

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
WEST LINDSEY IN
LINCOLNSHIRE

*Report to the Secretary of State for
the Environment*

March 1997

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for West Lindsey in Lincolnshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

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Local Government Commission for England

25 March 1997

Dear Secretary of State

On 19 March 1996 the Commission commenced a periodic electoral review of the district of West Lindsey under the Local Government Act 1992. It published its draft recommendations in October 1996 and undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

The Commission has now formulated its final recommendations in the light of the consultation. It has, for the most part, confirmed its draft recommendations, although it has modified some of its initial warding proposals in the light of further evidence. This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in the area.

The Commission is therefore recommending to you that West Lindsey should be served by 37 councillors, but that there should be 25 wards, rather than 26 as at present, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries to improve electoral equality, having regard to the Commission's statutory criteria. It is recommended that the Council should continue to be elected by thirds.

Finally, I would like to thank members and officers of the District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of West Lindsey on 19 March 1996. It published its draft recommendations on electoral arrangements on 31 October 1996, after which it undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the submissions received by the Commission during consultation on its draft recommendations, and offers its final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

The Commission found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in West Lindsey because:

- **in 15 of the 26 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district;**
- **in six of these wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2001, the number of electors per councillor is likely to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 of the wards.**

The Commission's final recommendations for the District Council's electoral arrangements (Figure 1) are that:

- **West Lindsey should continue to be served by 37 councillors;**
- **there should be 25 wards, rather than 26 as at present;**
- **the ward boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to be held by thirds, with the next elections taking place in 1998.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each district councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

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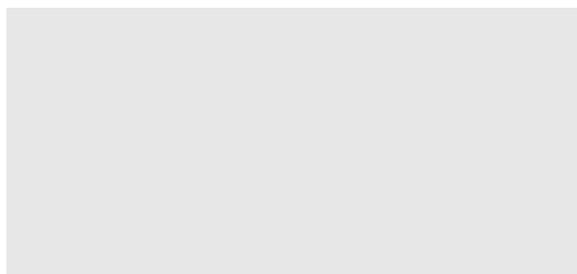


Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
12 Market Rasen	2	Market Rasen ward (part - parishes of Buslingthorpe, Legsby, Linwood, Lissington, Market Rasen, North Willingham and Sixhills); Walshcroft ward (part - parishes of Tealby and Walesby)	Map 2
13 Middle Rasen	1	Middle Rasen ward (parishes of Middle Rasen, Osgodby and Owersby); Ancholme Valley ward (part - parish of West Rasen)	
14 Nettleham	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Grange de Lings, Greetwell, Nettleham and Riseholme)	Map 2
15 Saxilby	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Broadholme, Broxholme, Burton, North Carlton, Saxilby with Ingleby and South Carlton)	Map 2
16 Scampton	1	Scampton ward (parishes of Aisthorpe, Brattleby, Cammeringham, Ingham, Scampton and Thorpe in the Fallows); Hemswell ward (part - parishes of Glentworth and Fillingham)	Map 2
17 Scotter	2	Scotter ward (parish of Scotter); Forest ward (part - parishes of East Ferry, Laughton, Northorpe, Scotton and Wildsworth); Thonock ward (part - parishes of East Stockwith and Walkerith)	Map 2
18 Stow	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Stow, Sturton by Stow and Willingham)	Map 2
19 Sudbrooke	1	Dunholme ward (part - parish of Scothern); Witham ward (part - parish of Sudbrooke)	Map 2
20 Thonock	1	Thonock ward (part - parishes of Morton and Thonock); Forest ward (part - parishes of Blyton and Pilham)	Map 2
21 Torksey	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Brampton, Fenton, Gate Burton, Hardwick, Kettlethorpe, Marton, Torksey and Newton on Trent)	Map 2
22 Waddingham and Spital	1	Ancholme Valley ward (part - parishes of Bishop Norton, Glentham, Snitterby and Waddingham); South Cliff ward (part - parishes of Caenby, Normanby-by-Spital, Owmbly, Saxby and West Firsby)	Map 2

continued overleaf

*Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
23 Welton	2	South Cliff ward (part - parishes of Cold Hanworth, Faldingworth, Hackthorn and Spridlington); Welton ward (parish of Welton); Ancholme Valley ward (part - parish of Toft Newton)	Map 2
24 Wold View	1	Wold View ward (part - parishes of Claxby, Holton-le-Moor, Nettleton, Normanby-le-Wold, Rothwell and Thoresway); Walshcroft ward (part - parishes of Kirmond-le-Mire, Stainton-le-Vale, Swinhope and Thorganby)	Map 2
25 Yarborough	1	Yarborough ward (part - parishes of Brocklesby, Keelby and Riby)	Map 2

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of West Lindsey in Lincolnshire.

2 The Commission has now reviewed the districts in Lincolnshire as part of its programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England. This is the Commission's first review of the electoral arrangements of West Lindsey. The last such review was undertaken by the Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1977 (Report No. 268). The electoral arrangements of Lincolnshire County Council were last reviewed in September 1980 (Report No. 396). It is intended that a review of the County Council electoral arrangements will follow in due course.

3 In undertaking these reviews, the Commission is required to have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992:
 - (a) to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) to secure effective and convenient local government.
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 The Commission has also had regard to its own *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996 and supplemented in September 1996). This sets out its approach to the reviews.

5 The review of West Lindsey was in four stages (Figure 2).

6 Stage One commenced on 19 March 1996. The Commission wrote to West Lindsey District Council inviting it to make proposals for its future electoral arrangements. Copies of that letter were sent to Lincolnshire County Council, the other borough and district councils in Lincolnshire, the Lincolnshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. The Commission also placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review.

7 At Stage Two the Commission considered all the representations received during Stage One and formulated its draft recommendations. The Commission also held a public meeting in Gainsborough, in order to seek further information from interested parties. An independent Assessor, Mr John White, was appointed to chair the meeting, which was held at the Weston Rooms, Hickman Street, Gainsborough on 31 July 1996. Mr White reported his findings to the Commission, which took account of them during its deliberations over the West Lindsey review. A note of the public meeting's proceedings is available from the Commission on request.

8 Stage Three began on 31 October 1996 with the publication of the Commission's report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for West Lindsey in Lincolnshire*. Copies were sent to all those to whom the Commission wrote at the start of the review as well

Figure 2:
Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission's analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State for the Environment

as those who had written to the Commission during Stage One, inviting comments on the Commission's preliminary conclusions. Again, the Commission placed a public notice in local newspapers, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the report more widely.

⁹ Finally, during Stage Four, the Commission reconsidered these draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 West Lindsey district covers an area of over 100,000 hectares and is predominantly rural in character. Over one-third of the population lives in the market towns of Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor, although a number of villages on its boundaries have seen residential development in recent years. Scotter, to the north of the district, has expanded by becoming a commuter area for Scunthorpe, while Cherry Willingham, Greetwell and Nettleham, which adjoin Lincoln in the south of the district, have witnessed similar development pressures. In contrast, the population of Gainsborough, the inland port and industrial centre of the district, has increased less than that of the rural area.

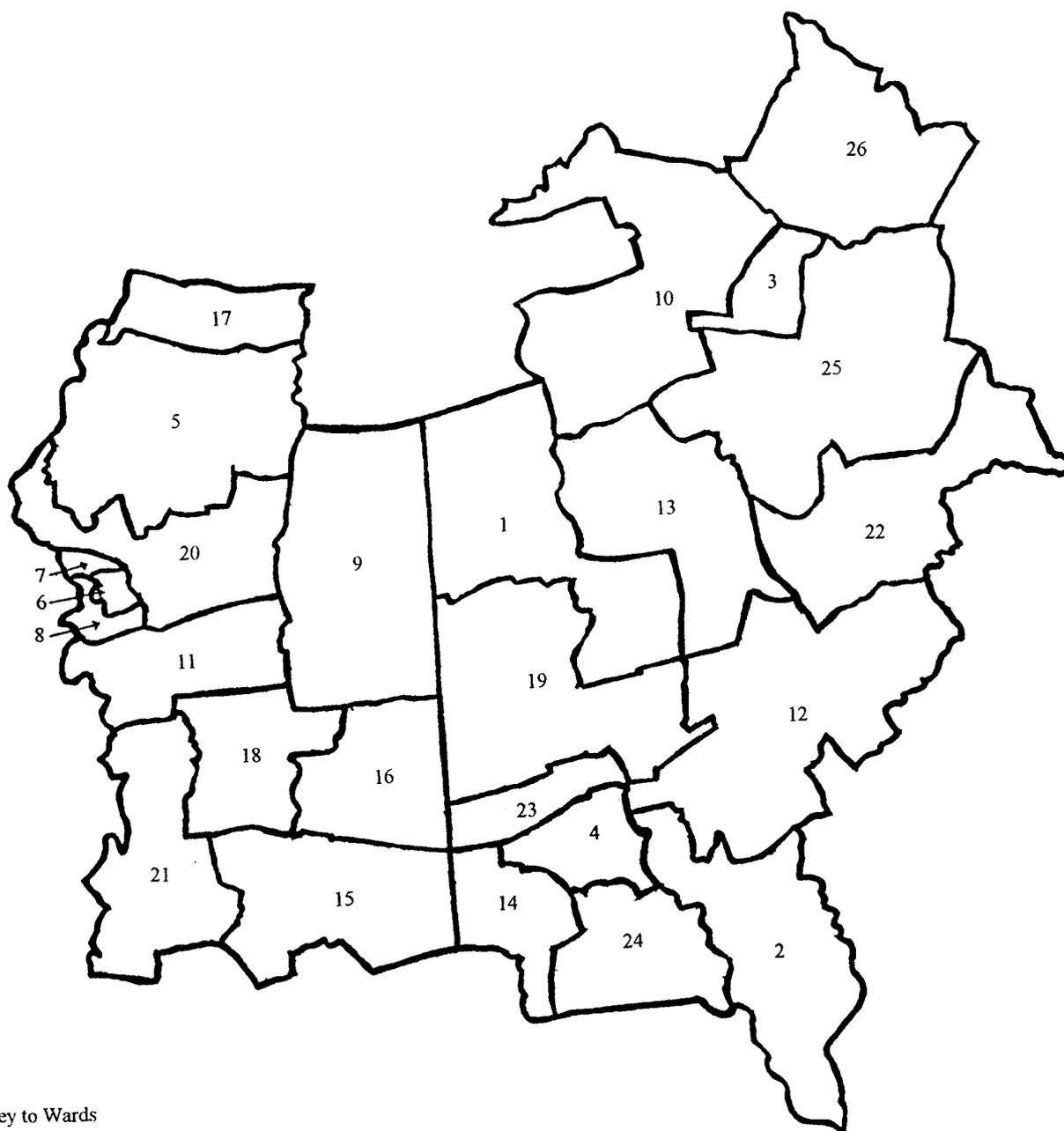
11 The District Council has 37 councillors elected from 26 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Nineteen wards are represented by a single councillor, three wards are represented by two councillors, and four wards are represented by three councillors. The current electoral cycle in West Lindsey is by thirds, with the next district council elections taking place in May 1998. The current electorate of the district is 61,692 (February 1996) and each councillor represents an average of 1,667 electors. The District Council forecasts that the electorate will increase by just under 5 per cent to 64,635 by the year 2001, which would change the average number of electors per councillor to 1,747 (Figure 3).

12 In order to compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the Commission calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (councillor:elector ratio) varies from the average for the area in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

13 Since the last electoral review by the LGBC in 1977, changes in population and electorate have not been evenly spread across the district. As a result, the number of electors per councillor varies significantly from the average in many wards. In particular, there are currently 15 wards which have electoral variances in excess of 10 per cent, and six

wards with electoral variances in excess of 20 per cent. Currently, Welton ward has 45 per cent more electors per councillor than the average, so that the councillor for this ward represents 2,423 electors compared to the average of 1,667.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in West Lindsey



Key to Wards

1	Ancholme Valley	8	Gainsborough South-West	15	Saxilby	22	Walshcroft
2	Bardney	9	Hemswell	16	Scampton	23	Welton
3	Caistor	10	Kelsey	17	Scotter	24	Witham
4	Dunholme	11	Lea	18	Stow	25	Wold View

Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	1996			2001 (Projected)		
		Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ancholme Valley	1	1,473	1,473	-12	1,508	1,508	-14
2 Bardney	1	1,728	1,728	4	1,761	1,761	1
3 Caistor	1	2,105	2,105	26	2,291	2,291	31
4 Dunholme	1	1,879	1,879	13	2,076	2,076	19
5 Forest	1	1,843	1,843	11	1,897	1,897	9
6 Gainsborough East	3	4,753	1,584	-5	4,873	1,624	-7
7 Gainsborough North	3	4,771	1,590	-5	5,105	1,702	-3
8 Gainsborough South-West	3	3,946	1,315	-21	4,009	1,336	-24
9 Hemswell	1	1,490	1,490	-11	1,604	1,604	-8
10 Kelsey	1	1,854	1,854	11	1,985	1,985	14
11 Lea	1	1,750	1,750	5	1,913	1,913	10
12 Market Rasen	2	3,434	1,717	3	3,530	1,765	1
13 Middle Rasen	1	1,793	1,793	8	1,820	1,820	4
14 Nettleham	2	3,281	1,641	-2	3,600	1,800	3
15 Saxilby	2	2,969	1,485	-11	3,099	1,550	-11
16 Scampton	1	1,418	1,418	-15	1,387	1,387	-21
17 Scotter	1	2,152	2,152	29	2,236	2,236	28
18 Stow	1	1,613	1,613	-3	1,677	1,677	-4
19 South Cliff	1	1,230	1,230	-26	1,290	1,290	-26
20 Thonock	1	1,673	1,673	0	1,720	1,720	-2
21 Torksey	1	1,816	1,816	9	1,946	1,946	11
22 Walshcroft	1	1,329	1,329	-20	1,354	1,354	-22
23 Welton	1	2,423	2,423	45	2,709	2,709	55

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	1996				2001 (Projected)		
	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24 Witham	3	5,365	1,788	7	5,610	1,870	7
25 Wold View	1	1,341	1,341	-20	1,380	1,380	-21
26 Yarborough	1	2,263	2,263	36	2,255	2,255	29
Totals	37	61,692	—	—	64,635	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,667	—	—	1,747	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on West Lindsey District Council's submission.

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Welton ward are relatively under-represented by 45 per cent, while electors in South Cliff ward are relatively over-represented by 26 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One, the Commission received a submission from West Lindsey District Council on electoral arrangements in the district. It also received seven submissions from parish councils, local organisations and residents. In the light of these representations, the Commission formulated its preliminary conclusions, which were set out in its report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for West Lindsey in Lincolnshire*. The Commission proposed that West Lindsey should continue to be served by 37 councillors, but that there should be 24 wards rather than 26 as at present. It also proposed that:

- (a) Gainsborough town should be represented by eight district councillors instead of nine; it should continue to have three wards, but the boundaries of each ward should be modified;
- (b) the pattern of parishes constituting the wards of Bardney, Caistor, Dunholme, Kelsey, Market Rasen, Scampton, Scotter and Welton should be reconfigured;
- (c) the existing wards of Forest, Kelsey, Middle Rasen, South Cliff, Walshcroft, Witham and Wold View should be abolished;
- (d) there should be no change to the existing arrangements for the wards of Lea, Nettleham, Saxilby and Torksey;
- (e) the majority of the existing wards of Thonock and Hemswell should be combined to form a new two-member ward of Thonock and Hemswell;
- (f) the existing ward of Ancholme Valley should be modified and be renamed Waddingham.

15 The Commission's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 21 of the 24 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This would remain the case by 2001.

16 The Commission's draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

Draft Recommendation

West Lindsey District Council should comprise 37 councillors, serving 24 wards. The Council should continue to be elected by thirds.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the Commission's report, 56 submissions were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission.

West Lindsey District Council

18 The District Council supported the Commission's recommendations for no change to the current council size of 37, for the continuation of elections by thirds and for an increase in the number of parish councillors for Keelby Parish Council from nine to 11. However, it considered that while the Commission's draft recommendations provided a greater level of electoral equality across the district, this was achieved by sacrificing community identity and historical links in certain areas, such as the loss of several historic ward names. The Council reiterated its strong preference for its original submission to the Commission, stating that the sparsely populated nature of the district meant that the Commission's proposals "would result in tremendous upheaval for relatively small shifts of people".

19 In addition to these general comments, the Council expressed "serious concern" about the Commission's proposed wards of Thonock and Hemswell, Sudbrooke, Welton, Fiskerton, Rasen and Caistor, and its proposal to reduce the number of councillors for Gainsborough South-West ward. In relation to the proposed ward of Thonock and Hemswell, the Council contended there was no community affinity between the parishes at its eastern and western edges. While the Council preferred no change, it suggested that, if some change were necessary, an alternative would be to split the ward in two, as proposed by Councillor Dredge. In relation to the proposed Sudbrooke ward, the Council argued that the two parishes that would constitute the proposed ward (Sudbrooke and Scothern) do not have any significant community links, and that Scothern's ties are with the parish of Dunholme to the north, in which ward it currently lies.

20 With regard to the proposed Welton and Caistor wards, it argued that both Welton and Caistor are market towns, and that the larger

populations and urban outlook of these towns may come to dominate the much smaller and completely rural parishes that would be contained in the respective proposed wards. Additionally, the Council was concerned over the break up of the Yarborough ward, stating that its constituent parts had close community ties dating back several centuries. Similar factors influenced the Council's opposition to the proposed Rasen ward, particularly the detachment of the parishes of Owersby and Osgodby.

21 In relation to the proposed Fiskerton ward, the Council argued that the parishes that would constitute this ward have little in common with each other, and the many links that exist between parishes in the existing wards of Bardney and Witham would be broken as some parishes would be placed in neighbouring wards. Additionally, the Council considered the proposed reduction of one councillor for Gainsborough South-West ward to be detrimental to an area that is in the process of regeneration.

Lincolnshire County Council

22 The County Council commented "on areas where the draft recommendations differ from the original district council submission ... based on the premise that County Council, in general terms and notwithstanding the issue of electoral equality, is minded to support the district council where the Council considers that such arrangements can be justified on community identity/interest grounds".

23 In relation to the Commission's recommendations for West Lindsey, the County Council stated that it was minded to support West Lindsey District Council on the basis that "it is best placed to reflect community identity and the wishes of the local electorate".

The Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils

24 The Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils commented on the reviews of the Lincolnshire districts as a whole. It considered that the views of parishes should be paramount when evaluating any

proposal for change to electoral arrangements, as they are the foundation for the entire electoral system. The Association expressed concern over one large village being merged with one or more much smaller villages within the same district council ward, as it considered that it was almost inevitable that the concerns of the larger community would dominate. More specifically, in relation to West Lindsey, it expressed concern over the Commission's recommendations for Gainsborough and Thonock and Hemswell, and advised that the Commission should have regard to road communications as well as numbers of electors when considering ward boundaries.

Gainsborough Constituency Conservative Association

25 The Gainsborough Constituency Conservative Association supported the majority of the Commission's draft recommendations. However, it considered that its original proposal for the parishes of Welton and Dunholme to form a two-member ward would still be more appropriate than the Commission's draft recommendations in that area. This proposal would necessitate alterations to the surrounding wards, in particular the Commission's proposed wards of Rasen, Market Rasen and Waddingham. The Association also proposed that the ward of Caistor should include the name of Yarborough, in order to reflect historic links in the area.

Lincolnshire Liberal Democrats

26 The Lincolnshire Liberal Democrats opposed the Commission's proposal to reduce the number of councillors representing Gainsborough South-West ward from three to two. The Liberal Democrats considered that, notwithstanding projections of minimal growth for the ward, there was a movement of people into the area. Additionally, it stated that this proposal may "send the wrong message to any potential investors" at a time when development and regeneration was planned for the area.

West Lindsey and District Liberal Democrats

27 The West Lindsey and District Liberal Democrats were concerned that the Commission may have ignored long-standing community links in order to achieve improved electoral equality. It expressed the view that a review of parish boundaries would be a better starting point from

which to embark on an electoral review of the district, and argued that the Commission's draft recommendations, if implemented, would result in lower turnout at local elections, as electors would feel "disconnected from their representative".

Gainsborough Representation Group

28 The Gainsborough Representation Group supported the Commission's recommendations for those wards to the east of the A15, and the recommendation that the council size should remain at 37. However, it opposed the proposal to reduce the number of councillors for Gainsborough South-West ward from three to two, and stated "We are convinced that this would have very far-reaching deleterious effects in terms of the urban/rural balance... and loss of civic momentum at a time of significant hoped-for community development in Gainsborough". It reiterated its view that the parishes of Morton and Lea, immediately to the north and south of the town, should be included within the modified district wards of the town. It also proposed different arrangements for the wards of Thonock, Hemswell, Lea, Scampton, Torksey, Saxilby and Stow, and advocated a change from the present system of elections by thirds to four-yearly whole-council elections.

Parish and Town Councils

29 Representations were received from 40 parish and town councils during the Stage Three consultation period, commenting on the majority of the Commission's draft recommendations. In the north-east of the district, both Claxby and Nettleton parish councils accepted the proposed Nettleton ward, although both councils suggested that the current ward name of Wold View should be retained, in order to reflect the topography and historical links of the area. Brocklesby, Great Limber and Keelby parish councils opposed the Commission's proposal to abolish the current Yarborough ward and place them within a revised Caistor ward, arguing that these parishes have strong historical links with each other, yet none with the other parishes in the proposed ward. Swallow Parish Council also opposed this draft recommendation, stating a preference to remain within the existing Wold View ward, arguing that the proposed ward would become orientated towards the town of Caistor. Caistor Town Council however, supported the Commission's recommendation.

30 In the north of the district, Waddingham and Snitterby parish councils both supported the Commission's proposal for a new Waddingham ward. However, Normanby-by-Spital Parish Council objected, as it considered it would be difficult for the district councillor to attend the meetings of all the parishes within the ward. Caenby Parish Meeting and Glentham Parish Council proposed that Glentham parish be extended to include Caenby.

31 While Middle Rasen Parish Council regarded the Commission's proposed Rasen ward as "quite sensible", Osgodby Parish Council and West Rasen Parish Meeting both objected. In particular, the former objected to its detachment from its neighbour, Owersby, with which it stated it had been closely allied for over 450 years. West Rasen Parish Meeting supported the retention of the current Ancholme Valley ward, stating that its only similarity with Middle Rasen lay in its name.

32 In the east of the district, North Willingham Parish Meeting supported the Commission's recommendation for a modified Market Rasen ward, stating that it would strengthen community identity and ties. Market Rasen Town Council accepted the recommendation, but expressed concern that the town may be under-represented in the new ward. Similarly, Tealby Parish Council accepted the proposal, but suggested that the ward should be known as Walshcroft.

33 Faldingworth, Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth, Spridlington and Welton parish councils all opposed the Commission's recommendation for a reconfigured Welton ward, containing these parishes in addition to Toft Newton parish. Faldingworth and Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth parish councils expressed a preference to be placed in the Commission's proposed Dunholme and Waddingham wards respectively, stating that they believed that such arrangements would more properly reflect the pattern of community ties in their respective areas. Both Welton and Spridlington parish councils supported no change to warding arrangements in their areas, with both expressing the fear that the councillors for the ward would struggle to represent efficiently such a large and varied ward. Similarly, both Dunholme and Snarford parish councils preferred no change to their existing arrangements.

34 In the south of the district, Fiskerton Parish Council objected to the Commission's recommendation for a new ward of Fiskerton. It argued that the parish had no day-to-day contact with several of the other parishes in the proposed

ward, and that in order to retain community ties the existing Witham ward should be retained. The two parish councils that would constitute the Commission's proposed Cherry Willingham ward, Cherry Willingham and Reepham, both accepted the draft recommendation. However, Reepham Parish Council proposed that the ward be known as Reepham, as it argued the parish is an older and more established area than its neighbour. Langworth Parish Council requested that the parishes of Newball and Stainton-by-Langworth should be placed in the Bardney ward, so that all the parishes within the Langworth group could be contained within the same ward. Sudbrooke Parish Council supported the Commission's recommendation for a new Sudbrooke ward, while Scothern Parish Council strongly supported its retention within the existing Dunholme ward. Nettleham Parish Council concurred with the Commission's recommendation for an unchanged Nettleham ward.

35 In the west of the district, Harpswell Parish Meeting opposed the Commission's suggested Thonock and Hemswell ward, and argued that the nature of the parishes in the eastern half of the ward, such as Hemswell and Harpswell, differed considerably from the Trentside villages such as East Stockwith and Walkerith. Together with the parish councils of Hemswell and Willoughton, it expressed a preference for two new wards based upon Councillor Dredge's proposal (outlined below). Glentworth, Northorpe, Morton, Heapham and Aisthorpe parish councils all expressed support for no change to their respective warding arrangements. Gainsborough Town Council declared itself "unconvinced on the need for change", and stated that, in its view, the loss of one district councillor for Gainsborough South-West ward would be contrary to the needs of the area.

Other Representations

36 Councillor Dredge, who represents Hemswell ward on the District Council, opposed the Commission's recommendation for a new Thonock and Hemswell ward. He echoed the District Council view that the parishes at the eastern and western edges of the proposed ward had little affinity with each other, and argued that the new ward would be large, at some 14 miles across. He proposed a new arrangement for the area, which would involve splitting the proposed ward into two new wards, and lead to minor alterations to neighbouring wards. He argued that the proposal would better reflect the community identities of

the areas and, at the same time, would maintain a good level of electoral equality.

³⁷ The Commission received a further eight submissions in relation to this review. Councillor Heathorn, the district councillor for Ancholme Valley ward, stated that the Commission's proposed Waddingham ward had merits, but proposed that it should be named Spital. The respective district councillors for the existing Dunholme and South Cliff wards (Councillors Taylor and Tilney-Bassett) both expressed their opposition to the draft recommendations for their wards. Similarly, a resident opposed the proposal to separate the parish of Owersby from Osgodby for district council warding purposes. Councillor Whaley, the district councillor for Lea ward, supported the Commission's recommendations for no change to the ward. Councillor Lomas, who represents the Gainsborough South-West county electoral division, opposed the Commission's recommendation to reduce the number of district councillors representing the ward from three to two. Finally, the Earl of Yarborough opposed the abolition of Yarborough ward, stating that the existing ward had always operated effectively.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

38 As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for West Lindsey district was to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria and to Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

39 However, the Commission's function is not merely arithmetical, for three reasons. First, its recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. Second, it must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, the Commission has had to consider the desirability of servicing effective and convenient local government, and reflecting the interests and identities of local communities.

40 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. In conducting its electoral reviews, the Commission's predecessor, the LGBC, considered that variations from the average number of electors per councillor for an authority as a whole should be kept to the absolute minimum; a variation of up to plus or minus 10 per cent in a particular ward may be regarded as being "acceptable", but variations in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent were generally accepted only in very exceptional circumstances.

41 The Commission's view was that the LGBC's approach to this issue had merit insofar as it combined a clearly defined tolerance threshold with the degree of flexibility necessary to achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality across a local authority's area. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to adopt this approach for the purposes of its reviews.

42 In its March 1996 *Guidance*, the Commission expressed the view that "proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should therefore be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances ... and will have to be justified in full." However, as the Commission emphasised in its September 1996 supplement to the *Guidance*: "While the Commission accepts that absolute equality of representation is likely to be unattainable, it considers that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to a minimum, such equality should be the starting point in any electoral review".

Electorate Projections

43 West Lindsey District Council submitted electorate forecasts which projected an increase of just under 5 per cent in the electorate of the district between 1996 and 2001, from 61,692 to 64,635. The District Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period. Reasonable estimates have been made of the changes in electorate that will arise and advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of ward boundary changes has been obtained.

44 At Stage Three, the County Council broadly supported the Council's five-year electorate projections. The Commission accepts that this is an inexact science, and having given consideration to the Council's projections, is content that they represent the best estimate that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

45 The Commission indicated in its March 1996 *Guidance* that it would normally expect the number of councillors serving a district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

46 West Lindsey District Council is at present served by 37 councillors. The Council did not propose any change in council size during Stage One of the review. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. The Commission concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be served by a council of 37 members. At Stage Three, the Commission received support for this council size from the District Council and the Gainsborough Representation Group, and has therefore decided to confirm its draft recommendation for a council size of 37.

Electoral Arrangements

47 Having considered all representations received during both Stages One and Three of the review, the Commission has further considered its draft recommendations. The following areas are covered in turn:

- (a) Caistor, Kelsey, Middle Rasen, Wold View and Yarborough wards;
- (b) Market Rasen and Walshcroft wards;
- (c) Bardney and Witham wards;
- (d) Nettleham ward;
- (e) Dunholme, South Cliff and Welton wards;
- (f) Ancholme Valley ward;
- (g) Gainsborough East, Gainsborough North and Gainsborough South-West wards;
- (h) Forest, Hemswell, Scotter and Thonock wards;
- (i) Lea, Saxilby, Scampton, Stow and Torksey wards.

Caistor, Kelsey, Middle Rasen, Wold View and Yarborough

48 Overall the current electoral arrangements in the north-east of the district do not provide a good level of electoral equality. The number of electors per councillor in Caistor and Yarborough wards is 26 per cent and 36 per cent above the district

average respectively; electoral equality is rather better in Kelsey and Middle Rasen wards where the number of electors per councillor is 11 per cent and 8 per cent above the average respectively.

49 In order to resolve these imbalances, the Commission proposed significant changes to the existing wards (Figure 4). It proposed that Caistor ward should comprise the town itself, combined with parts of the current Wold View, Kelsey and Yarborough wards. A modified Kelsey ward would be formed, combining part of the existing ward with Holton-le-Moor and Owersby parishes from Middle Rasen and Wold View wards. The Commission also proposed that a new Nettleton ward be formed from parts of the current Wold View and Walshcroft wards, while the proposed Rasen ward should comprise the parishes of West Rasen, Middle Rasen and Osgodby. The Commission also recommended that Yarborough ward should be abolished, Keelby parish given its own separate ward, and that the remainder of Yarborough ward form part of a modified Caistor ward.

50 The District Council expressed concern regarding the proposed Rasen ward and, in particular, it argued that the parishes of Osgodby and Owersby had many historical links which might be broken were they to be placed in separate wards. This view was supported by Osgodby Parish Council, which objected to its separation from Owersby. Submissions were also received from Middle Rasen Parish Council, which supported the Commission's recommendation, and from West Rasen Parish Meeting, which opposed the recommendation on the basis that the parish would have little in common with the other parishes in the proposed Rasen ward.

51 The Commission is not persuaded by West Rasen Parish Meeting's argument of limited community ties with the other parishes in the proposed Rasen ward, as it considers that such an argument could equally apply to its current inclusion in the Ancholme Valley ward. There is, for instance, little shared community identity between the parishes in the south-eastern corner of the ward, Rasen and Toft Newton, and those parishes at the northern end. However, it has given further consideration to whether the parishes of Osgodby and Owersby should be placed in separate wards. By placing Owersby in the proposed Rasen ward (with Osgodby), the historical community ties between the two parishes would be protected, and the local preferences of both the parish and district councils would be respected. Although this would mean that the

number of electors per councillor in Rasen ward would be 11 per cent above the district average, this would fall to 8 per cent by 2001. The Commission is persuaded that such a proposal would better reflect community ties while securing adequate electoral equality. It has therefore decided to modify its draft recommendation accordingly, and to confirm it as final. Additionally, the Commission has concluded that due to the similarity of the proposed ward to the existing ward, the existing ward name of Middle Rasen should be retained. The proposed ward would comprise the parishes of Middle Rasen, Osgodby, Owersby and West Rasen.

52 At Stage Three, the District Council restated its preference for no change to Kelsey ward, while the Gainsborough Representation Group supported the Commission's recommendation. Given the Commission's recommendation that the parishes of Owersby and Osgodby should remain within the same district ward, it considers that there now exists an opportunity to retain the existing arrangements for this area. The six parishes that currently constitute Kelsey ward share many common characteristics and ties, and the District Council supported its retention. This would mean that the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent more than average (14 per cent more by 2001). On balance, the Commission has decided to withdraw its draft recommendation, and to recommend to the Secretary of State no change to Kelsey ward.

53 At Stage Three, nine submissions were received in relation to the proposed Caistor and Keelby wards. The Gainsborough Representation Group and the Gainsborough Conservative Association supported the proposed wards, and while Caistor Town Council supported the proposed Caistor ward, it would prefer that the ward be renamed Yarborough with Caistor. However, the District Council and four parish councils opposed the Commission's recommendations. Brocklesby, Great Limber and Keelby parish councils argued that strong historical links between these parishes justified retaining the existing Yarborough ward, while Swallow Parish Council wished to remain within the existing Wold View ward. In addition, the Earl of Yarborough supported no change to the existing Yarborough ward.

54 In the light of the representations received during Stage Three of the review, the Commission has considered what alternative arrangements are available to it. While it is clear that there is strong local support for the retention of the current Yarborough ward, and some opposition to being merged with the town of Caistor, the Commission

considers that the significant electoral imbalances that would continue to exist present difficulties in justifying the retention of the existing arrangements.

55 In order to maintain current ties, one alternative would be to merge the parish of Keelby with the Commission's proposed ward of Caistor less those parishes which it has decided should be retained within the existing Kelsey ward. However, such an option would create a geographically large ward. It would also be the only ward within the rural part of the district (outside Gainsborough) to be represented by three councillors.

56 The Commission notes the strong community ties between the parishes in Yarborough ward. It also notes that communication links between the parishes of Riby and Brocklesby and the town of Caistor are poor, and may militate against the provision of effective representation by the respective district councillors.

57 The Commission has therefore decided to modify its draft recommendations. It recommends two wards - Caistor ward, which should comprise the parishes of Caistor, Cabourne, Swallow and Great Limber, and Yarborough ward, which should comprise the parishes of Keelby, Brocklesby and Riby. While Caistor and Yarborough wards would contain 23 per cent fewer and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, the Commission considers, in this instance, that such an electoral imbalance is unavoidable if regard is to be had to community ties in the area.

58 At Stage Three, the District Council, Swallow Parish Council and the Gainsborough Representation Group supported the retention of the existing ward of Wold View, while Claxby and Nettleton parish councils accepted the Commission's proposal for a new Nettleton ward, with the proviso that it retained the name of Wold View.

59 The Commission remains of the view that the parishes within this proposed ward are similar in nature, being largely rural and characterised by similar geography. As a result of the Commission's final recommendations for neighbouring wards, however, it proposes that the parish of Holton le Moor should also form part of Wold View ward, along with several of its neighbouring parishes. This modification would result in the proposed ward containing only 7 per cent more electors per councillor than average, falling to 5 per cent by 2001. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to

Figure 4:
Configuration of parishes in the present wards of Caistor, Kelsey, Middle Rasen, Wold View and Yarborough

Present Configuration		Draft Recommendations		Final Recommendations	
Ward and parishes	Electoral variance	Ward and parishes	Electoral variance	Ward and parishes	Electoral variance
Caistor Caistor	26	Caistor Bigby Brocklesby Cabourne Caistor Grasby Great Limber Riby Searby-cum-Owmbly Somerby Swallow	5	Caistor Cabourne Caistor Great Limber Swallow	-23
Yarborough Brocklesby Great Limber Keelby Riby	36	Keelby Keelby	9	Yarborough Brocklesby Keelby Riby	22
Kelsey Bigby Grasby North Kelsey Searby-cum-Owmbly Somerby South Kelsey	11	Kelsey Holton-le-Moor North Kelsey Owersby South Kelsey	-7	Kelsey Bigby Grasby North Kelsey Searby-cum-Owmbly Somerby South Kelsey	11
Middle Rasen Middle Rasen Osgodby Owersby	8	Rasen Middle Rasen Osgodby West Rasen	-4	Middle Rasen Middle Rasen Osgodby Owersby West Rasen	11
Wold View Cabourne Claxby Holton-le-Moor Nettleton Normanby-le-Wold Rothwell Swallow Thoresby	-20	Nettleton Claxby Kirmond-le-Mire Nettleton Normanby-le-Wold Rothwell Stainton-le-Vale Swinhope Thoresway Thorganby	-2	Wold View Claxby Holton-le-Moor Kirmond-le-Mire Nettleton Normanby-le-Wold Rothwell Stainton-le-Vale Swinhope Thoresway Thorganby	7

Note: Current and proposed ward names are indicated in bold type at the top of each row.

confirm its draft recommendation for Nettleton, subject to this modification, and retaining the name of Wold View, as proposed by both Claxby and Nettleton Parish Councils.

60 Figure 4 illustrates the pattern of parishes constituting the existing wards of Caistor, Yarborough, Kelsey, Middle Rasen and Wold View, together with the Commission's draft and final recommendations.

Market Rasen and Walshcroft

61 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed that the existing Walshcroft ward be abolished, and divided between a new Nettleton ward and a modified Market Rasen ward. During Stage Three, the Gainsborough Representation Group, North Willingham Parish Meeting, Tealby Parish Council and Market Rasen Town Council supported the Commission's recommendation for a revised Market Rasen ward, although the Town Council also stated that it feared the town would be under-represented. Additionally, Tealby Parish Council proposed that the current ward name of Walshcroft be retained. The District Council reiterated its preference for no change to the existing Market Rasen ward, while proposing a minor boundary modification between the existing Walshcroft and Wold View wards.

62 The parishes surrounding Market Rasen have many community links, both with each other and with the town, which acts as a focus for the surrounding area. The proposed ward would contain some 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, but the Commission notes that by 2001 this is expected to improve to 8 per cent. It also recognises the similarities in the character and identities of the constituent parishes and notes the support for the proposal expressed by three of the parish councils. It has therefore decided to confirm this proposal as its final recommendation for the area.

Bardney and Witham

63 At draft recommendation stage, the Commission proposed a revised Bardney ward, and the division of the existing Witham ward into the two new wards of Fiskerton (comprising the parishes of Barlings, Bullington, Fiskerton, Fulnetby, Goltho, Holton-cum-Beckerling, Newhall, Rand and Stainton-by-Langworth) and Cherry Willingham (comprising the parishes of Cherry Willingham and Reepham).

64 At Stage Three, the District Council resubmitted its proposal for the retention of the two existing wards of Bardney and Witham, with slightly modified boundaries. In addition, Fiskerton Parish Council opposed the recommended Fiskerton ward, preferring the retention of the existing Witham ward. However, the Gainsborough Representation Group supported the Commission's recommendations. The parish councils of Cherry Willingham and Reepham both supported the recommendation that these two parishes should form a new district ward, although Reepham Parish Council suggested that the ward be known as Reepham.

65 Langworth Group Parish Council proposed that all the parishes in the group (Stainton-by-Langworth, Newhall and Barlings) should be included in the existing Witham ward. Although the Commission recommended a different arrangement for this area than that currently in place, its proposed ward of Fiskerton would contain all three parishes in the Langworth group.

66 Although there is not a substantial level of electoral inequality in the existing wards of Bardney and Witham, modifications elsewhere in the district (in particular to the existing wards of Market Rasen, South Cliff, Welton and Dunholme) mean that changes to these wards are required if a good level of electoral equality is to be maintained. While the Commission acknowledges that the community ties between parishes at either end of the proposed Fiskerton ward are limited, given the Commission's final recommendations for the surrounding areas, the available options that would both reflect community ties and achieve a good level of electoral equality are restricted. In these circumstances, the Commission has concluded that its draft recommendation for Fiskerton ward continues to offer the best solution for this area. Consequently, it confirms its draft recommendation as final. The number of electors per councillor in the ward would initially be 12 per cent below the district average, and is projected to become 14 per cent below average by 2001.

67 In relation to the proposed Cherry Willingham ward, the Commission notes the degree of local support for this proposal, and has decided to confirm its draft recommendation. This proposed ward would contain two parishes which are similar in nature, covering a compact area and with many of their everyday links lying to the south with the city of Lincoln. The ward would contain only 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average and 6 per cent fewer by 2001. The Commission confirms its recommendation that the name of the proposed ward should be Cherry

Willingham, which is the name of the larger of the two constituent parishes.

Nettleham

68 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed no change to the existing Nettleham ward, thus retaining the community ties evident in the area. At Stage Three, Nettleham Parish Council, the District Council and the Gainsborough Representation Group supported no change to the existing ward. Given this support, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations as final. The ward would contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, and 3 per cent more than average by 2001.

Dunholme, South Cliff and Welton

69 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed a reconfiguration of the wards in this part of the district. It proposed that Dunholme parish be merged with Snelland, Wickenby, Friesthorpe and Snarford parishes in a revised Dunholme ward, and that Scothern parish be merged with Sudbrooke parish in a new Sudbrooke ward. Welton ward would be expanded to include the parishes of Cold Hanworth, Faldingworth, Spridlington, Toft Newton and Hackthorn from the current South Cliff ward, which would be abolished.

70 The parish councils of Dunholme and Scothern, which constitute the existing Dunholme ward, both expressed their opposition to these proposals, stating that their community ties lie with each other, rather than surrounding parishes. The District Council also expressed concern over the draft recommendation, stating that the existing ward was more cohesive than the Commission's proposal, while Welton Parish Council stated that the present arrangements worked satisfactorily and that there should therefore be no change. Both Spridlington and Snarford parish councils supported no change to the existing South Cliff ward, while Hackthorn and Cold Hanworth Parish Council strongly opposed its inclusion in the new Welton ward, arguing that it would have more in common with the proposed Waddingham ward. Similarly, Faldingworth Parish Council opposed the Commission's proposal that it should form part of the new Welton ward, on the grounds that there is no affinity of interest between its constituent parishes and that it would be better served by being included in the proposed Dunholme ward.

However, Sudbrooke Parish Council expressed its support for the draft recommendation that the parish should form a new single-member ward with Scothern parish. The Gainsborough Representation Group also supported the proposed re-warding in this area.

71 At Stage Three, the Gainsborough Constituency Conservative Association proposed an alternative warding for this area. It suggested a new Buslingthorpe ward combining most of the current South Cliff ward with parts of the existing wards of Ancholme Valley and Market Rasen. Under this proposal, the majority of the current Ancholme Valley ward would also be retained. In addition, it proposed that the parishes of Welton and Dunholme should be merged to form a new Welton ward.

72 The Commission acknowledges that certain of the parishes within its proposed Welton ward appear to have stronger community ties with other parishes elsewhere, but notes that its proposal would keep together several parishes from the existing South Cliff ward. While the Commission recognises that there is some support for retaining current arrangements, it has concluded that the advantages are clearly outweighed by the disadvantages that would arise from continuing high levels of electoral imbalance. At present, the councillors for Welton and Dunholme wards represent 45 per cent and 13 per cent more electors than the district average respectively, while the councillor for South Cliff ward represents 26 per cent fewer electors than average. The Commission also notes that there is some support for its proposed Scothern ward. It is therefore not persuaded that the retention of current arrangements for the wards of Dunholme, Welton and South Cliff would best meet the need for electoral equality having regard to the statutory criteria.

73 The Commission acknowledges that the proposals put forward by the Conservative Association for a new ward of Buslingthorpe may reflect certain community ties. However, such a ward would be one of the largest in the district, containing a total of thirteen parishes, and may prove difficult to represent effectively. Furthermore, the level of electoral equality in the reduced Waddingham ward would suffer if these proposals were adopted.

74 In the light of these factors, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Welton ward would be only 1 per cent

fewer than the district average, while Dunholme ward would have 7 per cent fewer and Sudbrooke ward 9 per cent more than average.

Ancholme Valley

75 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed a new ward of Waddingham, comprising the majority of the existing Ancholme Valley ward (the parishes of Bishop Norton, Glenthams, Snitterby and Waddingham) and part of the existing South Cliff ward (the parishes of Caenby, Normanby by Spital, Owmbly, Saxby and West Firsby). The Commission considered the parishes, all located on the Lincolnshire Heath, to be well linked and similar in character.

76 At Stage Three, the draft recommendations for this area gained the support of Waddingham and Snitterby parish councils and the Gainsborough Representation Group. Conversely, Normanby by Spital Parish Council preferred the existing arrangements, and expressed the concern that the proposed ward (which would contain a total of nine parishes) would prove too large for a district councillor to attend enough parish council meetings each year to keep abreast of local feelings and concerns. The District Council again expressed a preference for no change to the existing arrangements.

77 As indicated above, the Gainsborough Constituency Conservative Association suggested amendments to the Commission's proposed Waddingham ward. Although that proposal would maintain many of the existing community ties in the area, there were also parts of the Association's proposed ward where community ties may not have been reflected, particularly with regard to the parish of West Rasen, which has limited road links to other parishes in the ward.

78 In the light of these representations, the Commission reconsidered its draft recommendations. In a rural and sparsely populated area such as West Lindsey, it may be necessary to place together several geographically large parishes in order to create a viable district ward. Although the proposed Waddingham ward does indeed cover a large geographic area, the Commission has concluded there are clear and distinct ties between all the constituent parishes. Given these factors, and in the light of the support of several parish councils, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendation,

subject to one minor modification. The district councillor for the existing Ancholme Valley ward proposed renaming the Commission's proposed ward Spital or Spital-in-the-Street, in order to reflect historical factors. The Commission proposes to acknowledge this historic name, while also reflecting the largest settlement (Waddingham). It therefore recommends the ward be called Waddingham and Spital.

Gainsborough East, Gainsborough North and Gainsborough South-West

79 At Stage Three, the Commission recommended that there should be modifications to the boundaries of the three district wards in Gainsborough - Gainsborough East, Gainsborough North and Gainsborough South-West - in order better to reflect community ties in the area and to provide more identifiable boundaries. The Commission also proposed a reduction in the number of councillors for Gainsborough South-West ward from three to two. The District Council, Gainsborough Town Council, the county councillor for Gainsborough South-West and the Lincolnshire Liberal Democrats opposed the reduction in representation for the ward, stating that it was contrary to the needs of the area, and that local evidence suggests that the electorate of the ward is on the increase. The Gainsborough Representation Group submitted proposals which would involve modifications to the boundaries of all three district wards in Gainsborough, in addition to incorporating the parishes of Morton and Lea in the wards of Gainsborough North and Gainsborough South-West respectively.

80 After careful consideration of the evidence submitted to it during Stage Three, the Commission has concluded that, overall, its draft recommendations offer the best solution to the problems posed in Gainsborough. It was not persuaded that there was significant local support for the neighbouring parishes of Morton and Lea to be combined with the town of Gainsborough, and it considers that these areas continue to have separate identities.

81 In relation to Gainsborough South-West ward, although anecdotal evidence may show the population to be growing, the Commission can only have regard to the present electorate figures and forecasts for the period up to 2001. As previously indicated, these have been provided by the District Council and have been endorsed by the County Council. These figures indicate that the

electorate of Gainsborough has increased at a slower rate than the rest of the district since the last periodic electoral review, and that the South-West ward's electorate continues to grow at a slower rate than the average for the district, leading to a greater level of imbalance over time. This factor, allied to the clearly identifiable boundaries, which preserve and enhance community ties in the area and which were proposed in the Commission's draft recommendations, lead the Commission to confirm its draft recommendations for the town of Gainsborough as final. This recommendation is outlined in Map A1 at Appendix A. The number of electors per councillor would initially vary by 4 per cent above the district average in Gainsborough North and Gainsborough South-West and 4 per cent below average in Gainsborough East (6 per cent and 1 per cent more than average and 6 per cent below average in 2001).

Forest, Hemswell, Scotter and Thonock

82 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed a new two-member ward of Thonock and Hemswell, and a new two-member Scotter ward. The proposed Thonock and Hemswell ward would merge the two existing wards, with the exception of Glentworth and Fillingham parishes (which would join a modified Scampton ward, described below) and include Blyton and Pilham parishes from the current Forest ward. The proposed Scotter ward would combine the existing parish and district ward of Scotter with the remainder of the current Forest ward.

88 At Stage Three, the District Council, Harpswell Parish Meeting and Hemswell, Morton and Willoughton parish councils expressed their opposition to the proposed Thonock and Hemswell ward. All the respondents considered that the proposed ward would be geographically too large and, it was argued, that the parishes at either extremity shared little or no community identity. Councillor Dredge, who represents Hemswell ward on the District Council, suggested that the proposed ward could be divided into two new wards - Hemswell, comprising the parishes of Grayingham, Blyborough, Willoughton, Hemswell, Hemswell Cliff, Harpswell, Corringham and Springthorpe, in addition to the parish of Heapham, currently in Lea ward; and Thonock, comprising the parishes of Pilham, Blyton, Morton and Thonock. The Trentside parishes of East Stockwith and Walkerith would be transferred to the revised Scotter ward under this proposal. Councillor Dredge argued that such a merger was reasonable, as these villages have an

affinity with other villages that lie along the river. While the District Council preferred no change, it argued that this alternative proposition would be preferable to the Commission's proposals.

84 The Commission sees considerable merit in this proposal. Such a pattern of parishes, as that proposed by Councillor Dredge, would retain many of the existing community ties, while grouping together other parishes that are similar in character. It would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality in all three wards: the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent above the district average in Thonock, 1 per cent above average in Scotter and 1 per cent below in Hemswell. The Commission understands that some of the community ties of East Stockwith and Walkerith parishes may lie southwards towards Morton and Gainsborough rather than towards Scotter. However, the parishes abutting the River Trent share some affinity, and the Commission has therefore concluded that, on balance, this combination of parishes would offer the most appropriate solution in the circumstances. Consequently, it has decided to modify its draft recommendation in this area and has concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would be best served by a final recommendation for the creation of the three wards of Thonock, Hemswell and Scotter, as proposed by Councillor Dredge.

Lea, Saxilby, Scampton, Stow and Torksey

85 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed adding the parishes of Glentworth and Fillingham (currently in Hemswell ward) to the existing ward of Scampton, in order to achieve improved electoral equality. It proposed no change to the existing district wards of Lea, Stow, Torksey and Saxilby.

86 During Stage Three of the review, both Glentworth Parish Council and Aisthorpe Parish Meeting opposed the proposal to enlarge the existing ward of Scampton, stating a preference for no change. The Gainsborough Representation Group proposed modifications to the district wards in this area, specifically, a reconfiguration of the pattern of parishes that constitute the existing wards of Saxilby, Scampton, Stow and Torksey, to form three wards of Saxilby, Scampton and Stow. The Commission received three other submissions in regard to these wards, all supporting no change.

87 Although the Commission has modified its draft recommendation for the proposed Thonock and Hemswell ward, it is not persuaded that the boundary with the proposed Scampton ward should be modified. These parishes are similar in geography and character, while the ward provides a good level of electoral equality, containing only 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average at present, falling to 2 per cent by 2001. Given this, and the evident community ties between these parishes which lie beside the A15, the Commission has decided to confirm as final its draft recommendation for Scampton ward. As a consequence of this proposal, given the community ties in the area, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations for all of these wards, subject to the modification to Lea ward discussed above. The Commission's final recommendations are that: Lea ward should comprise the parishes of Kexby, Knaith, Lea and Upton; Saxilby ward should comprise the parishes of Broadholme, Broxholme, Burton, North Carlton, Saxilby with Ingleby and South Carlton; Scampton ward should comprise the parishes of Aisthorpe, Brattleby, Cammeringham, Fillingham, Glentworth, Ingham, Scampton and Thorpe in the Fallows; Stow ward should comprise the parishes of Stow, Sturton by Stow and Willingham; and Torksey ward should comprise the parishes of Brampton, Fenton, Gate Burton, Hardwick, Kettlethorpe, Marton, Newton on Trent and Torksey.

Electoral Cycle

88 At both Stages One and Three of the review, the Gainsborough Representation Group proposed a change in the electoral cycle of the district to whole-council elections, whereas the District Council supported no change to the present practice of election by thirds. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed no change to the current electoral cycle.

89 The Commission has carefully considered the proposal for a change to the electoral cycle of the district. However, it is not aware of any widespread support for such a move. Given this, and the District Council's support for no change, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendation to retain a system of elections by thirds.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

90 As indicated below, the Commission recommends that the warding arrangements of Gainsborough Town Council should be altered to reflect the new district warding arrangements in that area. It also recommends that the number of parish councillors for Keelby parish should be increased.

Conclusions

91 Having considered all the evidence and representations it has received on its draft recommendations, the Commission has concluded that West Lindsey district should continue to be served by a council of 37 members; that the district should comprise 25 wards instead of 26 as at present; that elections should remain by thirds; and that the boundaries of 21 of the existing district wards should be modified. Figure 5 shows the impact of the Commission's final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on current electorate figures and projected electorates in the year 2001.

92 As Figure 5 shows, the Commission's recommendations would result in a significant improvement to the existing electoral arrangements, with the number of wards having electors per councillor which vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average reduced from 15 wards to eight, with a further reduction to six by 2001. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would remain at 1,667. The Commission concludes that its recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

West Lindsey District Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 5, Map 2 and Appendix A. The Council should be elected by thirds, as at present.

93 As indicated above, the Commission recommends a number of changes to the electoral arrangements and boundaries to parish councils.

94 Gainsborough Town Council expressed opposition to the Commission's recommendation that there should be modifications to the warding arrangements for the town council. However, in view of the fact that the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations for the district wards in the town, it considers it appropriate to confirm its draft recommendations for modifications to the three existing parish wards in the town. As a result of these changes, the South-West ward should, in future, have fewer town councillors, with North ward gaining a councillor.

Final Recommendation

Gainsborough Town Council should continue to comprise 18 councillors. The ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards. East ward should be represented by six councillors; North ward should be represented by seven councillors; and South-West ward should be represented by five councillors. The revised ward boundaries are illustrated in Map A1 at Appendix A.

95 The Commission also confirms its draft recommendation regarding an increase in the number of parish councillors for Keelby Parish Council. The Parish Council made no comment on the Commission's draft recommendations at Stage Three.

Final Recommendation

Keelby Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, instead of nine councillors as at present.

96 The Commission also proposes that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of town and parish councils in the district.

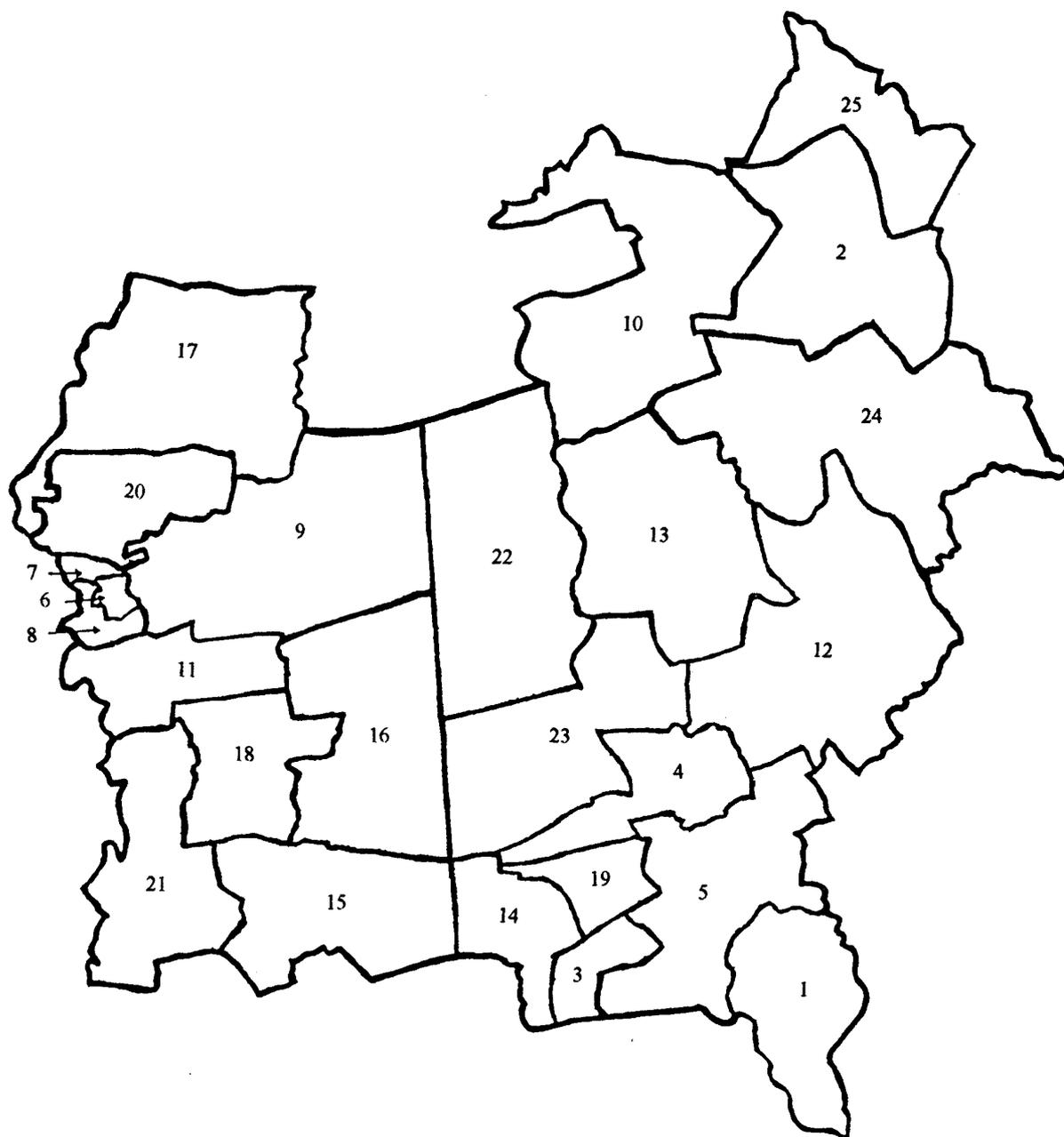
Final Recommendation

Elections for town and parish councils should take place at the same time as elections for principal authorities.

Figure 5:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Arrangements

	1996 electorate		2001 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	37	37	37	37
Number of wards	26	25	26	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,667	1,667	1,747	1,747
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	8	14	6
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	2	9	1

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for West Lindsey



Key to Wards

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Bardney | 8 Gainsborough South-West | 15 Saxilby | 21 Torksey |
| 2 Caistor | 9 Hemswell | 16 Scampton | 22 Waddingham and Spital |
| 3 Cherry Willingham | 10 Kelsey | 17 Scotter | 23 Welton |
| 4 Dunholme | 11 Lea | 18 Stow | 24 Wold View |
| 5 Fiskerton | 12 Market Rasen | 19 Sudbrooke | 25 Yarborough |
| 6 Gainsborough East | 13 Middle Rasen | 20 Thonock | |
| 7 Gainsborough North | 14 Nettleham | | |

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Figure 6:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for West Lindsey

Ward name	1996				2001 (Projected)		
	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bardney	1	1,545	1,545	-7	1,571	1,571	-10
2 Caistor	2	2,573	1,287	-23	2,772	1,386	-21
3 Cherry Willingham	2	3,071	1,536	-8	3,282	1,641	-6
4 Dunholme	1	1,555	1,555	-7	1,744	1,744	0
5 Fiskerton	1	1,464	1,464	-12	1,508	1,508	-14
6 Gainsborough East	3	4,790	1,597	-4	4,910	1,637	-6
7 Gainsborough North	3	5,202	1,734	4	5,536	1,845	6
8 Gainsborough South-West	2	3,478	1,739	4	3,541	1,771	1
9 Hemswell	1	1,653	1,653	-1	1,750	1,750	0
10 Kelsey	1	1,854	1,854	11	1,985	1,985	14
11 Lea	1	1,662	1,662	0	1,822	1,822	4
12 Market Rasen	2	3,691	1,846	11	3,779	1,890	8
13 Middle Rasen	1	1,859	1,859	11	1,886	1,886	8
14 Nettleham	2	3,281	1,641	-2	3,600	1,800	3
15 Saxilby	2	2,969	1,485	-11	3,099	1,550	-11
16 Scampton	1	1,778	1,778	7	1,782	1,782	2
17 Scotter	2	3,367	1,684	1	3,491	1,746	0
18 Stow	1	1,613	1,613	-3	1,677	1,677	-4
19 Sudbrooke	1	1,812	1,812	9	1,831	1,831	5
20 Thonock	1	1,866	1,866	12	1,912	1,912	9
21 Torksey	1	1,816	1,816	9	1,946	1,946	11
22 Waddingham and Spital	1	1,679	1,679	1	1,753	1,753	0

Continued overleaf

*Figure 6 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for West Lindsey*

Ward name	1996				2001 (Projected)		
	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Welton	2	3,295	1,648	-1	3,603	1,802	3
24 Wold View	1	1,782	1,782	7	1,831	1,831	5
25 Yarborough	1	2,037	2,037	22	2,024	2,024	16
Totals	37	61,692	—	—	64,635	—	—
Average	—	—	1,667	—	—	1,747	—

Source: Electorate figures based on West Lindsey District Council's submission.

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

6. NEXT STEPS

97 Having completed its review of West Lindsey and submitted its final recommendations to the Secretary of State on the future electoral arrangements and boundaries for West Lindsey, the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role under the Local Government Act 1992.

98 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to the Commission's recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that the Commission's recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

99 All further correspondence concerning the Commission's recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State at the following address:

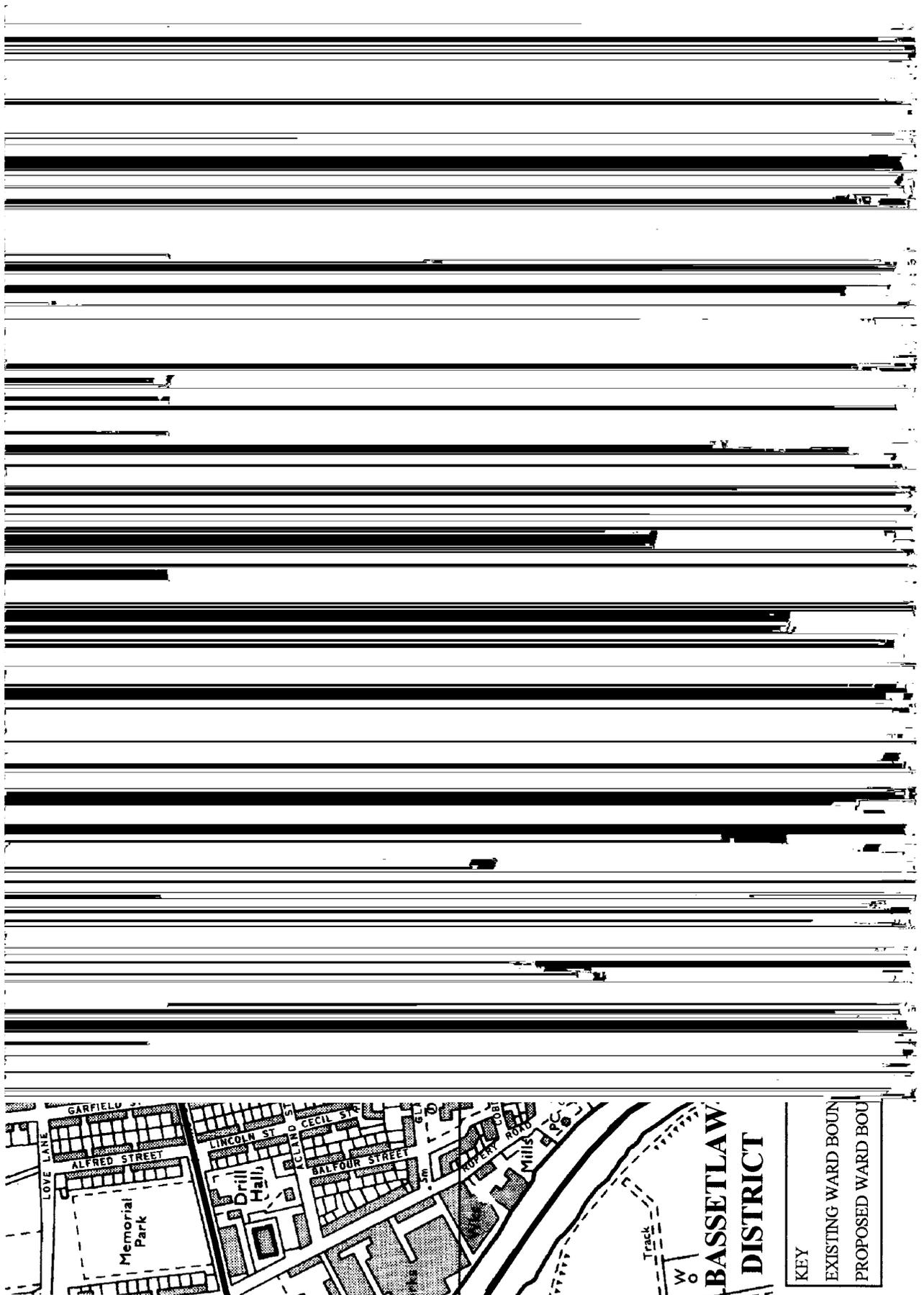
The Secretary of State for the Environment
Local Government Review
Department of the Environment
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for West Lindsey: Detailed Mapping

The following map (**Map A1**) illustrates the proposed boundary changes between the revised District Council and Town Council wards in Gainsborough.

*Map A1:
Proposed Boundary Changes between Gainsborough East, Gainsborough North and
Gainsborough South-West wards*



APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for West Lindsey

*Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
1 Bardney	Bardney ward (part - parishes of Apley, Bardney, Stainfield)
2 Caistor	Caistor ward (parish of Caistor); Kelsey ward (part - parishes of Bigby, Somerby, Searby-cum-Owmbly, Grasby); Yarborough ward (parishes of Brocklesby, Riby, Great Limber); Wold View ward (part - parishes of Cabourne, Swallow)
3 Cherry Willingham	Witham ward (part - parishes of Cherry Willingham, Reepham)
4 Dunholme	Dunholme ward (part - parish of Dunholme); South Cliff ward (part - parishes of Friesthorpe and Snarford); Market Rasen ward (part - parishes of Snelland and Wickenby)
5 Fiskerton	Witham ward (part - parishes of Barlings and Fiskerton); Bardney ward (part - parishes of Bullington, Goltho, Newball and Stainton-by-Langworth); Market Rasen ward (part - parishes of Fulnetby, Holton-cum-Beckering and Rand)
6 Gainsborough East	Gainsborough East district and parish ward (part); Gainsborough South-West district and parish ward (part)
7 Gainsborough North	Gainsborough North ward district and parish ward (part); Gainsborough South-West district and parish ward (part)
8 Gainsborough South-West	Gainsborough South-West district and parish ward (part)
9 Kelsey	Kelsey ward (part - parishes of North Kelsey and South Kelsey); Middle Rasen ward (part - parish of Owersby); Wold View ward (part - parish of Holton-le-Moor)
10 Keelby	Yarborough ward (part - parish of Keelby)
11 Lea	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Kexby, Heapham, Knaith, Lea and Upton)
12 Market Rasen	Market Rasen ward (part - parishes of Buslingthorpe, Legsby, Linwood, Lissington, Market Rasen, North Willingham and Sixhills); Walshcroft ward (part - parishes of Tealby and Walesby)

continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
13 Nettleham	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Grange de Lings, Greetwell, Nettleham and Riseholme)
14 Nettleton	Wold View ward (part - parishes of Claxby, Nettleton, Normanby-le-Wold, Rothwell and Thoresway); Walshcroft ward (part - parishes of Kirmond-le-Mire, Stainton-le-Vale, Swinhope and Thorganby)
15 Rasen	Middle Rasen ward (part - parishes of Middle Rasen and Osgodby); Ancholme Valley ward (part - parish of West Rasen)
16 Saxilby	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Broadholme, Broxholme, Burton, North Carlton, Saxilby with Ingleby and South Carlton)
17 Scampton	Scampton ward (parishes of Aisthorpe, Brattleby, Cammeringham, Ingham, Scampton and Thorpe in the Fallows); Hemswell ward (part - parishes of Glentworth and Fillingham)
18 Scotter	Scotter ward (parish of Scotter); Forest ward (part - parishes of East Ferry, Laughton, Northorpe, Scotton and Wildsworth)
19 Stow	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Stow, Sturton by Stow and Willingham)
20 Sudbrooke	Dunholme ward (part - parish of Scothern); Witham ward (part - parish of Sudbrooke)
21 Thonock and Hemswell	Thonock ward (part - parishes of Morton, Corringham, Springthorpe and Thonock); Forest ward (part - parishes of Blyton and Pilham); Hemswell ward (part - parishes of Grayingham, Blyborough, Willoughton, Hemswell, Hemswell Cliff, Harpswell)
22 Torksey	<i>Unchanged</i> (parishes of Brampton, Fenton, Gate Burton, Hardwick, Kettlethorpe, Marton, Newton on Trent and Torksey)
23 Waddingham	Ancholme Valley ward (part - parishes of Bishop Norton, Glentham, Snitterby and Waddingham); South Cliff ward (part - parishes of Caenby, Normanby-by-Spital, Owmbly, Saxby and West Firsby)
24 Welton	South Cliff ward (part - parishes of Cold Hanworth, Faldingworth, Hackthorn and Spridlington); Welton (parish of Welton); Ancholme Valley ward (part - parish of Toft Newton)

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for West Lindsey

Ward name	1996				2001 (Projected)		
	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bardney	1	1,545	1,545	-7	1,571	1,571	-10
2 Caistor	2	3,487	1,744	5	3,731	1,866	7
3 Cherry Willingham	2	3,071	1,536	-8	3,282	1,641	-6
4 Dunholme	1	1,555	1,555	-7	1,744	1,744	0
5 Fiskerton	1	1,464	1,464	-12	1,508	1,508	-14
6 Gainsborough East	3	4,790	1,597	-4	4,910	1,637	-6
7 Gainsborough North	3	5,202	1,734	4	5,536	1,845	6
8 Gainsborough South-West	2	3,478	1,739	4	3,541	1,771	1
9 Keelby	1	1,825	1,825	9	1,815	1,815	4
10 Kelsey	1	1,554	1,554	-7	1,651	1,651	-5
11 Lea	1	1,750	1,750	5	1,913	1,913	10
12 Rasen	2	3,691	1,846	11	3,779	1,890	8
13 Nettleham	2	3,281	1,641	-2	3,600	1,800	3
14 Nettleton	1	1,631	1,631	-2	1,671	1,671	-4
15 Rasen	1	1,608	1,608	-4	1,630	1,630	-7
16 Saxilby	2	2,969	1,485	-11	3,099	1,550	-11
17 Scampton	1	1,778	1,778	7	1,782	1,782	2
18 Scotter	2	3,114	1,557	-7	3,232	1,616	-7
19 Stow	1	1,613	1,613	-3	1,677	1,677	-4
20 Sudbrooke	1	1,812	1,812	9	1,831	1,831	5
21 Thonock and Hemswell	2	3,684	1,842	10	3,830	1,915	10
22 Torksey	1	1,816	1,816	9	1,946	1,946	11

continued overleaf

Figure B2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for West Lindsey

Ward name	1996				2001 (Projected)		
	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Waddingham	1	1,679	1,679	1	1,753	1,753	1
24 Welton	2	3,295	1,648	-1	3,603	1,802	3
Totals	37	61,692	—	—	64,635	—	—
Average	—	—	1,667	—	—	1,747	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on West Lindsey District Council's submissions.

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.