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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England 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 South Hams 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 July 2012.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
8 January 2013	Consultation on council size
26 March 2013	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
5 June 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
20 August 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
12 November 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

The Commission received 62 submissions during its initial consultation on council size. These submissions proposed council sizes of between 30 and 40. During consultation on warding arrangements, we received 54 submissions including two district-wide schemes from South Hams District Council. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

South Hams District Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for 2018. These forecasts projected a 10.3% level of growth. We requested further clarification from the Council concerning electorate growth in a number of polling districts.

Following this request, the Council provided further detail regarding the location of future development. The Council also revised its forecast figures so that the total electorate increase was 8.4%. We are content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

South Hams District Council currently has a council size of 40. The Council originally proposed a council size of 30. It argued that planned changes to the scrutiny function and new ways of working at the council would require fewer members overall. Opposition groups on the Council made a joint submission proposing a council size of 40. They argued that a smaller council would discourage people from standing for election, as well as being detrimental to the scrutiny function.

We considered that the evidence pointed most strongly to a council size of 30 and so undertook a public consultation on this figure. We did not consider that evidence received during consultation made a persuasive case for an alternative council size. We therefore proceeded to consultation on warding arrangements based on a council size of 30.

While developing our draft recommendations, we noted that a scheme for 31 councillors provided for the best overall reflection of our criteria. Our draft recommendations are therefore based on a council size of 31.

General analysis

Having considered submissions received during consultation on warding arrangements, we have developed our own proposals based on evidence received. Our proposals will provide good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and transport links in South Hams.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for South Hams 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 **11 November 2013**. Any 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 (South Hams)
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 South Hams 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 South Hams District 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 South Hams as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals first on council size and then on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review 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 South Hams in February 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 South Hams?

6 We decided to conduct this review because, based on December 2012 electorate data, 33% of the district wards currently have a variance of more than 10%. Of these, four wards have an electoral variance of over 20%.

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.

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

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 11 November 2013. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in February 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 South Hams District Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries and ward names. 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 South Hams 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 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of South Hams District 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.

15 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 divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

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

16 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority ward arrangements. However, principal councils have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct Community Governance Reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

Submissions received

17 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited South Hams District Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 54 submissions during our consultation on warding arrangements, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

18 As part of this review, South Hams District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 10.3% over the six-year period from 2012–18.

19 The figures were calculated with reference to future housing development in the district with electors allocated to polling districts where development was considered likely to be complete by 2018. We requested further clarification from the District Council concerning electorate growth in a number of polling districts.

20 Following this request, the Council provided further detail on the location of specific developments and made downward revisions of its forecasts in a number of areas. As a consequence, the projected increase in electorate reduced to 8.4% over the six-year period. We are content to use these forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

21 South Hams District Council currently has 40 councillors elected from 30 district wards, comprising 21 single-member, eight two-member and one three-member ward. During preliminary discussions, the Council proposed a council size of 30, while opposition members proposed an unchanged council size of 40.

22 The Council's principal arguments for a council size of 30 concerned the potential to reform the scrutiny function to enable the Council to run more efficiently. The Council argued that a streamlined scrutiny function would require fewer councillors.

23 The Council also argued that, as a consequence of new ways of working, future representational workload would be reduced and so would be sustainable under a reduced council size of 30 members. Evidence provided for this included the implementation of an e-casework system, greater use of digital engagement, housing stock transfer, a reduction in councillor positions on outside bodies, and an increase in shared service provision.

24 The opposition members argued for an unchanged council size of 40 on the basis that a smaller council would increase workload and discourage people from standing for election. The opposition submission also expressed concern that, if the size of the executive did not reduce under a smaller council, over half of members would be claiming special responsibility allowances, which would be detrimental to the scrutiny function.

25 We considered that the evidence received pointed most strongly to a council size of 30, as such a council size would reflect the proposed reform of the scrutiny function and the transfer of functions away from the council since the last review. We did not consider the evidence submitted by the opposition groups to make a persuasive case to retain a council size of 40. We therefore carried out a public consultation on a council size of 30.

26 During this consultation we received 62 submissions, of which 37 supported a council size of 40, 23 supported a council size of 30 or smaller, and two supported a more modest reduction in council size.

27 Following the consultation we considered that insufficient evidence had been received to counter our view that a council size of 30 was most appropriate for the council. We therefore proceeded to consultation on warding arrangements based on a council size of 30.

28 During the consultation on warding arrangements, a number of further submissions were received with regard to council size. These submissions argued that a 40-member council would be more appropriate for South Hams. We do not consider that the further evidence received makes a persuasive case for a council size of 40.

29 In developing proposals for draft recommendations, we considered that a scheme based on 31 members provided for stronger boundaries and better electoral equality than a 30-member scheme. Our draft recommendations are therefore based on a council size of 31.

Electoral fairness

30 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.

31 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (68,805 in 2012 and 74,585 by 2018) 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 2,220 in 2012 and 2,406 by 2018.

32 Under our draft recommendations, all of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the district by 2018. We are

therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for South Hams.

General analysis

33 During our consultation on warding arrangements, we received 54 submissions. Seven submissions were received from district councillors, 19 from local residents, 19 from parish and town councils, six from individual parish councillors, two from local political parties and groups, and one from the District Council.

34 The District Council submitted two options for warding arrangements based on a council size of 30. These options proposed wards for the entire district with the exception of the town of Ivybridge, to which four councillors were allocated but no specific boundaries were proposed.

35 The Council's options were not supported by evidence of community ties or effective and convenient local government. A number of other submissions made objection to, or provided comment on, these options.

36 A proposal was also submitted by a district councillor for an alternative pattern of wards in the north-west of the district. Additionally, two submissions were made proposing specific boundaries for Ivybridge town.

37 Following analysis of the Council's submission and the evidence relating to it, we considered that neither option submitted by the Council satisfactorily reflected our statutory criteria. We have consequently developed our own proposals for warding arrangements for the district, taking into account the evidence received during consultation.

38 We have concluded that a scheme based on a council size of 31 better reflects our statutory criteria than a scheme based on a membership of 30. Our draft recommendations are therefore for a council size of 31.

39 Our draft recommendations are for a pattern of 11 single-member, seven two-member and two three-member wards. In developing our proposals we have had regard for our statutory criteria of electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government.

40 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 23–4) and the large map accompanying this report.

41 We welcome all comments on the boundaries and ward names we have proposed as part of these draft recommendations.

Electoral arrangements

42 This section of the report details our draft recommendations for each area of South Hams, with reference to submissions where relevant. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- West (pages 9–11)
- North and east (pages 11–14)
- South (pages 15–16)

43 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 23–4 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

West

44 The western half of the district borders Plymouth and includes the town of Ivybridge. It is largely rural in character.

45 Both options presented by the Council in the west of the district proposed a pattern of six single-member wards and one two-member ward in the rural areas, with four councillors allocated to Ivybridge but no specific ward boundaries proposed for the town. This proposal was not supported by evidence relating to our statutory criteria. Additionally, no names were allocated to the proposed wards.

46 In the north-west, the Council proposed a two-member ward comprising Bickleigh, Shaugh Prior and Sparkwell and a single-member ward comprising Cornwood, Harford and Ugborough. In the south-west the Council proposed single-member wards of Brixton and Wembury, a single-member ward comprising Ermington and Yealmpton, a single-member ward comprising Newton & Noss and Holbeton, and a single-member ward comprising Bigbury, Kingston, Modbury and Ringmore.

47 Two of the wards proposed in this scheme – the ward of Cornwood, Harford and Ugborough and the ward of Newton & Noss and Holbeton – would have significant electoral inequality.

48 We also received a number of submissions arguing that it would be more appropriate to combine Ermington and Ugborough in a single ward, rather than dividing them between wards as proposed in the Council's options. The evidence for this argument largely centred on communication links, church and school ties.

49 It was also argued by Cornwood, Shaugh Prior and Sparkwell parish councils that they had a close relationship to each other based on mining and industrial links, whereas there was no direct road connection between Harford and Ugborough parish and the latter was of a different character.

50 An alternative scheme was proposed for the north-west of the district by Councillor Holway, supported by Councillor Hitchins and Bickleigh Parish Council. He proposed a single-member ward for the Woolwell area of Bickleigh parish, arguing that this was entirely urban in character and would have provided for good electoral equality as a separate ward.

51 Councillor Holway also proposed that the remainder of Bickleigh parish should be combined with the parishes of Shaugh Prior, Cornwood and Harford to form a single-member ward, on the basis of their similar character as moorland parishes with a history of mining and related industries.

52 Cornwood, Sparkwell and Shaugh Prior parishes submitted evidence supporting the argument that they should be combined in a single-member ward. It was noted that the parishes currently form a cluster based on their shared interest. While such a ward would have good electoral equality, a consequential effect would be to isolate the parish of Bickleigh which does not have satisfactory electoral equality to form a ward on its own. We have not therefore adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

53 We find the community evidence presented by Councillor Holway for the two proposed single-member wards to be persuasive, and both wards would have good electoral equality. We have therefore adopted the proposed single-member Bickleigh & Cornwood and single-member Woolwell wards as part of our draft recommendations. These wards would have 5% fewer and 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018 respectively.

54 To the south, Councillor Holway proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Yealmpton and Sparkwell. Councillor Baldry stated that the only parish with which Yealmpton had a strong connection was Brixton, while Newton & Noss Parish Council argued that it should be combined with the parish of Holbeton in a single-member ward.

55 A ward of Newton & Noss and Holbeton would not have satisfactory electoral equality, and we were unable to develop a scheme that included a two-member Brixton & Yealmpton ward which did not result in high electoral inequality in neighbouring wards. Councillor Holway's proposal for a single-member Yealmpton & Sparkwell ward would also result in unsatisfactory electoral equality. We have not therefore adopted these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

56 Instead, we propose a two-member Newton & Yealmpton ward as part of our draft recommendations, comprising the parishes of Holbeton, Newton & Noss, Sparkwell and Yealmpton. This ward has good electoral equality and communication links between the parishes. The ward is forecast to have 6% more electors per councillor than the district average

57 South of Ivybridge, Councillor Holway supported the evidence suggesting closer community ties between Ermington and Ugborough than with the parishes to their north. He also argued that the northern parishes look towards Plymouth for their amenities while Ermington and Ugborough look towards Modbury or Ivybridge.

58 We accept the evidence supplied by Councillor Holway and others that Ermington and Ugborough are of a similar character and share community ties. We are also persuaded that it would not be appropriate with regard to community identity or effective and convenient local government to include Ugborough in a ward with parishes to its north-west such as Harford or Cornwood.

59 We have therefore adopted Councillor Holway's proposal for a single-member Ermington & Ugborough ward comprising these two parishes as part of our draft recommendations. We propose to include a small part of Ugborough parish in Ivybridge East ward, as discussed below, owing to the location of a future housing development in this area adjoining Ivybridge. This amendment would also improve electoral equality in Ermington & Ugborough ward. With this amendment, Ermington

& Ugborough ward is forecast to have 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

60 In the south-west of the district, Brixton Parish Council argued that its parish should form a single-member ward, as the proposed Sherford development would result in its having good electoral equality.

61 Under a 31-member council, a single-member Brixton ward would be forecast to have 13% more electors than the district average by 2018. We are not persuaded that such a level of electoral inequality is justified. We therefore propose to retain the existing two-member Wembury & Brixton ward unchanged in this area. This ward is forecast to have 7% more electors than the district average by 2018.

62 The Council did not propose specific boundaries for Ivybridge. Ivybridge Town Council and Councillor Saltern both proposed a pattern of two two-member wards in the town, using the River Erme as the boundary between the two wards. They also proposed that a part of Ugborough parish be included in Ivybridge East ward as this was the location of a future development adjoining Ivybridge. The Town Council also indicated that it intended to apply to initiate a Community Governance Review to ensure that the new development was included in the Ivybridge Town Council area.

63 We consider that a pattern of two two-member wards using the River Erme as a boundary and including the future development in Ugborough parish within the Ivybridge East ward provides for a strong reflection of our statutory criteria. The proposal to include the forecast housing development in Ivybridge East also improves electoral equality in the Ermington & Ugborough ward.

64 We have therefore adopted the two-member Ivybridge East and two-member Ivybridge West wards as proposed by Ivybridge Town Council and Councillor Saltern as part of our draft recommendations. These wards are forecast to have equal to and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

65 Both Council options proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Bigbury, Kingston, Modbury and Ringmore. These parishes appear to have good communication links and this ward provides for good electoral equality. We have adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. The ward, which we propose to name Bigbury & Modbury, is forecast to have 5% more electors than the district average by 2018.

North and east

66 The north and east of the district includes the towns of Dartmouth and Totnes and a number of rural villages, including part of the Dartmoor national park.

67 The first Council option proposed a pattern of seven single-member wards and one two-member ward for the rural area. The first option also proposed that three members should be allocated to a group of parishes comprising Totnes, Littlehempston and Ashprington. The second Council option proposed a pattern of four single-member and two two-member wards. It also proposed that three members should be allocated to the Totnes town area.

68 The first Council option proposed that a single-member ward be formed from the parishes of Dean Prior, Harberton, Holne, Rattery, West Buckfastleigh and the rural part of South Brent parish. It also proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Staverton and Dartington, and a single-member ward combining the parish of North Huish with the part of South Brent parish comprising South Brent village itself. This option also proposed to combine the rural part of Berry Pomeroy parish with Marldon parish in a single-member ward.

69 Further south, the first Council option proposed to combine Blackawton, Cornworthy, Dittisham and Stoke Fleming in a single-member ward, and also proposed a single-member ward combining the inland parishes of Diptford, East Allington, Halwell & Moreleigh and Woodleigh with the coastal parishes of Slapton and Strete.

70 The second Council option for the north and east proposed that the parish of South Brent form a stand-alone single-member ward; that Dean Prior, Harberton, Holne, Rattery and West Buckfastleigh form a single-member ward; that Dartington be combined with Littlehempston and Staverton in a single-member ward; and that Ashprington, the rural part of Berry Pomeroy and Marldon form a single-member ward in the north-east corner of the district.

71 The second Council option also proposed that a single-member ward be created in the rural area between South Brent and Dartington comprising the parishes of Diptford, Halwell & Moreleigh, Cornworthy, Dittisham and Stoke Fleming.

72 In the Dartmouth and Kingswear area, both options proposed that the Dartmouth Town Council area should form a two-member ward, while Kingswear parish should be combined with Stoke Gabriel parish to form a single-member ward east of the River Dart.

73 We do not consider that either scheme provides for a satisfactory reflection of communities in this area. In particular, we are concerned that both options propose a number of wards comprising villages which appear to have poor connections.

74 A submission was also received from Diptford Parish Council opposing the proposal in both options to combine the village with parishes lying along the coastline. The submission argued that parishes such as Strete and Slapton were of a different character to the inland villages around Diptford.

75 We have therefore developed alternative proposals for wards in the north and east of the district, taking into account the statutory criteria and adopting elements of the Council's options as appropriate.

76 In the north of the district in the area neighbouring Buckfastleigh, we propose a two-member South Brent ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward contains the parishes of Dean Prior, Diptford, Holne, North Huish, Rattery, South Brent and West Buckfastleigh. This ward combines a number of villages with road connections to South Brent. The ward is forecast to have 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

77 We received a submission from Staverton Parish Council arguing that the village had more in common with smaller rural parishes to its west than with

Dartington. However, we consider that the strongest communication links of Staverton parish are in a southerly direction towards Dartington. Its road links to south-westerly parishes within the district are weaker.

78 We therefore consider that the Council's first option of a Dartington & Staverton ward would provide for effective and convenient local government as well as good electoral equality. This ward is forecast to have an equal number of electors per councillor to the district average by 2018. We have adopted this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

79 In the north-eastern corner of the district, Berry Pomeroy and Marldon parish councils both argued that the first Council option represented a stronger reflection of communities in the area, and that they had little in common with Ashprington parish, with which they were combined in a ward under the second option. Ashprington Parish Council also supported this view.

80 We find this evidence persuasive, as the River Dart represents a strong boundary between these parishes and Ashprington. We also consider that it would be appropriate to use the River Dart as the western boundary for the ward in this area.

81 We have therefore included as part of our draft recommendations a ward comprising the parishes of Berry Pomeroy, Littlehempston and Marldon. This single-member ward – which we propose to name Marldon & Littlehempston – would have an equal number of electors per councillor to the district average by 2018.

82 As stated above, the second Council option proposed to allocate three members to the Totnes Town Council area, including a small urban part of Berry Pomeroy parish. We consider that a three-member ward for this area would clearly reflect the community of Totnes and have good electoral equality. We have therefore adopted it as part of our draft recommendations. The three-member Totnes ward is forecast to have 2% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

83 We received a significant number of submissions in relation to the Council's proposals for the Dartmouth and Kingswear area, including from Dartmouth Town Council, Kingswear Parish Council, two district councillors from Dartmouth & Kingswear ward and several members of the public.

84 These submissions all argued that Dartmouth had strong links with Kingswear, while Kingswear had little relationship with Stoke Gabriel. They noted that, despite the lack of a direct road connection, there were a number of regular ferry connections for cars and pedestrians. The submissions also stated that the two settlements shared amenities as well as significant community connections.

85 It was proposed by Councillors Hawkins and Bastone that Dartmouth and Kingswear should form a three-member ward, including the proposed West Dartmouth development currently lying in Stoke Fleming parish.

86 Based on figures supplied to us by the Council, the West Dartington development would not alone provide sufficient additional electors by 2018 to provide for satisfactory electoral equality in the Dartmouth & Kingswear ward. We have not therefore adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

87 We received a submission from a resident in Stoke Gabriel opposing the proposal to combine the village with Kingswear. The resident argued that the primary links of Stoke Gabriel were with Totnes and that a more appropriate solution may be to combine it in a ward with villages to the west of the River Dart, which also look towards Totnes.

88 We note the evidence from the Stoke Gabriel resident, but are concerned at the poor communication links between the villages and the parish to its west, from which Stoke Gabriel is separated by the River Dart with no crossing points other than in Totnes.

89 The Chairman of Kingswear Branch of Totnes Constituency Conservative Association proposed that Stoke Gabriel be included in a two-member ward with the parishes of Berry Pomeroy, Littlehempston, Marldon and Staverton. However, this ward would not have satisfactory electoral equality. Communication links between Stoke Gabriel and Berry Pomeroy are by way of a single track road.

90 We were unable to identify a warding option for Stoke Gabriel which included a direct road connection between this village and other settlements in the ward. No option combining the village with parishes to its north would provide for good electoral equality.

91 We note that there is an indirect road connection between Stoke Gabriel and Kingswear via Galmpton and Hillhead, though this would require crossing the external district boundary to the east. We consider that combining Stoke Gabriel in a ward with Kingswear therefore provides for the best balance of electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

92 To reflect this, and the evidence of community ties between Dartmouth and Kingswear, we propose to create a three-member Dartmouth & Kingswear ward comprising the parishes of Dartmouth, Kingswear and Stoke Gabriel as part of our draft recommendations. This ward is forecast to have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

93 South of Totnes, we consider that a ward combining four rural parishes lying west of the River Dart provides for the best reflection of community ties and communication links, as these parishes have good road connections and a strong north-eastern boundary along the river. Ashprington Parish Council also provided evidence that these parishes are of a similar rural character.

94 We have therefore included a ward comprising the parishes of Ashprington, Cornworthy, Dittisham and Harberton as part of our draft recommendations. This ward, which we propose to name Ashprington & Cornworthy, is forecast to have 9% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

95 Finally, we have included a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Blackawton, Halwell & Moreleigh and Stoke Fleming as part of our draft recommendations. These parishes lie close to the A3122 which provides a strong internal road connection for the ward. The ward, which we propose to name Halwell & Stoke Fleming, is forecast to have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

South

96 The south of the district comprises rural villages, coastline communities and the town of Kingsbridge.

97 In this area, the first Council option proposed a pattern of five single-member wards in the rural area, with two members being allocated to the town of Kingsbridge and the neighbouring village of Charleton. The second Council option also proposed five single-member wards, with Kingsbridge town forming a two-member ward on its own.

98 The first Council option provided for two wards with significantly high electoral inequality, while the second option combined villages with poor communication links. We have therefore developed an alternative scheme of wards in this area, adopting elements of the Council's options where we consider they reflect our statutory criteria.

99 The first Council option proposed a single-member ward comprising Malborough and Salcombe parishes, and a single-member ward comprising Thurlestone, South Huish, South Milton and West Alvington parishes. The latter ward is forecast to have 19% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. The second Council option in this area also proposed a single-member Malborough & Salcombe ward, as well as a single-member ward comprising the above four parishes with Churchstow parish.

100 While the second Council option provides for better electoral equality, we consider that Churchstow has stronger connections to its north than to its south and would therefore be more appropriately joined in a ward with northward parishes.

101 We also note that combining the two proposed single-member wards from the first Council option into a single two-member ward would provide for improved electoral equality and good road connections. The ward is forecast to have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We have included this ward, which we propose to name Salcombe & Thurlestone, as part of our draft recommendations.

102 To the north, the first Council option proposed a rural single-member ward comprising the parishes of Aveton Gifford, Buckland-Tout-Saints, Churchstow and Loddiswell, while the second option proposed a single-member ward excluding Churchstow but including Woodleigh and North Huish.

103 We received a submission from Aveton Gifford Parish Council arguing that the parish should be included in a ward with Churchstow, Bigbury, Thurlestone and Loddiswell, forming a ward that 'has interest in the lower River Avon and the Avon Estuary'. We have not adopted this proposal as it would not provide for good electoral equality.

104 Instead, we have adopted a single-member Aveton Gifford ward comprising the parishes of Aveton Gifford, Churchstow, Loddiswell and Woodleigh as part of our draft recommendations. These villages have good road connections and appear to be of a similar character. This ward is forecast to have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

105 In the coastal area, as discussed in paragraphs 70-73 we felt unable to adopt the Council's first option to combine the parish of Diptford and neighbouring parishes with the coastal parishes of Slapton and Strete.

106 We also do not propose to adopt the Council's second option in this area, for a ward comprising the parishes of Blackawton, Charleton, East Allington, Frogmore & Sherford and Strete. We do not consider that this ward would reflect community ties or communication links.

107 Instead, we propose a single-member ward combining the parishes of Buckland-Tout-Saints, Charleton, East Allington, Frogmore & Sherford, Slapton and Strete in a single-member ward. We consider that this proposal has greater regard for communication links than either of the Council's options, and has good electoral equality. We have therefore included this ward, which we propose to name East Allington, as part of our draft recommendations. This ward is forecast to have 1% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

108 To the south, the Council's first option for the south-east coast area was for a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Chivelstone, East Portlemouth, Frogmore & Sherford, South Pool and Stokenham. The second option included the parish of Slapton and excluded the parish of Frogmore & Sherford.

109 We consider that both of these options provide for a good reflection of communities and communication links. We therefore propose to adopt a single-member ward named Stokenham based on these options as part of our draft recommendations, with minor amendments. Our proposed ward would comprise the parishes of Chivelstone, East Portlemouth, South Pool and Stokenham, and is forecast to have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

110 Finally, we have adopted the proposal of the second Council option to unite the town of Kingsbridge in a single two-member ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would clearly reflect the community of Kingsbridge and is forecast to have 8% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.

Conclusion

111 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	31	31
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,220	2,406
Number of wards with a variance more	3	0

than 10% from the average

Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average

0

0

Draft recommendation

South Hams Council should comprise 31 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

112 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.

113 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, South Hams District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

114 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Berry Pomeroy, Bickleigh, Ivybridge and Ugborough.

115 As a result of our proposed electoral 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 Berry Pomeroy parish.

Draft recommendations

Berry Pomeroy Parish Council should return seven parish councillors, the same as at present, representing two wards: Bridgetown (returning four members) and Village (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

116 As a result of our proposed electoral 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 Bickleigh parish.

Draft recommendations

Bickleigh Parish Council should return nine parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Bickleigh (returning two members) and Woolwell (returning seven members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

117 As a result of our proposed electoral 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 Ivybridge parish.

Draft recommendations

Ivybridge Town Council should return 16 town councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards: Ivybridge East (returning eight members) and Ivybridge West (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

118 As a result of our proposed electoral 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 Ugborough parish.

Draft recommendations

Ugborough Parish Council should return 11 parish councillors, the same as at present, representing two wards: Ivybridge East (returning one member) and Ugborough (returning 10 members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

108 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 South Hams contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 11 November 2013. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

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

110 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
South Hams Review
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, <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk> or by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk

111 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 received during the consultation on our draft recommendations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of South Hams District 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.

112 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.

113 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.

114 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 South Hams District Council in 2015.

115 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 South Hams

116 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for South Hams:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for South Hams.

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for South Hams

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashprington & Cornworthy	1	2,124	2,124	5%	2,187	2,187	-9%
2	Aveton Gifford	1	2,033	2,033	-8%	2,214	2,214	-8%
3	Bickleigh & Cornwood	1	2,220	2,220	0%	2,296	2,296	-5%
4	Bigbury & Modbury	1	2,391	2,391	8%	2,536	2,536	5%
5	Dartington & Staverton	1	2,082	2,082	-6%	2,394	2,394	0%
6	Dartmouth & Kingswear	3	6,555	2,185	-2%	6,916	2,305	-4%
7	East Allington	1	2,342	2,342	6%	2,429	2,429	1%
8	Ermington & Ugborough	1	2,200	2,200	-1%	2,393	2,393	-1%
9	Halwell & Stoke Fleming	1	1,863	1,863	-16%	2,329	2,329	-3%
10	Ivybridge East	2	4,543	2,272	3%	4,811	2,406	0%
11	Ivybridge West	2	4,943	2,472	11%	5,078	2,539	6%
12	Kingsbridge	2	4,729	2,365	7%	5,199	2,600	8%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft Recommendations for South Hams

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13	Marldon & Littlehempston	1	2,380	2,380	7%	2,417	2,417	0%
14	Newton & Yealmpton	2	4,788	2,394	8%	5,088	2,544	6%
15	Salcombe & Thurlestone	2	4,346	2,173	-2%	4,545	2,273	-6%
16	South Brent	2	4,164	2,082	-6%	4,454	2,227	-7%
17	Stokenham	1	2,139	2,139	-4%	2,264	2,264	-6%
18	Totnes	3	6,737	2,246	1%	7,372	2,457	2%
19	Wembury & Brixton	2	3,777	1,889	-15%	5,164	2,582	7%
20	Woolwell	1	2,449	2,449	10%	2,499	2,499	4%
	Totals	31	68,805	-	-	74,585	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,220	-	-	2,406	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Hams District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral division varies from the average for the district. 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 or division, expressed in parishes or existing wards or divisions, 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
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