

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Lincoln in Lincolnshire

Further electoral review

June 2005

Translations and other formats

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by The Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
Ann M. Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names.

Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is responsible for conducting electoral reviews as directed by The Electoral Commission. As a result of the poor levels of electoral equality in Lincoln under the existing arrangements, The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to review the electoral arrangements of the city on 2 June 2004. The broad objective of this electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the city as a whole.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, six wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the city average. The development that the City Council forecast during the last review for the five-year period between 1996 and 2001 was not realised. There has been some growth on the fringes of the city although the electorate has actually decreased since the last PER, particularly in Abbey ward which has resulted in it having a particularly poor variance, with 21% fewer electors per councillor than the city average. However, in Hartsholme ward, more development was undertaken than expected, which has resulted in it having 23% more electors than the city average.

The table below outlines the four stages of the review.

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	3 August 2004	Submission of proposals to us
Two	16 November 2004	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 June 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	13 September 2005	Final deliberation prior to our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission

Submissions received

During Stage One we received two submissions. The City Council proposed a city-wide scheme based on the existing council size of 33 and made city-wide proposals based upon it.

We received one further submission from the Boultham Park Advisory Group who proposed that Boultham Park should not be split between wards.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council has forecast an increase in electorate of 1% between 2003 and 2008, across the city. We are satisfied that these forecasts are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

During Stage One we received one submission relating to council size from the City Council. It proposed to retain the existing council size of 33 members. We did not consider that the Council had argued sufficiently for a retention of the current council size. Therefore we requested further information and examined a number of different options. Having considered the evidence available to us we concluded that a council size of 33 members would best represent the city. We therefore propose to retain a council size of 33 members.

General analysis

We are proposing recommendations primarily based on our own proposals in order to improve the level of electoral equality within the city. We have also sought to draw on the existing arrangements where we considered that community identity was already well reflected and where we could secure a good level of electoral equality. We have retained a pattern of three-member wards throughout the city and propose adopting three of the City Council's proposed wards. The remaining wards were modified with the aim of securing good levels of electoral equality and reflecting community identity. However, in light of the lack of evidence of community identity we would welcome views at Stage Three of the review including proposals for single or two-member wards if these would provide a better balance between community identity and electoral equality

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Lincoln City Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 12 September 2005. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Lincoln and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding community identity to be a difficult judgement. We would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

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This report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Constituent district wards
1 Abbey	3	Part of Abbey ward, part of Glebe ward, part of Park ward
2 Birchwood	3	Part of Birchwood ward
3 Boultham	3	Part of Boultham ward, part of Hartsholme ward
4 Bracebridge	3	Part of Bracebridge ward
5 Cathedral	3	Part of Abbey ward, part of Castle ward, part of Carholme ward, part of Minster ward
6 Carholme	3	Part of Boultham ward, part of Carholme ward, part of Castle ward
7 Ermin	3	Part of Castle ward, part of Minster ward
8 Glebe	3	Part of Glebe ward
9 Hartsholme	3	Part of Birchwood ward, part of Hartsholme ward
10 Moorland	3	Unchanged Moorland ward
11 Park	3	Part of Boultham ward, part of Bracebridge ward, part of Park ward

Notes:

1. The whole city is unparished.
2. The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.
3. We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Lincoln City Council – 2003 electorate

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	3	5,284	1,761	-4
2 Birchwood	3	5,403	1,801	-2
3 Boultham	3	5,491	1,830	0
4 Bracebridge	3	5,722	1,907	4
5 Cathedral	3	5,355	1,785	-3
6 Carholme	3	5,246	1,749	-5
7 Ermin	3	5,711	1,904	4
8 Glebe	3	5,662	1,887	3
9 Hartsholme	3	5,290	1,763	-4
10 Moorland	3	5,730	1,910	4
11 Park	3	5,612	1,871	2
Totals	33	60,506	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,834	-

Table 2 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Lincoln City Council – 2008 electorate

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	3	5,338	1,779	-4
2 Birchwood	3	5,453	1,818	-2
3 Boultham	3	5,546	1,849	0
4 Bracebridge	3	5,786	1,929	4
5 Cathedral	3	5,418	1,806	-2
6 Carholme	3	5,293	1,764	-5
7 Ermin	3	5,769	1,923	4
8 Glebe	3	5,725	1,908	3
9 Hartsholme	3	5,348	1,783	-4
10 Moorland	3	5,788	1,929	4
11 Park	3	5,660	1,887	2
Totals	33	61,124	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,852	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lincoln City Council.

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

Introduction

1 This report contains our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the city of Lincoln, on which we are now consulting.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 The Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a Periodic Electoral Review (PER) has elapsed. It was agreed that the criteria for deciding which authorities should be investigated were that either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average; or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average.

3 In those local authority areas that met the criteria we conducted research. The intention of the research was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances and assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Lincoln City Council. Lincoln's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1997. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 21 September 1998 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 1999.

5 In carrying out these reviews we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962), i.e. the need to:
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of Lincoln is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by The Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the city as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. When electoral imbalances arise across an area, or between individual wards, that principle can become eroded if the imbalances are left uncorrected. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, providing that each councillor represents exactly the same number of electors is unachievable given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. The Electoral Commission's *Guidance* to the Committee on this subject is quite clear. It is of paramount importance that any council size proposed to us has been developed and can be argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure. As intimated in its *Guidance*, The Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider the factor of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be ensuring that the recommended council size reflects the authority's political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence of this.

11 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities: the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

12 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

13 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	3 August 2004	Submission of proposals to us
Two	16 November 2004	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 June 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	13 September 2005	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

14 Stage One began on 3 August 2004, when we wrote to Lincoln City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lincolnshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Lincolnshire Local Councils' Association, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Lincoln City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 15 November 2004.

15 During Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

16 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 21 June 2005 and will end on 12 September 2005, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

17 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It will then be for the Commission to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an electoral changes Order. The Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

Equal Opportunities

18 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to:

- The general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. having due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity; and
 - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

National Parks, AONB and the Broads

19 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

2 Current electoral arrangements

20 The city of Lincoln has a population of 84,000 and covers an area of 3,571 hectares. Lincoln city is a compact urban area within the rural county of Lincolnshire and is completely unparished. Lincoln city is also an unusual shape with urban development stretching out to the north and south and squeezed in the centre so that across the River Witham there are just three crossing points linking the north and south of the city. There has been some growth on the fringes of the city although the electorate has actually decreased since the last PER.

21 We are undertaking a review of Lincoln as, under the existing arrangements, six of the 11 electoral divisions currently have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the city average. As a result of the further research undertaken into the continuing levels of electoral inequality, The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Lincoln City Council on the 2 June 2004.

22 The electorate of the city is 60,506 (December 2003). The Council presently has 33 members who are elected from 11 wards, all of which are urban. All wards are three-member wards.

23 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,834 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 1,852 by the year 2008 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to fluctuations in electorate growth during the last electoral review, the number of electors per councillor in six of the 11 wards varies by more than 10% from the city average and two wards vary by more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Hartsholme ward where the councillor represents 23% more electors than the city average.

24 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the city average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'. We may also refer to a ward having more electors than the city average or fewer electors than the city average.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements in Lincoln city – 2003 electorate

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	3	4,335	1,445	-21
2 Birchwood	3	5,623	1,874	2
3 Boultham	3	5,594	1,865	2
4 Bracebridge	3	6,343	2,114	15
5 Carholme	3	4,784	1,595	-13
6 Castle	3	4,761	1,587	-13
7 Glebe	3	6,198	2,066	13
8 Hartsholme	3	6,739	2,246	23
9 Minster	3	5,317	1,772	-3
10 Moorland	3	5,730	1,910	4
11 Park	3	5,082	1,694	-8
Totals	33	60,506		-
Averages	-	-	1,834	-

Table 4 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements in Lincoln city – 2008 electorate

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	3	4,379	1,460	-21
2 Birchwood	3	5,679	1,893	2
3 Boultham	3	5,650	1,883	2
4 Bracebridge	3	6,407	2,136	15
5 Carholme	3	4,841	1,614	-13
6 Castle	3	4,809	1,603	-13
7 Glebe	3	6,260	2,087	13
8 Hartsholme	3	6,807	2,269	23
9 Minster	3	5,371	1,790	-3
10 Moorland	3	5,788	1,929	4
11 Park	3	5,133	1,711	-8
Totals	33	61,124	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,852	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lincoln City Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2003, electors in Abbey ward were over-represented by 21%, while electors in Hartsholme ward were significantly under-represented by 23%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Submissions received

25 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Lincoln City Council.

26 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their cooperation and assistance. We received two representations during Stage One, including a city-wide scheme from Lincoln City Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and Lincoln City Council offices.

City of Lincoln Council

27 The City Council proposed a council of 33 members, the same as at present, serving 11 wards.

28 The Council proposed that a uniform pattern of three-member wards be retained and it also proposed to retain five of the existing wards. It proposed minor boundary amendments to the remaining six wards. Four of the 11 wards would have variances of over 10% by 2008. The Council's submission was not supported by a great deal of evidence or argument.

Other representations

29 We received one further submission from the Boultham Park Advisory Group who proposed that Boultham Park should not be split between wards due to securing proposed funding for a refurbishment programme for the park.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

30 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Lincoln and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. In particular, we found our decisions regarding community identity to be a difficult judgement. This was due to the lack of evidence received from local interested parties during Stage One. In this case, we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

31 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Lincoln is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), i.e. the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government;
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation).

32 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

33 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority: the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep that to a minimum.

34 If electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

35 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate figures

36 As part of the previous review of Lincoln, the City Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 4% between 1996 and 2001. However, between 1996 and the start of this review the electorate has decreased by 5%. There has been no substantial growth overall in any area. This has resulted in a knock-on effect across the city with many wards being substantially under-represented and over-represented. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2008, projecting an increase in the electorate of 1% from 60,506 to 61,124 over the five-year period from 2003 to 2008. It expects most of the growth to be spread evenly across the city. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to local/Unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

37 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the City Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

38 Lincoln City Council presently has 33 members. The City Council proposed to retain the current council size and made city-wide proposals based upon it. With regard to the argument provided in respect of council size, the City Council simply stated at Stage One that 'The Council from the start of its deliberations on future electoral arrangements resolved to retain membership at 33'. However, the Council did not argue for its proposed retention of council size in terms of the new political management structure. No further submissions regarding council size were received.

39 After considering the Stage One proposal we did not consider that we had received any evidence on which to base a decision on council size for Lincoln. We did not consider that we had been provided with sufficient discussion of the ways in which the proposed council size would reflect the City Council's political management structures, taking into account the representational elements of councillors' work in order to secure effective and convenient local government. We were therefore in the position of having to reach our own conclusions on the most appropriate council size for Lincoln City Council. To assist us in reaching an informed decision we asked the City Council to provide us with more information regarding the Council's political management structure and councillors' representational work.

40 In response, the Council stated that it had adopted the Cabinet and Leader Model with effect from May 2002 and its submission contained a list of all committees, partnerships, forums, panels, stakeholders and advisory groups that its members are involved in. Additionally, it stipulated various outside bodies that councillors are involved with. It enclosed a copy of its March 2004 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) report and a copy of its Democratic Renewal Report 2003/2004 undertaken by the Audit Commission. While the CPA report does not directly discuss council size, it does consider that Lincoln City Council is a 'fair' council. The latter submission and the CPA report did not demonstrate why the present council size is still applicable and why it should be retained. The Council did not state whether the workload of its members had increased or decreased during its modernisation process. It did not demonstrate

that it had developed its proposed council size in the context of a review of its internal political management arrangements or the role of its councillors in the new structures.

41 Having considered the limited evidence available to us we are of the view that a very limited case has been made for a council size of 33. However, there was no evidence that there should be either an increase or decrease in council size. Therefore, given the information available to us we are recommending that Lincoln City Council be represented by 33 members, the same as at present. However, we would welcome further information at Stage Three as to the appropriate council size for Lincoln. It is important that respondents demonstrate that their proposals have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the structure.

Electoral equality

42 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects The Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. Therefore, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where no justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

43 In the absence of any strong community identity argument or evidence we have sought to improve electoral equality in Lincoln. We received one city-wide proposal from the City Council, however had we adopted its proposals the level of electoral equality would not be below the criteria that triggered the review in the first instance; 36% of wards would have variances above 10% by 2008. This is only a marginal improvement on the existing arrangements, where six out of 11 wards currently vary by more than 10%. It should be noted that Lincoln City Council is completely unparished and is a compact urban area, therefore it should be possible to establish excellent levels of electoral equality. Under the City Council's scheme its proposed Abbey, Carholme, Castle and Hartsholme wards would have variances of -11%, -13%, -13% and 15% respectively by 2008. In light of this poor level of electoral equality we did not consider we could adopt its proposals in the majority of the city for the reasons set out in paragraph 42.

44 As we have not received any substantive evidence we have looked to significantly improve the levels of electoral equality within the city. We have also sought to draw on the existing arrangements where we considered that community identity was already well reflected and where we could secure a good level of electoral equality. However, we did not receive any substantial evidence to maintain the existing warding

arrangements. Because of the lack of strong evidence, we have looked to improve electoral equality even in those areas where the existing arrangements provide electoral variances below 10% of the city average.

General analysis

45 Our draft recommendations are a combination of our own proposals and the City Council's proposed wards. The City Council did not suggest any boundary amendments in the northern area under its scheme, with the exception of moving one polling district from Glebe ward to Abbey ward. It proposed retaining the existing arrangements with the exception of four wards in the southern area. We did not receive any substantial argument to maintain the existing warding arrangements. We have therefore, in the most part, looked to improve on electoral equality within the city.

46 Given the evidence available to us we are proposing that the city be represented by 11 three-member wards, as at present. While we looked at a mixed pattern of wards in the city we noted that we could achieve good levels of electoral equality under a three-member pattern. We also noted that there was little community identity argument for us to draw upon. Therefore, given that at this stage we consider that the statutory criteria can be reflected by a pattern of three-member wards and given that there is a lack of evidence available to us that single or two-member wards would better reflect the statutory criteria we propose a uniform pattern of three-member wards. However, we would be prepared to move away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards where evidence can be provided at Stage Three that community identity would be better reflected by one or two-member wards and where a good level of electoral equality can be achieved.

47 We attempted to divide the city between the north and south using the River Witham as a strong boundary. However, we noted that under a council size of 33 it was not possible to get a good allocation of councillors without breaching the river. In order to provide good electoral equality and maintain a three-member ward pattern in the city we aimed to take approximately 5,000 electors from the south of the city, from the wards of Park and Boultham, and include them in our proposed Abbey and Carholme wards. In light of our proposal to maintain the council size of 33 and the subsequent requirement to transfer electors from south of the River Witham to the north of the city, we were unable to retain the existing wards in the north as requested by the City Council.

48 In the north of the city we are proposing five new wards, three of which are loosely based on the existing Abbey, Carholme and Glebe wards. In the south of the city we have proposed boundary amendments to all but one of the existing wards.

49 Although there was a lack of substantive evidence in the submissions we received, we have taken account of the issues of community identity where possible and as we have interpreted them following a visit to the city. However, due to the lack of forthcoming evidence our recommendations are based primarily on electoral equality, and we invite community identity based arguments during Stage Three.

Warding arrangements

50 For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a Abbey, Carholme, Castle, Glebe and Minster wards (page 27); and
- b Birchwood, Boultham, Bracebridge, Hartsholme, Moorland and Park wards (page 29).

51 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps at the back of this report.

Abbey, Carholme, Castle, Glebe and Minster wards

52 Under the existing arrangements the northern area of Lincoln comprises the five wards of Abbey, Carholme, Castle, Glebe and Minster. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008, if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

53 We received one submission in relation to the wards in the north of Lincoln from the City Council.

54 At Stage One the City Council did not propose any changes to the electoral arrangements of the existing wards in the area, apart from one boundary amendment between the current Abbey and Glebe wards. It proposed 'to place all of the eastern side of Bunkers Hill currently within Glebe ward into Abbey ward'. This would transfer 536 electors into Abbey ward with which it proposed to address the significant electoral imbalance in Abbey ward. In relation to Carholme ward, it stated that 'it is not proposed to make any changes at this time'. In respect of Castle ward it stated that 'although the electoral quota is significantly below the average it is not proposed to make any changes to the current ward arrangements' as 'some development is due to take place'. In respect of Minster ward it stated 'there are no suggested proposals for this ward'. Under the City Council's proposed scheme Abbey, Carholme, Castle, Glebe and Minster wards would vary from the city average by -11%, -13%, -13%, 2% and -3% respectively (by 2008).

55 We noted that under a council size of 33 the wards in the north of Lincoln are entitled to 14 councillors, not 15 as under the current arrangements. Therefore, it was not possible to retain the existing arrangements and provide a good level of electoral equality for this area. We also noted that the City Council had provided no evidence or argument with regards to community identity for its proposals. Therefore, given the incorrect allocation of councillors, lack of argument or evidence and the continuing levels of electoral inequality under the City Council's scheme we are generally putting forward our own proposals in the north of the city.

56 As discussed previously in paragraph 43, we have sought to improve electoral equality and address the allocation of councillors in the north. Under the existing warding arrangements Abbey, Glebe, Minster, Castle and Carholme wards would vary from the city average by -21%, +13%, -3%, -13% and -13% respectively (by 2008). Given the lack of evidence available to us and having visited the area we have utilised aspects of the existing arrangements where we considered that community identity was

well reflected. However, we considered electoral equality could be significantly improved upon and have therefore made significant amendments to the existing arrangements in some areas and are proposing new wards in others. Having investigated alternatives, including a mixed pattern on single-member and two-member wards, we propose making amendments to the existing arrangements to create five new three-member wards in the north of the city.

57 As mentioned previously in paragraph 47, it has proven necessary to transfer electors from south of the River Witham to the north of the city in order to provide for the correct allocation of councillors. While not ideal, under a uniform pattern of three-member wards it has been necessary to combine areas north and south of the river in order to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality. On balance we considered that moving electors from the south to the north would be less disruptive. We considered transferring electors from the north to the south but were of the view that this would have divided a number of different communities. We noted that a greater number of electors would be required to achieve the correct allocation of councillors in the city than by a south to north solution. We have sought to use strong boundaries where possible. Therefore we propose transferring electors from the current Boutham ward to our proposed Carholme ward and from the current Park ward to our proposed Abbey ward.

58 To further improve the level of electoral equality in our proposed Abbey ward we propose to transfer electors from the existing Glebe ward to Abbey ward. Therefore we propose the northern boundary of our proposed Abbey ward follow Wragby Road and Bunkers Hill. We propose that the eastern boundary follow the existing boundary. We propose that the southern boundary, which will encompass the transfer of electors taken from the existing Park ward, follow Monson Street and Ripon Street, continuing south along Canwick Road and then to the boundary of the city. We propose the western boundary follow the existing boundary south to Monson Street. As mentioned previously, we have taken into account the issues of community identity where possible and where we have interpreted them from our visit to the city. However, due to the lack of substantive evidence of community identity our recommendations are primarily based on electoral equality. We would welcome views at Stage Three of the review including proposals for single or two-member wards if these would provide a better balance between community identity and electoral equality.

59 We propose creating a new three-member Cathedral ward in the centre of the northern area and centred around the Cathedral to improve electoral equality. This would encompass part of the existing Castle, Minster, Abbey and Carholme wards. We propose that the northern boundary runs behind the rear of the properties to the north of Yarborough Crescent and along the rear of the properties to the north of Longdales Road. We propose that the eastern boundary follow the existing boundary of Glebe ward and continue to the west of the Allotment Gardens, including the HM Prison and Lincoln County Hospital from the current Abbey ward. We propose that the southern boundary follow Lindum Terrace, Lindum Road and continue into Danesgate and Well Lane. The southern boundary would continue into Steep Hill and along Wordsworth Street into Drury Lane. We propose that the western boundary continue up Carline Road and follow the rear of the properties to the east of Yarborough Road. We propose the above amendments to improve electoral equality and to secure good councillor allocation in the north of the city. Having visited the area we are of the view that our proposals reflect local ties as far as is possible given our knowledge of the city, however, in light of the lack of evidence of community identity we would welcome views

at Stage Three of the review including proposals for single or two-member wards if these would provide a better balance between community identity and electoral equality.

60 We propose adopting the City Council's proposed Glebe ward as this achieves good levels of electoral equality and utilises strong boundaries. Having visited the area we also noted that the area that makes up the proposed Glebe ward appeared to reflect communities in the area. Having considered the City Council's proposals and noted the high levels of electoral inequality we considered a different configuration in the centre and the north of the area. We are also proposing to unite the housing estates in the north of the city to form a new Ermine ward. We propose that the ward be made up of that area to the north of Yarborough Crescent and Longdales Road, to the east of the rear of the properties on Burton Road and to the west of Nettleham Road. We note that our proposed Ermine ward would secure a good level of electoral equality and are of the view that it would reflect communities in the area. We propose the name Ermine due to church and school names in the area.

61 In order to provide for the correct allocation of councillors in the north of the city we propose a modified Carholme ward. We propose that the properties to the north of Boultham Avenue and Coulson Road in the current Boultham ward be transferred to the proposed Carholme Ward. We also propose that the area to the north of Carline Road and east of the rear of the properties on Yarborough Crescent be transferred from the current Carholme ward to the new Cathedral ward and that properties on both sides of Burton Road, to the north of Yarborough Crescent be included in the new Carholme ward. We note that these modifications would secure a good level of electoral equality and that community identity would be largely reflected.

62 Under our draft recommendations all of our proposed wards in the northern area of the city are expected to have electoral variances within 5% of the city average by 2008. Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Abbey, Carholme, Cathedral, Ermine and Glebe wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

Birchwood, Boultham, Bracebridge, Hartsholme, Moorland and Park wards

63 Under the existing arrangements, the south of Lincoln comprises Birchwood, Boultham, Bracebridge, Hartsholme, Moorland and Park wards. Table 4 (on page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008, if the existing arrangements remained in place.

64 We received two submissions in relation to the wards in the south of Lincoln including one city-wide submission from the City Council. The Boultham Park Advisory Group requested we consider retaining Boultham Park within Boultham ward due to funding issues.

65 In relation to Birchwood ward, the City Council proposed to address the electoral imbalance in Hartsholme ward by transferring an area into Birchwood ward. In respect of Boultham ward, the City Council did not propose any change to the existing electoral arrangements. With regard to Bracebridge ward the Council proposed to 'transfer the whole of Bracebridge Polling District HD into Park ward'. It stated that the polling district

'naturally looks towards the Newark Road area for health, library, work and transport links'.

66 With regard to Hartsholme ward, the Council acknowledged that even with their proposed amendment of moving polling district JB, the variance from the average would be 15% by 2008. However, it did not consider that any other amendments would be feasible as 'it is not considered possible to move any other electors into either Boultham or Moorland wards due to there being no natural links across Skellingthorpe Road and the Railway line forming another natural boundary'.

67 In respect of Moorland ward, the Council stated 'there are no suggested proposals for this ward'. In relation to Park ward, the Council proposed the transfer of 621 electors from the current Bracebridge ward as mentioned previously. They stated that 'this is the only suggested proposal for this ward as there are too many adjoining wards and natural boundaries which do not assist in trying to achieve an electoral quota nearer the average'. Under the City Council's proposed scheme Birchwood, Boultham, Bracebridge, Hartsholme, Moorland and Park wards would vary from the city average by 9%, 2%, 4%, 15%, 4% and 4% respectively (by 2008).

68 We noted that under a council size of 33 the wards in the south of Lincoln are entitled to 19 councillors, not 18 as under the current arrangements. Therefore, it was not possible to retain the existing arrangements and provide for a good level of electoral equality in the south of the city. Therefore, we are proposing modifications in the area in order to provide for the correct allocation of councillors and in order to secure improved levels of electoral equality.

69 Given the lack of community argument provided by the Council and the poor level of electoral equality provided under parts of its scheme, we have explored a number of different options for the area. In particular, we have looked at the Council's proposed Bracebridge ward, which we noted was divided by the River Witham. We considered placing that part of Bracebridge to the east of the river with parts of Park ward to the north. However, having visited the area we noted that the housing on both sides of the river is very similar and has little in common with the area to the north. Therefore, given the reasonable level of electoral equality under the Council's scheme, we propose adopting its proposed Bracebridge ward. We also propose adopting the Council's proposed Moorland ward as it achieved good levels of electoral equality and utilised strong boundaries.

70 We propose modifications to the Council's proposed Hartsholme and Birchwood wards in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality. We propose that the housing estate in the north-east of the existing Hartsholme ward be transferred to the proposed Boultham ward in order to secure improved levels of electoral equality. We propose minor amendments be made to the boundary between Hartsholme and Birchwood wards again, in order to secure improved levels of electoral equality. We propose to transfer the electors on Burghley Road, Haddon Close and Burghley Close from the existing Birchwood ward into our proposed Hartsholme ward. We also propose to transfer the properties on the western side of Birchwood Avenue, up to Birchwood County Junior School, to our proposed Hartsholme ward. We note that these amendments improve the level of electoral equality and having visited the area we are of the view that our proposals reflect local ties as far as is possible given our knowledge of the city. However, in light of the lack of evidence of community identity we would

welcome views at Stage Three of the review including proposals for single or two-member wards if these would provide a better balance between community identity and electoral equality.

71 We are proposing modified Boultham and Park wards towards the central area of the city. As mentioned earlier, in order to secure the correct allocation of councillors between the north and south of the city it has proven necessary to transfer electors from both the current Boultham and Park wards. In order to maintain a pattern of all three-member wards in the city it has also been necessary to combine electors on both sides of the River Witham in our proposed Boultham ward, something we sought to avoid when considering options for the area. However, we note that areas on both sides of the river are contained in the current Boultham ward. Therefore, in order to maintain a three-member pattern in the area while securing good levels of electoral equality we propose that the area to the south of Boultham Avenue, west of the High Street and north of Henley Street, which is in the current Boultham ward, be included within the new Boultham ward. The area to the south of Henley Street, east of the River Witham, also in the current Boultham ward, we propose transferring to the new Park ward.

72 The northern boundary of our proposed Boultham ward is described earlier. We propose that the eastern boundary run from the south of Boultham Avenue to Henley Street and continue along the River Witham. We propose the southern boundary follow the existing boundary before encompassing the housing estate to the north east of the existing Hartsholme ward. We note that Boultham Park would remain in Boultham ward as proposed by The Boultham Park Advisory Group. However, in light of the lack of evidence of community identity we would welcome views at Stage Three of the review including proposals for single or two-member wards if these would provide a better balance between community identity and electoral equality.

73 We propose the transfer of a significant amount of electors from Park to Abbey ward to address the allocation of councillors in the north. It was necessary to move electors from the south of the city to the north of the city in order to provide good electoral equality and maintain a three-member pattern in the city. The boundary between our proposed Abbey and Park wards is described earlier. We propose the eastern boundary follow the existing boundary. We propose the southern boundary run to the north of Broughton Gardens. We propose the western boundary will run along Brant Road and continue northwards along the River Witham and run east along Henley Street. It will continue to run northwards along the High Street and as far as Monson Street.

74 Under our draft recommendations, all of our proposed northern wards are expected to have electoral variances within 5% of the city average by 2008. Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Birchwood, Boultham, Bracebridge, Hartsholme, Moorland and Park wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

75 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2003 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2008.

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Draft recommendations	
	2003	2008	2003	2008
Number of councillors	33	33	33	33
Number of wards	11	11	11	11
Average number of electors per councillor	1,834	1,852	1,834	1,852
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	6	6	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	2	0	0

76 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Lincoln City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from six to none. By 2008 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to retain the existing council size and are recommending a council size of 33 members.

Draft recommendations:

Lincoln City Council should comprise 33 councillors serving 11 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

5 What happens next?

77 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Lincoln contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 12 September 2005. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

78 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Lincoln City Council and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. In particular, we found our decisions regarding community identity to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence received from local interested parties during Stage One. In this case we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

79 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Review Manager
Lincoln Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

80 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Lincoln City Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

81 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to 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 our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

6 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Lincoln City:

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Lincoln.

Sheet 1, Map 1 illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Lincoln.

Sheet 2, Map 2 illustrates the proposed boundaries in Lincoln.

Appendix A

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table A1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We comply with this requirement.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.

