

Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	5
2 Analysis and draft recommendations	7
Submissions received	8
Electorate figures	8
Council size	8
Electoral fairness	9
General analysis	9
Electoral arrangements	10
Okehampton	10
Hatherleigh and north West Devon	12
Tavistock	14
Dartmoor and south West Devon	15
Conclusions	17
Parish electoral arrangements	17
3 What happens next?	19
4 Mapping	21
Appendices	
A Table A1: Draft recommendations for West Devon Borough Council	22
B Glossary and abbreviations	27

Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of West Devon Borough Council ('the Council') to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in August 2013.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
3 September 2013	Consultation on council size begins
26 November 2013	Submission of proposals for warding arrangements to the LGBCE
4 February 2014	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
29 April 2014	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
22 July 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

During the preliminary stage of this review we received one submission on council size, from West Devon Borough Council. The Council proposed a council size of 31, the same size as at present. During consultation on council size we received seven submissions. These submissions proposed council sizes ranging from 24 to 31. During consultation on proposed ward boundaries we received two borough-wide submissions, one from the Council and one from the Conservative group on the Council. Central Devon Conservative Association submitted a warding pattern for the area of the borough covered by the Central Devon Parliamentary constituency. A borough councillor, Councillor Ball, submitted a scheme for the north of the borough. We also received 27 local representations. These were from 13 parish councils, seven borough councillors, one parish councillor and four local residents. South Tawton Parish Council submitted two representations. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

West Devon Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. This

is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 5% over this period.

We are content that these forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

West Devon Borough Council currently has a council size of 31. The Council proposed retaining this council size. It argued that a council size of 31 would best support its governance arrangements and ensure members could undertake an effective representational role.

During consultation on council size we received seven submissions. These were from West Devon Borough Council, three parish and town councils and three local residents. We received no substantive evidence to contradict the rationale provided by the Council and no clear evidence was provided to support any other council size. Therefore, we invited representations on warding arrangements based on a council size of 31.

During the consultation on warding arrangements, the Conservative Group proposed a warding pattern based on a council size of 32. Two borough councillors also proposed an increase to 32. We consider a Council size of 31 would provide the best allocation of members across the borough and provide for a pattern of wards that achieves the best balance between the statutory criteria. We have therefore based our draft recommendations for West Devon on a council size of 31 members.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during consultation on warding arrangements, we have developed proposals based on a combination of the submissions received. In general, we have based our draft recommendations on the proposals from the Council with significant modifications in some areas in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality and reflect the community identity evidence received.

Our draft recommendations for West Devon are for a mixed pattern of three single-member, 11 two-member and two three-member wards. We consider our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comments on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for West Devon Borough Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft**

proposals. We will take into account all submissions received by **21 July 2014**. Any submissions received **after** this date may not be taken into account. We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

Review Officer (West Devon)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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

You can also view our draft recommendations for West Devon on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review West Devon Borough Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to the Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on council size. We then held two periods of consultation, first on council size, and then on warding patterns for the Council. The submissions received during these consultations have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for West Devon Borough Council in autumn 2014.

What is an electoral review?

4 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in West Devon?

6 We are conducting a review in West Devon following the Commission's decision to review West Devon Council's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, 36% of its wards currently exceed the 10% variance threshold. Additionally, one ward, Hatherleigh, has a variance of 31%.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 21 July 2014. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in autumn 2014. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 19 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for West Devon Borough Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries, ward names and parish or town electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for West Devon is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

14 Additionally, in circumstances where we propose to divide a parish between borough wards we are required to divide it into parish wards so that each parish ward is wholly contained within a single borough ward. We cannot make amendments to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

15 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of West Devon Borough Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

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

Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited West Devon Borough Council and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

17 We received one preliminary submission on council size from the Council and seven submissions during consultation on council size. During consultation on warding patterns we received 30 submissions, including two borough-wide schemes, one from the Council and one from the Conservative group on the Council. Central Devon Conservative Association submitted a warding pattern for the area of the borough covered by the Central Devon Parliamentary constituency. A borough councillor, Councillor Ball, submitted a scheme for the north of the borough.

18 The other submissions were from 13 parish councils, seven borough councillors, one parish councillor and four local residents. South Tawton Parish Council submitted two representations. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

19 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 5% to 2019. The growth is primarily forecast in the towns of Okehampton and Tavistock. The Council's figures initially included an increase of 385 electors for the parish of Northlew. Following our tour of the area we did not observe any significant developments in Northlew. We therefore queried the electorate forecasts with the Council. The Council informed us that this growth had been wrongly allocated and was part of a planned development in the parish of Okehampton Hamlets. As part of our tour of the area we did observe significant developments in the Okehampton Hamlets area.

20 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

21 West Devon Borough Council currently has 31 councillors elected from 22 wards, comprising 15 single-member, five two-member and two three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed retaining a council size of 31. The submission from the Council had considered its governance and management structure, scrutiny of the council, work on outside bodies, members' representational role and the Council's other statutory functions. Having considered the evidence we decided to consult on a council size of 31.

22 We received seven submissions during the consultation on council size. These were from West Devon Borough Council, three parish and town councils and three local residents. We received no substantive evidence to contradict the rationale

provided by the Council and no clear evidence was provided to support any other council size. Therefore, we invited representations on warding arrangements based on a council size of 31.

23 During the consultation on warding arrangements, the Conservative Group proposed a warding pattern based on a council size of 32. Two borough councillors also proposed an increase to 32. We consider a Council size of 31 would provide the best allocation of members across the borough and provide for a pattern of wards that achieves the best balance between the statutory criteria. We have therefore based our draft recommendations for West Devon on a council size of 31 members.

Electoral fairness

24 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

25 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (43,457 in 2013 and 45,654 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 31 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,402 in 2013 and 1,473 by 2019.

26 Under our draft recommendations, one of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2019. The outlier is Hatherleigh, which is forecast to have 11% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. We are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for West Devon.

General analysis

27 During consultation on warding patterns, we received 30 submissions, including two borough-wide proposals. These were from the Council, and the Conservative Group on the Council. We also received partial warding patterns from Central Devon Conservative Association, covering the area of the Central Devon parliamentary constituency, and a borough councillor, Councillor Ball, who proposed a warding pattern for about two-thirds of the authority. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

28 The schemes submitted by the Council and the Conservative Group and the partial schemes submitted by Central Devon Conservative Association and Councillor Ball all provided a mixed warding arrangement of single-, two- and three-member wards.

29 The warding patterns proposed by the Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Ball were based on a council size of 31, while the partial scheme provided by Central Devon Conservative Association was based on a size of 32.

30 None of the borough-wide warding patterns received provided a detailed warding arrangement for Tavistock.

31 The Council did not name its proposed wards. We have therefore used the current ward names wherever possible, and have used the name of key parishes within proposed wards where the new wards differ significantly from the current wards.

32 Having carefully considered the proposals received, we were of the view that while the Council's proposed pattern of wards generally used clearly identifiable boundaries, they did not result in good levels of electoral equality in many areas of the borough. Had we accepted all of the Council's proposed boundaries, 39% of wards would have a variance of greater than +/- 10%, immediately meeting our criteria for another review. The Council's proposals also divided grouped parish councils between borough wards, which we try to avoid wherever possible. We have therefore made a large number of modifications to the Council's proposals in order to improve electoral equality and maintain community links.

33 Our draft recommendations are for three single-member, 11 two-member and two three-member wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

34 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 22–3) and on the large map accompanying this report.

35 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations. We also welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

Electoral arrangements

36 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of West Devon. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Okehampton (pages 10–12)
- Hatherleigh and north West Devon (pages 12–14)
- Tavistock (pages 14–15)
- Dartmoor and south West Devon (pages 15–16)

37 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 22–3 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Okehampton

38 Okehampton is a small town in the north of West Devon borough. The parish of Okehampton is surrounded by the parish of Okehampton Hamlets.

39 The Council proposed a two-member Okehampton East ward and a three-member Okehampton West ward. The proposed Okehampton West ward would include all of Okehampton Hamlets parish, and so would completely surround Okehampton East ward, creating a 'doughnut' ward. We consider that such wards ignore the tendency for the town to be the focus for the rural area. We generally consider that rural areas on opposite sides are likely to identify more with the town than with each other. Therefore, we will not normally recommend such a warding pattern unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it would better meet our statutory criteria than any other alternative pattern. We consider that evidence has not been received to support a ward surrounding the town of Okehampton.

40 The Council included the parish of Belstone in its proposed Okehampton East ward. We consider that Belstone has better links to South Tawton (see paragraph 53) and have therefore not included the parish in our warding pattern for Okehampton.

41 We investigated the possibility of creating two wards that divided Okehampton east–west, with the west ward including the parish of Inwardleigh and the majority of Okehampton Hamlets, and the east ward including the section of Okehampton Hamlets from Brightley to the A30. We considered that while this would be similar to the current pattern of wards in the area, it created an Okehampton West ward with a much larger rural area than that of Okehampton East and did not best reflect the rural communities around the town.

42 We also investigated dividing Okehampton on a north–south basis, including the parish of Inwardleigh in a three-member Okehampton North ward and the majority of Okehampton Hamlets in a two-member Okehampton South ward. The area of Okehampton Hamlets north of the town would be included in Okehampton North, thereby avoiding the creation of a 'doughnut' ward.

43 In looking to divide the town on this basis, we considered that the B3260 provided the most appropriate boundary. We therefore investigated using this road as the ward boundary across the parish. Following the road throughout the town would result in an Okehampton North ward with 11% more electors than the borough average, and an Okehampton South ward with 3% fewer. We have therefore departed from the road in the town centre. The proposed boundary diverts from the main road to run up Barton Road to Crediton Road, which it follows to Fore Street. West of the town centre the proposed boundary runs along Darkey Lane behind Jubilee Close to join Old Road and Beacon Down Hill and then continues to follow the parish boundary. Including the Barton Road / Victoria Street area and the Jubilee Close area in our Okehampton South ward reduces the level of electoral inequality in Okehampton North to 7% more.

44 We have also had regard to the county electoral division boundaries in the borough. We are therefore creating a parish ward for Okehampton Hamlets in the area of Moorcroft Close and Little Fatherford.

45 Okehampton Town Council expressed a wish for the parish of Okehampton Hamlets not to be divided between borough wards. This was supported by the Council and Central Devon Conservative Association. However, as discussed in paragraph 39, to do so would involve the creation of a 'doughnut' ward. We do not consider sufficient evidence has been received to justify such a warding pattern.

46 We consider the north–south pattern of wards in this part of the borough provide the best balance between our statutory criteria. We are therefore proposing a three-member Okehampton North ward and a two-member Okehampton south ward. These wards would have 7% more and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Hatherleigh and north West Devon

47 The north of West Devon borough is largely rural and sparsely populated. The population is concentrated in the parishes of Hatherleigh, North Tawton, South Tawton and Northlew.

48 The Council’s proposals for this area comprised a mixed warding pattern of eight single-member wards and one three-member ward. Our recommendations for this area are largely based on a combination of the proposals of the Council and Central Devon Conservative Association.

Chagford, Drewsteignton and South Tawton

49 To the north-east of the borough the Council proposed a pattern of three single-member wards. The proposed wards of Chagford, Drewsteignton and South Tawton would have 10% fewer, 9% fewer and 7% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

50 The Council proposed a single-member ward consisting solely of Chagford parish, which was supported by Chagford Parish Council, and a single-member Drewsteignton ward consisting of the parishes of Drewsteignton, Spreyton, Gidleigh and Throwleigh.

51 We investigated the possibility of combining the single-member wards of Chagford and Drewsteignton to create a two-member ward, as proposed by Central Devon Conservative Association. While this ward would have more clearly identifiable boundaries we considered that single-member wards would provide for more convenient and effective local government given the very rural nature of the area and the lack of good road links between parishes in this part of the borough.

52 The Council’s proposed South Tawton ward included the parishes of South Tawton and Sticklepath and would have 7% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019.

53 The Council’s proposals included the neighbouring parish of Belstone in its Okehampton East ward. South Tawton Parish Council proposed the same ward to that submitted by the Council, but noted that if the ward needed to be larger, the parish of Belstone could also be included. Central Devon Conservative Association noted that Belstone has more shared community identity with the parishes of South Tawton and Sticklepath rather than with Okehampton. We are therefore including Belstone in our proposed single-member South Tawton ward.

54 Our proposed single-member Chagford, Drewsteignton and South Tawton wards would have 10% fewer, 9% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Exbourne

55 At the northern edge of the borough the Council proposed two-single member wards, one coterminous with the parish of North Tawton and another which included the parishes of Bondleigh, Broadwoodkelly, Exbourne and Jacobstowe. These wards would have 13% more and 12% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019.

56 Central Devon Conservative Association proposed a two-member ward for this area, including all the parishes covered by the Council's Exbourne and North Tawton wards, with the addition of the parishes of Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton.

57 While a single-member North Tawton ward was proposed by the Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Ball, we did not consider that sufficient evidence was submitted to justify the relatively high level of electoral inequality that would result. We are therefore adopting Central Devon Conservative Association's proposed two-member ward.

58 We received representations from the parish councils of Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton indicating that they both had links to the parishes in the current Exbourne ward and expressing concern at the Council's proposals to include the parishes in its Hatherleigh ward. As a result, we have decided to include these parishes in our two-member Exbourne ward. This ward would have 10% more electors than the borough average by 2019.

Hatherleigh, Bridestowe and Tamarside

59 The Council proposed a three-member Hatherleigh ward and three single-member wards for the parishes south of the Hatherleigh area. The proposed ward for Hatherleigh also included the parishes of Meeth, Highampton, Inwardleigh, Northlew, Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton.

60 We considered the Council's proposed three-member ward to be too large to provide effective and convenient local government given the nature of the rural area. We therefore investigated alternative warding patterns for the area. Our investigations indicated that a pattern of single-member wards is not possible, as a single-member ward based on the parishes of Hatherleigh and Meeth would have 14% more electors than the borough average by 2019. Our investigations identified that Meeth parish only has road connections with Hatherleigh and not including the parishes together in a ward would result in the parish of Meeth being detached from the rest of the area. We also received representations which emphasised the links between the parishes of Hatherleigh and Meeth, and the importance of keeping the parishes in the same ward. However, we do not consider that persuasive enough evidence has been received to adopt a variance of 14%. We therefore considered a two-member ward in this part of the borough would better reflect our statutory criteria.

61 The Council's proposed three-member Hatherleigh ward included the parishes of Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton, which we have included in our Exbourne ward (see paragraph 58) and Inwardleigh, which we have included in our Okehampton North (see paragraph 42). As a result of these modifications, we propose a two-member Hatherleigh ward covering this part of the borough. Our proposed two-member Hatherleigh ward would have 11% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019. We consider this is justified by the evidence provided by Iddesleigh and Monkokehampton parish councils that they look more towards Exbourne than Hatherleigh.

62 South of Hatherleigh are the parishes of Bratton Clovelly, Beaworthy, Bridestowe, Coryton, Germansweek, Lewtrenchard, Marystow, Thrushelton and Sourton, which we have included in a two-member Bridestowe ward.

63 The Council proposed two single-member wards for this area, with the boundary between the wards running along the River Thrushel. However, while the southern ward would have a good level of electoral equality, with 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019, the northern ward would have 16% fewer electors than the average. This is a higher level of electoral inequality than we would usually accept. The Council's proposals also included the parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton in different wards. Bridestowe Parish Council provided evidence that the two parishes work closely together, and would be best served by inclusion in the same ward. We are therefore proposing a two-member Bridestowe ward, which would have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

64 We have also included the parish of Brentor in our Bridestowe ward. While Brentor Parish Council identified community links with Mary Tavy, we have not been able to include the parish in a ward with Mary Tavy as this would result in our Dartmoor ward having a poor level of electoral equality (see paragraph 80).

65 West of Bridestowe ward, we investigated the possibility of a single-member Lifton ward, based on the parishes of Lifton, Stowford and Kelly. This ward would have 12% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019.

66 We also investigated a single-member Tamarside ward, containing the parishes of Bradstone, Dunterton, Lamerton, Milton Abbot and Sydenham Damerel. This ward would have 7% more electors than the borough average. While this is an acceptable level of electoral inequality, combining the proposed Tamarside ward with the parishes included in the Lifton area would improve the electoral equality for the area as a whole. We are therefore proposing a two-member Tamarside ward covering all the parishes listed above. This ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

67 Our proposed two-member Hatherleigh, Bridestowe and Tamarside wards would have 11% fewer, 8% fewer and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

Tavistock

68 Tavistock is a market town in the south of the borough. The town consists of one parish. A number of developments are planned for the north of the town.

69 None of the warding patterns we received for West Devon provided specific warding arrangements for Tavistock. The Council's submission allowed for seven members for the town and the neighbouring parish of Whitchurch, but did not provide a breakdown of where the individual boundaries would be placed. It stated that the River Tavy should be used as a boundary wherever possible.

70 Our proposed Tavistock wards only cover Tavistock town. We have not adopted the Council's proposal to include Whitchurch (see paragraph 78).

71 Tavistock Town Council proposed three wards based on the current wards, with

modifications to the boundaries between Tavistock North and Tavistock South, and between Tavistock South and Tavistock South West.

72 If we were to implement the proposals of Tavistock Town Council and make no other changes, Tavistock North, South and South West would have 31% more, 23% fewer and 11% more electors than the borough average by 2019, respectively. We have therefore had to investigate alternative warding arrangements for the town.

73 Our proposed Tavistock north ward includes all of the parish north of the River Tavy, with the exception of the area west of Plymouth Road and south of Callington Road, which we have included in our Tavistock South West ward. We have also included a small area north of Callington Road, the Orchard Close and Abbotsfield Crescent area, in our Tavistock South West ward to provide for a better level of electoral equality.

74 Tavistock Town Council proposed using the former railway line west of Whitchurch Road as the boundary between Tavistock South (which we are naming Tavistock South East) and Tavistock South West wards. We have used this boundary as far as the north side of Mohun's Park, where we propose the boundary runs east to Whitchurch Road and follows the centre of the road to the River Tavy. This modification equalises the number of electors between the Tavistock South East and Tavistock South West wards.

75 Our proposed three-member Tavistock North and two-member Tavistock South East and Tavistock South West wards would have 7% more, 2% more and 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Dartmoor and south West Devon

76 The majority of the south of West Devon lies within Dartmoor National Park. It is exceptionally rural and sparsely populated.

Dartmoor and Burrator

77 The Council proposed a two-member ward for the Dartmoor area, consisting of the parishes of Dartmoor Forest, Meavy, Sampford Spiney, Sheepstor and Walkhampton. West of Dartmoor, it proposed a single-member ward for the parishes of Brentor, Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy. These wards would have 25% fewer and 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

78 The parish of Sampford Spiney, included in the Council's Dartmoor ward, is part of a grouped parish council with Whitchurch, which the Council included with Tavistock. We consider it important to keep grouped parishes in the same ward wherever possible. As the Council's proposals divided this grouped parish and would result in wards with poor levels of electoral inequality, we have investigated alternative warding patterns in this part of the borough. We have therefore included Whitchurch in our Dartmoor ward.

79 We propose a two-member Burrator ward based on the parish of Horrabridge and the parishes of Walkhampton, Meavy and Sheepstor which together form Burrator Grouped Parish Councils. This ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

80 In order to improve the level of electoral equality in the Dartmoor area, we have included the parishes of Mary Tavy, Peter Tavy and Lydford to form a two-member Dartmoor ward. Also included in this ward are the parishes of Sampford Spiney and Whitchurch. This ensures that this parish group is not divided between wards. Our two-member Dartmoor ward would have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

81 Our proposed two-member Dartmoor and two-member Burrator wards would have 8% fewer and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Bere Ferrers and Buckland Monachorum

82 West of Burrator is the parish of Buckland Monachorum. The Council and Buckland Monachorum Parish Council both proposed a ward coterminous with the parish boundary. With two members, a ward for this area would have 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019. We are therefore adopting this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

83 West of Buckland Monachorum are the parishes of Bere Ferrers and Gulworthy. The Council proposed a two-member ward for this area.

84 Bere Ferrers Parish Council provided evidence that the parish is insular and has no strong links to any other parishes in West Devon. The Parish Council therefore proposed a two-member ward consisting solely of Bere Ferrers parish. This was also proposed by the Conservative Group. Such a ward would have 18% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019. We consider this an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. Including the neighbouring parish of Gulworthy, as proposed by the Council to form a two-member Bere Ferrers ward results in the ward having 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. We are therefore adopting the Council's proposed Bere Ferrers ward as part of our draft recommendations.

85 Our proposed two-member Bere Ferrers and Buckland Monachorum wards would have 3% fewer and 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Conclusions

86 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2013 and 2019 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2013	2019
Number of councillors	31	31
Number of electoral wards	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,402	1,473
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10% from the average	3	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendation
 West Devon Borough Council should comprise 31 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

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

89 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Okehampton, Okehampton Hamlets and Tavistock. We would particularly welcome comments on these proposals from both the parish councils concerned and local residents during this consultation stage.

90 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Okehampton parish.

Draft recommendation
Okehampton Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning eight members) and South (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

91 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Okehampton Hamlets parish.

Draft recommendation
Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Little Fatherford (returning one member). North (returning six members) and South (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

92 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Tavistock parish.

Draft recommendation
Tavistock Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: North (returning seven members), South East (returning five members) and South West (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

93 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for West Devon Borough Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 21 July 2014. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

94 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for West Devon and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during this stage. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

95 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer (West Devon)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, consultation.lgbce.org.uk or by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk

96 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of West Devon Borough Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

97 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

98 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

99 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for West Devon Borough Council in 2015.

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

4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for West Devon

101 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for West Devon Borough Council:

- **Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for West Devon Borough Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for West Devon Borough Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for West Devon Borough Council

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bere Ferrers	2	2,913	1,457	4%	2,863	1,432	-3%
2 Bridestowe	2	2,580	1,290	-8%	2,722	1,361	-8%
3 Buckland Monachorum	2	3,075	1,538	10%	3,034	1,517	3%
4 Burrator	2	2,920	1,460	4%	2,873	1,436	-2%
5 Chagford	1	1,264	1,264	-10%	1,321	1,321	-10%
6 Dartmoor	2	2,740	1,370	-2%	2,714	1,357	-8%
7 Drewsteignton	1	1,370	1,370	-2%	1,344	1,344	-9%
8 Exbourne	2	3,071	1,536	10%	3,226	1,613	10%
9 Hatherleigh	2	2,481	1,241	-12%	2,608	1,304	-11%
10 Okehampton North	3	3,675	1,225	-13%	4,727	1,576	7%
11 Okehampton South	2	2,972	1,486	6%	2,970	1,480	1%
12 South Tawton	1	1,612	1,612	15%	1,583	1,583	7%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for West Devon Borough Council

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Tamarside	2	2,924	1,462	4%	2,873	1,436	-2%
14 Tavistock North	3	3,894	1,298	-7%	4,731	1,577	7%
15 Tavistock South East	2	3,070	1,535	9%	3,009	1,505	2%
16 Tavistock South West	2	2,896	1,448	3%	3,048	1,524	3%
Totals	31	43,457	–	–	45,654	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,402	–	–	1,473	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by West Devon Borough Council.

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

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

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