

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Suffolk County Council

Electoral review

September 2020

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

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

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

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

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

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

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

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Suffolk?

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

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The divisions in Suffolk are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the county.

Our proposals for Suffolk

9 Suffolk should be represented by 70 councillors, five fewer than there are now.

10 Suffolk should have 70 divisions, seven more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all but one division should change.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

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

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 15 September 2020 to 23 November 2020. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed divisions as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new divisions to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 23 November 2020 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 41 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Suffolk. We then held a period of consultation with the public on division patterns for the county. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

| Stage starts | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| 17 September 2019 | Number of councillors decided |
| 24 September 2019 | Start of consultation seeking views on new divisions |
| 13 January 2020 | End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations |
| 15 September 2020 | Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation |
| 23 November 2020 | End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations |
| 11 May 2021 | Publication of final recommendations |

Analysis and draft recommendations

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

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

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

| | 2019 | 2025 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Electorate of Suffolk | 563,760 | 591,841 |
| Number of councillors | 75 | 70 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 7,517 | 8,455 |

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a division is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the division as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed divisions for Suffolk will have good electoral equality by 2025.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2025, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2020. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 5% by 2025.

25 A number of respondents provided some localised comments questioning the forecast figures in their areas. Trimley St Martin Parish Council suggested that there was additional development in its area. Felixstowe Town Council also referred to the fact that the forecast figures only took limited account of the future development in

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

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

Felixstowe and the Trimleys. We note these comments but believe that the developments referred to appear to be beyond the forecast period and not yet subject to detailed planning applications or approvals.

26 We are therefore satisfied that the information provided by the Council remains best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 Suffolk County Council currently has 75 councillors. The Conservative and Labour groups on the Council proposed reducing the council size to 70. The Liberal Democrat, Green & Independent Groups on the Council proposed retaining the existing council size. Councillor Nettleton proposed a reduction to 72 councillors.

28 We looked at all the evidence provided and concluded that a council size of 70 would ensure the Council could carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively, while also ensuring a good allocation of councillors between the constituent districts.

29 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of divisions that would be represented by 70 councillors.

30 In response to our request for division proposals, we received a number of submissions commenting on council size. Some respondents expressed general support for the reduction in council size. Others, including Haverhill Town Council, Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council, Kettleburgh Parish Council and Councillor Kemp (Suffolk County Council), questioned it, citing concerns about councillor workload. Kersey Parish Council expressed support for a reduction in council size. Thurston Parish Council recommended a council size of 72.

31 The Suffolk County Council Liberal Democrat, Green & Independent Group reiterated their earlier opposition to the reduction in council size, restating concerns about councillor workload. The Group argued that workload varies between divisions and that some divisions cover a large number of parishes, adding to workload in these areas. A number of respondents proposed alternative council sizes but provided limited evidence to support them.

32 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. However, on balance, we have not been persuaded to move away from a council size of 70. We have therefore used this number as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Councillor allocation and coterminosity

33 A council size of 70 provides the following allocation between the district councils in the county. We have also listed the percentage of district wards that are wholly contained within our proposed divisions. We refer to this as coterminosity.

| Authority | Allocation of councillors | Coterminosity |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Babergh ⁴ | 9 | 75% |
| East Suffolk ⁵ | 24 | 38% |
| Ipswich ⁶ | 12 | 38% |
| Mid Suffolk ⁷ | 10 | 58% |
| West Suffolk ⁸ | 15 | 63% |

Division boundaries consultation

34 We received 66 submissions in response to our consultation on division boundaries. These included a county-wide proposal from Suffolk County Council Conservative Group ('Conservative Group'). For the borough of Ipswich, we also received a joint proposal from Ipswich Labour Party & Suffolk County Council Labour Group, as well as a proposal from Ipswich Liberal Democrats. South Suffolk Conservative Association ('South Suffolk Conservatives') put forward proposals for the district of Babergh and part of the district of West Suffolk. Councillor Nettleton put forward proposals for West Suffolk. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for division arrangements in particular areas of the county.

35 Suffolk County Council requested that we draw up a pattern based solely on single-councillor divisions. We have sought to reflect this request in the draft recommendations. We will only move away from this pattern of single-councillor divisions should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern will better reflect our statutory criteria.

36 We received a number of comments about coterminosity between district wards and divisions. Councillor Mallinder (East Suffolk Council) argued that the divisions should comprise whole district wards. Councillor Byatt (East Suffolk Council) suggested that East Suffolk should be represented by 34 county councillors based on the district wards. He provided an allocation of councillors based on these wards, with some wards being amalgamated. Councillor Gooch (East Suffolk Council) also stressed the importance of coterminosity between district wards and divisions,

⁴ Coterminosity based on the final recommendations for Babergh District Council.

⁵ Coterminosity based on the final recommendations for East Suffolk Council.

⁶ Coterminosity based on the final recommendations for Ipswich Borough Council.

⁷ Coterminosity based on the final recommendations for Mid Suffolk District Council.

⁸ Coterminosity based on the final recommendations for West Suffolk Council.

arguing that where this is not the case, it creates confusion. Councillor Gooch also argued in favour of two-member divisions, stating that they would enable cover in circumstances where a councillor is away or sick. Bromeswell Parish Council argued that division boundaries should seek to reflect ward boundaries.

37 We note the comments about retaining links between district wards and divisions and where possible we seek to reflect this in our draft recommendations. However, this must be balanced against the statutory criteria and in some instances it is necessary to move away from coterminous arrangements in order to secure electoral equality or reflect community identity or effective and convenient local government. We note the specific proposals for divisions based solely on wards, but these do not secure good electoral equality or give a district the correct allocation of councillors. Therefore, we are not adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

38 As discussed above, the Council requested that we draw up a pattern based solely on single-councillor divisions. We have therefore sought to avoid two-councillor divisions, despite some respondents favouring them.

39 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence we received during the first consultation period. These submissions provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas, we considered that the proposals for division arrangements did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries. We have based our draft recommendations on a mixture of the proposals from the Conservative Group, Councillor Nettleton, Ipswich Labour Party & Suffolk County Council Labour Group, Ipswich Liberal Democrats and a number of other local comments, as well as including some of our own amendments.

40 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This visit to Suffolk helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

41 Our draft recommendations are for 70 single-councillor divisions. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

42 The tables and maps on pages 10–33 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Suffolk. They detail how the proposed division arrangements reflect the three statutory⁹ criteria of:

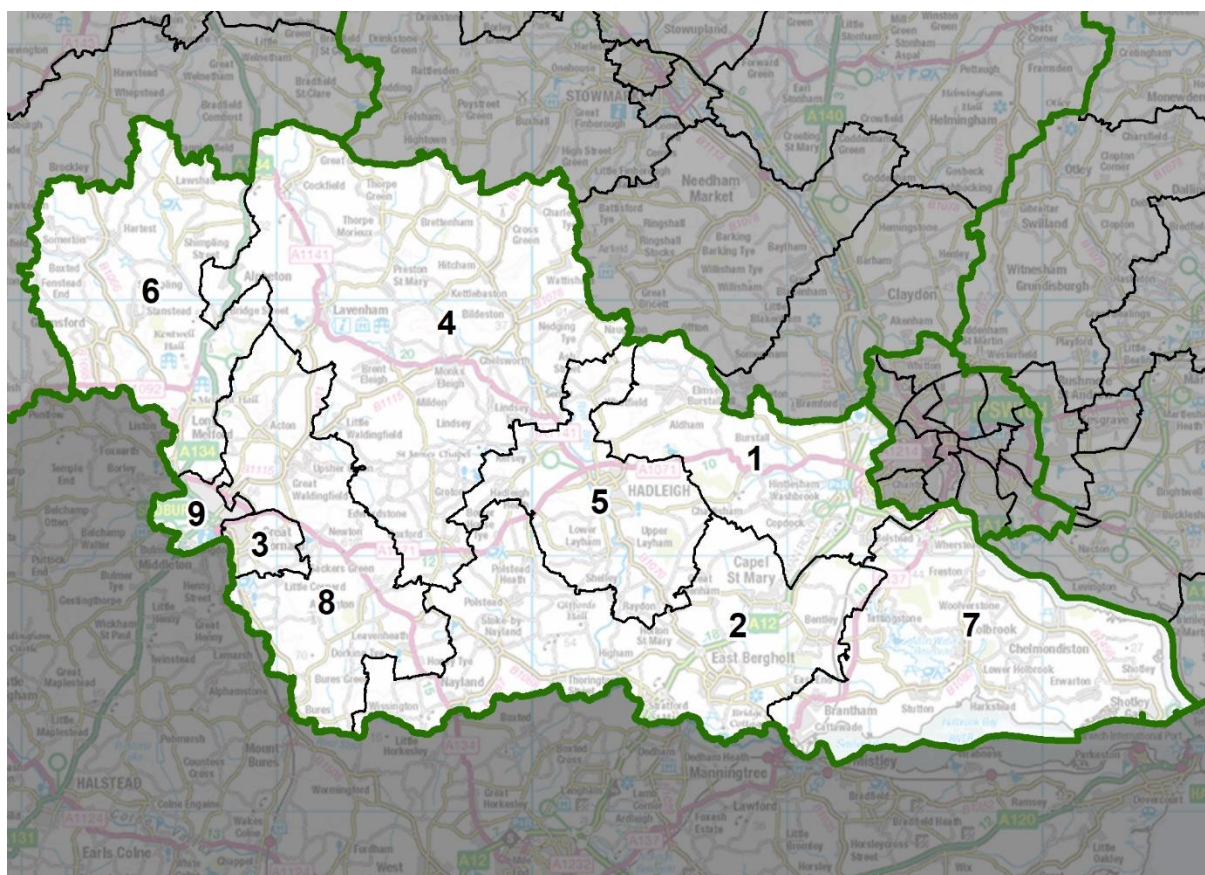
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

43 A summary of our proposed new divisions is set out in the table starting on page 47 and on the large map accompanying this report.

44 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the division boundaries, and the names of our proposed divisions.

⁹ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Babergh



| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Brook | 1 | -8% |
| 2 | Constable | 1 | 8% |
| 3 | Cornard & Sudbury East | 1 | -3% |
| 4 | Cosford | 1 | -2% |
| 5 | Hadleigh | 1 | 0% |
| 6 | Melford | 1 | -2% |
| 7 | Peninsula | 1 | 0% |
| 8 | Stour Valley | 1 | 1% |
| 9 | Sudbury West | 1 | -5% |

Cornard & Sudbury East, Stour Valley and Sudbury West

45 The Conservative Group and South Suffolk Conservatives put forward different proposals for this area. The Conservative Group proposed a Sudbury West division comprising part of Sudbury parish and a Cornard & Sudbury East division comprising Great Cornard parish and part of Sudbury parish. The Group also proposed a Gainsborough division comprising part of Sudbury parish and a number of rural parishes to the west.

46 South Suffolk Conservatives proposed to divide Sudbury between a Sudbury division, comprising an area of Sudbury parish, and a Great Cornard & Sudbury East division that comprised Great Cornard parish with the remainder of Sudbury parish. South Suffolk Conservatives also proposed a Babergh division comprising solely rural parishes to the west of Sudbury. Great Cornard Parish Council requested the retention of the existing division, arguing that it has good levels of electoral equality. Little Cornard Parish Council responded, but with no comments at this stage. A local resident proposed a number of changes across the area but did not provide any supporting evidence. We have therefore not adopted their proposals.

47 We note the argument from Great Cornard Parish Council. However, under the revised council size of 70 the existing division would have a variance of 11% in 2025. We do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify this level of electoral inequality. In addition, we must consider the whole of the Babergh district area and the need to secure electoral equality throughout.

48 We also note the argument from South Suffolk Conservatives that Sudbury and Great Cornard would be better served in two single-member divisions covering the more urban area, rather than combining part of this area with surrounding rural areas. We acknowledge these concerns, but note that South Suffolk Conservatives' proposed Babergh division would cover the entire north–south extent of the district. In addition, the southern parishes in its proposed division do not have direct access to the parishes to the north.

49 While the Conservative Group proposals for the area require part of Sudbury to be linked to a predominantly rural division, this particular area of the town has good connections out to the surrounding rural area. In addition, this proposal secures better electoral equality than the South Suffolk Conservatives' proposal. When considered alongside our concerns about the extent of the Babergh division proposed by South Suffolk Conservatives, on balance we have decided to base our draft recommendations for the area on the Conservative Group's proposals. We do, however, propose a minor amendment to the boundary between the Gainsborough and Sudbury West divisions to ensure that the whole of Sudbury North East ward is in the Gainsborough division. This improves coterminosity and reflects the access of the area around Grenville Road.

50 Finally, we note that the Conservative Group proposed the name 'Gainsborough' for one of its suggested divisions. However, Ipswich also contains a Gainsborough division and to avoid confusion we therefore propose the name Stour Valley. This reflects the name of a current division covering the Stour Valley area, which this proposed division also covers.

Cosford and Melford

51 The Conservative Group and South Suffolk Conservatives put forward identical proposals for a Melford division but suggested different division patterns for the rest of this area. Kersey Parish Council expressed support for the reduction of the council size to 70 but did not have any comments on the division pattern. Little Waldingfield Parish Council requested to be in a division with other rural parishes. Long Melford Parish Council responded to the consultation, but made no specific comments. A local resident proposed a number of changes across the area, but did not provide any supporting evidence. We have therefore not adopted their proposals.

52 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. However, given our decision to adopt the Conservative Group's Gainsborough division (renamed Stour Valley as discussed in the section above) we have not adopted the South Suffolk Conservatives' proposed Cosford division as part of our draft recommendations. South Suffolk Conservatives' Cosford division includes a number of parishes we have included in our proposed Stour Valley division.

53 As part of our draft recommendations, we have therefore adopted the Conservative Group's proposed Cosford division without amendment. We have also adopted the Melford division proposed by both groups without modification.

Brook, Constable and Hadleigh

54 The Conservative Group and South Suffolk Conservatives put forward different proposals for this area. Bentley Parish Council argued in favour of the existing Samford division, stressing the importance of the services in Capel St Mary. Polstead Parish Council submitted a response, but made no specific comments on division arrangements. A local resident proposed a number of changes to boundaries across the area, but did not provide any supporting evidence. We have therefore not adopted their proposals.

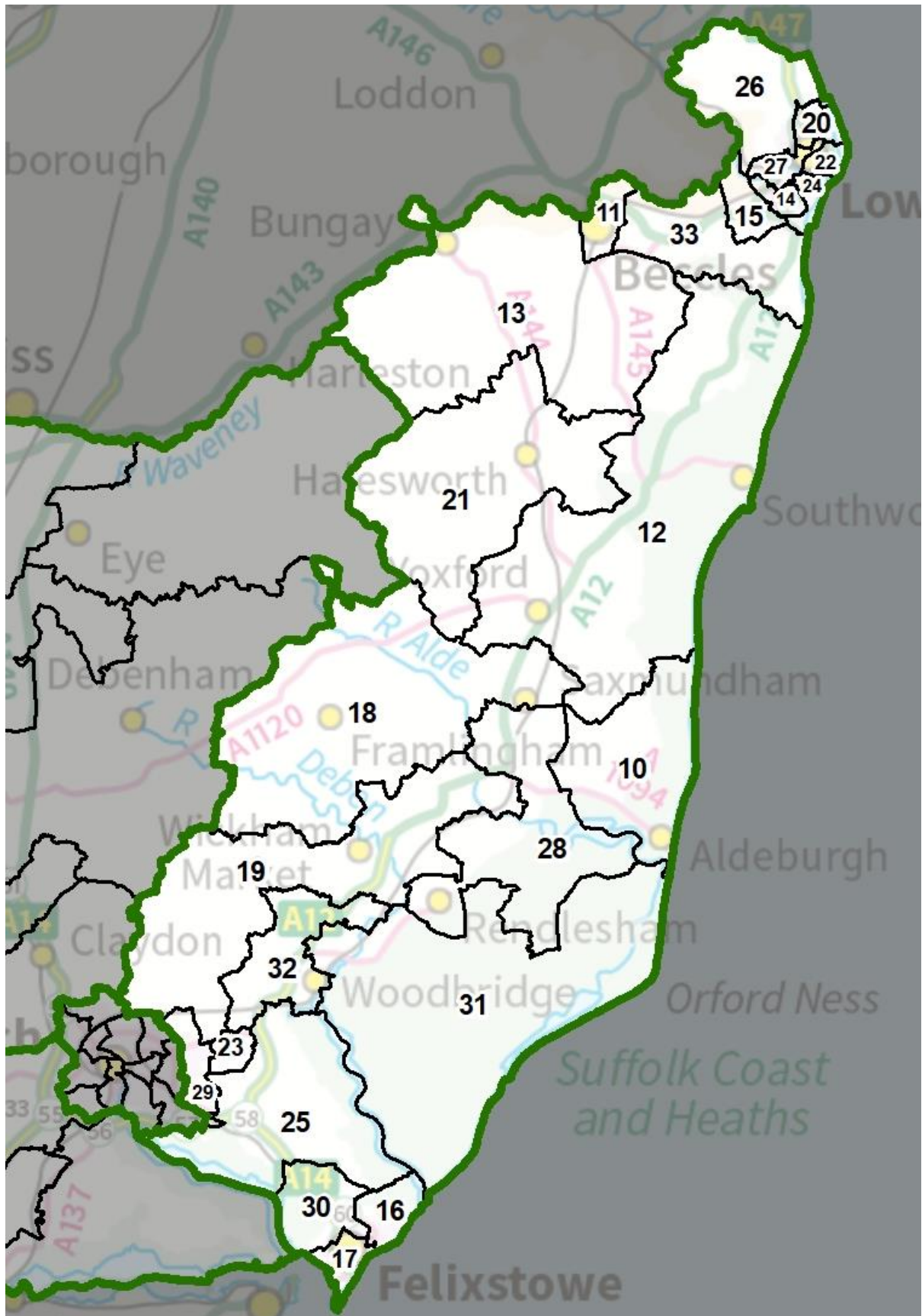
55 We have given careful consideration to the evidence we received. As with the Cosford and Melford area, our decision to adopt the Conservative Group's proposals for the Sudbury area means that a number of the parishes included by South Suffolk Conservatives in proposed divisions for the area have been allocated to other divisions we have recommended elsewhere in the district. We are therefore basing our draft recommendations in this area on the Conservative Group proposals. We do, however, propose an amendment between the Group's proposed Brook and Constable divisions to include Bentley parish in the Constable division, reflecting the arguments made by Bentley Parish Council. Our visit to the area confirmed that while the A12 is not an insignificant boundary, Bentley has good access routes under it to the services in Capel St Mary.

Peninsula

56 The Conservative Group and South Suffolk Conservatives put forward slightly different proposals for this division. Tattingstone Parish Council argued that the Peninsula ward should be extended to include Wherstead parish as it is rural in nature. A local resident proposed a number of changes across the area, but did not provide any supporting evidence. We have therefore not adopted their proposals.

57 There was limited evidence for the proposed divisions in this area. However, given the comments from Tattingstone Parish Council, we have been persuaded to adopt the Conservative Group's proposal as part of our draft recommendations. This arrangement includes Wherstead parish in Peninsula division.

East Suffolk



| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 10 | Aldeburgh & Leiston | 1 | -5% |
| 11 | Beccles | 1 | -1% |
| 12 | Blyth Estuary | 1 | -4% |
| 13 | Bungay | 1 | -7% |
| 14 | Carlton & Whitton | 1 | 4% |
| 15 | Carlton Colville | 1 | -6% |
| 16 | Felixstowe Clifflands | 1 | 2% |
| 17 | Felixstowe Maritime | 1 | -2% |
| 18 | Framlingham | 1 | -7% |
| 19 | Grundisburgh & Wickham Market | 1 | -6% |
| 20 | Gunton | 1 | -5% |
| 21 | Halesworth | 1 | -9% |
| 22 | Harbour | 1 | 6% |
| 23 | Kesgrave | 1 | 7% |
| 24 | Kirkley & Pakefield | 1 | 9% |
| 25 | Martlesham | 1 | -6% |
| 26 | Oulton | 1 | 1% |
| 27 | Oulton Broad & Normanston | 1 | 0% |
| 28 | Rendlesham & Saxmundham | 1 | -9% |
| 29 | Rushmere St Andrew | 1 | 4% |
| 30 | Walton & Trimleys | 1 | -7% |
| 31 | Wilford | 1 | -3% |
| 32 | Woodbridge | 1 | 2% |
| 33 | Worlingham & Kessingland | 1 | 2% |

Gunton, Harbour, Oulton and Oulton Broad & Normanston

58 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Councillor Butler (Lowestoft Town Council) argued that the area to the east of the A1117 Millennium Way should be included in a Lowestoft division, as the current parish boundary cuts through houses around Bentley Drive.

59 We note that Councillor Butler also argued that the parish boundary in this area should be amended. However, we are unable to amend external parish boundaries as part of this review. We also note the general comments about following ward boundaries (discussed in paragraphs 36–7) and have sought to do so wherever possible. However, it has been necessary to divide some wards to secure electoral equality for our proposed divisions in this area.

60 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note that the Conservative Group's proposals are based on the district wards, while generally securing good levels of electoral equality. However, we also note the comment from Councillor Butler about the boundary between Lowestoft and Oulton parishes. The Conservative Group have used the parish boundary, rather than the ward boundary, as part of their division proposals. We consider that the ward boundary is more identifiable as it does not divide the Bentley Drive area, and we are therefore amending the Conservative Group proposal to follow the ward boundary as part our draft recommendations.

61 Our proposed amendment improves electoral equality in the proposed Gunton division from 9% fewer electors than the county average in 2025 to 5% fewer. However, it worsens electoral equality in Oulton division from 5% fewer to 9% fewer. We also note that the Conservative Group's proposed Oulton Broad & Normanston division has relatively poor electoral equality, with 10% more electors than the county average by 2025. However, it is possible to improve electoral equality in Oulton and Oulton Broad & Normanston divisions by transferring an area around Woods Loke West to Oulton division. This improves electoral equality in these divisions to 1% more and 0% by 2025, respectively. We have therefore included this amendment as part of our draft recommendations.

Carlton & Whitton, Carlton Colville and Kirkley & Pakefield

62 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Councillor Gooch (East Suffolk Council) argued that the division boundaries should be conterminous with the ward boundaries, suggesting two divisions coterminous with Carlton & Whitton and Kirkley & Pakefield wards, or a two-councillor division covering both wards.

63 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and note that Councillor Gooch's proposals would result in poor electoral equality. A division coterminous with Kirkley & Pakefield ward would have 29% more electors than the county average by 2025, which we consider too high to justify. While this level of electoral inequality may be improved by the creation of a two-councillor division, it would still remain poor at 14%. In addition, when considering our draft recommendations, we have sought to reflect the Council's request for a uniform pattern of single-councillor divisions. We have not been persuaded that a two-councillor division would provide for a better reflection of our statutory criteria and we have therefore not adopted Councillor Gooch's proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

64 We note that the Conservative Group's proposals secure reasonable electoral equality in the area. However, we had concerns about the boundaries between Carlton Colville and Carlton & Whitton divisions. We note the Group's argument about including the rural area to the north around Oulton Dyke in a division with the rural area to the south. However, our visit to the area suggested that the electors in

the area to the north of Cotmer Road would be better placed in a Carlton & Whitton division, as this would better reflect access routes. In addition, we are of the view that the area to the north of Hollow Grove Way would be better placed in a Carlton Colville division. We consider the impact on the electors in these areas is more significant than the impact on ensuring two rural areas are in the same division. Therefore, we propose an amendment to the boundary between these proposed divisions, transferring the area north of Cotmer Road to Carlton & Whitton division and the area north of Hollow Grove Way to Carlton Colville division. We are adopting its Kirkley & Pakefield division without amendment.

Beccles and Worlingham & Kessingland

65 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Councillor Beavan (East Suffolk Council) objected to any link between Kessingland and Southwold, suggesting that Kessingland should be included in a division with Lowestoft.

66 We received limited comments on this area and note that the Conservative Group's proposals avoid placing Kessingland with Southwold. We also note that placing Kessingland in a Lowestoft division would require a significant redrawing of the proposals discussed above and are not of the view that we received sufficiently compelling evidence to support such changes. We are therefore adopting the Conservative Group's proposals for this area without amendment.

Bungay and Halesworth

67 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. A local resident provided evidence of links between Cookley parish into Halesworth, rather than with Framlingham.

68 We received limited comments on this area and note that the Conservative Group's proposal includes Cookley parish in Halesworth division. We are therefore adopting the Group's proposal for the area without amendment.

Aldeburgh & Leiston, Blyth Estuary, Framlingham and Rendlesham & Saxmundham

69 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council expressed concern about the size of divisions and cited its links to Saxmundham. Tunstall Parish Council argued that it should remain in a division with similar sized villages.

70 We note that there were limited comments on this area. While the Conservative Group's proposals use good boundaries, we were concerned about the poor level of electoral equality in the Group's proposed Blyth Estuary ward, which would have 14% fewer electors than the county average by 2025. While the Group provided some evidence to justify this level of electoral inequality in light of the rural and coastal nature of the area, we have looked to see if it could be improved.

71 We note that the options are limited given the area's position at the edge of the county and our decision to adopt the Bungay and Halesworth divisions (as above). However, including Sibton and Yoxford parishes within the proposed Blyth Estuary division would improve electoral equality there to 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2025. These parishes have good links into the division via the A1120 Yoxford Road. However, we note that transferring these parishes out of the proposed Framlingham division would worsen electoral equality there to 18% fewer electors than the county average by 2025. We therefore propose to transfer Kelsale-cum-Carlton parish to Framlingham division. While we note the Parish Council's arguments about its links to Saxmundham, and indeed our visit to the area supported this, we also saw that it has links into the neighbouring rural parishes in the Framlingham division. Given the need to secure a balance in our statutory criteria across the whole of this area, we have included this amendment within our draft recommendations.

72 The Conservative Group's Aldeburgh & Leiston division secures good electoral equality and comprises whole parishes. We have therefore adopted it without amendment.

Grundisburgh & Wickham Market, Wilford and Woodbridge

73 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Councillor Hedgley (East Suffolk Council), Great Bealings Parish Council and Little Bealings Parish Council argued for the retention of the existing Carlford division. Councillor Page and Woodbridge Town Council proposed amendments to the existing Woodbridge division, expanding it northwards and taking in an area of Melton parish, which they argued was linked strongly with Woodbridge. These respondents also proposed to extend the division southwards to take in an area of Martlesham parish that is not already in the existing division.

74 Ufford Parish Council argued that it should not be divided and that it should be part of a division with parishes of a similar nature. Martlesham Parish Council expressed support for retaining part of the parish in the proposed Woodbridge division. Hollesley Parish Council argued that it should be in a division with similar rural parishes and that the River Deben should be used as a boundary. A local resident expressed concern about the number of parishes a county councillor represents.

75 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the comments from Councillor Hedgley, Great Bealings Parish Council and Little Bealings Parish Council about retaining the existing Carlford division. However, under the revised council size of 70, the existing division would have 12% fewer electors than the county average by 2025. In light of this level of electoral equality and the need to secure a division pattern across the district that best reflects our

statutory criteria, we are not retaining the existing Carlford division as part of our draft recommendations.

76 We also note the proposals from Councillor Page and Woodbridge Town Council. As stated above, there is support from Martlesham Parish Council for retaining the area of Martlesham parish in Woodford division. However, Martlesham Parish Council does not refer to the inclusion of a further area to the south and we do not consider there to be strong justification for including a larger area of Martlesham parish in Woodbridge division.

77 We also note the argument for including areas of Melton parish to the north of Pytches Road, citing links from this area into Woodbridge division. However, while their proposed amendments may facilitate the creation of a Woodbridge division focused primarily around Woodbridge parish, when taken into consideration with our proposals for the wider area, it would result in Woodbridge and Wilford divisions with 21% more and 22% fewer electors than the county average by 2025, respectively. Therefore, we have not included these amendments as part of our draft recommendations and are adopting the Conservative Group proposals for this area without amendment. We are of the view that the Group's proposals across the whole area provide for the best available balance in our statutory criteria.

Kesgrave, Martlesham and Rushmere St Andrew

78 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. As stated above, Martlesham Parish Council supported retaining the current arrangement of part of the parish being placed in a Woodbridge division, citing links into Woodbridge for residents. We also note that Martlesham Parish Council requested the retention of a small area of the parish around Deben Avenue in a Martlesham division, rather than a Kesgrave division. Martlesham Parish Council also argued for the inclusion of Brightwell parish in the Martlesham division, as well as some parishes to the north or south.

79 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. As stated above in the previous section, we have rejected a proposal from Woodbridge Town Council and Councillor Page to add a further area of Martlesham to Woodbridge division. We note the proposal from Martlesham Parish Council to retain the small area of the parish around Deben Avenue in a Martlesham division. The Conservative Group proposal retains this area in Martlesham division.

80 However, we also note that as part of the electoral review of East Suffolk district, the area around Deben Avenue was transferred to a ward with Kesgrave. We consider that the links from the area to Kesgrave are stronger and are therefore including it in a Kesgrave division. Including this area in Kesgrave division worsens electoral equality there to 11%. Therefore, we propose a small amendment,

transferring the electors around Montana Road to Rushmere St Andrew division to improve electoral equality in the division.

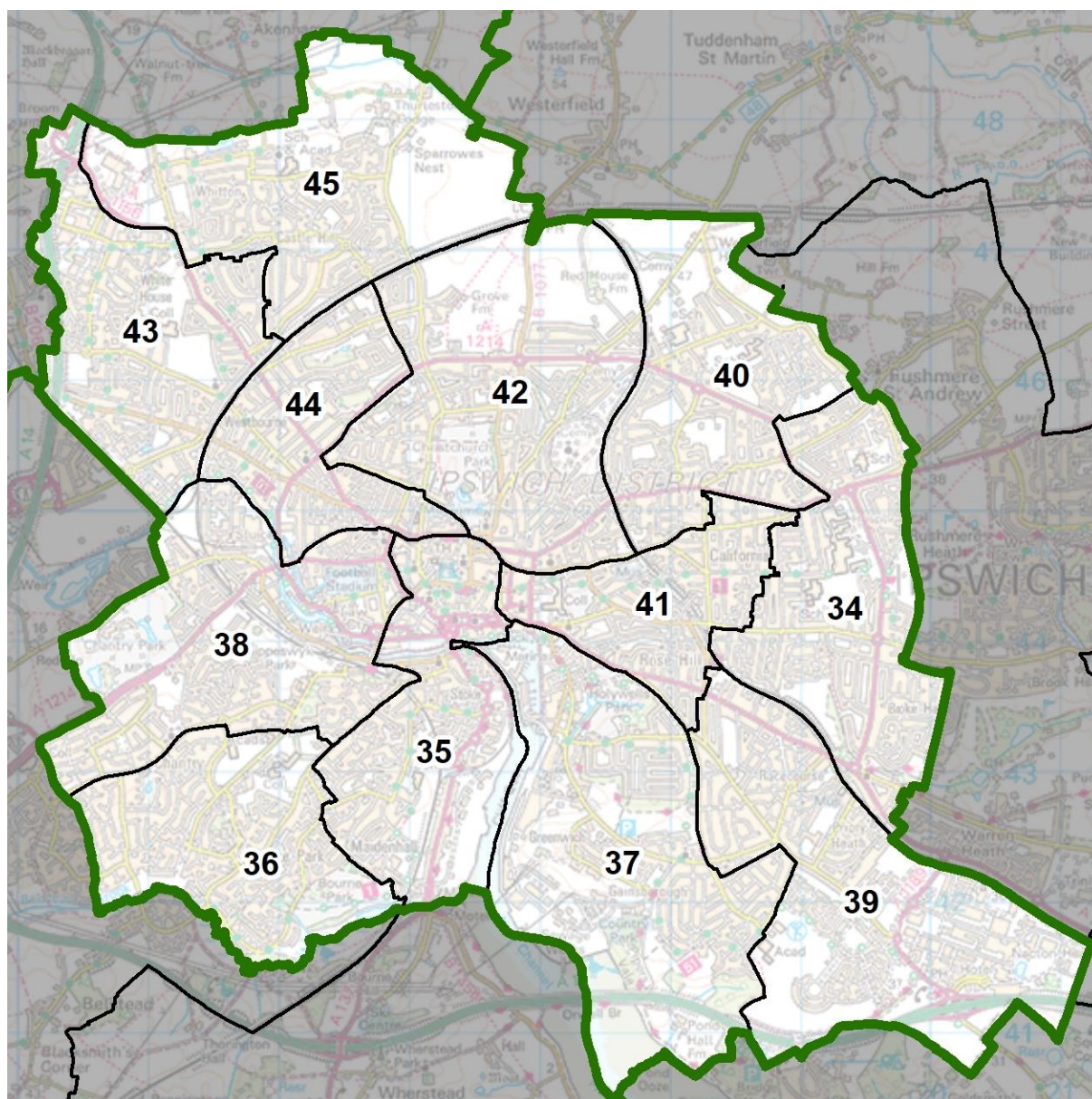
81 We note the comments from Martlesham Parish Council about including parishes to the north or south in a Martlesham division. The Conservative Group proposals include parishes to the south and, while we consider these to generally have good links into Martlesham, we are of the view that the division would better reflect communities by additionally including Brightwell parish, as suggested by Martlesham Parish Council, along with Foxhall parish. This further improves electoral equality in Martlesham and Rushmere St Andrew divisions from 9% fewer and 7% more electors than the county average by 2025, respectively, to 6% fewer and 4% more.

Felixstowe Clifflands, Felixstowe Maritime and Walton & Trimleys

82 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Felixstowe Town Council put forward almost identical proposals, including a Walton & Trimleys division that combined part of Felixstowe parish with Trimley St Mary and Trimley St Martin parishes. The Town Council also mirrored the Conservative Group with its proposed Felixstowe Clifflands and Felixstowe Maritime divisions, albeit with a slightly different boundary between them. The Town Council argued that Crescent Road is a clearly identifiable boundary.

83 We have given consideration to the evidence and note that the Conservative Group uses a clear boundary along Orwell Road. However, we are in agreement with Felixstowe Town Council that Crescent Road is a more identifiable boundary in the area and provides for a better balance in our statutory criteria. We have therefore adopted the Town Council's proposals for this area without modification.

Ipswich



| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 34 | Bixley | 1 | 2% |
| 35 | Bridge | 1 | -2% |
| 36 | Chantry | 1 | 3% |
| 37 | Gainsborough | 1 | -4% |
| 38 | Gipping | 1 | 5% |
| 39 | Priory Heath | 1 | 2% |
| 40 | Rushmere | 1 | 1% |
| 41 | St Clement's | 1 | 4% |
| 42 | St Margaret's | 1 | 5% |

| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 43 | Westbourne | 1 | -1% |
| 44 | Westgate | 1 | 5% |
| 45 | Whitton | 1 | -6% |

Bridge, Gipping and Chantry

84 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group, a joint proposal from Ipswich Labour Party & Suffolk County Council Labour Group ('Labour') and a proposal from Ipswich Liberal Democrats ('Liberal Democrats'). All three proposals agreed on the external boundaries of the area as a whole and the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats put forward identical proposals for the divisions. Labour proposed a slightly different pattern. All proposals secured good electoral equality for the area.

85 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note that the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats put forward identical proposals for a Bridge division. Labour proposed some modifications, but its proposal had marginally worsened electoral equality. We are therefore generally adopting the proposal from the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats in this area as part of our recommendations, with some modifications.

86 To the west of this area, the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats put forward identical boundary proposals, but with different proposed division names. Although these divisions secure good electoral equality, we consider that the proposed boundary between the two divisions is not as clear as the Labour proposal to use Hawthorn Drive. We are therefore adopting the proposed Labour boundary between its Gipping and Chantry divisions. However, we propose a minor amendment to transfer the Salmat Close area to the Gipping division, as this appears to have far better links there than into the Chantry division.

87 Finally, we note that although these divisions cover broadly the same area, there was some difference in the proposed division names, with limited evidence to support them. We are therefore retaining the existing names of Chantry and Gipping. We would welcome local comments on these names during the consultation on these draft recommendations.

St Margaret's, Rushmere, Westbourne, Westgate and Whitton

88 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Labour and the Liberal Democrats used the same external boundaries for the area as a whole, with some shared boundaries within the area. The Conservative Group proposed significantly different boundaries for the whole area.

89 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that the Conservative Group proposals secure good coterminosity with the borough wards and also secure good electoral equality. However, we have a number of concerns with the Group's proposals. Its proposed Valley division crosses the railway line and, while we concur that there is the provision of access across it, we consider that the area north of the railway line would be better retained in its Henley Rise division. Although there may be shared concerns around Valley Road and Colchester Road, we consider that Valley division has a large east–west extent and joins a number of separate areas. We also note that the Group's proposed Christchurch division appears divided by Christchurch Park. On balance, we are not persuaded to adopt the Conservative Group proposals for this area.

90 We note that Labour and the Liberal Democrats proposed an identical Rushmere division. In our view, this division has clear boundaries, including the railway line to the west, and we are therefore adopting this division as part of our draft recommendations.

91 To the west, we consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposals use less identifiable boundaries. Their Whitton division breaches the railway line, taking in an area to the south. Their Westgate division extends a long way east, crossing Dale Hill Lane and Henley Road. Labour's proposal used the railway line to a greater extent and, in our view, this provides for a better balance in the statutory criteria in the area.

92 We have therefore adopted Labour's proposals as part of our draft recommendations. However, we propose a minor amendment to improve electoral equality, transferring the west side of Beechcroft Road to Whitton division. This amendment improves Whitton division from 8% fewer electors than the county average by 2025 to 6% fewer, while securing 1% fewer electors than the county average in Westbourne division.

Bixley, Gainsborough, Priory Heath and St Clement's

93 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Labour and the Liberal Democrats used the same external boundaries for the area as a whole, but proposed different division arrangements within the area. The Conservative Group proposed significantly different boundaries for the whole area.

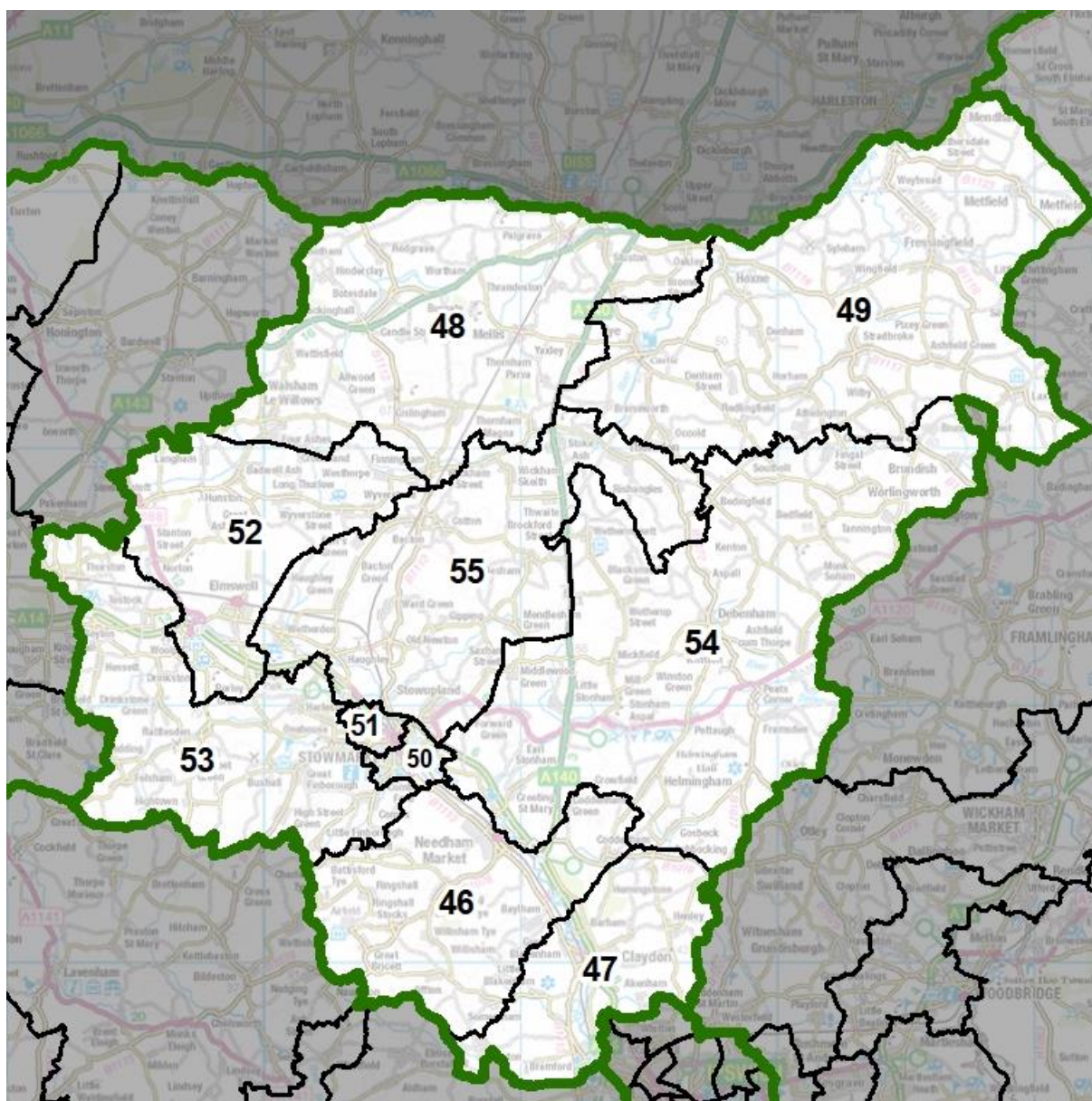
94 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. Given our proposal to adopt Labour's and Liberal Democrats' Rushmere division and the use of the same southern boundary for St Margaret's division, we note that the Conservative Group's proposed St Mary's and St Augustine's divisions breach this

boundary. We are therefore unable to adopt these proposed divisions, or those proposed further south by the Group.

95 As stated above, Labour and the Liberal Democrats proposed different boundaries within this area, although both sets of proposals secured good electoral equality. On balance, we consider that the Labour proposals use stronger boundaries, particularly between its Bixley, Priory Heath and Gainsborough divisions. To ensure electoral equality, Labour's proposals include an area to the east of Nacton Road within its Priory Heath division. We consider this a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the Liberal Democrat proposal to include the Broke Hall area, as this appears separated by the railway line. We also consider the Labour proposal to keep the marina and dock area in its Gainsborough division with the east bank of the River Orwell to the south provides for a better reflection of community links in the area.

96 We have therefore adopted the Labour proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, subject to one minor amendment. We note that the boundary between its St Clement's and Priory Heath divisions is slightly defaced to the south of Rose Hill Primary School. To ensure the boundary is identifiable on the ground, we are amending the boundary to ensure it follows ground detail.

Mid Suffolk



| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 46 | Bosmere | 1 | -3% |
| 47 | Gipping Valley | 1 | 1% |
| 48 | Hartismere | 1 | 4% |
| 49 | Hoxne & Eye | 1 | 1% |
| 50 | Stowmarket East | 1 | 4% |
| 51 | Stowmarket West | 1 | -4% |
| 52 | Thedwastre North | 1 | 1% |
| 53 | Thedwastre South | 1 | 2% |
| 54 | Thredling | 1 | 0% |
| 55 | Upper Gipping | 1 | 5% |

Hartismere, Hoxne & Eye and Upper Gipping

97 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Stowupland Parish Council stated that it should be in Upper Gipping division. A resident also argued that Stowupland parish should be in Upper Gipping division, rejecting any links to a Stowmarket division. Another resident cited links between Botesdale parish and the Rickinghall parishes, as well as a number of other parishes within the Conservative Group's proposed Hartismere division.

98 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that the Conservative Group's proposals secure good electoral equality and also reflect the comments received from other respondents for this area. As part of our draft recommendations, we are therefore adopting the Group's proposals for these divisions without amendment.

Bosmere, Gipping Valley and Thredling

99 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. Batisford Parish Council proposed an amendment for its parish boundary with Ringshall. However, we are unable to amend parish boundaries as part of this review. We received no other comments. The Conservative Group's proposal secured good electoral equality and we are therefore adopting the Group's proposals for the area without amendment.

Thedwastre North and Thedwastre South

100 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for this area. We received only limited comments from others. Buxhall and Felsham parish councils requested the retention of the existing Thedwastre South division. Great Finborough Parish Council expressed support for the current boundaries.

101 We have given consideration to the evidence received, noting the good levels of electoral equality under the Conservative Group proposals. We note the comments from Buxhall, Felsham and Great Finborough parishes, but are unable to retain the existing Thedwastre South division given the change in council size as it would not secure good electoral equality. We note, however, that both parishes remain in the modified Thedwastre South division. We are therefore adopting the Conservative Group's proposals without amendment as part of our draft recommendations.

Stowmarket East and Stowmarket West

102 The Conservative Group put forward proposals for Stowmarket North and Stowmarket South divisions in this area. We did not receive any other comments on this area.

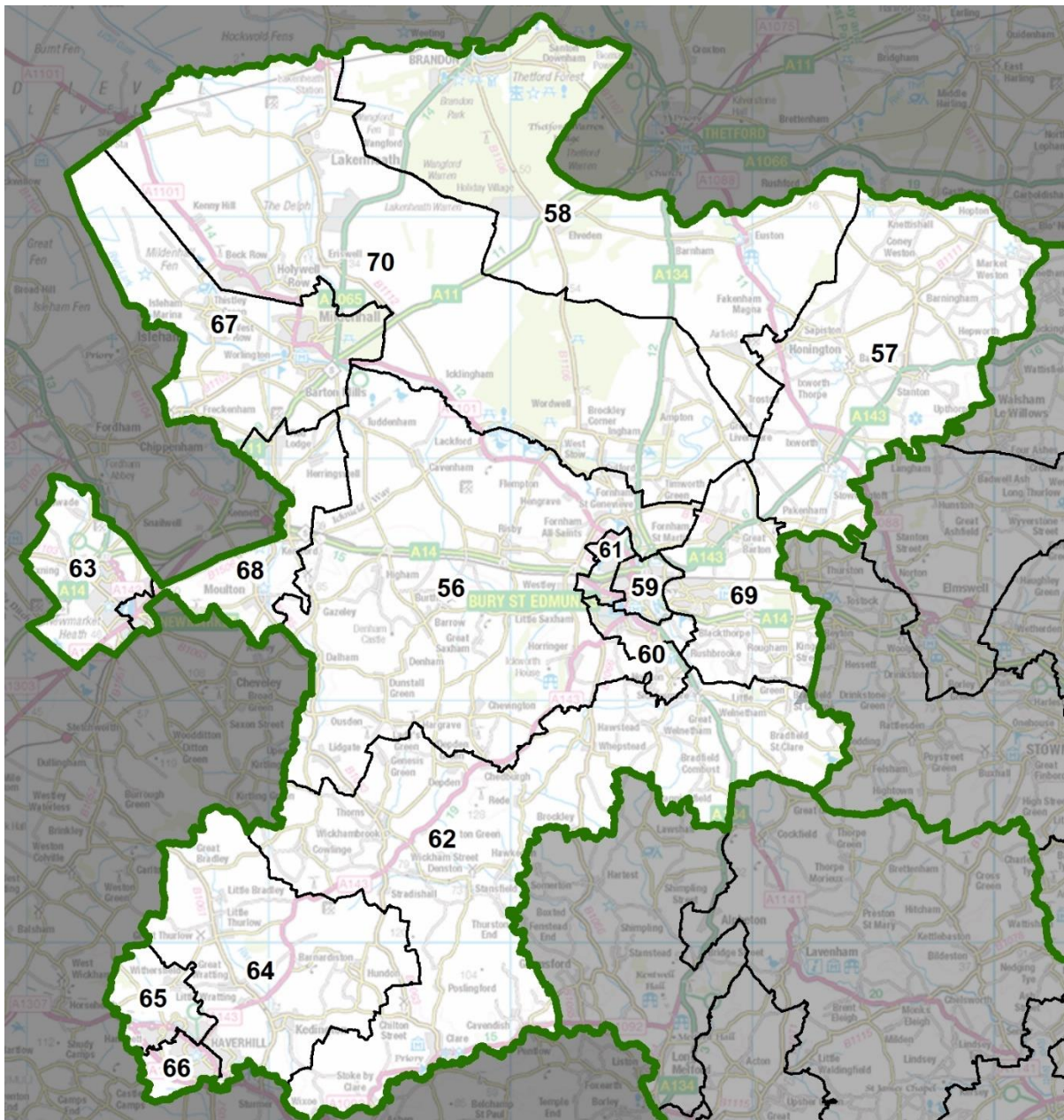
103 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and are concerned about the relatively poor levels of electoral equality the Group's proposals

achieve – its Stowmarket North and Stowmarket South divisions would have 9% fewer and 9% more electors than the county average by 2025, respectively. We also note that there are no direct internal road links between the Chilton Way and Mortimer Road areas in the Group’s Stowmarket North division. The Group argued that the relatively poor variance in its proposed Stowmarket division would enable the division to accommodate future growth around Ashes Farm, although it acknowledged that was beyond the five-year forecast period considered as part of this review. The Group also argued that its proposed Stowmarket North division would be able accommodate additional electors from a future Community Governance Review.

104 We are unable to consider growth that might occur beyond the five-year forecast period. Therefore, coupled with the concern about the lack of internal access, we have explored options for an alternative division pattern in Stowmarket.

105 We consider that an east–west split can secure good electoral equality and create divisions with good internal links. Our proposed Stowmarket East division would have 4% more electors than the county average by 2025. Our visit to the area confirmed that this creates a division containing two distinct areas, but we noted that they are well-linked by the A1120. Our Stowmarket West division would have 4% fewer electors than the county average by 2025. In addition, our proposed division has good internal links and is focused around the town centre. We would welcome local comments on these proposals.

West Suffolk



| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 56 | Barrow & Thingoe | 1 | 3% |
| 57 | Blackbourn | 1 | -1% |
| 58 | Brandon | 1 | 1% |
| 59 | Bury St Edmunds Cathedral | 1 | 3% |
| 60 | Bury St Edmunds Hardwick | 1 | 5% |
| 61 | Bury St Edmunds North-Western | 1 | 2% |
| 62 | Clare | 1 | 0% |
| 63 | Exning & Newmarket | 1 | 9% |

| Division number | Division name | Number of councillors | Variance 2025 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 64 | Haverhill East & Rural | 1 | 8% |
| 65 | Haverhill North West & Withersfield | 1 | -7% |
| 66 | Haverhill South | 1 | -6% |
| 67 | Mildenhall | 1 | 3% |
| 68 | Newmarket & Red Lodge | 1 | 6% |
| 69 | Rougham Airfield | 1 | 2% |
| 70 | Row Heath | 1 | -5% |

Clare, Haverhill East & Rural, Haverhill North West & Withersfield and Haverhill South

106 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group, Councillor Nettleton and from Haverhill Town Council for the Haverhill area. South Suffolk Conservatives put forward a proposal for a Clare division that was identical to the Conservative Group. All the proposals included areas of Haverhill parish with surrounding rural parishes.

107 Councillor Smith (West Suffolk Council) expressed support for the proposal from Haverhill Town Council. Councillor Roach (Suffolk County Council) expressed support for the current Haverhill divisions, including the inclusion of Kedington parish in a division with part of Haverhill. Councillor Roach also argued that given the predicted growth, the area should retain three councillors. Councillor Hanlon (West Suffolk Council) submitted a copy of the Haverhill Town Council response reiterating his support for it.

108 Two residents expressed support for the Haverhill Town Council proposal. Another local resident argued that Haverhill parish should not be combined with any surrounding rural parishes. Hawstead Parish Council stated that it would comment once the draft recommendations were published. Stansfield Parish Council stated that it wished to retain links to Denston, Hawkedon, Poslingford and Assington Green. Stradishall Parish Council stated that it wished to retain links to Stansfield, Denston and Poslingford.

109 We have given careful consideration to the evidence for this area, noting that the Conservative Group, Councillor Nettleton and Haverhill Town Council put forward different proposals for the Haverhill area. Councillor Nettleton's proposals secure good electoral equality and have good coterminosity with district wards, but we have concerns about his proposals to include the Haverhill Central ward area in a Haverhill & Withersfield division with the Haverhill North ward area, along with parishes to the north. We are not persuaded by arguments relating to community links between the central area and the rural parishes to the north. Therefore, we are not adopting these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

110 We also have concerns about the proposals from the Conservative Group. While its proposals limit the number of areas in Haverhill parish that are linked to rural divisions, the result is a proposed Haverhill South division that has poor internal links, placing the Wilsey area in a division with Haverhill Centre. Our visit to the area suggested that Wilsey has better links to the Chalkstone area, as proposed by Haverhill Town Council. Therefore, we are not adopting the Conservative Group's proposal for this area.

111 We consider that the proposals from Haverhill Town Council provide the most coherent division pattern for the area. We also note the local support for these proposals. We have therefore based our draft recommendations for this area on the Town Council's proposals, with a modification to ensure electoral equality in areas further east in the district.

112 To the east of the district, Haverhill Town Council did not put forward proposals for this area. The Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton put forward similar proposals for a Clare division, under which Hundon parish is included in a Haverhill division to ensure electoral equality. If we were to include Hundon parish in our proposed Clare division, it would have 11% more electors than the district average by 2025. As part of our draft recommendations, we are therefore including Hundon parish in the Haverhill East & Rural division. This ensures that our proposed Clare division has a variance of 0% by 2025.

113 We are basing the boundaries of our proposed Clare division on the Conservative Group proposal. Councillor Nettleton excluded Rede parish from his proposed division, which had the effect of limiting the internal links through it. This proposal would also separate Ousden and Lidgate parishes from Dalham parish, which stressed its links to these parishes. The Conservative Group's proposals retain links between parishes outlined by Stansfield and Stradishall parishes.

Barrow & Thingoe, Exning & Newmarket and Newmarket & Red Lodge

114 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton. Dalham Parish Council stated that it has links to Ousden, Lidgate and Gazey, and to Moulton and Wickhambrook for facilities.

115 Councillor Nettleton's proposals for Newmarket provide better coterminosity with the district wards than those received from the Conservative Group, although his Exning & Newmarket division would have 9% more electors than the county average by 2025. The proposals also join the east of Newmarket with Red Lodge, with no direct road links within the county between those two areas. Councillor Nettleton's proposed Barrow & Thingoe division comprised the rural parish between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds.

116 The proposals from the Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton retain the links between Dalham, Ousden, Lidgate and Gazeley. Neither links Dalham to Wickhambrook. However, the Conservative Group proposal also retains its links to Moulton.

117 The Conservative Group's proposals provide a lower level of coterminosity in Newmarket and link it to the rural parishes to the east, arguing that the two areas have links through the horse racing industry. The Group argued that its Lackford & Thingoe division included Red Lodge due to the fact that it has its own identity and shares more in common with the parishes along the A14.

118 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that both proposals create a compact urban division for the west of Newmarket and a division that combines the east of Newmarket with more rural parishes. Although the Conservative Group provided evidence for the links between Red Lodge and the parishes to the east, we are persuaded that Councillor Nettleton's proposals linking Red Lodge with Newmarket provide a more coherent division arrangement.

119 Finally, we note that Councillor Nettleton's Barrow & Thingoe division combines rural parishes, minimising the mixing of urban and rural areas. On balance, we are persuaded to adopt these proposals for this area.

Bury St Edmunds Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds Hardwick, Bury St Edmunds North-Western and Rougham Airfield

120 We received proposals for this area from the Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton. They both proposed an identical Rougham Airfield division, which secures good electoral equality and uses strong boundaries. We are therefore adopting this without amendment as part of our draft recommendations.

121 We have given careful consideration to the proposals for the rest of the area. We note that Councillor Nettleton's divisions for Bury St Edmunds secure good electoral equality. Councillor Nettleton's proposed Bury St Edmunds Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds Hardwick and Bury St Edmunds North-Western divisions would have variances of 3% more, 5% more and 2% more than the county average by 2025, respectively. The boundaries for these divisions are generally identifiable and, although Councillor Nettleton's Bury St Edmunds North Western division crosses the A14, the areas on either side are linked by Beetons Way.

122 The Conservative Group's proposals provided a good level of coterminosity, but the level of electoral inequality for its College and Cathedral divisions was higher than under Councillor Nettleton's proposals, with variances of 9% more and 10% more electors than the county average by 2025, respectively. In addition, the boundary of its proposed College division extends south, transferring part of the

centre of Bury St Edmunds out of the Cathedral ward. We do not consider this to be a strong boundary.

123 On balance, given the better levels of electoral equality and our concerns relating to the boundary between the Conservative Group's proposed Cathedral and College divisions, we are adopting Councillor Nettleton's proposals for Bury St Edmunds as part of our draft recommendations. We have considered an option to improve coterminosity by transferring the Out Westgate parish ward area from the councillor's Bury St Edmunds Cathedral division to Bury St Edmunds Hardwick division, but this would worsen electoral equality in Bury St Edmunds Hardwick division to 9% more electors than the county average by 2025. Therefore, we are not adopting this amendment.

Blackbourn, Brandon, Mildenhall and Row Heath

124 We received identical proposals for this area from the Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton. Councillor Spicer (Suffolk County Council) expressed support for the inclusion of Pakenham parish in Blackbourn division, also highlighting that the review of West Suffolk retained RAF Honington in a single ward and that the divisions should continue to reflect this. Finally, Councillor Spicer expressed concern about proposals to remove Barnham, Euston and Fakenham Magna from the division, arguing that they form the Euston Estate and share links to Honington, Sapiston and Bardwell.

125 Barnham and Fakenham Magna parish councils and Euston Parish Meeting put forward similar evidence, highlighting links between them as part of the Euston Estate and their links for community facilities with Honington, Ixworth, Bardwell and Sapiston. The two parishes stressed that links to Brandon are much weaker and that it lies some distance away. The Euston Estate put forward a similar argument to these parishes.

126 Coney Weston Parish Council stated that it should remain in Blackbourn division. Barningham CEVC Primary School expressed support for the current Blackbourn division.

127 We have given careful consideration to the evidence for this area. We note that there is strong evidence for retaining Barnham, Euston and Fakenham Magna parishes in the Blackbourn division. While it is possible to secure good electoral equality by transferring these parishes from Brandon division to Blackbourn division (7% fewer and 8% more electors than the county average by 2025, respectively), it would leave Troston parish and the Station parish ward of Honington parish separated from Brandon division. If these areas were included in the Blackbourn division, this would significantly worsen electoral equality in Brandon and Blackbourn divisions to 18% fewer and 18% more electors than the county average by 2025,

respectively. We do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify such a poor level of electoral equality.

128 As part of our draft recommendations, we are therefore adopting the proposals from the Conservative Group and Councillor Nettleton for this area without amendment.

Conclusions

129 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Suffolk, referencing the 2019 and 2025 electorate figures. A full list of divisions, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

| | Draft recommendations | |
|--|-----------------------|-------|
| | 2019 | 2025 |
| Number of councillors | 70 | 70 |
| Number of electoral divisions | 70 | 70 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 8,054 | 8,455 |
| Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average | 4 | 0 |
| Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average | 0 | 0 |

Draft recommendations

Suffolk County Council should be made up of 70 councillors serving 70 divisions representing 70 single-councillor divisions. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed divisions for Suffolk.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Suffolk on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

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

131 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, Suffolk County 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.

132 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bury St Edmunds Town Council, Felixstowe Town Council, Haverhill Town Council, Kesgrave Town Council, Lowestoft Town Council, Oulton Broad Parish Council and Stowmarket Town Council.

133 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bury St Edmunds Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Bury St Edmunds Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing 11 wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Abbeygate | 2 |
| Eastgate | 1 |
| Minden | 1 |
| Moreton Hall | 3 |
| Northgate | 1 |
| Out Westgate | 1 |
| St Olaves | 2 |
| Southgate | 2 |
| Tollgate | 1 |
| Westgate | 2 |
| Westley | 1 |

134 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Felixstowe Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Felixstowe Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| Central | 3 |
| East | 3 |
| Port | 5 |
| South | 2 |
| Walton | 3 |

135 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Haverhill Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Haverhill Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| Central | 1 |
| East | 3 |
| Mount Road | 1 |
| North | 3 |
| North West | 2 |
| South | 3 |
| South East | 2 |
| West | 1 |

136 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kesgrave Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Kesgrave Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| East | 7 |
| Central | 6 |
| West | 3 |

137 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Lowestoft Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Lowestoft Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing 11 wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Elmtree | 2 |
| Gunton | 1 |
| Harbour | 5 |
| Kirkley | 3 |
| Normanston | 1 |
| Pakefield | 2 |
| Pakefield Park | 1 |
| St Margaret's East | 2 |
| St Margaret's West | 1 |
| Tom Crisp | 1 |
| Uplands | 1 |

138 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements Oulton Broad Parish Council.

Draft recommendations

Oulton Broad Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Oulton Broad North | 6 |
| Oulton Broad North East | 1 |
| Oulton Broad South East | 3 |
| Oulton Broad South West | 2 |

139 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements Stowmarket Town Council.

Draft recommendations

Stowmarket Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

| Parish ward | Number of parish councillors |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Chilton North | 3 |
| Chilton South | 2 |
| Combs Ford | 5 |
| St Peter's North | 1 |
| St Peter's South | 1 |
| Stow Thorney North | 1 |
| Stow Thorney South | 3 |

Have your say

140 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole county or just a part of it.

141 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Suffolk, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of divisions.

142 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps and draw your own proposed boundaries. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

143 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Suffolk)
LGBCE c/o Cleardata
Innovation House
Coniston Court
Riverside Business Park
Blyth
NE24 4RP

144 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of divisions for Suffolk County Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

145 A good pattern of divisions should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

146 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in Suffolk?

147 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

148 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed divisions too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the divisions appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed divisions? Is there any form of public transport?

149 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 at our offices 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.

150 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, 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.

151 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.

152 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 all-out elections for Suffolk County Council in 2025.

Equalities

153 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Suffolk County Council

| Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Babergh | | | | | | | |
| 1 Brook | 1 | 7,139 | 7,139 | -11% | 7,770 | 7,770 | -8% |
| 2 Constable | 1 | 8,595 | 8,595 | 7% | 9,122 | 9,122 | 8% |
| 3 Cornard & Sudbury East | 1 | 7,711 | 7,711 | -4% | 8,175 | 8,175 | -3% |
| 4 Cosford | 1 | 7,918 | 7,918 | -2% | 8,277 | 8,277 | -2% |
| 5 Hadleigh | 1 | 8,028 | 8,028 | 0% | 8,495 | 8,495 | 0% |
| 6 Melford | 1 | 7,811 | 7,811 | -3% | 8,271 | 8,271 | -2% |
| 7 Peninsula | 1 | 8,234 | 8,234 | 2% | 8,459 | 8,459 | 0% |
| 8 Stour Valley | 1 | 8,109 | 8,109 | 1% | 8,536 | 8,536 | 1% |
| 9 Sudbury West | 1 | 7,600 | 7,600 | -6% | 8,047 | 8,047 | -5% |

| Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| East Suffolk | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Aldeburgh & Leiston | 1 | 7,795 | 7,795 | -3% | 8,068 | 8,068 | -5% |
| 11 | Beccles | 1 | 8,103 | 8,103 | 1% | 8,386 | 8,386 | -1% |
| 12 | Blyth Estuary | 1 | 7,874 | 7,874 | -2% | 8,133 | 8,133 | -4% |
| 13 | Bungay | 1 | 7,549 | 7,549 | -6% | 7,897 | 7,897 | -7% |
| 14 | Carlton & Whitton | 1 | 8,235 | 8,235 | 2% | 8,786 | 8,786 | 4% |
| 15 | Carlton Colville | 1 | 7,794 | 7,794 | -3% | 7,981 | 7,981 | -6% |
| 16 | Felixstowe Clifflands | 1 | 8,063 | 8,063 | 0% | 8,585 | 8,585 | 2% |
| 17 | Felixstowe Maritime | 1 | 7,947 | 7,947 | -1% | 8,291 | 8,291 | -2% |
| 18 | Framlingham | 1 | 7,353 | 7,353 | -9% | 7,836 | 7,836 | -7% |
| 19 | Grundisburgh & Wickham Market | 1 | 7,584 | 7,584 | -6% | 7,937 | 7,937 | -6% |
| 20 | Gunton | 1 | 7,808 | 7,808 | -3% | 8,022 | 8,022 | -5% |
| 21 | Halesworth | 1 | 7,485 | 7,485 | -7% | 7,731 | 7,731 | -9% |
| 22 | Harbour | 1 | 8,780 | 8,780 | 9% | 9,001 | 9,001 | 6% |

| Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 23 Kesgrave | 1 | 8,699 | 8,699 | 8% | 9,077 | 9,077 | 7% |
| 24 Kirkley & Pakefield | 1 | 9,047 | 9,047 | 12% | 9,252 | 9,252 | 9% |
| 25 Martlesham | 1 | 7,697 | 7,697 | -4% | 7,939 | 7,939 | -6% |
| 26 Oulton | 1 | 7,694 | 7,694 | -4% | 8,520 | 8,520 | 1% |
| 27 Oulton Broad & Normanston | 1 | 8,253 | 8,253 | 2% | 8,471 | 8,471 | 0% |
| 28 Rendlesham & Saxmundham | 1 | 7,444 | 7,444 | -8% | 7,655 | 7,655 | -9% |
| 29 Rushmere St Andrew | 1 | 8,492 | 8,492 | 5% | 8,778 | 8,778 | 4% |
| 30 Walton & Trimleys | 1 | 7,576 | 7,576 | -6% | 7,836 | 7,836 | -7% |
| 31 Wilford | 1 | 7,813 | 7,813 | -3% | 8,209 | 8,209 | -3% |
| 32 Woodbridge | 1 | 8,212 | 8,212 | 2% | 8,610 | 8,610 | 2% |
| 33 Worlingham & Kessingland | 1 | 8,317 | 8,317 | 3% | 8,634 | 8,634 | 2% |
| Ipswich | | | | | | | |
| 34 Bixley | 1 | 8,200 | 8,200 | 2% | 8,583 | 8,583 | 2% |
| 35 Bridge | 1 | 7,963 | 7,963 | -1% | 8,279 | 8,279 | -2% |

| Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 36 Chantry | 1 | 8,325 | 8,325 | 3% | 8,685 | 8,685 | 3% |
| 37 Gainsborough | 1 | 7,855 | 7,855 | -2% | 8,150 | 8,150 | -4% |
| 38 Gipping | 1 | 8,419 | 8,419 | 5% | 8,899 | 8,899 | 5% |
| 39 Priory Heath | 1 | 8,276 | 8,276 | 3% | 8,632 | 8,632 | 2% |
| 40 Rushmere | 1 | 8,274 | 8,274 | 3% | 8,541 | 8,541 | 1% |
| 41 St Clement's | 1 | 8,540 | 8,540 | 6% | 8,809 | 8,809 | 4% |
| 42 St Margaret's | 1 | 8,672 | 8,672 | 8% | 8,904 | 8,904 | 5% |
| 43 Westbourne | 1 | 7,969 | 7,969 | -1% | 8,349 | 8,349 | -1% |
| 44 Westgate | 1 | 8,575 | 8,575 | 6% | 8,896 | 8,896 | 5% |
| 45 Whitton | 1 | 7,635 | 7,635 | -5% | 7,931 | 7,931 | -6% |
| Mid Suffolk | | | | | | | |
| 46 Bosmere | 1 | 7,590 | 7,590 | -6% | 8,189 | 8,189 | -3% |
| 47 Gipping Valley | 1 | 7,561 | 7,561 | -6% | 8,575 | 8,575 | 1% |
| 48 Hartismere | 1 | 8,358 | 8,358 | 4% | 8,809 | 8,809 | 4% |
| 49 Hoxne & Eye | 1 | 8,102 | 8,102 | 1% | 8,512 | 8,512 | 1% |

| Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 50 Stowmarket East | 1 | 8,474 | 8,474 | 5% | 8,806 | 8,806 | 4% |
| 51 Stowmarket West | 1 | 7,486 | 7,486 | -7% | 8,117 | 8,117 | -4% |
| 52 Thedwastre North | 1 | 7,522 | 7,522 | -7% | 8,521 | 8,521 | 1% |
| 53 Thedwastre South | 1 | 8,270 | 8,270 | 3% | 8,623 | 8,623 | 2% |
| 54 Thredling | 1 | 8,061 | 8,061 | 0% | 8,432 | 8,432 | 0% |
| 55 Upper Gipping | 1 | 8,247 | 8,247 | 2% | 8,884 | 8,884 | 5% |
| West Suffolk | | | | | | | |
| 56 Barrow & Thingoe | 1 | 8,576 | 8,576 | 6% | 8,692 | 8,692 | 3% |
| 57 Blackbourn | 1 | 8,192 | 8,192 | 2% | 8,403 | 8,403 | -1% |
| 58 Brandon | 1 | 8,497 | 8,497 | 6% | 8,560 | 8,560 | 1% |
| 59 Bury St Edmunds Cathedral | 1 | 8,257 | 8,257 | 3% | 8,744 | 8,744 | 3% |
| 60 Bury St Edmunds Hardwick | 1 | 8,273 | 8,273 | 3% | 8,869 | 8,869 | 5% |
| 61 Bury St Edmunds North-Western | 1 | 7,880 | 7,880 | -2% | 8,624 | 8,624 | 2% |
| 62 Clare | 1 | 8,178 | 8,178 | 2% | 8,495 | 8,495 | 0% |

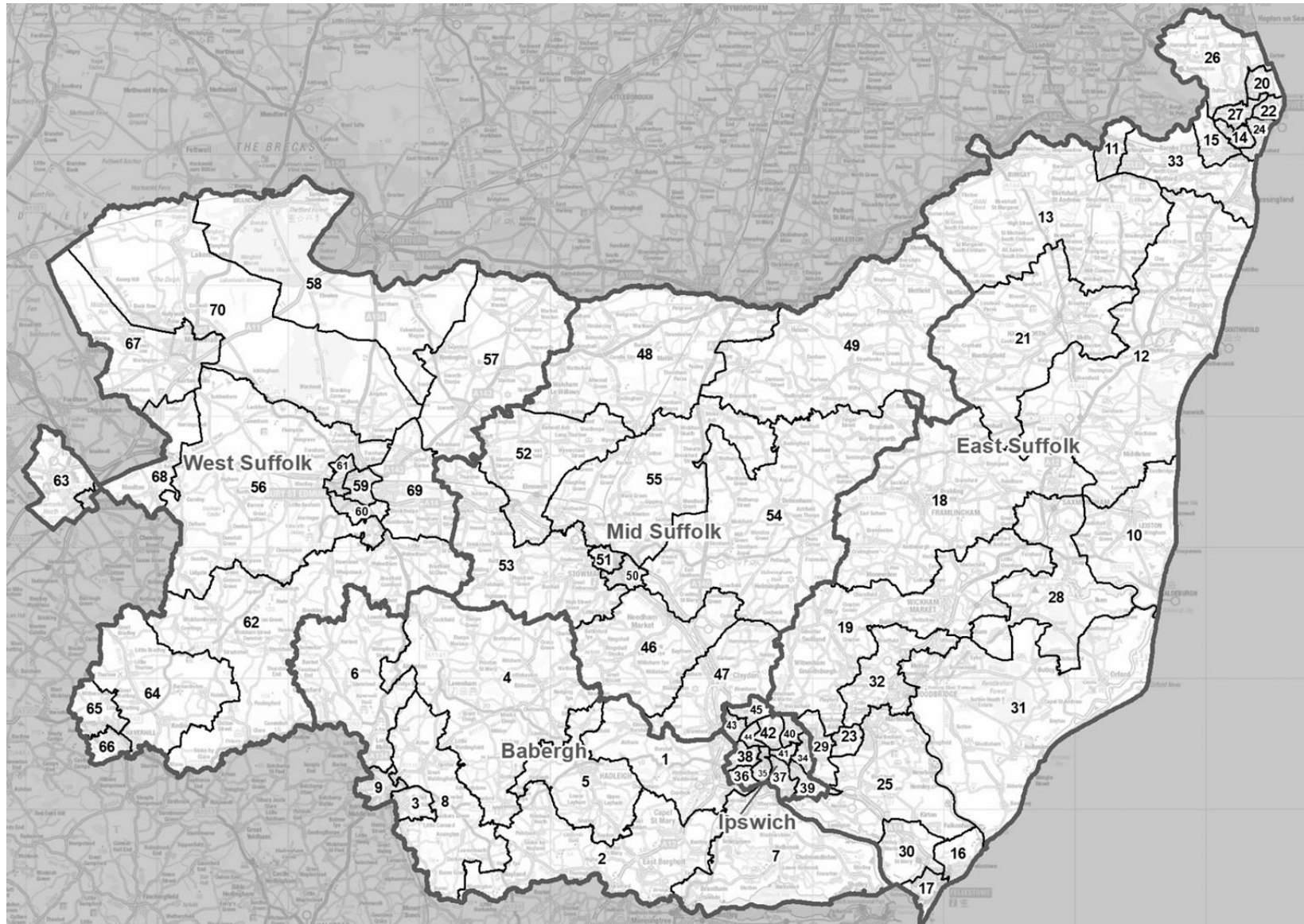
| | Division name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2019) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2025) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 63 | Exning & Newmarket | 1 | 8,914 | 8,914 | 11% | 9,243 | 9,243 | 9% |
| 64 | Haverhill East & Rural | 1 | 8,234 | 8,234 | 2% | 9,100 | 9,100 | 8% |
| 65 | Haverhill North West & Withersfield | 1 | 7,017 | 7,017 | -13% | 7,895 | 7,895 | -7% |
| 66 | Haverhill South | 1 | 7,810 | 7,810 | -3% | 7,948 | 7,948 | -6% |
| 67 | Mildenhall | 1 | 8,392 | 8,392 | 4% | 8,706 | 8,706 | 3% |
| 68 | Newmarket & Red Lodge | 1 | 8,662 | 8,662 | 8% | 8,978 | 8,978 | 6% |
| 69 | Rougham Airfield | 1 | 8,264 | 8,264 | 3% | 8,644 | 8,644 | 2% |
| 70 | Row Heath | 1 | 7,481 | 7,481 | -7% | 8,028 | 8,028 | -5% |
| Totals | | 70 | 8,054 | - | - | 8,455 | - | - |
| Averages | | - | - | 563,760 | - | - | 591,841 | - |

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

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

Appendix B

Outline map



| Division Number | Division name | Division Number | Division name |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Babergh | | 36 | Chantry |
| 1 | Brook | 37 | Gainsborough |
| 2 | Constable | 38 | Gipping |
| 3 | Cornard & Sudbury East | 39 | Priory Heath |
| 4 | Cosford | 40 | Rushmere |
| 5 | Hadleigh | 41 | St Clement's |
| 6 | Melford | 42 | St Margaret's |
| 7 | Peninsula | 43 | Westbourne |
| 8 | Stour Valley | 44 | Westgate |
| 9 | Sudbury West | 45 | Whitton |
| East Suffolk | | Mid Suffolk | |
| 10 | Aldeburgh & Leiston | 46 | Bosmere |
| 11 | Beccles | 47 | Gipping Valley |
| 12 | Blyth Estuary | 48 | Hartismere |
| 13 | Bungay | 49 | Hoxne & Eye |
| 14 | Carlton & Whitton | 50 | Stowmarket East |
| 15 | Carlton Colville | 51 | Stowmarket West |
| 16 | Felixstowe Clifflands | 52 | Thedwastre North |
| 17 | Felixstowe Maritime | 53 | Thedwastre South |
| 18 | Framlingham | 54 | Thredling |
| 19 | Grundisburgh & Wickham Market | 55 | Upper Gipping |
| 20 | Gunton | West Suffolk | |
| 21 | Halesworth | 56 | Barrow & Thingoe |
| 22 | Harbour | 57 | Blackbourn |
| 23 | Kesgrave | 58 | Brandon |
| 24 | Kirkley & Pakefield | 59 | Bury St Edmunds Cathedral |
| 25 | Martlesham | 60 | Bury St Edmunds Hardwick |
| 26 | Oulton | 61 | Bury St Edmunds North-Western |
| 27 | Oulton Broad & Normanston | 62 | Clare |
| 28 | Rendlesham & Saxmundham | 63 | Exning & Newmarket |
| 29 | Rushmere St Andrew | 64 | Haverhill East & Rural |
| 30 | Walton & Trimleys | 65 | Haverhill North West & Withersfield |
| 31 | Wilford | 66 | Haverhill South |
| 32 | Woodbridge | 67 | Mildenhall |
| 33 | Worlingham & Kessingland | 68 | Newmarket & Red Lodge |
| Ipswich | | 69 | Rougham Airfield |
| 34 | Bixley | 70 | Row Heath |
| 35 | Bridge | | |

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

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk

Political Groups

- Ipswich Labour Party & Suffolk County Council Labour Group
- Ipswich Liberal Democrats
- South Suffolk Conservative Association
- Suffolk County Council Conservative Group
- Suffolk County Council Liberal Democrat, Green & Independent Group

Councillors

- Councillor D. Beavan (East Suffolk Council)
- Councillor C. Butler (Lowestoft Town Council)
- Councillor P. Byatt (East Suffolk Council)
- Councillor C. Hedgley (East Suffolk Council)
- Councillor D. Nettleton (West Suffolk Council)
- Councillor L. Gooch (East Suffolk Council)
- Councillor P. Hanlon (West Suffolk Council)
- Councillor R. Kemp (Suffolk County Council)
- Councillor J. Mallinder (East Suffolk Council)
- Councillor C. Page (Suffolk County Council)
- Councillor D. Roach (Suffolk County Council)
- Councillor D. Smith (West Suffolk Council)
- Councillor J. Spicer (Suffolk County Council)

Local Organisations

- Barningham CEVC Primary School
- Euston Estate

Parish and Town Councils

- Barnham Parish Council
- Battsford Parish Council
- Bentley Parish Council
- Bromeswell Parish Council
- Buxhall Parish Council

- Coney Weston Parish Council
- Dalham Parish Council
- Euston Parish Meeting
- Fakenham Magna Parish Council
- Felixstowe Town Council
- Felsham Parish Council
- Great Bealings Parish Council
- Great Cornard Parish Council
- Great Finborough Parish Council
- Haverhill Town Council
- Hawstead Parish Council
- Hollesley Parish Council
- Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council
- Kersey Parish Council
- Kettleburgh Parish Council
- Little Bealings Parish Council
- Little Cornard Parish Council
- Little Waldingfield Parish Council
- Long Melford Parish Council
- Martlesham Parish Council
- Polstead Parish Council
- Stansfield Parish Council
- Stowupland Parish Council
- Stradishall Parish Council
- Tattingstone Parish Council
- Thurston Parish Council
- Trimley St Martin Parish Council
- Tunstall Parish Council
- Ufford Parish Council
- Woodbridge Town Council

Local Residents

- 11 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Council size | The number of councillors elected to serve on a council |
| Electoral Change Order (or Order) | A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority |
| Division | A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council |
| Electoral fairness | When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's |
| Electoral inequality | Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority |
| Electorate | People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections |
| Number of electors per councillor | The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors |
| Over-represented | Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average |
| Parish | A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents |

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