

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 42

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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Sir Andrew Wheatley, CBE.

Mr F B Young, CBE.

To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BOROUGH OF
HARTLEPOOL IN THE COUNTY OF CLEVELAND

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the Borough of Hartlepool in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that borough.

2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 13 May 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Hartlepool Borough Council, copies of which were circulated to the Cleveland County Council, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the borough, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of the local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from any interested bodies.

3. Hartlepool Borough Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. In doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were asked also to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultations with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. In accordance with section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Borough Council had exercised an option for a system of elections by thirds.

5. On 1 November 1974 the Hartlepool Borough Council presented their draft scheme of representation. The Council proposed to divide the area into 16 wards all returning 3 members except the ward comprised of the parishes which it was proposed should return 2 members. This produced a council of 47 members, one more than at present, the additional representation being for the rural area.

6. We considered the Borough Council's draft scheme together with comments sent to us and to the Council following the publication of their draft scheme. We noted that the draft scheme complied with the rules in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and to our own guidelines and that it provided a satisfactory basis for the representation of the borough. One of the parishes in the proposed 2-member ward had asked for separate representation when commenting on the draft scheme. We noted that the proposed rural ward covered quite an extensive area and decided that it could be divided to form 2 single member wards. We decided therefore to re-group the parishes to form 2 separate wards. An alternative scheme had been put forward for our consideration. This grouped parishes with urban areas to form sixteen 3 member wards. We preferred the Council's draft scheme and decided to adopt it as our draft proposals subject to the sub-division of the rural ward and to some minor boundary re-alignments suggested by Ordnance Survey. We formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

7. On 31 January 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals, and the accompanying maps which defined the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that any comments should reach us by 4 April 1975.

8. We received comments in favour of our draft proposals but a political association asked for the alternative scheme to be further examined and we received objections relating to the proposed St Hilda ward. We decided these issues should be further examined before we formulated our final proposals.

9. Accordingly, at our request, you appointed Mr H D Jeffries as an Assistant Commissioner to visit the area and hold a local meeting to hear representations about our draft proposals.

10. The meeting was held on 7 July at the Municipal Buildings, Hartlepool and Mr Jeffries' report is attached as Schedule 1 to this report. He has explored the alternative arrangements which were put forward and recommends that the Commission's draft proposals should not be modified in any respect. We are happy to accept the Assistant Commission's recommendations.

11. We have made one amendment to the order of retirement table in Schedule 3. In our draft proposals we suggested that the district councillor representing the Greatham ward should retire in the first of the borough council election years and that the parish council elections for the parishes in that ward should be brought forward to the same year. On reconsideration we have decided to

propose that the borough councillor and the parish councillors for this ward should serve an extended rather than a reduced term of office and we have therefore changed the table accordingly. Subject to this one amendment, we hereby confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

12. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedule 2 and 3 to this report and on the attached maps. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each ward. Schedule 3 shows the order of retirement for councillors. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps.

PUBLICATION

13. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 a copy of this report and a copy of the maps are being sent to Hartlepool Borough Council and will be made available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without maps) are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards as defined on the maps is set out in Schedule 4 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (Chairman)

JOHN M RANKIN (Deputy Chairman)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REPORT OF A MEETING

held at Hartlepool on

Monday, 7 July, 1975

to consider

PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

in

THE BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL

14 July, 1975.

H. D. JEFFRIES, O.B.E.,
Assistant Commissioner,
Alwinton,
41, Castle Terrace,
Berwick-upon-Tweed.

To: THE SECRETARY,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND.

INITIAL REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE
BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL

1. Pursuant to my appointment by the Secretary of State as an Assistant Commissioner, I held a local meeting on Monday 7 July 1975 at The Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Hartlepool, to hear arguments for and against the different proposals on the initial review of electoral arrangements for the Borough.

2. Attendance

A list of those attending the meeting is appended as Annexe 1.

3. The Commission's Draft Proposals, Objections Raised and other Proposals submitted.

(a) The Commission's Draft Proposals, which differed from the Borough Council's draft scheme only significantly in dividing into two a proposed Rural Ward, provided for the division of the area into the following Wards:

<u>Ward</u>	<u>No. of Councillors</u>	<u>Electorate 1974</u>	<u>No. of Electors per Councillor</u>	<u>Electorate 1979</u>	<u>No. of Electors per Councillor</u>
Fens	3	5121	1707	5121	1707
Rossmere	3	4762	1587	4762	1587
Owton	3	4608	1536	4608	1536
Seaton	3	3717	1236	4465	1488
Park	3	4582	1527	4720	1573
Rift House	3	4264	1421	4324	1441
Brinkburn	3	4296	1432	4334	1445
Stranton	3	4266	1422	4608	1536
Grange	3	5270	1756	4808	1603
Jackson	3	5333	1777	4614	1538
Throston	3	2584	861	4069	1359
Dyke House	3	4687	1562	5159	1719
St. Hilda	3	5334	1778	4851	1526
Brus	3	4861	1620	5004	1668
Hart	3	2023	674	4083	1361
Greatham	1	814	814	1533	1533
Elwick	1	1106	1106	1335	1335
	<u>47</u>	<u>67628</u>	<u>Av. 1439</u>	<u>72398</u>	<u>Av. 1540</u>

(b) The objections of the Hartlepool and Headland Traders & Ratepayers Association were contained in a letter to the Commission dated 28 March 1975 and a supporting map. They related only to the proposed new St. Hilda Ward.

The Association argue that the area of the existing St. Hilda Ward has been enlarged to include additional electors on the assumption

/ that the

that the population in the Central Estate will move away from the Ward as demolition takes place. They challenge the rate of progress of the Council's demolition plans and say that there is likely to be redevelopment within the Ward which could rehouse any electors displaced by demolition. They fear that the proposed enlargement of the Ward will destroy the spirit of the Ward community.

- (c) The objections of the Hartlepool Conservative Association were submitted on 29 March 1975 with supporting maps and table. They argue that the Borough Council's scheme (and, by inference, the Commission's proposals) does not meet the criteria of the Commission in respect of the definition of boundaries, nor in respect of equality of representation. They accordingly offer alternatively a scheme providing for sixteen 3-member Wards making a Council of 48 (as against 47 proposed by the Commission). The table set out below gives a numerical analysis of their scheme, with suggested names for new Wards.

The fundamental difference between the Commission's Proposals and this scheme is that it proposes combining continuing, formerly Rural Parishes, with adjoining Wards in the urban area of Hartlepool. The Association argues that this would give the Parishes access to 15 Councillors as compared with two in the Commission's proposals. They point out that future private and Council development will be concentrated on the perimeter of the Borough, thus bringing rural and urban communities closer to each other.

Hartlepool Conservative Association
Proposed Wards : Electorate based on 1974 Register.

<u>Proposed New Ward</u>	<u>No. of Councillors</u>	<u>Electorate based on 1974 Register</u>	<u>No. of Electors per Councillor</u>	<u>Proposed Electorate 1980</u>	<u>No. of Electors per Councillor</u>
Greatham	3	3913	1304	4688	1563
Rossmere	3	4762	1587	4762	1586
Owton	3	4370	1456	4370	1456
Seaton	3	3717	1236	4465	1468
Manor & Brierton	3	4273	1474	4273	1424
Rift House	3	4274	1421	4324	1441
Brinkburn	3	4296	1432	4334	1445
Park & Dalton					
Piercey	3	3336	1112	4308	1436
Stranton	3	4266	1422	4353	1447
Grange	3	4666	1555	4299	1433
Jackson	3	5333	1777	4774	1541
Dyke House	3	4687	1562	5154	1719
Throston & Elwick	3	3358	1119	4393	1464
St. Hilda	3	5334	1778	4851	1617
Brus	3	4560	1520	4428	1476
Hart & Hart Village	3	2483	824	4608	1536
	<u>48</u>	<u>67628</u>	<u>Av. 1409</u>	<u>71384</u>	<u>Av. 1508</u>

4. Assistant Commissioner's Opening Statement

After referring to my appointment, I said that I was instructed to conduct the meeting as informally as possible so as to encourage a full exchange of views, but consistently with the need to ensure a fair hearing.

I did not call for proof of publication of the notice of Meeting, but from my own observation on my earlier inspection and from the attendance at the Meeting, I was satisfied that there had been proper publication.

I informed the Meeting that I had made an unaccompanied inspection of the Borough on Wednesday, 2 July 1975, but that if it was desired that I make a further, accompanied inspection I would of course do this.

I referred to the two objections of which I had been informed, namely those submitted by

- (a) the Hartlepool and Headland Traders and Ratepayers Association, and
- (b) the Hartlepool Conservative Association.

No-one having expressed any wish to speak on any other aspect of the Proposals than those affected by these two objections, I indicated that I would first consider (a) and then (b).

I asked for a spokesman for each objector to open, after which I would hear anyone else who wished to be heard on that objection, and then the Chief Executive and his witnesses for the Borough Council.

I asked particularly that the Borough Council's spokesman supplement as much as was reasonably possible what had been said in the general statement submitted with their draft Scheme regarding clearances and planned development likely to take place within the next five years and to affect the number and distribution of electors. Doubts about the implementation of clearance and development proposals were implicit in the Comments of the Hartlepool and Headland Traders and Ratepayers Association. The likelihood of such proposals being carried out during the next five years was also very relevant in considering the arguments of the Conservative Association.

5. Maps: Documents handed in at the Meeting.

- (a) The Chief Executive, Mr. N.D.Abram, drew attention to certain maps on display. These were:

- (1) Map of Wards and Present Electorate of the present Borough of Hartlepool.
- (2) Map of the Borough Council's Draft Scheme.
- (3) 1966 Ward and Street Map of the former Borough of Hartlepool.
- (4) Maps of the Conservative Party proposals.

- (b) He also handed in:

- (1) Folder containing various Ward analyses, copy correspondence with the Parish Councils and comparison of electorate figures as between the Conservative Party proposals and the Electoral Registration Officer. (Annexe 2)
- (2) Copy Minutes of the Local Government Boundary Review Committee

24 June 1974 to 24 February 1975 and of the Borough Council
9 September 1974 (Annexe 3).

3. Copy letter dated 27 February 1975 from the County Secretary, Cleveland to the Chief Executive, Hartlepool. (Annexe 4).
4. Proof of Evidence of Mr. F.R. Turner, Borough Planning Officer, Hartlepool and copy Memorandum dated 20 June 1974 from himself to the Chief Executive. (Annexe 5).
6. The Objection and Proposals of the Hartlepool and Headland Traders Association.

Mr. McRae, speaking for the Association, said that this was a representative "parochial" Association. Their argument was based on their letter of 28 March 1975.

He felt that the extension of Wards had gone on without consideration for people. The Notice of this Meeting should have indicated that it was concerned with the St. Hilda Ward (from which I took the inference that this might have produced a larger attendance from the Headland area).

He could not see that the demolition of the Central Estate would ever come, but if it did, all the people displaced could be accommodated on the Old Boys Field and the Mayor had told them that this land was to be taken for housing. There were also other plots of land ripe for housing all round the Headland.

The Brus Ward and others were in the old Borough of Hartlepool before 1967. Now it appeared that the aim was to include all the former Borough in one Ward. It was not necessary to do this to provide the required population.

Councillor Andrews, Conservative Association, said that the area of the former Borough had retained the same representation after 1967 as it had previously.

The Chief Executive referred first to the former Hartlepool Borough 1966 Ward Street Map showing 6 wards. The County Borough of Hartlepool came into being on 1st April 1967. A great problem had been to provide equal representation. The Headland had then wanted representation greater than any other part of the new County Borough. The aim had been to have 1500 electors per member.

He quoted the Commission's Report No.6, para. 28. The Council was now looking to the next 5 year period and trying to assess what the population would be.

Turning to the Association's objection, Mr. Abram suggested that its name was misleading. The Association was formed about 20 years ago to look after the Headland Traders' interests, although its membership had now been widened to take in all ratepayers.

The "undemocratic population explosion" seen by the Association was not defined and there was no intention to interfere with the franchise.

He referred to the Planning Officer's statement (Annexe 5) as indicating the significant housing clearance to be undertaken in the Ward.

The Council had recently set up a working party to consider the possibility of developing the Old Boys Field, but it had not yet had a report.

/The Council

The Council did not own the Field and if it was decided to try to buy it, the acquisition might take a year. The field was owned by the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority and it was regarded by them as operational land, although it had not been used as such for many years. Compulsory acquisition would not be possible. While some 300 houses might be built on the land, industry was close by and the establishment of buffer zones and landscaping would be needed.

(From subsequent question and discussion it was elicited that trial holes had recently been taken. Outside consultants had been brought in and while the site might have some geological difficulty it could probably be developed for two-storey housing provided proper base precautions were taken, probably by pile driving. A small beck would also need to be culverted. The increase in cost might be something like £1,000 per house).

Mr. Abram continuing said the Ropery Field could accommodate approx. 27 houses.

In 1946 84% of the electorate of the former Borough of Hartlepool lived on the Headland. Immediately prior to 1 April 1967 this had dropped to 42%, while 58% lived in the area known as West View, some in private, but mostly in Council houses.

Since 1967 there had been no alteration in the Ward boundaries. St. Hilda's Ward covered basically the same area as on the 1966 maps. Its electorate on the 1975 Register was 4215.

On the 1967 amalgamation, the aim had been to draw Ward boundaries so as to have roughly 1500 electors per member, i.e. 4500 per ward.

Table E which he had put in (Annexe 2) showed decreases in the St. Hilda Ward electorate up to 1980. From the figure of 4215 there had to be deducted for clearances in the Central Estate 874 and a further 126 in the Headland area, reducing the electorate by 1000 to 3215. New building would be put back 438 electors, and this did not include the Old Boys Field, giving a projected electorate in 1980 of 3653.

To balance out, it was proposed to add 1234 electors from the adjacent part of the Brus Ward which would increase the St. Hilda Ward electorate to 4887.

The Chief Executive then called Mr. F.R. Turner, Borough Planning Officer, who read his statement (Annexe 5).

In reply to a question by Mr. McRae, Mr. Turner said the Old Boys Field was not ideal environmentally for housing. The Council would have to decide, having regard to the good of the Headland area, whether it should be used.

After discussion regarding its geological suitability and helpful contributions by Councillor Andrews, Conservative Leader and Councillor Hanson, Leader of the Council, the latter said that there was a possibility that the number of electors at present in the Ward could be reaccommodated there, but the time span was quite considerable. The Boundary Review Committee had spent a great deal of time in consideration of the Headland area and were concerned with the points made by the objecting Association. They had finally finished with the boundary proposed to get the electorate in reasonable balance having regard to time.

Mr. McRae reiterated points made earlier, emphasizing the importance of people. The Headland was a viable community and the largest in the Borough.

7. The Objection and Proposals of the Hartlepool Conservative Association

The Chief Executive drew attention to the folder (Annexe 2) handed in containing Tables (to some of which reference has already been made) and copy correspondence between himself and the Parish Councils regarding the Commission's draft Proposals for the Parishes. He also referred to the copy Minutes handed in. (Annexe 3).

Councillor Andrews speaking for the Hartlepool Conservative Association, said the town had been well served by both political Parties, because they were fairly equally divided and control changed every 4 - 5 years.

He and his colleagues had gone through the whole process of consideration with the controlling Group, but at the end of each meeting there had been lack of agreement. Basically, therefore, his Association objected to the draft Proposal on the grounds that they were politically drawn. The boundary line had not been drawn in accordance with the prescribed criteria, although it was difficult to reconcile the criteria.

Reorganisation had brought the villages into the Town. They were with urban Wards for County Electoral purposes and there was confusion.

As there had been no agreement the Conservatives had submitted counter proposals. These had been looked at but not found acceptable.

The Association's proposals now under consideration would give easily and clearly defined Ward boundaries and equal representation.

Difficulties arose through the villages having little representation. It was wrong that the greater part in area of the new Borough should be looked after by two Councillors.

Another factor was that equality of representation should be projected to 1980. It appeared that the Commission's Proposals envisaged no new houses in Fens, Owton or Greatham in the next five years, but in the Parish of Greatham alone 488 houses were proposed of which 125 were started and 85 completed.

Councillor Andrews referred to the present balance of the Parties. A 1% or 2% swing would change the situation. What was proposed in the Proposals the Commission had adopted was to add Conservative voters to solid Conservative seats, making marginal seats predominately Socialist, which would give that Party a very great advantage.

Summing up, Councillor Andrews said

- (a) The Commission's proposals did not meet the criteria in relation to easily defined boundaries, or
- (b) in relation to equality of numbers of electors per Councillor.
- (c) Parishes would be left with little representation
- (d) Lines on the map were deliberately drawn to give advantage to the Socialist Party.

He referred finally to the difficulties of the two Conservative members of the Committee. When the Council lodged its draft Scheme

/ they had

they had decided to submit counter proposals in the little time at their disposal.

The Conservatives had decided that it would be better to have 16 Wards bringing in the villages. This would give the villages 15 representatives and a bigger voice than at present. They would then have a sense of oneness with the town.

Their proposals were based not only on what they knew was happening, but what they knew was to happen. They gave more nearly equal representation than those of the Commission.

Councillor Rodgers, Conservative, speaking in support, said Councillor Andrews had covered nearly every point.

They considered that the villages would be better served by having more representatives. The villages would still have their Parish Councils or Parish Meetings which had, and would continue to have, considerable power and influence. They had tried to base their proposals on accepted boundaries. They thought they had boxed rather cleverly. Their Wards were evenly balanced and none was terribly unwieldy. Their proposals were viable, practical and fair. If adopted, the whole electorate would have a chance of representation.

Councillor Andrews said that his attention had been drawn to the fact that a small adjustment would be needed to achieve contiguity between Elwick and Throston in their Proposals. This could be done.

The Chief Executive, Mr. Abram, opened by referring to his position representing the Council in the presence of all his political masters. He disclaimed political bias for himself or his staff - which was at once conceded by both Leaders.

He referred to the constitution of the Boundary Review Committee, comprising 5 members of the controlling Labour Group and 2 Conservatives. This Committee and the Council had given every consideration to the Proposals.

He referred to the copy Minutes put in (Annexe 3) to demonstrate that the various proposals had been considered in detail by the Council.

He further referred to Appendix F (Annexe 2), copy correspondence with the Parish Councils in February 1975. Minute 5 Boundary Review Committee 10 July 1974 (Annexe 3) also showed the attitude of the villages going into any warding system.

The Borough Council had gone out of its way to try to meet the prescribed criteria. The Parishes would be no better off under the Conservative proposals.

Mr. Abram read a letter dated 27 February 1975 from the Cleveland County Secretary to himself (Annexe 4), stating that the County Council were informing the Boundary Commission that they had no observations to make on the Commission's proposals for the Borough.

/On the question

On the question of development affecting the electorate projection for the rural parts, Mr. Abram referred to the "Table Showing Electoral Equality", Column 5 (submitted as part of the Corporation's draft Scheme). This showed a 1980 figure of 2868. The Memorandum dated 20 June 1974 from the Planning Officer to himself (Annexe 5) showed how the 2868 projection had been arrived at.

He referred to the fact, already acknowledged by Councillor Andrews, that the Conservative proposal did not show a direct link between Elwick and Elwick Hall and the town Ward to which they were proposed to be joined. There would have to be an adjustment.

On the question of boundaries generally, it was not apparent on what ground the Conservative criticism of failure to meet the criteria could be made.

Mr. Abram then called Councillor Hanson, Leader of the Council.

He said that the Conservatives had suggested that the proposed new boundaries had been rigged to Labour's advantage. He pointed out that the low percentage of votes dividing the Parties would make this very difficult.

One of the Council's first steps had been to resolve the question whether the former Rural Parishes should be put into a town Ward system. The Mayor had had meetings with the Parishes, without any brainwashing, and the Parishes had made clear their wish to stay outside such a system.

Once that question was decided they then started to look at the town Ward system. All members of the Boundaries Review Committee had had maps and full information. Two major schemes A and B had been produced and other schemes.

After a "50/50" vote on the major schemes, Scheme B had been submitted as the Council's draft Scheme. The Council had then been happy to accept the Commission's Proposals including the division of the one 'rural' Ward into two.

Turning to the Conservative complaint that he, as Leader of the Labour majority party, had said the decision on the draft Scheme would be a 'political decision', in his meaning this was a decision reflecting the will of the Council and, theoretically, the will of the people. This meeting gave another opportunity for arguments to be put.

The main Conservative argument was that the rural Parishes should be in Wards with 3 members instead of in rural Wards with only 1 member. The Council had, however, tried to vary as little as possible Wards not affected by numbers.

Parish Councillor Wilkinson, Vice-Chairman, Greatham Parish Council, speaking on behalf of all the Parishes, said the villagers and parishioners were not going to be pawns in a political game. Their outlook was entirely different. They had formerly been in a Rural District where there were no Party politics whatsoever.

This was one of the reasons why all the villages chose an independent Councillor as their representative on the Borough and County Councils. They

/ were now in

were now in agreement with the Commission's Proposals for two Wards with two representatives, i.e. one for each Ward.

Councillor Johnson, the Member representing the present Rural Ward 16, said the Parishes had never been political and they were strongly opposed to being taken into town Wards. When they had considered this question they had been unanimous in their opposition.

They had subsequently heard that Greatham wished to have separate representation. He understood this and regarded the Commission's proposals for two Wards as very acceptable.

The Parishes feared town development if they were linked with town Wards.

In his view the boundaries were very well defined in the Commission's proposals.

Parish Councillor Lyver, Chairman, Greatham Parish Council, after referring to his long service as a Parish and Rural District Councillor, expressed surprise that the villages had got to be torn between two political parties. The villages were independent. He was satisfied with the proposals, which gave the people all they needed.

Councillor Rogers, Conservative Association, reiterated that the Rural Parishes were already with Urban Wards for County Electoral purposes. The case for consideration for urban people was just as strong as for rural people. Councillor Andrews had referred to current private housing developments in the Parish of Greatham, with which the builders were pushing ahead. There was no intention of absorbing the rural areas, but they were all now in one District and the sooner they became one the better.

Councillor Wilkinson said all the 400 houses building in Greatham were on the Fens side of the Stockton Road (which I took to mean: not contiguous to the village of Greatham).

Councillor Andrews said he deeply regretted the attitude of the village representatives. There was no intention to despoil the villages. Some of their town members had moved into the villages.

Councillor Johnson said the Conservatives argued that their scheme would give the villages increased representation. After quoting the Parish electorates he said that under such a scheme the villagers would be swamped by townspeople.

Before closing the meeting, I referred to my earlier inspection and asked whether anyone wished me to make a further accompanied inspection, but the meeting was unanimous in considering this unnecessary.

Mr. Abram expressed thanks to myself. I replied thanking him and his staff and all those present for the courteous and helpful way in which the questions to be determined had been presented and argued.

8. Inspection.

I spent some five hours on unaccompanied inspection in Hartlepool on Wednesday, 2 July 1975.

(a) The St. Hilda Ward.

I first went to the St. Hilda Ward and tried to familiarise myself with its present boundaries, those proposed, and the general relation of the Headland area to the rest of the Borough.

The area is to some extent separated geographically and by extensive dock development from the main part of the present Borough. A high railway embankment adds to its apparent separateness.

Although not lacking new development, the impression the residential part left on me was of mellowness after a bustling past. Its commanding position at the mouth of the River Tees and its long river and sea frontage makes it an attractive residential area with a considerable planning and architectural potential, especially in the part around its fine Parish Church.

The Central Estate, so marked on the objecting Association's map, is clearly ready for redevelopment. The large adjoining "Old Boys Field", marked 'A' on the same map, is an open site bordered on one side by the railway embankment. It is not particularly attractive but appears on superficial viewing to have a residential development potential.

Proceeding N.W. along West View Road, I came to the large newer housing estate which I judged to be development of the former Hartlepool Borough Council and part of which the Commission now propose to put into an enlarged St. Hilda Ward. The proposed new boundary of this extended Ward was without question "easily identifiable".

(b) The Town Wards.

There was not time to examine in detail the boundaries and other changes proposed for the town Wards. I went into each Ward proposed by the Commission but saw nothing on which to comment. It was, of course, a fact to be expected that the western, landward, residential estate development in these Wards would impinge on the neighbouring countryside, but I was generally impressed by the division between town and country. This may be largely due to the constraint of the pre-1974 County Borough boundary but there was a marked freedom from urban sprawl and the sort of "penumbra" one has seen elsewhere. The major and impressive industrial development which has occurred and was clearly still in progress in the southern part of the Borough seemed perhaps to be pressing harder on the rural area in that part, but this was possibly an impression due primarily to the sheer physical size of the installations and their skyline impact.

(c) The Rural Parishes.

I travelled every public road in the rural Parishes as well as a long, private, farm and waterworks road in Elwick Hall Parish, close

/to the western

to the western boundary of the new Borough.

The overriding impression was of a peaceful, prosperous and, in its western parts, quite beautiful agricultural countryside. On the town fringe there was some evidence of urban pressure, like anti-social dumping of rubbish, but overall the impression was of a clean and unspoilt countryside still being successfully farmed. The apparent isolation of the more westerly parts from anything urban seemed almost complete.

The villages themselves made a different impression. All were residentially attractive and Elwick and Dalton Piercy, screened by high ground from the industrial skyline, especially so. All had had significant redevelopment (the modernisation of old homes, etc.) and some new development, and the impression I had was of very pleasant commuter villages. They were not divorced from their agricultural hinterland - I noticed a farmhouse and buildings, for example, near the centre of Elwick, and I should no doubt have found agricultural and country workers in all of them, but they appeared to be experiencing the metamorphosis common to villages situated near large towns and with less agricultural 'raison d'être' than they once had.

I told the meeting what my impression of the villages had been. Nothing was said to change it.

The population of all these Parishes is, of course, still very small in relation to the town population and although some further development is likely, and indeed commenced, its impact on the number of electors will not be great.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations.

- (a) After careful consideration, firstly, of the criteria laid down in Schedule 11 of the Act of 1972 and the guidance of Report No.6, secondly, of all that was said at the Meeting and, thirdly, of my impressions on my inspection, I recommend no change in the Commission's draft Proposals, and hence the rejection of both objections.
- (b) Dealing first with the objection of the Headland and Hartlepool Traders and Ratepayers Association, my recommendation is based
- (1) on the evidence regarding projected clearance and redevelopment, with the consequent reduction in the number of the electorate likely to take place in the next five years, producing a significant electoral disparity
 - (2) on the considerable uncertainty about the use for housing within that period of the Old Boys Field. (Had the difficulties of securing and developing the Field within the five year period appeared less substantial, my recommendation might have been different)
 - (3) on the fact that the part proposed to be added to the St. Hilda Ward was in the pre-1967 former Borough of Hartlepool with the resultant probability that many of its residents will have old ties with the Headland area

One could not but have sympathy with the Headland representatives, whose distinctive area is clearly undergoing a difficult process of readjustment and change, but I could find nothing to support their comments and I was satisfied as to the likely effects on electorate numbers resulting from clearances and redevelopment in the next five years.

- (c) Turning now to the objection of the Hartlepool Conservative Association, while I have reported fully their representatives' arguments supporting the Association's criticisms of the proposals on grounds of Party political partiality, this appears to be a matter outside my terms of reference and I have therefore had no regard to it.

My recommendation is based

- (1) on having heard (or seen) nothing to support the Association's criticism respecting the definition of boundaries
- (2) on not being satisfied, on the evidence I had, that the town would spread so as to affect significantly the distribution or number of electors in the next five years
- (3) on there appearing to be no difficulty arising from the present or proposed situation with respect to County Electoral Divisions
- (4) on the views strongly expressed by the Parish Council

/ representative

representatives that their Parishes did not wish to be linked with any urban Wards, fearing that they would lose rather than gain effective representation by such a change

- (5) on the fact that no-one attended this Meeting from the Parishes to express the contrary view and support the Conservative Party proposals.

I would add that this recommendation might well be different if made five or ten years hence. The Borough of Hartlepool is clearly in a region and a period of dynamic change and its continuous industrial and commercial growth may force significant changes in the distribution and numbers of the electorate. Those living in the recently added rural Parishes may themselves then feel the situation to have altered and be prepared for closer identification with the urban Wards.

10. May I end by again acknowledging the courtesy and cooperation I experienced in Hartlepool in dealing with this matter.

14 July 1975.


Assistant Commissioner.

SCHEDULE 2

BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO OF COUNCILLORS</u>
BRINKBURN	3
BRUS	3
DYKE HOUSE	3
ELWICK	1
FENS	3
GRANGE	3
GREATHAM	1
HART	3
JACKSON	3
OWTON	3
PARK	3
RIFT HOUSE	3
ROSSMERE	3
ST HILDA	3
SEATON	3
STRANTON	3
THROSTON	3

BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL

ORDER OF RETIREMENT

WARD	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
BRINKBURN	3	1	1	1
BRUS	3	1	1	1
DYKE HOUSE	3	1	1	1
ELWICK	1	-	1 PE	-
FENS	3	1	1	1
GRANGE	3	1	1	1
GREATHAM	1	-	-	1 PE
HART	3	1	1	1
JACKSON	3	1	1	1
OWTON	3	1	1	1
PARK	3	1	1	1
RIFT HOUSE	3	1	1	1
ROSSMERE	3	1	1	1
ST HILDA	3	1	1	1
SEATON	3	1	1	1
STRANTON	3	1	1	1
THROSTON	3	1	1	1
	47	15	16	16

PE = Parish Elections for any parishes within the ward which have parish councils.

For the purpose of this table year 2 is deemed to be the normal parish election year, ie 1976, 1979 and every fourth year thereafter.

BOROUGH OF HARTLEPOOL

NOTE: Where the boundary is described as following a road, railway, river, canal or similar feature, it should be deemed to follow the centre line of the feature unless otherwise stated.

HART WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Hart Parish meets the northern boundary of the District, thence northeastwards and southeastwards following said district boundary to a point due northeast of the northern curtilage of Hart Warren Farm thence southwestwards in a straight line to and along said curtilage and continuing generally southwestwards along a footpath to Speeding Drive thence along said drive and crossing King Oswy Drive to the southeastern boundary of No 127 in said drive thence along said property boundary and rear boundaries of Nos 73-75 and 48-46 Studland Drive Nos 5 to 8 Portland Grove and 5-6 Parkstone Grove to Easington Road thence southeastwards along said road to a point opposite the northern boundary of Parcel No 5333 on 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Plan NZ 48/4934 Edn 1965 thence to and along said boundary and northern boundary of Parcel No 2931 to the eastern boundary of Hart Parish thence generally northwestwards and northeastwards following said Parish boundary to the point of commencement.

BRUS WARD

Commencing at a point on the District boundary being due northeast of the footbridge crossing the access road to the Magnesite Works from Winterbottom Avenue thence due southwestwards in a straight line crossing North Sands to said footbridge and continuing southwestwards along said access road and southwards along the said avenue to Easington Road thence westwards and northwestward along said road and continuing along the eastern boundary of Hart Ward to and southeastwards along the District boundary to the point of commencement.

ST HILDA WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Brus Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District thence generally southeastwards and westwards following the District boundary to a point in prolongation southeastwards of Ferry Road thence northwestwards along said prolongation and said

road to Slake Terrace thence southwestwards along said terrace to Middleton Road thence westwards along said road to Lancaster Road thence northwards along said road to Powlett Road thence westwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Brus Ward thence generally northwards following said eastern boundary to the point of commencement.

THROSTON WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Hart Parish meets the southern boundary of Hart Ward thence northeastwards following said ward boundary to the western boundary of Brus Ward thence southeastwards following said boundary and continuing southwards along Jesmond Gardens and Jesmond Road to Hart Lane thence westwards along said lane to Dunston Road thence southwestwards along said road to Elwick Road thence westwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Elwick Parish thence generally northwards and eastwards along said eastern boundary and eastern boundary of Hart Parish to the point of commencement.

DYKE HOUSE WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Throston Ward meets the southern boundary of Brus Ward thence eastwards following said southern boundary and eastwards and southwards following the western boundary of St Hilda Ward to Middleton Road thence westwards along said road and Hart Lane to the eastern boundary of Throston Ward thence northwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

JACKSON WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of St Hilda Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District thence generally southwards following the District boundary to South Pier thence southwestwards along said pier, to the entrance thereto thence due westwards in a straight line to the main

railway line thence northwestwards and westwards along said railway to a point being a prolongation eastwards of Museum Road thence westwards along said prolongation to Clarence Road thence southwards along said road to Victoria Road thence westwards along said road to Murray Street thence northwards along said street to Alma Street thence westwards along said street and Bright Street to Welldeck Road thence northwards along said road to the southern boundary of Throston Ward thence generally eastwards following said boundary and southern boundaries of Dyke House Ward and St Hilda Ward to the point of commencement.

GRANGE WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Throston Ward meets the western boundary of Jackson Ward thence southwards eastwards and southwards following said western boundary to and continuing along St Paul's Road to Thornton Street thence westwards along said street to Osborne Road thence southwards along said road to Elwick Road thence westwards and northwards along said road Wooler Road and Serpentine Road to the southern boundary of Throston Ward thence eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

STRANTON WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Jackson Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District at the easternmost point of South Pier, thence generally southwards following the District boundary to a point being a prolongation due east of the southernmost point of Windmere Road thence due westwards along said prolongation and northwards and westwards along said avenue to Bellevue Way thence southwestwards along said way to Brenda Road thence northwards along said road Stockton Road and York Road to Elwick Road thence westwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Grange Ward thence northwards following said eastern

boundary to the southern boundary of Jackson Ward thence generally eastwards following said southern boundary to the point of commencement.

PARK WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Throston Ward meets the eastern boundary of Elwick Parish thence generally eastwards following said southern boundary to the western boundary of Grange Ward thence southwards following said western boundary and Catcote Road to Brierton Lane thence generally westwards along said lane to the eastern boundary of Brierton Parish thence generally northwards following said eastern boundary and eastern boundaries of Dalton Piercy Parish and Elwick Parish to the point of commencement.

BRINKBURN WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Grange Ward meets the eastern boundary of Park Ward thence eastwards following said southern boundary and eastwards and southwards following the western boundary of Stranton Ward to Oxford Road thence southwestwards along said road to Heathfield Drive thence southwards along said drive to Wordsworth Avenue thence southwestwards along said avenue to Tristram Avenue thence southwards along said avenue to Waverley Terrace thence southwestwards along said terrace to Kingsley Avenue thence northwards along said avenue to Taybrooke Avenue thence southwestwards along said avenue to Swalebrooke Avenue thence northwards along said avenue to Oxford Road thence westwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Park Ward thence northwards along said eastern boundary to the point of commencement.

RIFT HOUSE WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Brinkburn Ward meets the western boundary of Stranton Ward thence southwards following said western boundary to Bellvue Way thence southwestwards along said way and

Stockton Road to Brierton Lane thence westwards along said lane to its junction with the eastern boundary of Park Ward thence northwards following said boundary to the southern boundary of Brinkburn Ward thence generally northeastwards following said southern boundary to the point of commencement.

SEATON WARD

Commencing at a point where the southern boundary of Stranton Ward meets the eastern boundary of the District thence generally southwards and westwards following the eastern and southern boundary of the District to the eastern boundary of Greatham Parish thence generally northwards following said boundary to the main Railway Line thence northeastwards along said railway to Brenda Road thence northwards along said road to the southern boundary of Stranton Ward thence generally eastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

ROSSMERE WARD

Commencing at a point where the western boundary of Seaton Ward meets the southern boundary of Rift House Ward thence southwards and southwestwards following said western boundary to the eastern boundary of Greatham Parish thence generally northwards following said eastern boundary to Stockton Road thence northeastwards along said road to Torquay Avenue thence westwards along said avenue to Catcote Road thence northwards along said road to the southern boundary of Rift House Ward thence eastwards and northeastwards following said boundary to the point of commencement.

FENS WARD

Commencing at the junction of Owton Manor Lane with the western boundary of Rossmere Ward thence generally southwards eastwards and southwestwards following said western boundary to the eastern boundary of Greatham Parish thence generally northwards, westwards and northwards following said eastern boundary and eastern boundaries of Claxton Parish and Greatham (Det) Parish

to Macrae Road thence eastwards along said road and Owton Manor Lane to the point of commencement.

OWTON WARD

Commencing at the point where the southern boundary of Park Ward meets the western boundary of Rossmere Ward thence southwards following said western boundary to the northern boundary of Fens Ward thence westwards following said northern boundary to the eastern boundary of Greatham (Det) Parish thence northwards following said boundary and eastern boundary to Brierston Parish to the southern boundary of Park Ward thence eastwards following said southern boundary to the point of commencement.

ELWICK WARD

The parishes of Brierston, Dalton Piercy, Elwick, Elwick Hall and Hart

GREATHAM WARD

The parishes of Claxton, Greatham and Newton Bewley