8% more by 2007). The proposed Ely North East, Haddenham, Soham and Woodditton divisions would initially contain 8%, 13%, 19% and 20% more electors than the county average respectively (13%, 5%, 18% and 11% more by 2007). The County Council acknowledged the high level of electoral inequality in its proposed Fordham division, but considered that it should be accepted 'in this isolated, sparsely populated area, right at the edge of the county'.

110 The County Labour Party's scheme was based on an increase in the number of councillors representing East Cambridgeshire from seven to eight to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. It proposed four single-member and two two-member divisions. However, as discussed previously, we proposed an increase in council size from 59 to 69 and it was therefore difficult to utilise any of the Labour Party's proposed divisions because divisions in the County Labour Party's scheme were of different sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members resulting in higher levels of electoral inequality and thus making it very difficult to incorporate individual divisions from their scheme into a district-wide scheme based on a different council size.

111 Soham Town Council objected to the division of Soham in the County Council's proposals. It was, however, referring to the County Council's consultation paper rather than its submitted scheme. Soham Town Council considered that 'any boundary alterations must at least coincide with the recently determined district electoral review boundaries'.

112 We carefully considered all the representations we received at Stage One. We adopted the County Council's proposals in the seven divisions of Burwell, Ely North East, Ely South West, Haddenham, Littleport, Sutton and Woodditton because of their good levels of electoral equality and coterminosity. However, we proposed amendments to the County Council's proposed Fordham and Soham divisions in the east of the district. We did not consider that sufficient evidence and argumentation had been provided by the County Council to justify the significantly lower than average electoral variance (36%) in its proposed Fordham division. While we acknowledged the rural nature of the area we considered that it was possible to improve electoral equality without proposing 'unworkable' divisions. Under our draft proposals a revised Soham North division comprised the district wards of Soham North, Isleham and Wicken parish of Soham South district ward, and a revised Fordham division comprised the district ward of Fordham Villages and the remainder of Soham South district ward. We acknowledged that the County Council reported that local parties opposed dividing Soham, but we did not hear directly from them at Stage One, and we welcomed comments on our proposals during the consultation period.

113 Under our draft recommendations the district of East Cambridgeshire would have 78% coterminosity between district ward and county division boundaries. Our proposed Burwell, Ely South West, Soham North, Sutton and Littleport divisions would initially contain 2%, 14%, 18%, 6% and 14% fewer electors than the county average respectively (9%, 7%, 17% and 12% fewer and 8% more by 2007). Our proposed Ely North East, Haddenham, Woodditton and Fordham divisions would initially contain 8%,

13%, 20% and 7% more electors than the county average respectively (13%, 5% and 11% more and 1% fewer by 2007).

114 At Stage Three we received 14 submissions in response to our draft recommendations for East Cambridgeshire, all of which related to our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions. The County Council accepted our proposals for East Cambridgeshire, but noted that there 'has been strong opposition to the amendments locally.' It continued that while it had considered 'various representations, seeking to balance the wishes of the community and the council's position on multi-member wards' it was 'not able to propose a better solution' than that of our draft recommendations. However, it considered that our proposed Fordham division should be renamed Soham South & Fordham.

115 The Strategic Development Committee on East Cambridgeshire District Council said that it had noted the objections from Soham Town Council 'in relation to the specific proposals for Soham', and 'having debated the matter' asked that Fordham division be renamed Soham South & Fordham. South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats supported our proposals for the district but considered that Fordham & Soham South 'might be a more appropriate name' for our proposed Fordham division. Cambridgeshire County Labour Party considered that the proposals for the district were unacceptable, but did not propose any alternatives. It also noted 'the difficulty of creating electoral equality in this strangely shaped district.' The North East Labour Party considered that East Cambridgeshire should be represented by eight councillors, to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. However, they did not provide any alternative arrangements or argumentation for this proposal.

116 Soham Town Council considered that our proposals for Soham are 'totally unacceptable.' It said that it objects 'to any division of Soham, particularly one that takes no notice of, or totally ignores, both geographical features, established communities, and most importantly the wishes of the community.' It also opposed the name of our proposed Fordham division considering it to be 'divisive to the residents and community who consider Soham as a separate entity.'

117 Isleham Parish Council considered that Soham should not be divided and supported the County Council's Stage One proposal. Chippenham Parish Council also supported the County Council's Stage One proposal. It considered that 'Fordham Villages ward has a more natural affinity with Isleham [ward than Soham ward]' as children from Chippenham parish attend school in Isleham, and the two wards are linked together in 'the Three Rivers group ministry.' Fordham Parish Council strongly objected to our proposals concerning Soham town and considered that 'Soham should remain as one unit.'

118 Wicken Parish Council considered that our draft proposals 'placed too much emphasis on electoral equality and have taken insufficient notice of local community identities and coterminosity.' It considered that combining Wicken parish with Soham North and Isleham district ward 'will lead to confusion and disillusionment among electors.' It continued by saying that the parish has strong community links with Soham [South parish] and that the primary school children attend will be in a different division from the village in which they live. It also stated that our proposed divisions would result in 'even poorer turnouts than we get at present [for elections]'. Toft Parish Council said that it approved of our draft recommendations in the county.

119 Councillor Powley (Soham division) considered that our proposals for Soham are 'totally unacceptable' and that 'each county councillor representing the same number of electors is incompatible with bearing in mind local circumstances' with regards to Soham North and Fordham divisions. He highlighted 'a strong attachment' between the two parishes in Soham South, discussing schools, the post office, shops and churches as being shared between the communities. He considered that no such community identity exists between Soham South parish and the Fordham Villages. Instead, he suggested as a compromise that our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions be combined to form a two-member division, which would retain the name of Soham in the title. Under his proposal East Cambridgeshire would be 100% coterminous and his proposed two-member division would initially have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the county average (9% fewer by 2007).

120 Councillor Dwyer considered that a two-member division can 'work efficiently and has the advantage that cover is available when one councillor may be ill.' She considered that our draft proposals would result in 'the major part of Soham (Schools, shops, churches)' being in our proposed Fordham division and considered it 'unacceptable that the bulk of Soham should be re-designated as a Fordham village, and [that] the name Soham should not be dropped in any event.'

121 Councillor Leeke (West Chesterton division) considered that although our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions are 'much better' than those proposed by the County Council at Stage One they 'are not very popular' and so proposed an alternative arrangement. He proposed that Soham Central polling district from Soham South district ward be combined with Soham North district ward to create a Soham division, and that the remainder of Soham South ward be combined with Fordham Villages and Isleham district wards to create a Fordham division. His proposals would produce divisions with 12% and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2007. Councillor Leeke considered that his proposal would result 'in most of Soham being in the same seat [division]', but provided no further argumentation in support of it.

122 Malcolm Moss, MP, supported our draft recommendations. A local resident of Soham considered that the proposed Fordham division should be renamed Soham South & Fordham, 'or something similar' as not giving recognition to Soham electors would 'undoubtedly cause great resentment.'

123 We have carefully considered the evidence and representations received in relation to our draft recommendations and we note the general opposition to our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions. We consider that there was some good community identity argumentation supplied regarding the links between Soham North and Soham South wards, such as schools, transport and churches, and similarly the relationship between Isleham and the Fordham Villages. However, we do not consider that this is strong enough to justify the deterioration in electoral equality that would result from adopting the County Council's Stage One proposal. We note that the County Council itself did not resubmit its Stage One proposal in this area. We also note the support for our proposed Soham North and Fordham divisions from the County Council Liberal Democrats, The Strategic Development Committee on East Cambridgeshire District Council, and the County Council's admission that it could 'not suggest anything better' for the area. We also received general support for all our proposals from Malcolm Moss, MP, and Toft Parish Council.

124 We carefully considered the two single-member divisions proposed by Councillor Leeke and we note that his proposal improves electoral equality. However, we note that his proposal would put parts of Soham town in different divisions, resulting in an arrangement to which we consider there would be general opposition. In light of this and also the community identity evidence from Wicken Parish Council linking it to Soham (links which would not be reflected in this proposal), we do not consider that Councillor Leeke has provided strong enough argumentation to persuade us to adopt this proposal in our final recommendations

125 However, we also considered Councillor Powley and Councillor Dwyer's suggestion that Fordham and Soham North divisions could be combined to create a two-member division. This division would be coterminous and would have an electoral variance of -9% by 2007. We consider that the improved coterminosity and electoral equality that this division would provide, combined with the better reflection of community identity, would provide a better reflection of the statutory criteria than our draft proposals. We acknowledge that this is a large division which includes urban and rural areas, but note that a similar Norman Cross division has been created in Huntingdonshire that has received support. We also note that this proposal is locally generated and allows us to take account of all submissions received at Stage Three regarding Soham. We note that this is the only proposal that allows for Soham town to remain wholly in one division while also providing good coterminosity and electoral equality. We are therefore proposing an amended two-member Soham & Fordham Villages division as final.

126 As we are adopting this two-member division we are not proposing to adopt the name change proposed by the County Council, as it is no longer relevant. We are therefore endorsing our draft recommendations as final in East Cambridgeshire with the exception of the proposed amendment to the Soham and Fordham Villages area. Under our final recommendations coterminosity would improve to 100% between county divisions and district wards. Our proposed Burwell, Ely South West, Littleport, Soham & Fordham Villages and Sutton divisions would initially be over-represented with 2%, 14%, 14%, 6% and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (9%, 7% fewer, 8% more, 9% and 12% fewer by 2007). Our proposed Ely North East, Haddenham and Woodditton divisions would initially be under-represented with 8%, 13% and 20% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (13%, 5% and 11% more by 2007). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Fenland district

127 Under the current arrangements, the district of Fenland is represented by nine county councillors serving nine divisions. March West, Whittlesey, Wisbech North, Elm and Chatteris divisions are over-represented with 6%, 9%, 6%, 9% and 4% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (8%, 5% and 5% fewer, 4% more and equal to the county average by 2007). Benwick & Doddington, Leverington, March East and Wisbech South divisions are under-represented with 2%, 11%, 16% and 23% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (8%, 12%, 20% and 18% by 2007).

128 At Stage One we received four submissions in relation to the district of Fenland, including district-wide proposals from the County Council, the County Labour Party and the North East Labour Party. The County Council's scheme was based on an increase in councillors from nine to 11 to which it would be entitled under a council size of 69.

129 The County Council proposed 11 single-member divisions. In the north of the district the County Council proposed three coterminous divisions, a Roman Bank & Peckover division comprising the district wards of Peckover and Roman Bank, a Wisbech North division comprising the district wards of Clarkson, Kirkgate and Waterlees and a Wisbech South division comprising the district wards of Hill, Medworth and Staithe. It also proposed a coterminous Waldersey division comprising the district wards of Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary and Elm & Christchurch.

130 The County Council proposed three coterminous divisions in the March area of the district whereby the three proposed divisions of March East, March North and March West would be coterminous with the district wards of the same names. In the south of the district it proposed a coterminous Chatteris division comprising the district wards of Birch, Slade Lode, The Mills and Wenneye, and a Forty Foot division comprising the district wards of Doddington, Manea and Wimblington and Benwick parish of Benwick, Coates & Eastrea district ward.

131 In the west of the district the County Council proposed a Whittlesey North division comprising the district wards of Bassenhally, Delph, Kingsmoor and St Andrews, and a Whittlesey South division comprising the district wards of Lattersey, St Marys and Whittlesey South parish ward of Whittlesey parish in Benwick, Coates & Eastrea district ward.

132 Under the County Council's proposals 82% coterminosity would be secured in the district. The proposed Forty Foot, March East, March North, March West and Whittlesey North divisions would initially contain 20%, 14%, 22%, 18% and 4% fewer electors than the county average respectively (12%, 11%, 20% and 21% fewer and 15% more by 2007). The proposed Chatteris, Roman Bank & Peckover, Waldersey, Wisbech North, Wisbech South and Whittlesey South divisions would initially contain 12%, 3%, 8%, 11%, 15% and 3% more electors than the county average respectively (17%, 3%, 12%, 12% and 11% more and 2% fewer by 2007).

133 Both the County Labour Party and the North East Labour Party schemes were based on the number of councillors representing Fenland remaining at nine to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. The North East Labour Party proposed nine single-member divisions. The County Labour Party supported seven of these but made alternative proposals for two divisions in the Whittlesey area. However, as discussed previously, we are proposing an increase in council size from 59 to 69 and it was therefore difficult to utilise any of these proposed divisions because divisions in these schemes were of different sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members resulting in higher levels of electoral inequality and thus making it very difficult to incorporate individual divisions from these schemes into a district-wide scheme based on a different council size.

134 Chatteris Town Council contended that the forecast figures for Chatteris town were too low. As discussed earlier, we asked the County Council to respond to this query and, having received its response, we were satisfied with the figures that they

have provided for Chatteris town. Chatteris Town Council also raised objections to the County Council's proposed Chatteris division, but these objections referred to proposals in the County Council's consultation paper, not their final submission.

135 We carefully considered all the representations we received at Stage One. We adopted the County Council's scheme in the six divisions of Roman Bank & Peckover, Wisbech North, Wisbech South, Whittlesey North and Whittlesey South as we considered that these divisions provided a good balance between coterminosity and electoral equality. We also proposed to adopt the County Council's proposed March North division. We acknowledged the high level of electoral inequality (-20% by 2007) in this division, but due to the size and distribution of the electorate in March and the surrounding district wards we did not consider that we could improve on this without causing knock-on effects across the rest of the district. We did, however, propose our own amendments to the remaining five divisions. The County Council's proposals emphasised coterminosity as a priority. Whilst obtaining an acceptable level of coterminosity is important, it is also necessary for us to ensure that our recommendations provide a good level of electoral equality and our amendments in the district of Fenland were made with this intention.

136 We did not consider that the argumentation in any of the representations was strong enough to justify so many divisions in the County Council's scheme having electoral imbalances of over 10%. Therefore our amendments provided what we considered to be a better balance between coterminosity and electoral equality. We proposed a non-coterminous Waldersey division comprising the district ward of Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary and Elm parish of Elm & Christchurch district ward. We proposed a non-coterminous March East division comprising the district ward of March East and Christchurch parish of Elm & Christchurch district ward, and a non-coterminous March West division comprising the district ward of March West and Benwick parish of Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward. In the south of the district we proposed amending the County Council's proposed Forty Foot division by transferring Benwick parish into an amended March West division and including Slade Lode district ward. Our proposed Chatteris division would be the same as the County Council's proposal with the exception of Slade Lode ward. We considered that these amendments were necessary in order to provide a better balance between electoral equality and coterminosity.

137 Under our draft recommendations the district of Fenland would have 64% coterminosity between district ward and county division boundaries. Chatteris, March East, March North, March West, Forty Foot, Waldersey and Whittlesey North divisions would initially contain 14%, 5%, 22%, 7%, 4%, 2% and 4% fewer electors than the county average respectively (10%, 2%, 20%, 8% fewer and 2%, 3% and 15% more by 2007). Roman Bank & Peckover, Wisbech North, Wisbech South and Whittlesey South divisions would initially contain 3%, 11%, 15% and 3% more electors than the county average respectively (3%, 12% and 11% more and 2% fewer by 2007).

138 At Stage Three, we received 10 submissions in relation to our draft recommendations for Fenland. The County Council accepted our proposals for Fenland, but highlighted that our proposals provided a reduction in coterminosity compared to its Stage One proposal for the district. The County Labour Party did not consider our proposals acceptable but 'found it impossible to propose alternatives.' The North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association, Toft Parish Council, Councillor Leeke and

Malcolm Moss, MP, approved of and supported our draft recommendations for Fenland. The North East Labour Party considered that Fenland should be represented by nine councillors, to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59, but they provided no argumentation in support of this.

139 Christchurch Parish Council considered that in the interests of coterminosity Christchurch parish should be included in our proposed Waldersey division, as proposed by the County Council at Stage One. It considered that by including the parish in our proposed March East division it would be 'exposed to increased urban influence.' Chatteris Town Council considered our proposal to include Slade Lode ward in our proposed Forty Foot division 'totally unacceptable.' It considered that splitting Chatteris would 'lead to loss of identity and heritage' and that this ward should be included in our proposed Chatteris division as it has 'no affinity with a rural area.' Chatteris Town Council considered that the town should be represented by two councillors, and if this was not possible then it should be represented by one councillor as at present. However, we received support for our proposed Forty Foot division from Manea Parish Council.

140 We carefully considered all the representations we received at Stage Three. We considered Christchurch Parish Council's request to be included in the proposed Waldersey division. However, we transferred it from this division at Stage One to improve electoral equality in the district and we do not consider that we have received strong enough argumentation to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendations for this division. We also note its concerns about combining urban and rural areas. However, as stated previously in paragraph 14, it is almost impossible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse communities, for example, combining rural and urban areas, when seeking the best balance between the statutory criteria.

141 We also considered Chatteris Town Council's objections to the separation of Slade Lode ward from the rest of Chatteris town. However, as stated in our draft recommendations the 2007 electorate forecast for the town is insufficient to warrant two councillors. We received little community identity argumentation and no alternatives were proposed. Therefore, in light of this and the support we received for our proposals from the County Council and other groups, and specifically for Forty Foot division from Manea Parish Council, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations.

142 We are therefore endorsing our draft recommendations as final in Fenland. Our final recommendations would provide 64% coterminosity and the number of electors per councillor would be the same as proposed at draft. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Huntingdonshire district

143 Under the current arrangements, the district of Huntingdonshire is represented by 15 county councillors serving 15 divisions. Brampton, Buckden, Eynesbury, Huntingdon North, Priory Park, St Ives South and West Hunts divisions are over-represented with 4%, 7%, 13%, 3%, 9%, 3% and 17% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (11% and 26% more and 20%, 8%, 14%, 5% and 21% fewer by 2007). Eaton, Houghton & Wyton, Huntingdon & Godmanchester, Norman Cross, Ramsey, Somersham and St Ives North & Warboys divisions are under-represented with 32%, 7%, 64%, 18%, 22%, 16% and 21% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (22%, 2%, 58%, 21%, 17%, 7% and 12% by 2007). Sawtry division is under-represented with 3% more electors per county councillor than the county average (4% fewer by 2007).

144 At Stage One we received 13 submissions, including district-wide schemes from the County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, the County Labour Party, Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council, Councillor Eddy, Councillor Clarke and Councillors Souter and Taylor. The County Council proposed two schemes for this district based on an increase in councillors from 15 to 18.

145 The County Council proposed a preferred option of 18 single-member divisions and an alternative option with 10 single-member and four two-member divisions. In its preferred option, seven divisions would have electoral variances of over 10% and two would have variances of over 20% by 2007 under a council size of 69. In the County Council's alternative option, six divisions would have electoral variances of over 10% and two over 20% by 2007 under a council size of 69. We looked at the divisions proposed by the County Council but, as discussed previously, we proposed an increase in council size from 59 to 69. It was therefore difficult to utilise many of the County Council's proposed divisions from either scheme as it allocated 18 councillors to the district, when under a council size of 69 it would be entitled to 19 councillors.

146 Huntingdonshire District Council proposed an increase in councillors from 15 to 19 to which the district would be entitled under a council size of 69. It proposed seven single-member and six two-member divisions for the district of Huntingdonshire. It did not, however, provide any names for its proposed divisions. In the north of the district it proposed a coterminous two-member division (1) comprising the district wards of Elton & Folksworth, Stilton and Yaxley & Farcet and a coterminous single-member division (2) comprising the district ward of Ramsey only. In the east of the district it proposed a coterminous single-member division (4) comprising the district wards of Upwood & The Raveleys and Warboys & Bury. It also proposed a single-member division (8) comprising the district wards of Somersham and the parishes of Bluntisham and Earith from Earith district ward, and a two-member division (7) comprising the district wards of St Ives East, St Ives South, St Ives West and Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish of Earith district ward. It proposed a single-member division (10) comprising the district wards of Fenstanton and The Hemingfords, and a two-member division (6) comprising the district wards of Godmanchester and Huntingdon East.

147 In the south of the district Huntingdonshire District Council proposed a single-member division (11) comprising the district wards of Buckden and Gransden & The Offords, a two-member division (12) comprising the district wards of Little Paxton, St Neots Priory Park and St Neots Eaton Ford and a two-member division (13) comprising

the district wards of St Neots Eaton Socon and St Neots Eynesbury. Finally, in the west of the district it proposed a single-member division (9) comprising the district wards of Brampton and Kimbolton & Staughton, a two-member division (5) comprising the district wards of Alconbury & The Stukeleys, Huntingdon North and Huntingdon West and a single-member division (3) comprising the district wards of Ellington and Sawtry.

148 Huntingdonshire District Council considered that their proposed divisions 'represent communities of interest', although it did not provide any detailed argumentation in support of its divisions. The District Council's proposals for divisions 1, 2, 3 and 10 are the same as those proposed in the County Council's alternative option.

149 Under the District Council's proposals 85% coterminosity would be secured within the district. The proposed divisions 1, 2, 5, 6, 13 and 11 would initially contain 6%, 2%, 7%, 10%, 12% and 4% fewer electors than the county average respectively (6%, 5%, 7%, 13% and 9% fewer and 16% more by 2007). The proposed divisions 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10 would initially contain 16%, 12%, 14%, 15%, 13% and 11% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (9%, 6%, 8%, 7%, 5% and 7% more by 2007). The proposed division 12 would initially have a councillor: elector ratio equal to the county average (6% fewer by 2007).

150 The County Labour Party's scheme was based on the number of councillors representing Huntingdonshire increasing by one from 15 to 16, to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. It proposed 16 single-member divisions. The North West Labour Party also considered that Huntingdonshire should be represented by 16 councillors. However, as discussed previously, we are proposing an increase in council size from 59 to 69 and it has therefore been difficult to utilise any of the County Labour Party's or the North West Labour Party's proposed divisions because divisions in these schemes were of different sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members.

151 Huntingdon Town Council considered that the County Council's proposals for Huntingdon town did 'not support community identity nor existing boundaries'. It gave support to the proposals submitted by Huntingdonshire District Council. Farcet Parish Council considered that Farcet parish should not be separated from the rest of its district ward, as it is in the County Council's preferred proposal for the district [removing Yaxley parish]. Warboys Parish Council supported the County Council's proposal that it be part of a coterminous division with Somersham and Upwood & The Raveleys district wards. Sawtry Parish Council were of the 'opinion that the local electoral division boundaries remain based from Sawtry'.

152 Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council made two submissions. The first submission objected to the District Council's proposal that it be included in a division with St Ives, stating that the 'village status of Holywell-cum-Needingworth would be jeopardised if it was attached to a ward with part of St Ives'. In its second submission, Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council gave support for, and attached a copy of, Councillor Eddy's submission (detailed below).

153 Councillor Eddy, Councillor Clarke and Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council submitted identical proposals for the district of Huntingdonshire. The scheme was based on an increase in council size from 15 to 19 councillors for the district, to which it would be entitled under a council size of 69. They proposed 13 divisions, six two-member and seven single-member divisions. The proposal was also identical to

Huntingdonshire District Council's proposed scheme in seven of the 13 divisions (the proposed divisions 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 12 and 13) but differed in the east of the district. They did, however, propose names for these divisions; division (1) would be named Yaxley, division (2) would be named Ramsey, division (3) would be named Sawtry, division (9) would be named Brampton, Kimbolton & Staughton, division (11) would be named Buckden, Gransden & The Offords, division (12) would be named St Neots Eaton Ford & Priory Park and division (13) would be named St Neots Eynesbury & Eaton Socon.

154 Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council, Councillor Eddy and Councillor Clarke proposed five alternative divisions for the northeast of the district based on 19 councillors representing the district. They proposed a pattern of coterminous single-member and two-member divisions in this area. Under Councillor Eddy, Councillor Clarke and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council's proposals 85% coterminosity would be secured in the district. Initially six divisions would have electoral variances of more than 10% from the county average, and one division would have a variance of more than 10% by 2007.

155 Councillors Souter and Taylor's proposal was based on 19 single-member divisions for the district. They contended that single-member divisions 'bring[s] the elected member closer to the people it represents [and] prevents divisions from becoming too unwieldy'. Their proposal was identical to the District Council's in four divisions (divisions 2, 4, 8 and 10). They proposed that division (2) be named Ramsey, division (4) be named Warboys & Upwood, division (8) be named Somersham and division (10) be named Hemingfords.

156 Under Councillors Souter and Taylor's proposal 26% coterminosity would be secured within the district. Initially seven divisions would have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the county average and one division would have a variance of over 20%, while six divisions would have electoral variances of over 10% by 2007.

157 We carefully considered all the representations we received at Stage One. We adopted the District Council's proposal in full for Huntingdonshire, as we considered that it facilitated the best balance between electoral equality and coterminosity across the district. We were not persuaded to adopt Councillors Souter and Taylor's proposals due to the very low level of coterminosity resulting from their scheme. We noted that the scheme proposed by Councillor Eddy, Councillor Clarke and Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council provided a slightly better level of electoral equality than the District Council's proposals. However, their proposals for Huntingdon North, West & Godmanchester and Huntingdon East divisions involved the creation of a parish ward with 20 electors in it and we did not consider that a parish ward of this size would provide for convenient and effective local government. We noted the objections of Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council to the splitting of Holywell-cum-Needlingworth parish from Earith district ward, and we considered combining Godmanchester and the Huntingdon district wards to create a three-member division, which would facilitate a scheme in the rest of the district allowing Holywell-cum-Needlingworth parish to be contained in a division with the rest of Earith district ward. However, we stated that we would require very strong evidence and argumentation to propose a three-member division, and we did not consider that we had sufficient argumentation and evidence at Stage One to propose such a division.

158 We noted that the District Council did not propose division names for Huntingdonshire and we therefore proposed names that we considered to be suitable. Under our proposals division (1) would be named Elton & Stilton, division (2) would be named Ramsey, division (3) would be named Sawtry & Ellington, division (4) would be named Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury, division (5) would be named Huntingdon, division (6) would be named Godmanchester. The proposed division (7) would be named St Ives, division (8) would be named Somersham & Earith, division (9) would be named Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton, division (10) would be named The Hemingfords & Fenstanton, division (11) would be named Gransden & The Offords. The proposed division (12) would be named Little Paxton & St Neots North and division (13) would be named St Neots Eaton Socon.

159 Under our draft recommendations the district of Huntingdonshire would have 85% coterminosity between district ward and county division boundaries. The electoral variances under our draft recommendations would be as detailed above in the District Council's proposals.

160 At Stage Three we received 27 submissions in relation to Huntingdonshire. The County Council accepted our draft recommendations for the district, but proposed one amendment. It considered that the two member St Ives division should be converted into two single-member divisions. It proposed a St Ives North division which would contain the district wards of St Ives East and St Ives West, and a St Ives South division which would contain the district ward of St Ives South along with Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish from Earith district ward. These divisions would have 11% and 4% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2007, but only one of them would be coterminous. It acknowledged that this proposal would receive 'strong resistance from Holywell-cum-Needingworth [parish].' The County Council also proposed three division name changes, it proposed that Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury be renamed Warboys & Upwood, that Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton be renamed Brampton & Kimbolton and that Elton & Stilton be renamed Norman Cross. It did not provide any argumentation for any of its amendments at Stage Three.

161 Huntingdonshire District Council supported our draft recommendations for the district, but proposed three division name changes that are identical to those proposed by the County Council.

162 The County Labour Party considered that our draft recommendations 'were not subject to prior consultation and are in the main unacceptable' and therefore proposed an alternative partial scheme for the district. The seven divisions of Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton, Little Paxton & St Neots North, Ramsey, Sawtry & Ellington, Somersham & Earith, The Hemingfords & Fenstanton and Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury were the same as our draft recommendations. It also proposed the same division amendments to our proposed St Ives division as the County Council. The County Labour Party considered that 'it is desirable, where possible to create single member divisions.' It proposed that our two-member Elton & Stilton division be converted into two single-member divisions, a non-coterminous Yaxley division comprising Yaxley parish of Yaxley & Farcet district ward and a non-coterminous Norman Cross division comprising the district wards of Elton & Folksworth and Stilton and Farcet parish of Yaxley & Farcet district ward. The County Labour Party considered the area needed 'a local councillor who owes no allegiance to Yaxley.' It proposed to

convert our two two-member divisions of Huntingdon and Godmanchester into four non-coterminous single-member divisions. It proposed a Godmanchester division comprising Godmanchester district ward, part of East Huntingdon district ward ('CG register and the Newtown area') and Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy parishes from Gransden & The Offords district ward. It proposed a Huntingdon North division comprising Huntingdon North district ward and part of Huntingdon West district ward ('CP register'). It considered that the Oxmoor estate in North Huntingdonshire district ward is 'the most deprived area in the county' and 'needs a councillor who can give their undivided attention to solving its problems.'

163 It also proposed a Huntingdon Hinchingsbrooke division comprising The Alconbury & Stukeleys district ward and the remainder of Huntingdon West district ward, and a Huntingdon East division comprising the remainder of Huntingdon East district ward. The County Labour Party also proposed a non-coterminous Gransden & The Offords division comprising Buckden parish from Buckden ward and the remainder of Gransden & The Offords district ward. In the south of the district it proposed amending our St Neots Eaton Socon division to create two non-coterminous single-member divisions. It proposed a St Neots Eaton Socon division comprising St Neots Eaton Socon district ward and part of St Neots Eynesbury district ward (Town parish ward of Eynesbury Hardwick parish), and a St Neots Eynesbury division comprising the remainder of St Neots Eynesbury district ward.

164 Its proposed Godmanchester, Gransden & The Offords, Huntingdon North, Huntingdon Hinchingsbrooke, Huntingdon East, Norman Cross and Yaxley divisions would initially contain 3% more, 20%, 13%, 16%, 7%, 6% and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the county average (1% fewer, 1% more, 8%, 3%, 12%, 12% fewer and 1% more by 2007). Its proposed St Ives North, St Ives South, St Neots Eaton Socon and St Neots Eynesbury divisions would initially contain 19%, 9% more, 19% and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the county average (11%, 4% more, 6% and 12% fewer by 2007). Under its proposals coterminosity would be 39% between district wards and county divisions.

165 Huntingdon Constituency Labour Party considered that our proposed two-member Huntingdon and Godmanchester divisions were 'rather strange' as it considered that they combined diverse communities that mixed urban and rural areas. It considered that Huntingdon East ward has 'no community or historical links with Godmanchester.' It also considered that in our Huntingdon division electors 'in a small village [...] could be living seven miles from Huntingdon town' and considered that 'this is really pushing the combining of rural and urban area beyond anybody's reasoning.' It proposed the same single-member divisions as the County Labour Party, although it also proposed an alternative Huntingdon East division, which would not include the parishes of Offord Darcy and Offord Cluny, and would have an electoral variance of -11% from the county average by 2007. It also proposed the same amendments as the County Council to our proposed St Ives division, based on the opinion that single-member divisions are preferable.

166 North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party considered that Huntingdonshire should be represented by 16 councillors, to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59, but provided no argumentation or proposals for this. North West Cambridgeshire Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations but proposed two division name changes. It considered that Elton and Stilton division

should be renamed Norman Cross and that Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury division should be renamed The Woods or Upwood & Warboys. It also opposed the suggestion of a three-member division in our draft recommendations and considered it to be 'a stage too far in the changing pattern of representation.' Huntingdon Constituency Conservative Association fully supported our draft recommendations for the district.

167 Huntingdon Town Council fully supported our draft recommendations particularly the two-member divisions of Godmanchester and Huntingdon. Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council opposed our proposal to include the parish in a St Ives division, as it felt that 'the village status would be jeopardized' and considered that it would be better served in a division with Earith ward. It therefore proposed the three member Huntingdon & Godmanchester division we discussed in our draft recommendations, comprising the district wards of Godmanchester, Huntingdon East, Huntingdon North and Huntingdon West. This would also involve creating a two-member St Ives division comprising the district wards of St Ives East, St Ives South and St Ives West, a two-member division comprising the district wards of Earith, Somersham and Warboys & Bury, and a single-member division comprising the district wards of Alconbury & The Stukeleys and Upwood & the Raveleys. These divisions would have electoral variances of 1% more, 7% less, 3% more and 8% less by 2007, respectively, and would achieve 100% coterminosity in the district. It considered that this proposal would result in no divisions with a 'mix of rural and urban communities', and that the parish would be affiliated with the same areas at district and county level elections. However, it did not provide any community identity argumentation in its submission.

168 Bluntisham Parish Council also opposed the inclusion of Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish in our proposed St Ives division. It considered that our proposals combined areas 'at completely different ends of the spectrum. St Ives, a small busy market town and Holywell-cum-Needingworth a village with no more than two shops.' It considered that the village 'could be torn apart by not being linked with the same parishes' at county and district election level.

169 Warboys Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for Upwood & the Raveleys & Warboys & Bury division, but suggested that we rename it Warboys. Woodhurst Parish Council opposed our proposals to include the parish in a division with Somersham (despite the parish being part of Somersham district ward). It considered that Woodhurst residents use facilities in Warboys, including the post office, doctors and school. It suggested that we create a two-member division combining Somersham and Warboys & Bury district wards to 'enable Woodhurst and also Old Hurst and Broughton to remain part of the Warboys locality.' However, this would result in a division with an electoral variance of 31% fewer electors by 2007, unless Earith district ward was included as in Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council's proposal.

170 St Neots Town Council considered that 'not enough attention has been paid to the future growth of the town [of St Neots].' It considered that as residential development which is progressing into the adjoining parishes of Eynesbury Hardwicke and St Neots Rural is likely to be approved by the district council 'it makes no sense for these "town developments" to remain in a different electoral [division]'. It also opposed our draft recommendations for St Neots town. It considered that the river Ouse provides 'a natural division in the town' and that 'there can be no dispute that there is natural

affinity between the Eatons and between St Neots & Eynesbury as areas of the town.' It considered that the town should be split north to south along the River Ouse to form east and west town divisions, but provided no detailed argumentation for this proposal. Altering this boundary to follow the river would result in a division comprising St Neots Eynesbury and St Neots Priory Park district wards and another division comprising St Neots Eaton Ford, St Neots Eaton Socon and Little Paxton district wards. These divisions would have electoral variances of 6% and 9% from the county average by 2007 respectively and would both be coterminous. Little Paxton Parish Council reported that it approved of our proposals to include it in a division with St Neots, which it looks to for transport, education, shopping and other local services and facilities. It was pleased that we did not adopt the County Council's proposals, as it considered that it has little in common with the villages to the north west of it.

171 Ramsey Town Council submitted a copy of part of their response to the County Council's Stage One consultation in which it considered that Bury parish of Warboys & Bury district ward should be included in our proposed Ramsey division. This would result in both Ramsey and Warboys & Bury & Upwood & The Raveleys divisions being non-coterminous and having electoral variances of 14% and -14% from the county average by 2007. Buckden Parish Council had no objections to our draft recommendations, but suggested that Gransden & The Offords division be renamed Buckden, Gransden & The Offords. Toft Parish Council approved of our draft recommendations and had no further comment to make.

172 Councillor Leeke (West Chesterton division) proposed an alternative scheme for Huntingdonshire. His proposals were the same as our draft recommendations in the seven divisions of Huntingdon, Sawtry & Ellington, Elton & Stilton, Ramsey, Warboys & Bury & Upwood & the Raveleys, Somersham and The Hemingfords & Fenstanton. However, he proposed to rename these divisions, Huntingdon North West, Sawtry, Norman Cross, Ramsey, Warboys, Somersham and The Hemingfords, respectively. He also proposed the same amendment to St Ives division as the County Council, to create two single-member divisions. He proposed a Huntingdon East division comprising the district ward of the same name and a Godmanchester division comprising the district ward of Godmanchester and Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy parishes from Gransden & the Offords district ward. He considered that school catchment areas linked these areas. He also proposed a Gransden division comprising the remainder of Gransden & the Offords district ward and part of St Neots Eynesbury district ward (Town parish ward of Eynesbury parish). He considered that all of Eynesbury Hardwick parish should be in the same division, although this resulted in dividing district wards. He proposed an Eynesbury division comprising the remainder of St Neots Eynesbury district ward and a St Neots division comprising the district wards of St Neots Eaton Socon, St Neots Eaton Ford and St Neots Priory Park. He also proposed a Kimbolton division comprising the district wards of Kimbolton & Staughton and Little Paxton and part of Brampton district ward (the parishes of Grafham and Perry) and a Brampton division comprising the remainder of Brampton district ward and Buckden district ward. He also used school catchment areas as argumentation in support of these divisions.

173 His proposed Huntingdon East, Godmanchester, Gransden, Eynesbury, St Neots, Kimbolton and Brampton divisions would have 1%, 10%, 4%, 12% fewer, 5% more, 10% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the county average by 2007. His proposals would result in 56% coterminosity in the district.

174 Councillor Eddy proposed an alternative arrangement in the east of the district that was identical to Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council's proposal and included a three-member division. He considered that this proposal was a 'better alternative' because of the improved electoral equality the three-member Huntingdon & Godmanchester division resulted in and the fact that Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish would not be contained in a division with St Ives town. He also considered that the Oxmoor and Sapley estates in Huntingdon North ward would be better represented in the three-member division than in our proposed Huntingdon division and that Alconbury & The Stukeleys district ward would continue to be part of a rural division. He considered that the amendments would keep 'all these various communities and their interests either together or apart' and improve coterminosity.

175 Councillors Souter & Taylor considered that our proposed Elton & Stilton division should be amended to form two single-member divisions as they proposed at Stage One. They also proposed six division name changes. They considered that Elton & Stilton division should be named Norman Cross or Yaxley, that Gransden & The Offords division should be named Buckden, that Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton division should be named Brampton & Kimbolton, that Somersham & Earith division should be named Somersham, that St Neots Eaton Socon division should be named St Neots South and that Warboys & Bury & Upwood & The Raveleys division should be named Warboys & Bury.

176 Councillor Barnes opposed our proposals for St Neots town, in particular our proposed St Neots Eaton Socon division. He highlighted that the River Ouse separates the two wards in the proposed division, and that there is no bridge to connect them whereas St Neots Eaton Socon and St Neots Eaton Ford 'share so much.' He continued that if the town must be divided that it should be north to south along the river, although he considered that St Neots Eaton Socon and St Neots Eynesbury should each be represented by a single councillor, as he opposed two-member divisions. Councillor Hansard also opposed the arrangements for St Neots town and considered that the town should be divided using the river as the boundary especially as the divisions on either side of the river 'share borders on the same street[s].' He considered that it would be better to combine the district wards of St Neots Eaton Socon, St Neots Eaton Ford and Little Paxton in a division west of the river and to combine St Neots Eynesbury and St Neots Priory Park wards with part of Gransden & the Offords district ward (the parishes of St Neots Rural and Eynesbury Hardwicke) in a division east of the river. His proposals would result in the west and east divisions having electoral variances of 6% and 7% from the county average by 2007. However, his proposed east division would affect our proposed Gransden & the Offords division resulting in a detached division with an electoral variance of -11% by 2007. His proposals would also reduce coterminosity in the district.

177 Malcolm Moss, MP, supported our draft recommendations in the county. We also received five submissions from local residents of Huntingdonshire. Three of these opposed our proposed two-member divisions of Godmanchester and Huntingdon considering that the divisions combined communities with 'nothing much in common.' All considered that the area would be better served by a pattern of four single-member divisions, although none of the submissions provided detailed argumentation or evidence in support of such amendments.

178 The remaining two submissions were concerned with our proposals regarding Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish. One local resident proposed the same amendments to the east of the district as Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council and considered that this would allow the parish to be linked with the same parishes at district and county level. The other resident also supported the proposal that Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish be contained in a division with Bluntisham and Earith parishes. However, neither submission provided any detailed argumentation in support of such proposals.

179 We have carefully considered all the representations received during the consultation period. We considered Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council, Councillor Eddy and a local resident's proposal to replace five divisions in the northeast of the district with four of their own divisions, including a three-member division in Huntingdon & Godmanchester, and two two-member and one single-member divisions. We also acknowledge that this scheme would take account of the opposition from Holywell-cum-Needingworth and Bluntisham parish councils, Councillor Eddy and the two local residents, to the inclusion of Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish in our proposed St Ives division, and in this respect would provide a better reflection of community identity. We also note that this scheme would satisfy the requests of Woodhurst parish council to be combined with Warboys parish in a division.

180 We consider that this scheme has merit, as it improves electoral equality (only one division would have an electoral variance of more than 10% in the district) and coterminosity (100% for the district) as well as providing a better reflection of community identity by taking account of the opposition to Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish's inclusion in St Ives division. However, we stated in our draft report that we would require extremely strong argumentation and widespread support for a three-member division to be accepted at the final stages of the review. We do not consider that these three submissions achieve this requirement. In particular Huntingdon Town Council and Warboys Parish Council also supported elements of the draft recommendations that would be affected by the changes resulting from Councillor Eddy's proposal. Both of these councils would be contained with different wards from those proposed in our draft recommendations and in light of their support for the draft recommendations, and the knock on effects this scheme would have on these wards we do not consider that adopting the proposed three-member division would provide the best balance of the statutory criteria. We also note that Huntingdonshire District Council and North West Cambridgeshire Conservative Association gave general support to our draft proposals. Therefore, in light of this support for our draft recommendations in neighbouring divisions and the lack of strong community argumentation against our draft recommendations, we have not been persuaded to adopt such a radical proposal at this stage in the review.

181 We also considered the possibility of removing Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish from the St Ives division. However, this would result in Somersham & Earith division having an electoral variance of 36% by 2007, which we do not consider is acceptable given the argumentation received and the fact that Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish does have excellent road links with St Ives town.

182 We also examined the County Council's proposal to create two single-member divisions from our proposed St Ives division, and acknowledge that this was also proposed by a number of other groups. However, we consider that the argumentation for this amendment is based on a general opposition to two-member divisions, rather

than any specific community identity evidence or argumentation, particularly as Holywell-cum-Needingworth parish would still be combined with St Ives in an urban division which Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council do not want.

183 We also looked at the proposals to create single-member divisions in place of our two-member divisions in Huntingdon and Godmanchester as proposed by Cambridgeshire County Labour Party, Huntingdon Constituency Labour Party and Councillor Leeke. However, all these proposals worsened coterminosity in the district and none provided any more detailed community identity argumentation than that submitted at Stage One for similar divisions. Nor was there persuasive evidence supplied to explain why the related areas could not be represented in the same division. Therefore, we have decided not to make amendments to our proposed Huntingdon and Godmanchester divisions.

184 Similarly, we considered the County Labour Party and Councillors Souter and Taylor's proposal to create two single-member divisions from our proposed Elton & Stilton division. However, this was proposed at Stage One and we do not consider that they have provided any more detailed argumentation as to why these divisions would be more suitable than our draft recommendations. We note that this proposal would worsen coterminosity and electoral equality and, given the general support our proposals have received we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations in this area.

185 We considered Councillor Leeke's proposals for the southern part of the district and we note that this proposal provides slightly better electoral equality than the draft recommendations, but reduces coterminosity in the district. We also note that his proposed Kimbolton division would include Little Paxton district ward. Given the evidence submitted by Little Paxton Parish Council in support of our recommendations to include the district ward with St Neots town and the good community identity argumentation it provided for this, combined with its opposition to being included in a division with villages running in a north westerly direction as in Councillor Leeke's proposal, we do not consider that there is strong enough argumentation in support of his proposal.

186 We considered the opposition to our proposals for St Neots town, particularly our proposed Eaton Socon division. We note that St Neots Town Council and Councillor Hansard consider that the parishes of Eynesbury Hardwick and St Neots Rural should be included in a division with the eastern side of St Neots town. However, this proposal would result in our proposed Gransden & The Offords division being severed in half and becoming detached as the parishes stretch from one side of the division to the other. We therefore have not been persuaded to adopt this proposal. We also note that St Neots Town Council, Councillor Hansard and Councillor Barnes considered that the boundary for the two divisions in the town should run north to south along the River Ouse rather than east to west as in our draft proposals. We note that these divisions would have the same electoral variances for 2007 as under our draft recommendations, that coterminosity would not be affected and that Little Paxton district ward would still be linked with St Neots town.

187 We acknowledge that there was limited community identity evidence in these submissions for this proposal. However, the opposition led us to look closely at this area, and it is clear that the River Ouse separates St Neots Eaton Socon and St Neots

Eynesbury district wards. There is no direct road link between these communities apart from the main road following the southern division boundary. There are no bridges crossing the river in our proposed St Neots Eaton Socon division and so, in effect, these two communities are separated from one another. The amendments to these two divisions are self-contained meaning that this proposal would not affect any other divisions. Coterminosity and electoral equality would also be unaffected and given the significantly better links between communities that this proposal provides, we propose adopting it as final. We propose to name these divisions St Neots East and St Neots West.

188 We considered Ramsey Parish Council's proposal for amended Ramsey and Upwood & Warboys divisions. However, its amendments would worsen electoral equality and coterminosity, and would also impact on other divisions which we have received support for. Therefore, we are not proposing to amend our draft recommendations in this area.

189 We note the proposed name changes for the district and we propose to rename the three divisions of Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury, Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton and Elton & Stilton as proposed by the County Council as the alternative names have all received local support and provide a better reflection of the constituent parts in the division. We are also proposing to rename Gransden & The Offords division as proposed by Councillors Souter & Taylor, again as this received local support. However, we are not adopting Councillors Souter & Taylor's alternative name for St Neots Eaton Socon division as it is no longer relevant given our amended St Neots divisions. We are also not proposing to adopt their division name for Somersham, as it has not received local support.

190 We are therefore endorsing our draft recommendations as final in Huntingdonshire with the exception of the proposed amendment to the St Neots town area and the four division name changes discussed above. Under our final recommendations coterminosity would remain at 85% between county divisions and district wards. Our proposed Brampton & Kimbolton, Sawtry & Ellington, Somersham, St Ives, The Hemingfords & Fenstanton and Warboys & Bury divisions would initially be under-represented with 13%, 16%, 15%, 14%, 11% and 12% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (5%, 9%, 7%, 8%, 7% and 6% more by 2007). Buckden, Gransden & The Offords, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Norman Cross, Ramsey, St Neots East and St Neots West divisions would initially be over-represented with 4%, 10%, 15%, 6%, 2%, 3% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (16% more, 13%, 7%, 6%, 5%, 9% and 6% fewer by 2007). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

South Cambridgeshire district

191 Under the current arrangements, the district of South Cambridgeshire is represented by 14 county councillors serving 14 divisions. Bassingbourn, Linton, Sawston, Shelford, Waterbeach and Histon divisions are over-represented with 11%, 2%, 4%, 19%, 3% and 12% fewer electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (16%, 9%, 11%, 25% and 9% fewer and 2% more by 2007). Cottenham, Gamlingay, Willingham and Harston divisions are under-represented with 2%, 19%, 15% and 1% more electors per county councillor than the county average

respectively (7%, 76% and 8% more and 4% fewer by 2007). Comberton, Fulbourn, Girton and Melbourn divisions are under-represented with 3%, 4%, 2%, 3% more electors per county councillor than the county average respectively (2%, 4%, 3% and 4% fewer by 2007).

192 At Stage One we received five submissions including district-wide proposals from the County Council and the County Labour Party. The County Council's scheme was based on the number of councillors representing South Cambridgeshire increasing from 14 to 16 to which it would be entitled under a council size of 69. It proposed 16 single-member divisions.

193 In the north of the district the County Council proposed a Willingham division comprising the district wards of Longstanton and Willingham & Over, a Cottenham division comprising the district ward of Cottenham and a Waterbeach division comprising the district wards of Milton and Waterbeach. It also proposed a Histon & Impington division comprising the district ward of Histon & Impington, a Bar Hill division comprising the district wards of Bar Hill and Girton, and a Papworth & Swavesey division comprising the district wards of Papworth & Elsworth and Swavesey.

194 In the east of the district the County Council proposed a Fulbourn division comprising the district wards of Fulbourn, Teversham and The Wilbrahams and a Linton division comprising the district wards of Balsham and Linton. In the south of the district it proposed a Duxford division comprising the district wards of Duxford, The Abingtons and Whittlesford, a Sawston division comprising the district ward of Sawston, a Shelford division comprising the district wards of Harston & Hauxton and The Shelfords & Stapleford, and a Melbourn division comprising the district wards of Fowlmere & Foxton and Melbourn. It also proposed a Bassingbourn division comprising the district wards of Bassingbourn, Meldreth and The Mordens.

195 In the west of the district the County Council proposed a Gamlingay division comprising the district wards of Gamlingay, Haslingfield & The Eversdens and Orwell & Barrington, a Bourn division comprising the district ward of Bourn and a Hardwick division comprising the district wards of Barton, Caldecote, Comberton and Hardwick.

196 Under the County Council's proposals 100% coterminosity would be secured within the district. Its proposed Cottenham, Duxford, Melbourn, Papworth & Swavesey, Sawston and Bourn divisions would initially contain 5%, 10%, 3%, 18%, 11% and 56% fewer electors than the county average respectively (11%, 14%, 10%, 14% and 18% fewer and 7% more by 2007). Its proposed Bar Hill, Bassingbourn, Fulbourn, Gamlingay, Hardwick, Histon & Impington, Linton, Shelford, Waterbeach and Willingham divisions would initially contain 12%, 16%, 22%, 23%, 13%, 3%, 15%, 21%, 14% and 2% more electors than the county average respectively (6%, 10%, 13%, 14%, 8%, 19%, 6%, 12%, 6% and 10% more by 2007).

197 The County Labour Party's scheme was based on the number of councillors representing South Cambridgeshire remaining at 14 to which it would be entitled under a council size of 59. It proposed 14 single-member divisions. However, as discussed previously, we are proposing an increase in council size from 59 to 69 and it has therefore been difficult to utilise any of the County Labour Party's proposed divisions because divisions in the County Labour Party's scheme were of different electorate sizes to those required under a council size of 69 members.

198 Rampton Parish Council requested that it remain in a division with Cottenham parish as under the current arrangements. Orwell Parish Council requested that its links with Bassingbourn should be maintained in order to keep links between local primary schools and the village college at Bassingbourn parish. Longstanton Parish Council wished to ensure that division boundaries reflected the increase in population in the Longstanton area.

199 We carefully considered all the submissions we received at Stage One. We adopted the County Council's proposals in the five divisions of Bar Hill, Gamlingay, Hardwick, Linton and Willingham, because we considered that these divisions provided a good balance between electoral equality and coterminosity. However, we proposed our own divisions in the remainder of the district as we considered that the County Council's proposals provided a high level of electoral inequality. We proposed a further seven single-member divisions and two two-member divisions. We noted that our proposals reduced coterminosity in the district compared to the County Council's proposals, but we considered that was necessary in order to improve electoral equality and provide a better balance between the two.

200 In the north of the district we proposed a coterminous two-member Cottenham division comprising the district wards of Cottenham and Histon & Impington, and in the south of the district we proposed a coterminous two-member Sawston division comprising the district wards of Harston & Hauxton, Sawston and The Shelfords & Stapleford. Although these were not locally proposed we proposed them as they provided good electoral equality and are coterminous. We noted that some parties do not favour two-member divisions. However, we considered that given the relatively urban nature of these divisions they were not unworkably large. In the west of the district we proposed a single-member Waterbeach division comprising the district wards of Milton including Milton (detached) and Waterbeach, and Horningsea parish of The Wilbrahams district ward. We also proposed a single-member Fulbourn division comprising the district wards of Fulbourn, Teversham and the remainder of The Wilbrahams district ward in order to improve electoral equality.

201 In the south of the district we proposed a Duxford division comprising the district wards of Duxford, The Abingtons and Whittlesford and Fowlmere parish of Fowlmere & Foxton district ward and a Melbourn division comprising the district wards of Melbourn, Meldreth and Foxton parish of Fowlmere & Foxton district ward. We also proposed a coterminous Bassingbourn division comprising the district wards of Bassingbourn and The Mordens. In the west of the district we proposed a Bourn division comprising the parishes of Bourn, Cambourne and Caxton from Bourn district ward, and a Papworth & Swavesey division comprising the district wards of Papworth & Elsworth and Swavesey and the remainder of Bourn district ward.

202 We noted that our proposed Waterbeach division would constitute a detached division. This is owing to an area of Milton district ward being detached (Milton detached) and this was brought to our attention during the recent review of the electoral arrangements of South Cambridgeshire. During this review it was suggested that Milton detached be combined in a ward with The Wilbrahams. However, this proposal was rejected as it can be argued that a detachment would still occur as the two areas are geographically separated by the River Cam, which forms a significant barrier. The anomaly in this area could be addressed by an amendment to the external boundary

between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, as the only access into the Milton detached area is from Cambridge City. However, this option is outside the remit of this review. Therefore, although it results in a detached division, we considered that the identities and interests of the local community would be better reflected if the two parts of Milton parish are retained within the same division.

203 Under our draft recommendations the district of South Cambridgeshire would have 57% coterminosity between district ward and county division boundaries. Our proposed Bassingbourn, Papworth & Swavesey, Cottenham and Bourn divisions would initially contain 13%, 11%, 1% and 63% fewer electors than the county average respectively (19% and 7% fewer, 4% more and equal to the county average by 2007). Our proposed Fulbourn, Waterbeach, Melbourn, Duxford and Sawston divisions would initially contain 18%, 18%, 12%, 5% and 5% more electors than the county average respectively (9%, 10%, 5% and 1% more and 3% fewer by 2007).

204 At Stage Three we received 19 submissions in relation to South Cambridgeshire. The County Council generally accepted our draft recommendations, but proposed two amendments in the district. It considered that Horningsea parish should be transferred from our proposed Waterbeach division into our proposed Fulbourn division. The County Council said that 'there is no direct link between the two villages [of Milton and Horningsea].' It continued by highlighting the links between Horningsea and the rest of our proposed Fulbourn division, such as the schools and colleges at Fen Ditton and Bottisham and also the fact that Fen Ditton and Horningsea share a vicar. It continued that Waterbeach has its own schools and vicar. This amendment would result in a slightly worse level of electoral equality as Fulbourn and Waterbeach divisions would have 13% and 6% more electors per councillor than the county average by 2007, compared with 10% and 9% more under our draft recommendations. However, this proposal would improve coterminosity. The County Council also proposed amending our proposed two-member Sawston division to create two non-coterminous single-member divisions. They proposed that Sawston district ward and part of The Shelfords & Stapleford ward (Stapleford parish) be combined to form one division and Harston, Hauxton & Newton district ward and the remainder of The Shelfords & Stapleford district ward make up another. Under this amendment Sawston & Stapleford division and Harston, Hauxton & Newton division would have electoral variances of 3% and -9% by 2007. The County Council stated that it proposed this amendment on its 'support for the principle of single-member' divisions. The County Council also proposed to rename our proposed Cottenham division Histon & Cottenham and our proposed Bar Hill division Girton.

205 Cambridgeshire County Labour Party proposed two amendments to our proposals in South Cambridgeshire. It proposed the same amendment as the County Council to our proposed Sawston division and also cited its preference for single-member divisions to justify this amendment. It also proposed to transfer the parishes of Arrington and Croydon from our proposed Gamlingay division to our proposed Bassingbourn division. This amendment would improve electoral equality resulting in Gamlingay and Bassingbourn divisions having electoral variances of 7% and -11% by 2007 but would worsen coterminosity. The County Labour Party considered that this amendment would go 'some way to meeting the wishes of the Arrington Parish Council.'

206 South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats supported our proposed divisions of Duxford, Linton and Willingham, and 'with some reservations,' our proposed

Cottenham division. However, they objected to our proposal to include Horningsea parish in our proposed Waterbeach division. They proposed the same division amendment as the County Council. They considered that Horningsea is historically linked to Fen Ditton, and that these villages are 'interlocked like a jigsaw piece' as well as sharing 'many links with other Fulbourn division villages.' They continued by stating that 'the River Cam forms a natural, obvious, and real boundary' between Horningsea and the rest of our proposed Waterbeach division, and that there is no direct link between Horningsea and Milton villages. As in the County Council's submission, they also used the schools attended to illustrate the close links between Horningsea and the other villages in our proposed Fulbourn division. North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party considered that 14 councillors should represent South Cambridgeshire, as in their Stage One submission, but provided no further argumentation in support of this proposal.

207 Sawston Parish Council opposed our proposed two-member Sawston division and considered that either the County Council's Stage One or Stage Three proposal would be preferable to our proposed two-member division. It considered that parishioners would not know which councillor to contact in a two-member division. Stapleford, Hauxton and Little Shelford parish councils also all agreed with the County Council's Stage Three proposal to create two single-member divisions in place of our proposed Sawston division. They all considered that it would be less confusing for electors, as they would know who their local councillor was. Great Shelford Parish Council opposed the County Council's Stage Three proposal for our proposed Sawston division. It considered that 'Great Shelford and Stapleford are classed as a single entity [and] as stated in the local plan they are physically joined and form one settlement.' It continued to say that Sawston is separate from Stapleford and that it would be 'preferable if it [Sawston] was joined with Newton and Harston to be served by one member.' However, this would mean the creation of a detached division. Great Shelford Parish Council concluded by saying that because of 'the designation of Great Shelford and Stapleford [parishes] as a rural growth settlement, it would be preferable if any significant development in the future was dealt with by one councillor, rather than splitting what is a single planning entity between two councillors.'

208 Swavesey Parish Council opposed our proposal regarding Swavesey district ward. It considered that Swavesey ward should be combined in a division with Willingham and Fen Drayton parishes from Papworth district ward resulting in Papworth and Willingham divisions having electoral variances of -44% and 48% from the county average by 2007 respectively. It considered that it had historical and geographical links with Longstanton and Over parishes and 'often liaises with' them. It continued that it has 'rarely' had meetings with the villages in the proposed division, and that the A14 road separates the areas. Fen Drayton Parish Council also opposed being included in our proposed Papworth & Swavesey division and considered they should be in a division with villages east of the A14 with whom they share schools, pastoral care and concerns over flood risks. However, it was not specific regarding which villages it would be linked with.

209 Little Abington Parish Council opposed our proposed Duxford division considering that the A11 divides the area and that there are few links either side of it. It proposed that Little Abington, Great Abington, Hildersham and Linton parishes should be joined together in a division as they form an ecclesiastical parish and their children

attend the same schools. Such a division would be non-coterminous and would have an electoral variance of -31% by 2007.

210 Histon Parish Council expressed opposition to our proposed two-member Cottenham division, and considered that Histon & Impington ward should be a single-member division because the district ward 'is already a significant size' and 'it is a developing community.' It considered that our proposed division 'would be difficult for one person to manage' and that 'such a large commitment would discourage potential candidates taking up such a post.' It concluded that if our proposed division is unchanged then Histon should be included in the division name. Impington Parish Council also opposed our proposed Cottenham division and considered that 'one member would represent Cottenham [district ward] and the other Histon & Impington [district ward].' It also considered that if the division remains unchanged then Histon or Histon & Impington should be included in the division's name. Rampton Parish Council considered that the parish should remain in a division with Cottenham as under the current arrangements. Toft Parish Council approved of our draft recommendations and had no further comments to make.

211 Councillor Leeke (West Chesterton division) proposed the same amendments as the County Council for South Cambridgeshire. He stated that 'Horningsea's community links are with the villages in the Fulbourn division' and highlighted the educational links between the areas. With regards to Sawston, Councillor Leeke again used schools to illustrate the community links between areas, claiming that children from Sawston ward and Stapleford parish attend the same schools and college. He also proposed the same name change for our proposed Cottenham division as the County Council.

212 Councillor Orgee (Sawston division) proposed three alternative partial schemes in the southern part of the district. In his first alternative he proposed transferring Foxton parish from Melbourn division into our proposed Duxford division. He also proposed transferring The Abingtons district ward from our proposed Duxford division to be combined in a division with Sawston district ward, leaving the remainder of our proposed Sawston division to form a single-member The Shelfords division. His proposed Melbourn, Duxford, Sawston and The Shelfords divisions would have electoral variances of -10%, -11%, 8% and -9% by 2007. He noted that this proposal would improve coterminosity and that it separates The Abingtons from Duxford. His second alternative made one amendment to this first alternative proposal. He proposed that Newton parish should be transferred from his proposed The Shelfords division into his proposed Duxford division. This would result in The Shelfords and Duxford divisions having electoral variances of 8% and 6% from the county average by 2007. He considered that 'the community identity incorporated in this proposal is [...] much stronger than those in the draft recommendations,' although he did not give details of this community identity. In his third alternative, Councillor Orgee said that the proposal of other parties such as the County Council to split Sawston into two single-member divisions was 'worthy of consideration.' He concluded by saying that his second alternative was his preferred arrangement for the district as he considered that it provided a better reflection of community identity.

213 Councillor Gooden (Histon division) opposed our proposed two-member Cottenham division. He considered that the division would 'force out potential candidates who have full-time work commitments' and that it is 'a recipe for ensuring only the unemployed and retired have the time [to stand for councillor].' He considered

that the two wards in the division should have ‘the right to elect their own chosen representative.’ Thirdly he considered that it was unfair that Histon & Impington with a projected electorate of 8,000 did not have its own representative. He considered that growth in the rural wards compared with city wards was greater and that therefore our proposed divisions would have to be amended in the future. His fifth point was in regard to accountability as he considered it would be ‘difficult for elected members to maintain contact with their electorate.’ He considered that elections would cost more to run for two-member divisions and finally that the division name does not recognise Histon & Impington ward.

214 Andrew Lansley, MP, expressed his opposition to two-member divisions and gave support to the County Council’s amended Sawston division on this basis. Malcolm Moss, MP, supported our draft recommendations. We also received one submission from a local resident who submitted an almost identical submission to that of Impington Parish Council in opposition to our proposed Cottenham division.

215 We have carefully considered all the representations received during the consultation period. We note that the County Council, South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats and Councillor Leeke all considered that Horningsea parish should be transferred from Waterbeach division into Fulbourn division. We also note the community identity argumentation they put forward regarding the shared use of facilities such as churches and schools. They also highlighted that Horningsea is separated from Waterbeach by the River Cam and a railway line, with no direct link between the two villages. We acknowledge that this proposal worsens electoral equality but improves coterminosity, and that the argumentation submitted was limited. However, having looked at the area again, we consider that the slight deterioration in electoral equality is justified given the improvement in coterminosity and community identity that this amendment would provide. This amendment would reflect the geography of the area and would take account of the community identity links outlined in the submissions received at Stage Three. We note also that this amendment is self contained and will not affect other areas in the district.

216 We note that there was general opposition to our proposed Sawston division. We carefully considered the County Council’s proposal for this area, which was also supported by the County Labour Party, Sawston, Stapleford, Hauxton and Little Shelford parish councils, Councillors Leeke and Orgee and Andrew Lansley, MP. We note that this proposal would slightly worsen electoral equality and coterminosity. All the argumentation provided was regarding respondents’ opposition to two-member divisions and we did not consider that persuasive community identity argumentation was provided to support this proposal. Nor were there any persuasive reasons given as to why these areas could not be represented in the same division. We also note the opposition to the County Council’s proposal from Great Shelford Parish Council who considered that Great Shelford and Stapleford parishes are classed as a single entity and should not be divided between divisions (as would be the case under the County Council’s proposal). We also acknowledge Great Shelford Parish Council’s alternative to include Sawston and Harston & Hauxton district wards in one division and The Shelfords & Stapleford ward in another division. However, the former of these divisions would be detached as The Shelfords & Stapleford ward physically separates Sawston ward from Harston & Hauxton ward, and we do not therefore propose adopting this proposal. Therefore, given the conflicting views and mixed messages we received in this area, we are not proposing any amendments to our proposed Sawston division.

217 We considered Councillor Orgee's alternative proposals for the south of the district. However, we note that his proposals worsen electoral equality and would mean amending Duxford division, which we have received specific support for from South East Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats. We note that he considers that his proposals would provide a better reflection of community identity. However, he did not provide any argumentation in support of this. Therefore, in light of this, and the support we have received for areas affected by his proposal, we are not proposing to adopt Councillor Orgee's proposals.

218 We considered the opposition to our proposed two-member Cottenham division, from Histon and Impington parish councils, Councillor Gooden and a local resident, and the proposal to divide this division into two single-member divisions. We note that this proposal would worsen electoral equality. We also note the argumentation in opposition to two-member divisions. However, none of the submissions provided any community identity argumentation or evidence to justify the high electoral variance of the proposed Histon & Impington division (19% by 2007), nor did they demonstrate why these areas could not be effectively represented in the same division. Therefore, we do not propose to amend our draft recommendations in this area. However, we note the widespread support for including Histon in the division's name, and are therefore proposing to adopt the County Council's proposal to name the division Histon & Cottenham to better reflect the constituent parts.

219 We also considered the opposition to our proposed Papworth & Swavesey division. We note that Fen Drayton Parish Council wished to be in a division with the villages on the east of the A14. However, it gave no details regarding which villages it wished to be linked with. We noted that under our draft proposals it would be in a division with Swavesey, its immediate neighbour on the east of the A14. While we note that both Fen Drayton and Swavesey Parish Councils provided some argumentation for their proposals we do not consider that it is strong enough to justify the extremely high electoral variances that would result from transferring these parishes into our proposed Willingham division. Attempts to rectify this would have knock on effects in the rest of the district and would involve us making amendments to divisions that have received support. We also do not consider we can propose a large number of new divisions without consultation at this stage. We therefore do not consider that the argumentation received is strong enough to justify the deterioration in coterminosity and electoral equality that would result from making amendments to this division.

220 We considered the opposition from Little Abington Parish Council to the inclusion of The Abingtons ward in Duxford division, and acknowledge the community identity argumentation supplied regarding the links between this parish and Linton ward. We looked at transferring The Abingtons into Linton division, but this would result in Linton and Duxford divisions having electoral variances of 32% and -25% respectively by 2007. We do not consider that the argumentation is strong enough to recommend these divisions. Any further attempts to accommodate this would have knock on effects in the rest of the district and would involve us making amendments to divisions that have received support. We would also not wish to propose a large number of new divisions without consultation at this stage without extremely strong arguments for doing so. We are therefore not proposing to make any amendments to this area.

221 We looked at the County Labour Party's proposal regarding Arrington and Croydon parishes. While we acknowledge that this would improve electoral equality it would result in a Gamlingay division that is effectively cut in half as there are no road links from the west to the east of the division without passing through these parishes. We also do not consider that we have received sufficient argumentation to propose amendments to these divisions. We also are not proposing to adopt the County Council's alternative name for our Bar Hill division due to the lack of local support this received.

222 We are therefore endorsing our draft recommendations as final in South Cambridgeshire with the exception of the proposed amendment to Fulbourn division and the division name change discussed above. As a result of this amendment coterminosity would improve to 64% between county divisions and district wards. Our proposed Bar Hill, Duxford, Fulbourn, Gamlingay, Hardwick, Linton, Melbourn, Sawston, Waterbeach and Willingham divisions would initially be under-represented with 12%, 5%, 18%, 23%, 13%, 15%, 12%, 5%, 18% and 2% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (6%, 1%, 9%, 14%, 8%, 6%, 5% more, 3% fewer, 10% and 10% more by 2007). Our proposed Bassingbourn, Bourn, Histon & Cottenham and Papworth & Swavesey divisions would initially be over-represented with 13%, 63%, 1% and 11% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (19% fewer, equal to, 4% more and 7% fewer by 2007). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Conclusions

223 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we propose:

- There should be 69 councillors, an increase in 10, representing 60 divisions, an increase in one;
- Changes should be made to all of the existing 59 divisions.

224 We have decided to substantially confirm our draft recommendations subject to the following amendments:

- In East Cambridgeshire district, we propose combining Fordham Villages, Isleham, Soham North and Soham South district wards in a two-member Soham & Fordham Villages division to provide a better reflection of community identity and to improve electoral equality and coterminosity in the district.
- In Huntingdonshire district, we propose creating two alternative St Neots divisions to provide a better reflection of community identity. We are also proposing that Upwood & The Raveleys & Warboys & Bury, Kimbolton, Staughton & Brampton, Elton & Stilton and Gransden & The Offords divisions be renamed Warboys & Upwood, Brampton & Kimbolton, Norman Cross and Buckden, Gransden & The Offords respectively.
- In South Cambridgeshire, we propose transferring Horningsea parish from our proposed Waterbeach division into our proposed Fulbourn division to improve

community identity and coterminosity. We are also proposing that Cottenham division be renamed Histon & Cottenham.

225 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2002 and 2007 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2002 electorate		2007 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	59	69	59	69
Number of divisions	59	60	59	60
Average number of electors per councillor	7,314	6,254	7,765	6,639
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	29	27	31	12
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	12	4	15	0

226 As Table 4 shows, our final recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of divisions with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 29 to 27, with only four divisions varying by more than 20% from the county average. By 2007, 12 divisions are forecast to vary by more than 10%, and no division would have a variance of over 20%. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Final recommendation

Cambridgeshire County Council should comprise 69 councillors serving 60 divisions, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated in the Appendix, the large map at the back of the report.

6 What happens next?

227 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI No. 2001/3962).

228 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether or not to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 26 October 2004, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date.

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

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

**Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose.)**

Appendix

Final recommendations for Cambridgeshire County Council:

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates in outline form the proposed divisions for Cambridgeshire including constituent district wards and parishes.