

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Mid Suffolk District Council

Electoral review

October 2017

Translations and other formats

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

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

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

Electoral review

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

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

Why Mid Suffolk?

4 We are conducting a review of Mid Suffolk District Council as the value of each vote in district elections varies depending on where you live in Mid 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.

Our proposals for Mid Suffolk

- Mid Suffolk should be represented by 34 councillors, six fewer than there are now.
- Mid Suffolk should have 26 wards, four fewer than there are now.
- The boundaries of almost all wards should change, one will stay the same.

Have your say

5 We are consulting on our draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 3 October 2017 to 11 December 2017. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to contribute to the design of the new wards – the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be when analysing all the views we received.

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

You have until 11 December 2017 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 23 for how to send us your response.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

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

8 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
 - Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL
 - Alison Lowton
 - Peter Maddison QPM
 - Sir Tony Redmond
-
- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

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

1 Introduction

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

- The wards in Mid 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 district.

What is an electoral review?

10 Our three main considerations are to:

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

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

Consultation

12 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Mid Suffolk. We then held a period of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

13 This review is being conducted as follows:

| Stage starts | Description |
|------------------|---|
| 18 April 2017 | Number of councillors decided |
| 13 June 2017 | Start of consultation seeking views on new wards |
| 14 August 2017 | End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations |
| 3 October 2017 | Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation |
| 11 December 2017 | End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations |
| 6 February 2018 | Publication of final recommendations |

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

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

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

17 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.

| | 2016 | 2023 |
|---|--------|--------|
| Electorate of Mid Suffolk | 79,119 | 82,781 |
| Number of councillors | 34 | 34 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 2,327 | 2,435 |

18 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Mid Suffolk will have good electoral equality by 2023.

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

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

21 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2023, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2018. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 5% by 2023. This is mainly due to moderate growth in Eye, Needham Market and Stowmarket.

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.

22 During our consultation on warding arrangements we received a number of submissions from parish councils that queried the electorate forecasts for their parish. We contacted Mid Suffolk District Council, who stated that they considered that the figures provided were accurate as they were based on planning permission data and that the Local Plan referred to was not at a sufficiently advanced stage to identify any future development above that already accounted for in the Council's electorate figures.

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

Number of councillors

24 Mid Suffolk District Council currently has 40 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing the number of members by six will make sure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively. We also received a submission from Suffolk Green Party that suggested a council size of between 38 and 42 but did not provide compelling evidence to support this assertion.

25 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 34 councillors – for example, 34 one-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

26 We received no submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. Our draft recommendations are therefore based on a 34-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

27 We received 26 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included four detailed district-wide proposals from Mid Suffolk District Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Green Party, who submitted two potential options. The schemes from the Liberal Democrat Group on Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Green Party were based on 34 elected members and the scheme from Mid Suffolk District Council was based on a pattern of wards to be represented by 35 elected members. The evidence received in two of these schemes – those from the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council – was very limited.

28 The four district-wide schemes each provided for a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Mid Suffolk. We carefully considered the proposals received and noted that whilst most of the proposed ward boundaries would have acceptable levels of electoral equality, all the schemes varied significantly from one another. This made it very difficult to put together a coherent warding pattern across the district using parts of each proposal. In addition, none of the four district-wide schemes provided a warding pattern for Stowmarket parish. We did, however,

receive a warding pattern submission for Stowmarket from Stowmarket Town Council.

29 The scheme from Mid Suffolk District Council was based on a 35-member council, an increase of one from the figure that we consulted on. Whilst we reserve the right to increase or decrease the number of councillors during the course of the review, we could not identify any reason that justified the increase in the number of councillors and the associated poor variances. The two options we received from Mid Suffolk Green Party also provided for poor electoral equality in a number of areas. The scheme from the Liberal Democrat Group on Mid Suffolk District Council provided acceptable electoral equality across the district.

30 Our draft recommendations use elements of all the district-wide proposals that we received particularly in areas where a good degree of consensus existed. We have made modifications based on other local evidence that we received, which provided evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries, and on our tour of the area. In some areas, we considered that none of the proposals provided for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

31 Our draft recommendations are for eight two-councillor wards and 18 one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

32 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on page 20 and on the large map accompanying this report.

33 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed ward.

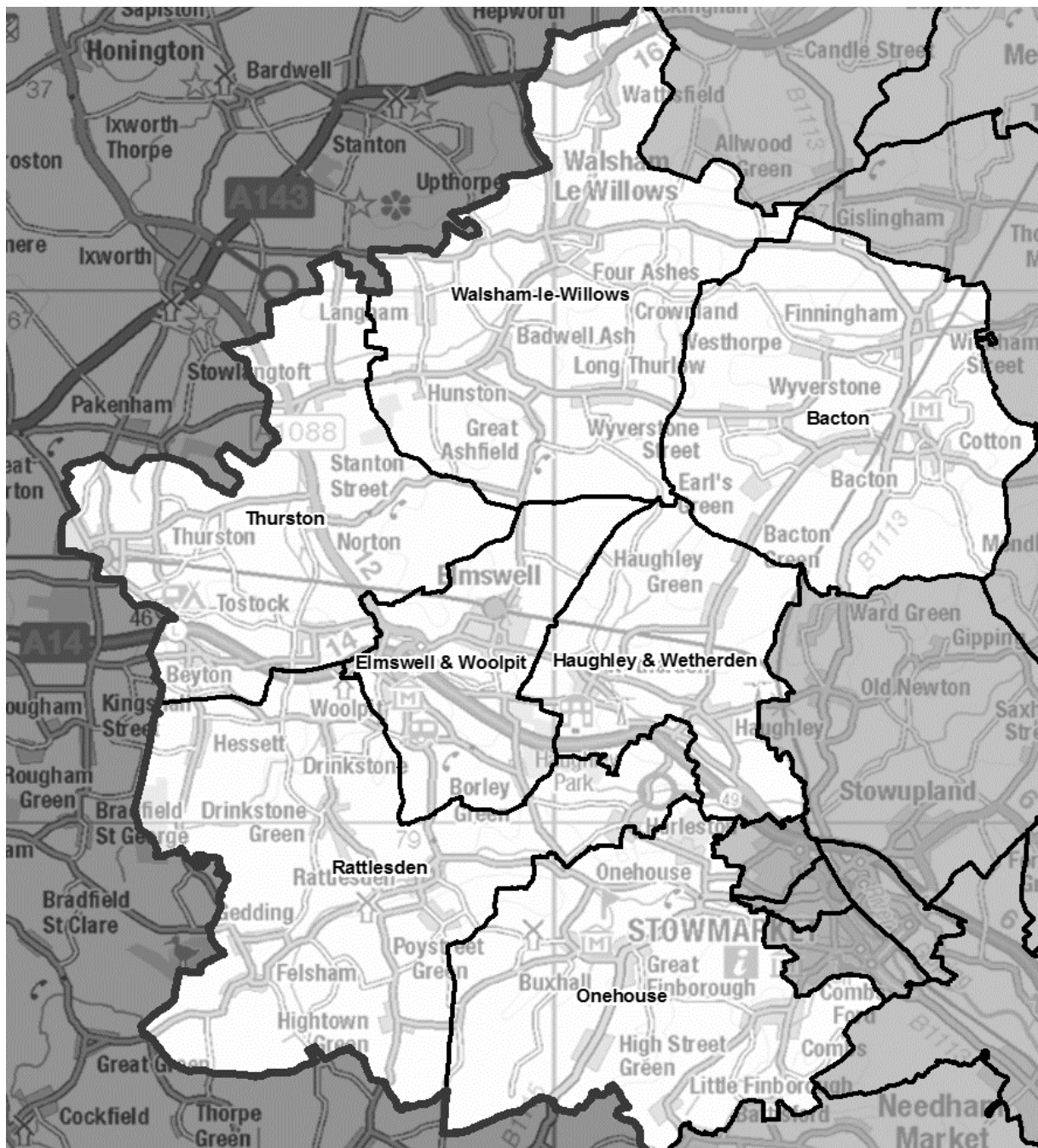
Draft recommendations

34 The tables and maps on pages 8–19 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Mid Suffolk District Council. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

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

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Eastern parishes



| Ward name | Number of Cllrs | Variance 2023 |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Bacton | 1 | 0% |
| Elmswell & Woolpit | 2 | 0% |
| Haughley & Wetherden | 1 | -7% |
| Onehouse | 1 | 6% |
| Rattlesden | 1 | -3% |
| Thurston | 2 | -1% |
| Walsham-le-Willows | 1 | 8% |

Elmswell & Woolpit, Haughley & Wetherden, Onehouse and Rattlesden

35 The four district-wide submissions we received in this area proposed significantly different boundaries. Three schemes provided a pattern of wards with poor electoral equality. On visiting the area, we decided that the scheme submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group best reflected the communities in this area and reflected our statutory criteria and we have based our scheme for this area on their proposals.

36 We propose a two-member ward of Elmswell & Woolpit made up of the two parishes on either side of the A14. We are happy that these parishes share a degree of commonality from their position on the A14 and that this ward has good access between the two villages across the A14. We did consider whether we could create two single-member wards of Elmswell and Woolpit but we noted that both wards would have extremely poor electoral equality. The submission from Woolpit Parish Council asked that we include Drinkstone parish in a ward with Woolpit. None of the proposed district-wide schemes proposed this and we were unable to identify a warding pattern in the area that allowed this whilst also providing acceptable electoral equality.

37 Instead, we propose that Drinkstone parish be included in our Rattlesden ward along with the parishes of Felsham, Gedding, Harleston, Hessett, Rattlesden and Shelland. We consider this ward is reflective of the community identity of these parishes in the south-eastern part of the district. The inclusion of the parish of Hessett in this ward is supported in the submission from Felsham Parish Council.

38 Haughley Parish Council proposed that no changes be made to the current Haughley & Wetherden ward. We looked at including Harleston parish in a proposed Haughley & Wetherden ward but have decided to include it in our proposed Rattlesden ward with which, on balance, we consider it has stronger ties. We are, however, particularly interested in local views on this proposal.

39 Great Finborough Parish Council suggested that their existing ward of Onehouse be retained but this would result in poor electoral equality which we do not consider is justified. Great Finborough Parish Council also stated that if the ward needed to be increased in size that Little Finborough and Combs parishes be added. We propose to do this and we propose to retain the name Onehouse instead of Great Finborough as suggested by the Liberal Democrats given that Onehouse is the larger settlement and an existing ward name. Buxhall Parish Council suggested the most appropriate solution would be to add Combs and Great Finborough parishes to the existing ward which included Harleston and Shelland. We are unable to include Harleston and Shelland in our proposed Onehouse ward and still provide good electoral equality for the area. We therefore propose that Harleston and Shelland parishes be included in our proposed Rattlesden ward.

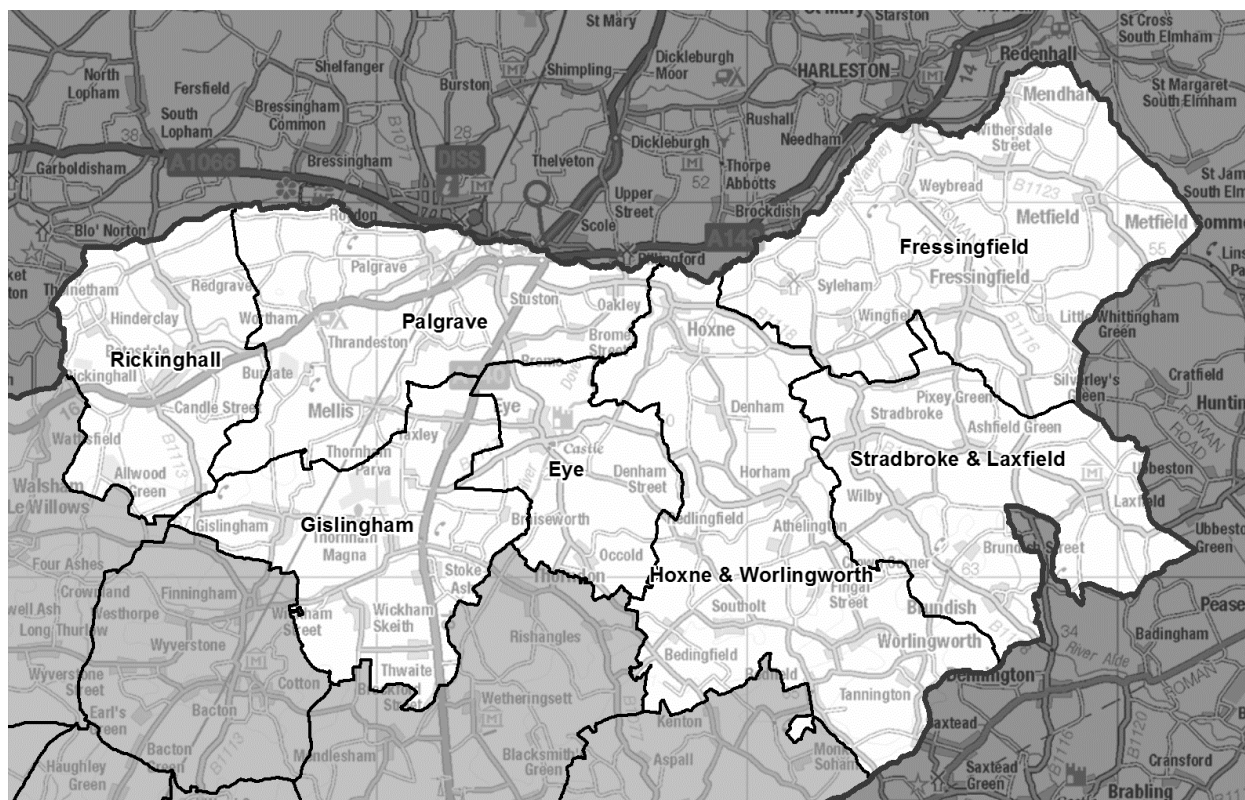
Bacton, Thurston and Walsham-le-Willows

40 Our proposed two-member Thurston ward and single-member Bacton and Walsham-le-Willows wards are the same as the district-wide scheme we received from the Liberal Democrats.

41 We received a submission in this area from Beyton Parish Council who suggested that the current Thurston & Hesselsett ward be retained. As mentioned above, the reduction in the number of councillors means retaining the existing ward provides for unacceptably poor levels of electoral equality and we have already proposed to include the parish of Hesselsett in Rattlesden ward to provide for acceptable electoral equality in both wards.

42 Thurston Parish Council stated that they were in broad agreement with a ward that includes Beyton, Norton, Thurston and Tostock parishes, as our proposed ward does. Cotton Parish Council, which is part of our proposed Bacton ward, added that they felt they should remain in a ward with neighbouring rural parishes rather than be included with any part of the town of Stowmarket. In their submission, Wyverstone Parish Council emphasised their links to Bacton rather than Badwell Ash. Having considered all these submissions we consider that our proposed wards are the best reflection of the community ties for this area.

Northern parishes



| Ward name | Number of Cllrs | Variance 2023 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Eye | 1 | -1% |
| Fressingfield | 1 | 1% |
| Gislegham | 1 | -10% |
| Hoxne & Worlingworth | 1 | 5% |
| Palgrave | 1 | 6% |
| Rickingham | 1 | -1% |
| Stradbroke & Laxfield | 1 | 2% |

Gislingham, Palgrave and Rickingham

43 Our proposed Rickingham ward is as suggested by the Council, Liberal Democrats and Green Party in their district-wide schemes. We received no other submissions relating to this ward and we propose this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

44 The proposals we received for Gislingham and Palgrave outlined a number of different suggestions. The Council's and Green Party's schemes paired the two parishes together in one ward and suggested another ward comprising the parishes of Mellis, Thorndon and Yaxley. The scheme from the Liberal Democrats proposed a Palgrave ward made up of the parishes of Brome & Oakley, Palgrave, Stuston, Thrandeston, Wortham and Yaxley and a Gislingham ward of Braiseworth, Burgate, Gislingham, Mellis, Stoke Ash, Thornham Magna, Thornham Parva, Thwaite and Wickham Skeith.

45 We have based our proposed ward on this latter proposal but we propose to include Burgate and Mellis in a Palgrave ward and Yaxley in a Gislingham ward. The Commission endeavours where possible not to divide grouped parishes between wards. In this instance Wortham and Burgate are part of the same grouped parish council and our proposed ward ensures they are in the same proposed ward of Palgrave.

Eye

46 Our proposed ward includes the parish of Occold in an enlarged Eye ward. The proposal to include Occold in this ward was made by the Council in its district-wide submissions. This proposal was supported by the submission of Eye Town Council who submitted evidence of the strong community ties that exist between the parishes. We also considered whether to include the parish of Brome & Oakley in this ward. However, having visited the area, we concluded that Brome & Oakley should be included in our Palgrave ward.

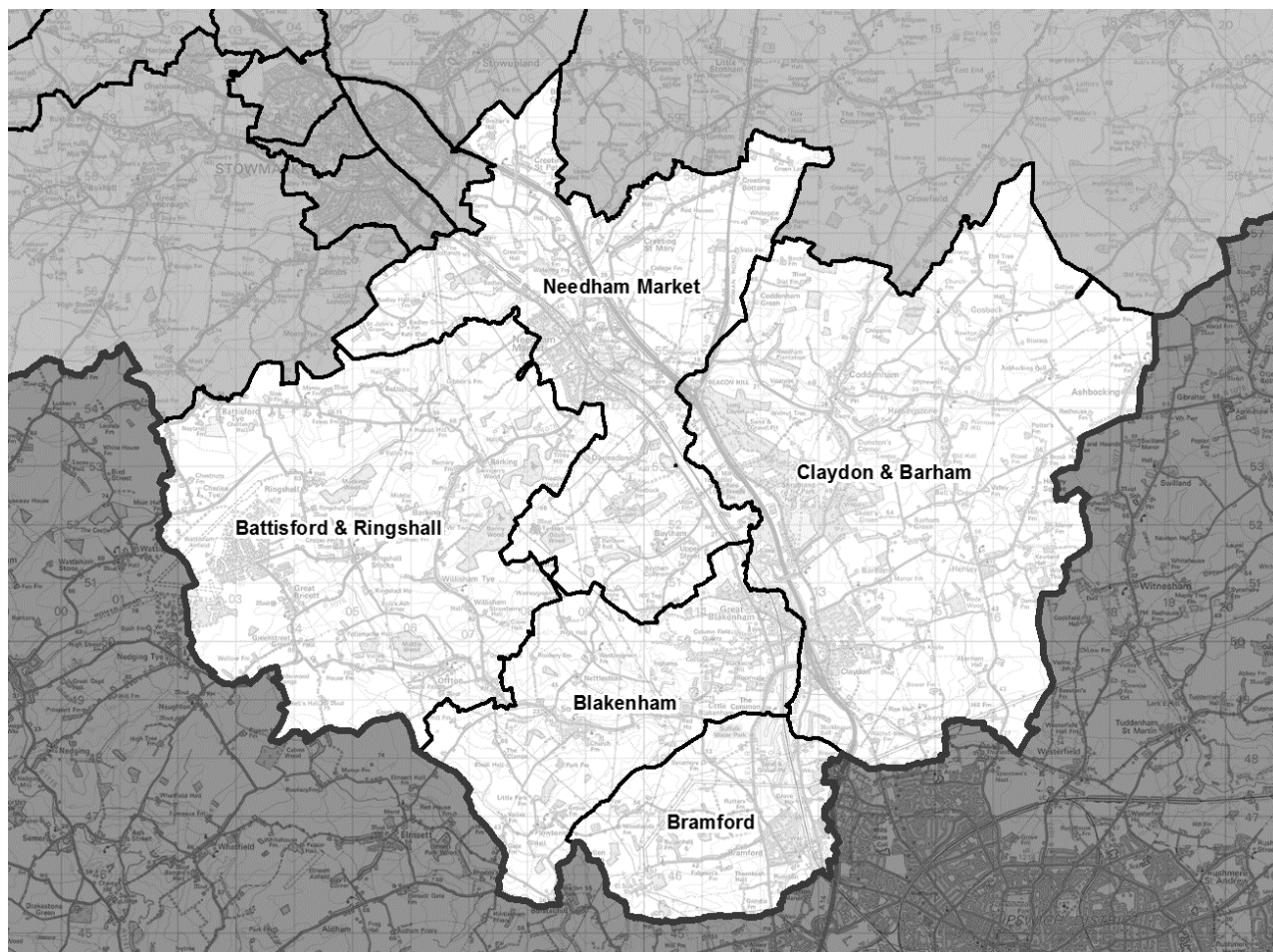
Fressingfield, Hoxne & Worlingworth and Stradbroke & Laxfield

47 The four district-wide submissions all suggested that the parish of Wingfield be added to the current ward of Fressingfield and three of the four submissions also added the parish of Syleham. We propose that both parishes are added to the ward to make a single-member Fressingfield ward. Weybread Parish Council suggested we retain the current warding arrangement but, as mentioned before, this would provide for an unacceptable level of electoral equality under a 34-member council.

48 Our proposed Stradbroke & Laxfield ward is as proposed in three of the four district-wide warding patterns. We received no other submissions in relation to this area and we proposed a single-member Stradbroke & Laxfield ward made up of Brundish, Laxfield, Stradbroke and Wilby.

49 We received no submissions regarding the parishes contained in our proposed Hoxne & Worlingworth ward. We are aware that this ward is geographically large for a single-member ward; however, this is due to the sparseness of the population in this part of the district. We are particularly interested in views on our proposed Hoxne & Worlingworth ward.

Southern parishes



| Ward name | Number of Cllrs | Variance 2023 |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Battisford & Ringshall | 1 | 0% |
| Blakenham | 1 | 6% |
| Bramford | 1 | -5% |
| Claydon & Barham | 2 | 0% |
| Needham Market | 2 | 3% |

Blakenham, Bramford and Claydon & Barham

50 Our proposals for this area are based on the submission from Mid Suffolk District Council. The Council proposed a two-member Claydon & Barham ward. We propose to add to this ward the parishes of Ashbocking and Gosbeck. We note that these parishes have links to the parishes of Coddensham and Hemingstone. We looked to see if this ward could be divided into two single-member wards but we are unable to identify a warding pattern that allow us to do this which would provide acceptable electoral equality. We are particularly eager to hear the views of interested parties in this area.

51 Our proposed Bramford ward is identical to that proposed by Mid Suffolk District Council and is coterminous with the parish of Bramford. We considered whether to include the parish of Flowton in this ward but concluded it was more appropriate to include this in our proposed Blakenham ward.

52 We propose a Blakenham ward made up of the parishes of Flowton, Great Blakenham, Little Blakenham, Nettlestead and Somersham. We proposed to add Nettlestead to this ward due to its strong links to Somersham and to allow us to provide for better electoral equality in neighbouring wards.

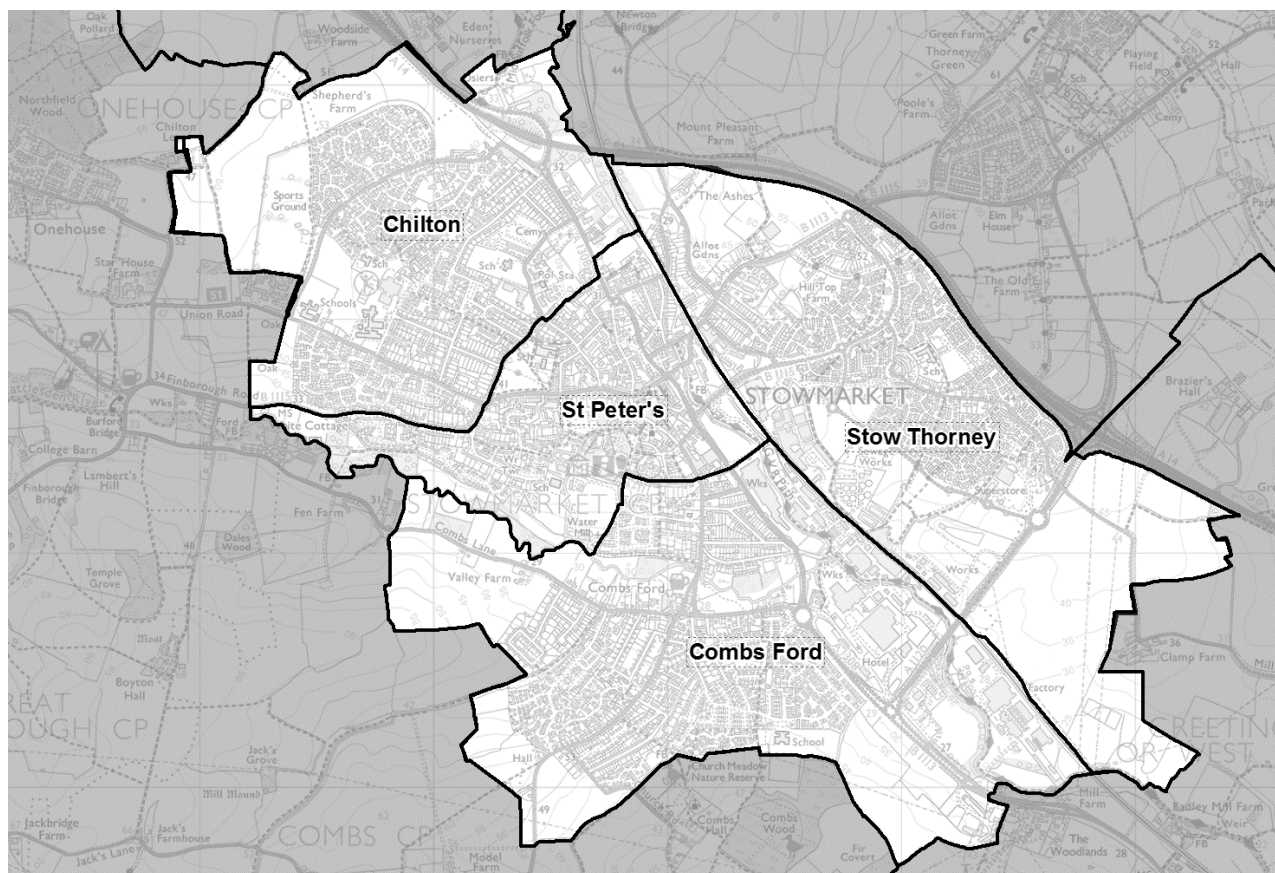
Battisford & Ringshall and Needham Market

53 Our proposed Needham Market ward is for a two-member ward made up of the parishes of Badley, Baylham, Creting St Mary, Creting St Peter, Darmsden and Needham Market. In developing this proposal, we noted that Needham Market parish is too large to be contained within a single-member ward and too small to make up a two-member ward. To avoid dividing the parish between wards we must include some neighbouring parishes. We propose to include Creting St Mary due to its close links to Needham Market and Creting St Peter for its links to both. We include the parishes along the B1113 road through Needham Market in the ward: they are Badley, Baylham and Darmsden. We do not propose to include Barking in this ward as Barking Parish Council have stated that the parish has closer links to the neighbouring parishes of Battisford and Ringshall.

54 Our proposed Battisford & Ringshall ward is made up of the remaining parishes to the west of Needham Market. A ward made up of rural parishes in this area was supported by a local resident.

55 We are aware that wards that contain both rural and more urban parishes can generate opposition so we are interested to hear local views on these proposed wards, ideally accompanied by alternative proposals.

Stowmarket



| Ward name | Number of Cllrs | Variance 2023 |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Chilton | 2 | -4% |
| Combs Ford | 2 | 5% |
| St Peter's | 1 | -3% |
| Stow Thorney | 2 | -8% |

Chilton, Combs Ford, St Peter's and Stow Thorney

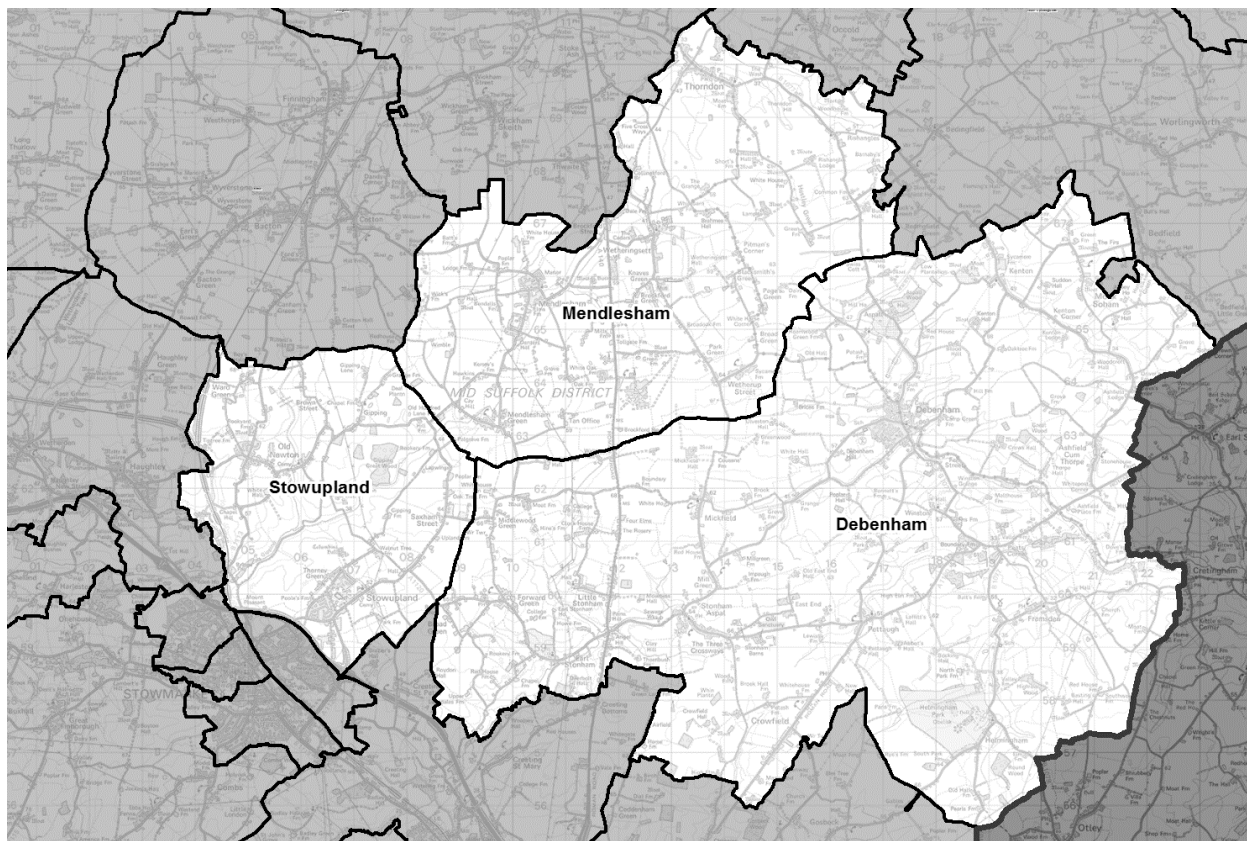
56 None of the four district-wide submissions we received provided any warding arrangements for Stowmarket other than suggesting it be covered by seven councillors. Stowmarket Town Council proposed that the town be covered by four wards that are coterminous with the existing Town Council wards and that each ward should have two councillors.

57 A warding pattern for Stowmarket town would have the best level of electoral equality if it had seven councillors. We are therefore not able to propose four wards of two councillors as this would provide very poor electoral equality. Our proposed wards are still, however, based on the proposal by Stowmarket Town Council but with two amendments to provide for better electoral equality.

58 We propose to include the area to the south of Onehouse Road in Chilton ward, noting that all the properties on Thirlmere Drive and the roads off it all access to the north and have no access onto Finborough Road. We also proposed to include the properties between Temple Road and The Old Maltings to the north and the Rattlesden River to the south in our proposed Combs Ford ward.

59 These two changes allow us to provide three two-member wards and one single-member ward for the town of Stowmarket. We are very keen to hear local views on these proposals as we note the limited evidence so far received.

Western parishes



| Ward name | Number of Cllrs | Variance 2023 |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Debenham | 2 | -2% |
| Mendlesham | 1 | -3% |
| Stowupland | 1 | 9% |

Mendlesham

60 Our proposed Mendlesham ward is based on a proposal in one of the district-wide schemes although we propose including the parish of Gipping in Stowupland to avoid splitting it from Old Newton with Dagworth with whom it is included in a grouped parish. Mendlesham Parish Council, in their submission, supported the inclusion of Wetheringsett-cum-Brockford in the same ward as Mendlesham.

Debenham and Stowupland

61 In this area, we again received a number of submissions with a number of different suggestions. The submission from the District Council suggested that Stowupland be paired in a ward with some of Stowmarket town. The proposal from the local councillor and Stowupland Parish Council suggested Stowupland be paired with Creting St Peter and Stonham Earl. To provide for good electoral equality in this area and surrounding wards we cannot propose that Creting St Peter and Stonham Earl be included in a Stowupland ward without proposing a three-member ward of Stowupland and Debenham. We do not consider that a three-member ward in a rural area like this would be appropriate.

62 Therefore, we propose a single-member Stowupland ward consisting of the parishes of Gipping, Old Newton with Dagworth and Stowupland and a two-member Debenham ward made up of Debenham and the surrounding parishes of Ashfield cum Thorpe, Aspall, Crowfield, Framsdon, Helmingham, Kenton, Mickfield, Monk Soham, Pettaugh and Winston together with The Stonhams (Stonham Aspal, Stonham Earl and Stonham Parva). We considered whether we could create two single-member wards but we concluded that it was better to have a larger two-member ward containing parishes that do not necessarily share a strong community of interest than two single-member wards which would require dividing one or more parishes between the wards.

Conclusions

63 The table below shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2016 and 2023 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

| | Draft recommendations | |
|--|-----------------------|-------|
| | 2016 | 2023 |
| Number of councillors | 34 | 34 |
| Number of electoral wards | 26 | 26 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 2,327 | 2,435 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average | 5 | 0 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average | 1 | 0 |

Draft recommendation

Mid Suffolk District Council should be made up of 34 councillors serving 26 wards representing 18 single-councillor wards and eight two-councillor wards. 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 wards for the Mid Suffolk District Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Mid Suffolk District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

64 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 ward 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.

65 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, Mid Suffolk 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.

66 As 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 Stowmarket parish.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Draft recommendation | |
| Stowmarket Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing six 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 | 4 |

3 Have your say

67 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 district or just a part of it.

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

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

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

Review Officer (Mid Suffolk)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

71 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for the Mid Suffolk District 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

72 A good pattern of wards 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

73 Electoral equality:

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

74 Community identity:

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

75 Effective local government:

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

76 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 in Millbank (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.

77 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.

78 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.

79 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 the Mid Suffolk District Council in 2019.

Equalities

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

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Mid Suffolk District Council

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2016) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2023) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Bacton | 1 | 2,368 | 2,368 | 2% | 2,428 | 2,428 | 0% |
| 2 | Battisford & Ringshall | 1 | 2,419 | 2,419 | 4% | 2,435 | 2,435 | 0% |
| 3 | Blakenham | 1 | 2,290 | 2,290 | -2% | 2,571 | 2,571 | 6% |
| 4 | Bramford | 1 | 1,952 | 1,952 | -16% | 2,309 | 2,309 | -5% |
| 5 | Chilton | 2 | 4,410 | 2,205 | -5% | 4,698 | 2,349 | -4% |
| 6 | Claydon & Barham | 2 | 4,776 | 2,388 | 3% | 4,878 | 2,439 | 0% |
| 7 | Combs Ford | 2 | 4,798 | 2,399 | 3% | 5,135 | 2,568 | 5% |
| 8 | Debenham | 2 | 4,740 | 2,370 | 2% | 4,789 | 2,395 | -2% |
| 9 | Elmswell & Woolpit | 2 | 4,817 | 2,409 | 4% | 4,883 | 2,442 | 0% |
| 10 | Eye | 1 | 2,210 | 2,210 | -5% | 2,404 | 2,404 | -1% |
| 11 | Fressingfield | 1 | 2,451 | 2,451 | 5% | 2,466 | 2,466 | 1% |
| 12 | Gislingham | 1 | 2,150 | 2,150 | -8% | 2,181 | 2,181 | -10% |
| 13 | Haughley & Wetherden | 1 | 1,803 | 1,803 | -23% | 2,273 | 2,273 | -7% |

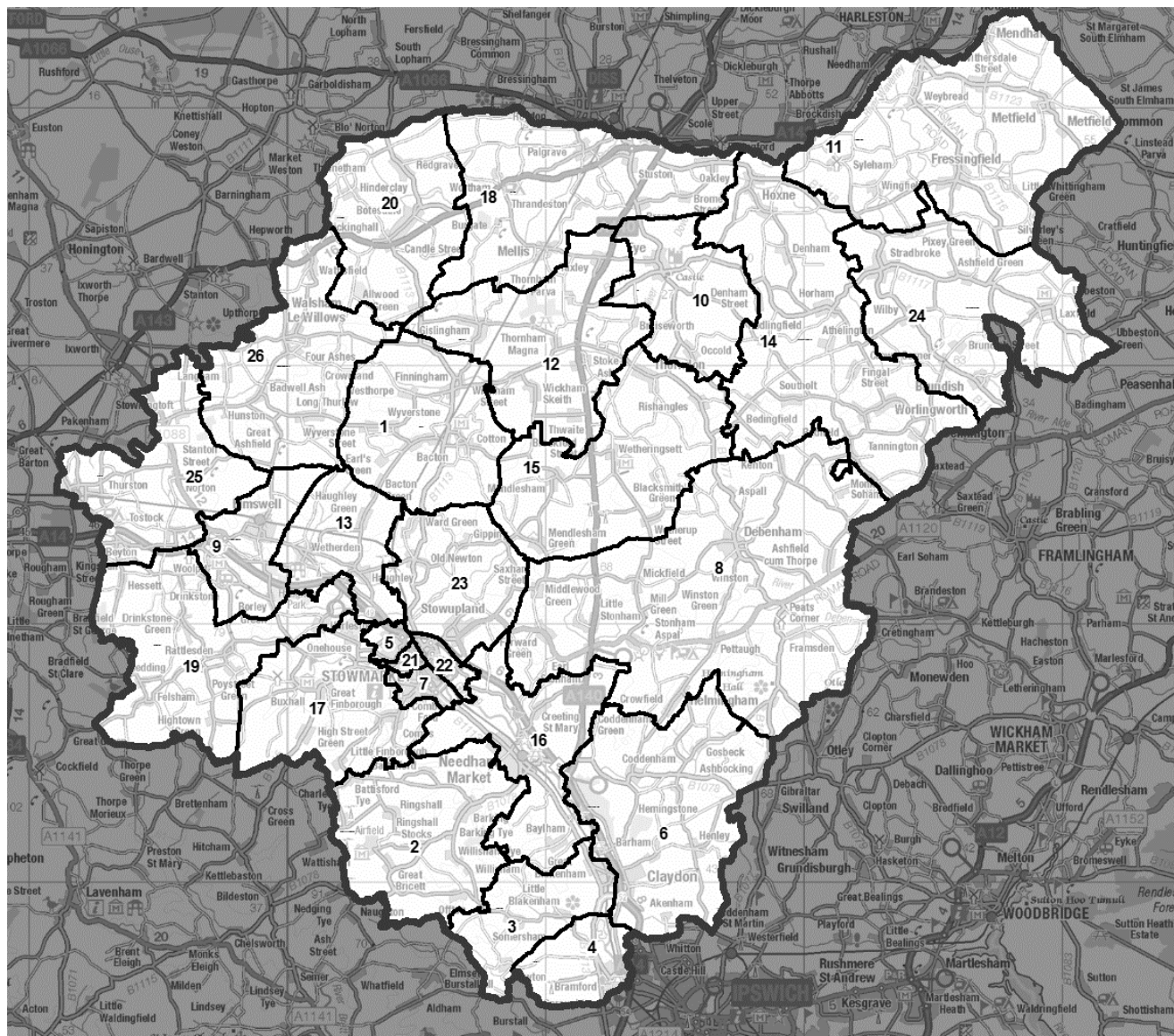
| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2016) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2023) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 14 | Hoxne & Worlingworth | 1 | 2,550 | 2,550 | 10% | 2,565 | 2,565 | 5% |
| 15 | Mendlesham | 1 | 2,324 | 2,324 | 0% | 2,367 | 2,367 | -3% |
| 16 | Needham Market | 2 | 4,861 | 2,431 | 4% | 5,035 | 2,518 | 3% |
| 17 | Onehouse | 1 | 2,381 | 2,381 | 2% | 2,575 | 2,575 | 6% |
| 18 | Palgrave | 1 | 2,570 | 2,570 | 10% | 2,586 | 2,586 | 6% |
| 19 | Rattlesden | 1 | 2,305 | 2,305 | -1% | 2,369 | 2,369 | -3% |
| 20 | Rickinghall | 1 | 2,390 | 2,390 | 3% | 2,408 | 2,408 | -1% |
| 21 | St Peter's | 1 | 2,295 | 2,295 | -1% | 2,365 | 2,365 | -3% |
| 22 | Stow Thorney | 2 | 4,118 | 2,059 | -12% | 4,490 | 2,245 | -8% |
| 23 | Stowupland | 1 | 2,611 | 2,611 | 12% | 2,652 | 2,652 | 9% |
| 24 | Stradbroke & Laxfield | 1 | 2,349 | 2,349 | 1% | 2,474 | 2,474 | 2% |
| 25 | Thurston | 2 | 4,584 | 2,292 | -2% | 4,814 | 2,407 | -1% |
| 26 | Walsham-le-Willows | 1 | 2,597 | 2,597 | 12% | 2,631 | 2,631 | 8% |
| Totals | | 34 | 79,119 | – | – | 82,781 | – | – |
| Averages | | – | – | 2,327 | – | – | 2,435 | – |

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

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

Appendix B

Outline map



Key

1. Bacton
2. Battisford & Ringshall
3. Blakenham
4. Bramford
5. Chilton
6. Claydon & Barham
7. Combs Ford
8. Debenham
9. Elmswell & Woolpit
10. Eye
11. Fressingfield
12. Gislegham
13. Haughley & Wetherden
14. Hoxne & Worlingworth
15. Mendlesham
16. Needham Market
17. Onehouse
18. Palgrave
19. Rattlesden
20. Rickinghall
21. St Peter's
22. Stow Thorney
23. Stowupland
24. Stradbroke & Laxfield
25. Thurston
26. Walsham-le-Willows

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

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/suffolk/mid-suffolk>

Local Authority

- Mid Suffolk District Council

Political Group

- Mid Suffolk District Council Liberal Democrat Group
- Suffolk Green Party

Councillors

- Councillor K. Welham, Mid Suffolk District Council

Parish and Town Council

- Barking Parish Council
- Beyton Parish Council
- Buxhall Parish Council
- Cotton Parish Council
- Eye Town Council
- Felsham Parish Council
- Gislingham Parish Council
- Great Finborough Parish Council
- Haughley Parish Council
- Mendlesham Parish Council
- Palgrave Parish Council
- Ringshall Parish Council
- Stowmarket Town Council
- Stowupland Parish Council
- Thurston Parish Council
- Wetherden Parish Council
- Weybread Parish Council
- Woolpit Parish Council
- Wyverstone Parish Council

Local Residents

- 3 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 |
|------|--|