

# Ordinary Council 13 November 2019 – Appendix C

## LGBCE Consultation on Suffolk County Council Boundaries Review

### Response on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council

#### **1) The Review is welcome**

Felixstowe Town Council (FTC) welcomes the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Review, both in its own right and in the hope that it will be able to be used as a mechanism to improve the current highly unsatisfactory arrangements for Town Wards in Felixstowe resulting from the 2018 East Suffolk Council Review.

It is notable that while the last SCC review was in 2004, Suffolk Coastal DC and then East Suffolk DC have been reviewed 3 times over that period, and it has become increasingly evident that the SCC Review is clearly overdue, in the light of major housing developments in the area, and very large new builds expected over the coming years.

#### **2) Wider issues affecting Felixstowe representation on SCC**

It has been the case for a long time that Felixstowe has had to be combined with the two Trimley parishes in regard to SCC Divisions. From both perspectives FTC and the Trimleys value their own perceived identities and communities, and many of our electorates would seek for that to be recognised by separate representation on SCC. However, both past and currently predicted electoral numbers clearly make that impossible, and FTC therefore believes that a continuation of that broad approach is appropriate. In taking that view FTC has noted the relevant paragraphs 214, 215 and 216 in the LGBCE SCC 2004 report.

However, when the coterminosity of the DC Wards and SCC was lost in 2013 and even more so in 2018, the resulting need to create FTC Wards to concur with the requirement for town wards to be wholly within both Division and DC wards has created anachronistic results for FTC, in the case of the Allenby Ward in 2013, and to an even greater degree the current Marshes Ward in 2018, with one councillor out of 16 on FTC representing a mere 447 out of 20,056 electors. FTC hopes very much that that situation can be greatly improved, if not eliminated in the current review. Accordingly, achieving that coterminosity is a significant factor leading to our proposal.

Also, it is a requirement that the Divisions are all contained within a DC area boundary. In the case of the ESC area as a whole that creates a situation with a starting variance -1.7% overall. Accordingly in this area, a local variation of +/- 5% is roughly equivalent to +3% / -7%. It is suggested that the proposal be judged in this light.

#### **3) Predicted electorates**

FTC has looked carefully at the electorates predicted for each Polling District for 2025, and the increase from the current register. While we understand that the LGBCE has determined those numbers by various statistical processes, which we do not challenge for the purpose of the arithmetic in the current review, it is clear that only a very limited account has been taken of currently ongoing builds and full planning permissions in being in the town and the Trimleys.

In both the Walton and our proposed Eastern Wards this factor is liable to render the Division sizes significantly out of date in a relatively short time scale. We suggest that it is therefore

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reasonable to recognise this in judging those cases where other considerations (notably coterminosity) indicate a pattern with negative variances, although all well within the 10% guidelines mentioned in the LGCBE technical guidance.

### 4) Outline of proposals

In all the contexts above we are therefore proposing in outline:

- Retention of the Felixstowe and Trimleys concept.
- A “Walton and Trimleys” Division
- A “Felixstowe Maritime” Division
- A “Felixstowe Clifflands” Division
- Within the above, an improved pattern of FTC Wards which serves the above primary objectives for the SCC Divisions, but creates a significantly improved FTC warding pattern in the context of “convenient local government” within the Town
- We strongly propose no change to the existing size of FTC - 16 councillors for a population of 20,056, which has proved to work very well in various different respects over many years.
- In that context we propose the following 5 FTC Wards (Option B) to support the SCC Division review, thus:

Walton	3 members	(Existing boundaries)
Port	5 members	(Existing boundaries)
South	2 members	
Central	3 members	
East	3 members	

We have considered all of the statutory criteria, and the factors discussed in the LGCBE’s technical guidance, and submit that our proposed pattern is a solution which fully balances the varying issues involved, and would ask that it be very carefully considered by the Commission in this light.

### 5) Methodology

We have worked directly from the LGCBE figures predicted for each PD, and built our proposals thereon via the spreadsheet attached. In 3 cases our proposal requires small amendments to certain PDs, for which we have used the relevant elector numbers in the current 2019 electoral register.

In the wider sense, the logical sequence has been as follows:

- Accept the concept of a Division for the Trimleys as a part of Felixstowe. In this instance, the current Walton Ward, with the Trimleys, is an obvious solution, in terms of the

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interaction of those communities, and by using the Walton Ward alone, achieves coterminosity with the new ESC Ward boundary on Garrison Lane.

- That then leaves the current Port Ward from the ESC Western Felixstowe Ward as some 70% of the required Division size. We therefore propose that it be retained as an FTC Ward. The Division then requires some 3,000 electors from the current ESC Eastern Ward to form a Division
- We therefore propose a new FTC South Ward, formed from the adjacent seaside area, from the south northwards to form the Felixstowe Maritime Division. We have sought a convenient and easily recognised boundary for that, coterminous with the existing SEFCH PD and as far as possible the SEFCG PD. The proposed boundary on Mill Lane and Crescent Road, linking then to the existing boundary on Hamilton Road South we believe achieves that.
- There then remains the northern part of the ESC Eastern Felixstowe Ward. We are proposing two options for that area. The “de minimis” option (Option A) on the spreadsheet would however yield a new FTC Felixstowe East Ward of a very considerable size (7,924 electors), with 6 out of the 16 Councillors on FTC.
- Accordingly we strongly request that LGBCE consider and adopt Option B, which splits that large East Ward into two, a smaller East to the north, with a (re-created) Central Ward covering the remainder of the town centre and seaside areas.

Further discussions of each of the new FTC Divisions follows.

### 6) Walton and the Trimleys

Walton is largely composed of the old village of Walton, the only significant settlement in the area prior to app.1880, alongside the two traditional parishes of Trimley St. Mary and Trimley St. Martin. There are clear community links between the three not least High Road (originally a Roman road), and the provision of secondary schooling at the recently built Felixstowe Academy. The use of Walton alone uses the new ESC Ward boundary on Garrison Lane and avoids repetition of the awkward Allenby or Marshes FTC Wards required on previous DC reviews to accommodate the disparity of the current North Felixstowe and Trimleys boundary on Beatrice Avenue. The latter derived from the CC 2004 review, when that was a Felixstowe North Ward boundary.

The variance in this case is -7.4% on current figures. However, an estate of just under 200 houses (app 320 electors) is now nearing completion, where only **xx** of the dwellings were included in the 2019 register. There is also an outline planning permission in place opposite that site for app 400 dwellings (app 640 electors), which we know from very recent meetings with the landowner is currently being actively marketed. It seems highly likely therefore that new build will quickly produce more than the increase of 145 electors in the predicted electorate. We therefore suggest that the variance of -7.4% (534 electors) is entirely appropriate in the circumstances.

### 7) Felixstowe Maritime Division

This division combines to existing FTC Port Ward with the new proposed FTC South Ward, thereby bringing together the wide range of commercial port, logistics, tourist and other marine related elements of life in the town. The proposed South Ward also re-creates that long

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standing entity as an FTC Ward where the local councillors can deal with many issues and opportunities which the town's seafront trade involves.

The new proposed South Ward boundary is on Mill Lane and Crescent Road, which together form the main traffic route through the centre of Felixstowe and represent a clear and understandable boundary. The northern boundary of the ward is of course coterminous with the ESC boundary on the railway line and then Garrison Lane, aiding elector understanding of the arrangements.

However, there are very limited opportunities for new housing on any scale, so an initially positive variance will gradually decrease over time. It is for these combined reasons that FTC believes the northern boundary proposed is the most appropriate

### 8) Felixstowe Clifflands Division.

This is the remaining are of the ESC Eastern Felixstowe area, and as such all of its boundaries other than the short southern one are conterminous with the ESC Ward, and so a natural choice.

This Division is scheduled in both short, long and medium terms for major new development. There is a development of 198 houses currently in build on Ferry Road, which we learnt at a meeting with the developer recently is scheduled for final phase completion in 2023, so around 320 additional electors. There is also a current full planning permission in place for 560 houses on Candlet Road, which will itself eventually form the core of the new Felixstowe Garden Village of c. 2000 homes proposed in the new ESC Local Plan currently awaiting the Inspector's decision post the Hearings. Again, we therefore suggest that it is reasonable to accept a small negative variation of predicted electorate here at this point in time.

It would be possible to retain it as a single FTC East Ward, but that would be very large, with 7924 electors, and 6 out of 16 FTC councillors. It would thus do little to mitigate the very poor "effective local government" factor created by the Costal Ward advent in 2018. Elections for 6, let alone 8, councillors, in an area this size, with up to 20 candidate names on a ballot paper are not conducive to clear choices being available for electors. Indeed, it is a commonly observed occurrence that in this situation electors have difficulty in remembering or relating to so many candidates. And after the election when they seek "their Councillor" and find 6 names to choose from, it is hard for any councillor to build meaningful relationships with residents in such a large area.

Accordingly, we strongly recommend the LGBCE to take the opportunity to make this Division two wards for FTC, Central and East, as per option B.

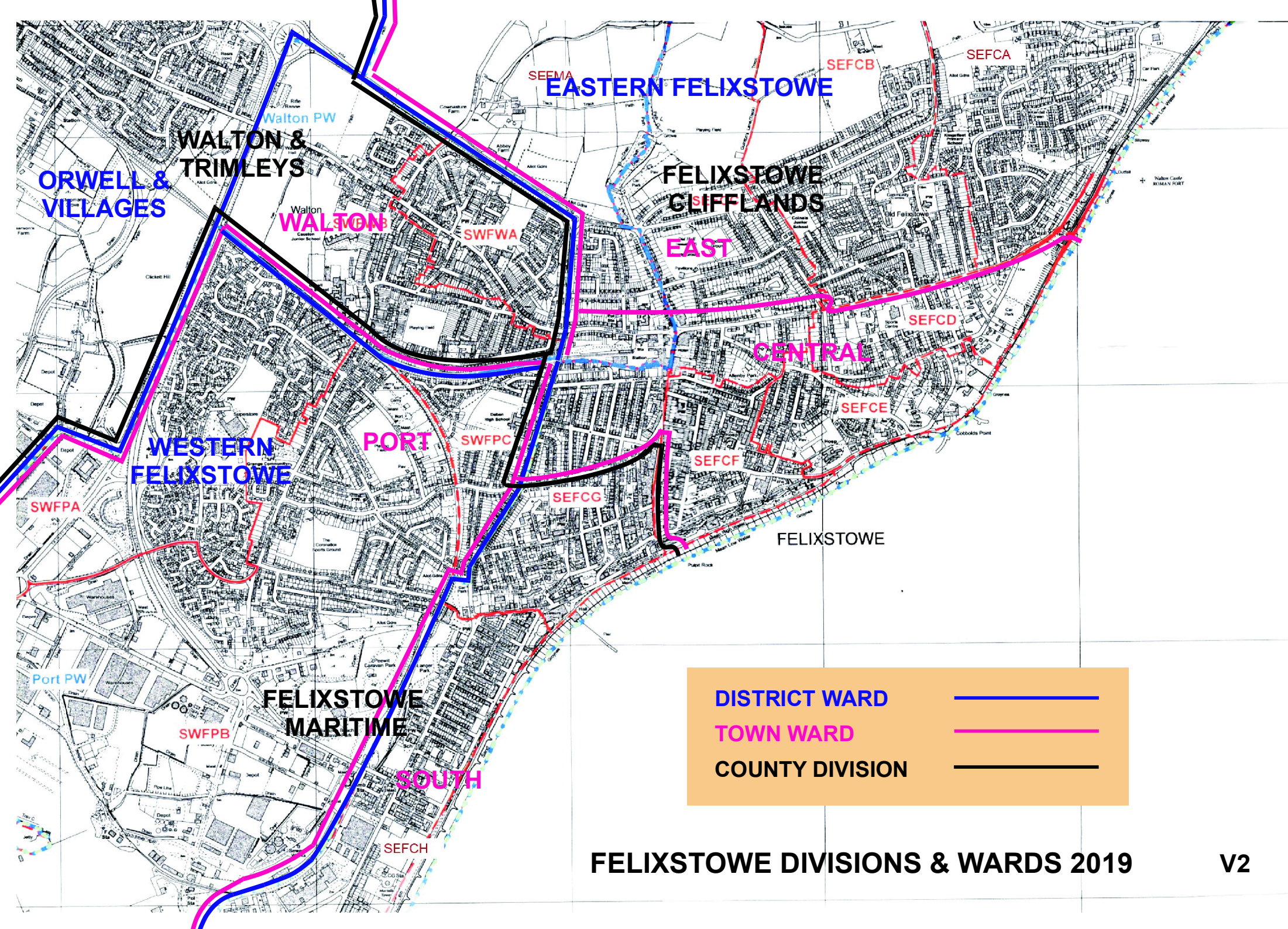
Again, there is a very clear available boundary line proposed along High Road East and West which would serve very well to aid residents' understanding of the Ward structure in the town.




### 9) Data Resources

The structure of the proposed wards street by street within the current PDs, with 3 small modifications, is presented in the spreadsheet at Append A, and the PD map at Appendix B.

We trust that LGBCE will therefore be able to easily understand and evaluate our proposal.





DISTRICT WARD	
TOWN WARD	
COUNTY DIVISION	



**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARIES REVIEW - FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION**

Current Numbers SCC		
Electors	Cllrs	Avg / Divn
592,066	75	7,894

SCC & FTC Wards both named Coastal but not coterminous: confusing for electors & others

LGBCE Numbers SCC 2025		
Electors	Cllrs	Avg / Divn
592,066	70	8,458

FTC	
Electors	Cllrs
20,056	16
1253.5	1253.5

Cllrs		
1	1253.5	
2	2507	
3	3760.5	

SCC CURRENT DIVISIONS Fx & Trimleys: PDs & Wards						
PD	SCC Divisions	Electors 2025 (BC)	ParishWards		ESC Wards	
<b>Fx N &amp; Trimleys</b>			<b>Trimleys</b>		<b>Trimleys</b>	
SOVTN	Fx N & Trimleys	1,674	St. Martin	1,674	Orwell & V	
SOVTY	Fx N & Trimleys	2,982	St. Mary	2,982	Orwell & V	
				<b>4,656</b>		<b>4,656</b>
			<b>Walton</b>		<b>Western</b>	
SWFWA	Fx N & Trimleys	1,280	Walton	1,280	Western	
SWFWB	Fx N & Trimleys	1,900	Walton	1,900	Western	
				<b>3,180</b>		<b>3,180</b>
<b>SCC currentCoastal</b>			<b>Port</b>			
SWFPA	SCC Coastal	2,563	Port	2,563	Western	
SWFPB	SCC Coastal	2,534	Port	2,534	Western	
SWFPC	SCC Coastal	712	Port	712	Western	
				<b>5,809</b>	<b>Western</b>	<b>8,989</b>
			<b>Marshes</b>		<b>Eastern</b>	
SEFMA	Fx N & Trimleys	447	Marshes		Eastern	
				<b>447</b>		
			<b>Coastal</b>			
SEFCA	SCC Coastal	1,821	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCB	SCC Coastal	1,518	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCC	SCC Coastal	913	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCD	SCC Coastal	445	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCE	SCC Coastal	785	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCF	SCC Coastal	1,314	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCG	SCC Coastal	2,153	Coastal		Eastern	
SEFCH	SCC Coastal	1671	Coastal		Eastern	
				<b>10,620</b>	<b>Eastern</b>	<b>11,067</b>
	<b>Fx N &amp; Trimleys</b>	<b>3,627</b>				24,712
	<b>SCC Coastal</b>	<b>16,429</b>				20,056
	<b>20,056</b>					

**Check Totals**

Trimleys	4,656	Felixstowe	20,056	
Felixstowe	20,056	2 cllrs	10028	18.6%
SCC FX & Ts 3 cllrs	24,712	-2.6%	3 cllrs	6685 -21.0%

PROPOSE		FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL WARDS									
		OPTION A (4 Wards)					OPTION B (5 Wards)				
<b>SCC Walton &amp; Trimleys</b>											
		FTC cllrs			FTC cllrs						
		Walton	Calc	Round	Walton	Calc	Round	Walton	Calc	Round	
		1280			1280						
		1900			1900						
		<b>3,180</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3180.00</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>3</b>				
		<b>7,836</b>		<b>-7.4%</b>							
<b>SCC Felixstowe Maritime</b>		Port			Port						
		2,563			2563			2563			
		2,534			2534			2534			
		712			712			712			
		<b>5,809</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5809.00</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>5</b>				
<b>SCC Felixstowe Clifflands</b>		East			East			Central			
		447			341			106			
										Adjusted PDs	
										106	
										See Note A	
		1,821			1821						
		1,518			1518						
		913			622			291		291	
										See Note B	
		445			445			445			
		785			785			785			
		1,314			1314			1314			
		681			681			681		681	
		<b>7924</b>	<b>6.32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,622</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>3</b>	
										See Note C	
		South			South						
		1,472			1472						
		1,671			1671			1671			
		<b>3,143</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3143</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>2</b>				
		<b>8,952</b>		<b>5.8%</b>							
Check totals		20,056			20056	16.00	16.00	20056	16.00	16.00	7,924

Note A Adjust High RD West SEFMA>SEFCF (Uses 2019 register elector numbers for each street)

Note B Adjust High RD East, Fleetwood Rd, Croutel Rd, Brook Lane, Park Ave SEFCC>SEFCF (Uses 2019 register elector numbers for each s

Note C Adjust north area of SEFCG > Clifflands Division (See separate sheet)