

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council

Electoral review

May 2013

Translations and other formats

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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Middlesbrough Council ('the Council') to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in June 2012.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
26 June 2012	Consultation on council size begins
27 November 2012	Submission of proposals for ward patterns to the LGBCE
19 February 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
14 May 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
6 August 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

During the preliminary stage of this review we received five submissions on council size from Middlesbrough Council, the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat) and a late submission from Councillor Michna (Green). During consultation on council size we received 11 submissions. During consultation on proposed ward boundaries we received three borough-wide submissions; one from the Council, one from the Conservative Group and one from Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat), plus additional representations from six borough councillors, six community councils, one parish council, one local organisation, 35 local residents and one anonymous submission. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

Middlesbrough Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2013. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of 0.1% over this period.

We are content that these forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Middlesbrough Council currently has a council size of 48 councillors. At the beginning of the electoral review we met with elected members and council officers to discuss council size.

Following these preliminary discussions we received five submissions. Submissions from Middlesbrough Council and the Labour Group both proposed a council size of 46 members. The Conservative Group and Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat) both proposed 38 members. A late submission from Councillor Michna (Green) proposed 26 members.

We considered that the representation made by the Council contained the most persuasive evidence on key areas of governance, elector representation, and the Council's other statutory functions. We were therefore minded to agree a council size of 46 members for Middlesbrough and began a period of consultation on this number.

During consultation on council size, 11 submissions were received which showed mixed support for a council size of 46. However, no substantive evidence was presented to contradict the rationale presented by the Council, nor was any other council size adequately evidenced. As a consequence, we are content to confirm a council size of 46 as part of our draft recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during consultation, we have developed proposals that are based broadly on those of Councillor Williams in the south-east of the borough, and of both the Council and Councillor Williams in the south-west of the borough. However, we have made a number of modifications to both proposals in the central and north-eastern part of the borough to provide a better balance between our statutory criteria.

Our draft recommendations for Middlesbrough are for a mixed pattern of two single-member, ten two-member and eight three-member wards. We consider our recommendations provide for good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by the 5 August 2013. Any submissions received after this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

Review Officer
Middlesbrough Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

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

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Middlesbrough Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to the Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on council size. We then held two periods of consultation, first on council size, and then on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council in late 2013.

What is an electoral review?

4 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Middlesbrough?

6 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2011 electorate figures, 30% of the existing wards have 10% more or fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. Furthermore, Middlehaven ward has 35% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the borough.

How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 5 August 2013. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in November 2013. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 23 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

14 Additionally, in circumstances where we propose to divide a parish between borough wards or county divisions, we are required to divide it into parish wards so that each parish ward is wholly contained within a single borough ward or county division. We cannot make amendments to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

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

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Middlesbrough Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

17 We received five preliminary submissions on council size from the Council, the Labour Group, the Conservative Group, Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat) and Councillor Michna (Green) and 11 additional submissions during a subsequent period of consultation. During consultation on proposed ward boundaries we received three borough-wide submissions, one each from the Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams. We also received representations from six borough councillors, one parish council, six community councils, one local organisation, 35 local residents and one anonymous submission.

18 All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

19 As part of this review, Middlesbrough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of 0.1% over the six-year period from 2012–18.

20 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

21 Middlesbrough Council currently has 48 councillors elected from 23 wards, comprising one single-member, 19 two-member and three three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed reducing the council size to 46 members. A proposal from the Labour Group also proposed 46 members. Submissions from the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat) both proposed 38 members. A submission from Councillor Michna (Green) proposed 26 members.

22 During the consultation on council size we received 11 submissions. These showed mixed support for the Council's proposal. We carefully considered the evidence received and concluded that the Council had put forward the strongest rationale arguing for the reduction from the existing council size.

23 We considered that the Council's submission had sufficient regard to its governance and management structure, scrutiny of the council, work on outside bodies, members' representational role and the Council's other statutory functions.

24 We are content that a council size of 46 members would not impact adversely on governance arrangements, member workload or councillors' representational role. Therefore, our draft recommendations Middlesbrough Council are based on a council size of 46.

Electoral fairness

25 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

26 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (101,468 in 2012 and 101,560 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 46 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,206 in 2012 and 2,208 by 2018.

27 Under our draft recommendations, all of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Middlesbrough.

General analysis

28 During consultation, we received 54 submissions on warding arrangements for Middlesbrough. The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams (Liberal Democrat) submitted borough-wide proposals based on a council size of 46. We received additional representations from six borough councillors, two of whom sent in two joint submissions, one parish council, six community councils, one local organisation, 35 local residents and one anonymous submission.

29 All three borough-wide proposals resulted in good levels of electoral equality across the borough. A supplementary submission from the Conservative group supported Councillor Williams' proposals with a minor exception for Nunthorpe ward.

30 We noted that a number of proposed wards within these submissions divided communities and did not appear to use strong boundaries, particularly in the central and eastern areas of the borough. In those areas we have made changes to the proposals to provide stronger ward boundaries and a better reflection of our statutory criteria.

31 In the south-east of Middlesbrough the Council and Councillor Williams put forward different proposals. We consider that the proposals made by Councillor Williams for this area provided for clear and identifiable boundaries and better reflected our statutory criteria. We are therefore content to adopt these proposed wards in south-east Middlesbrough as part of our draft recommendations.

32 In the south-west of the borough the Council and Councillor Williams made broadly similar proposals. In this area we are content to adopt the proposed wards, subject to a number of minor amendments to improve electoral equality or provide for stronger ward boundaries.

33 Our draft recommendations are for two single-member, 10 two-member and eight three-member wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide

for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

34 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on the large map accompanying this report.

35 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations. We also welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

Electoral arrangements

36 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Middlesbrough. The following areas are considered in turn:

- East Middlesbrough (pages 10–12)
- South-east Middlesbrough (pages 12–15)
- South-west Middlesbrough (pages 15–17)
- Central Middlesbrough (pages 17–20)

37 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 26–7 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

East Middlesbrough

38 East Middlesbrough is a densely populated area comprising the communities of North Ormesby, Berwick Hills, Pallister, Brambles Farm, Thorntree and Park End. The area is bordered by the neighbouring authority of Redcar & Cleveland to the east and south, the A66 to the north and a railway line and beck to the west.

39 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed different warding arrangements for this area. All three schemes provided for good levels of electoral equality and included evidence of community identity. However, we had some concerns that these proposals did not always use strong boundaries and appeared to divide communities in some areas. We received two other representations in relation to this area from Councillor McTigue (Independent, Beechwood ward) and Beckfield Community Council.

North Ormesby and Brambles Farm & Thorntree

40 This area comprises the communities of North Ormesby, Brambles Farm and Thorntree. The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed different patterns of two-member wards for this area.

41 The Council proposed three two-member wards for this area. They proposed combining North Ormesby with the community of Breckon Hill to create a North Ormesby & Breckon Hill ward. They also proposed combining Brambles Farm with the neighbouring Pallister community to create a Brambles & Pallister ward. Finally, they proposed a Thorntree ward. We were concerned that the Council's proposed North Ormesby & Breckon Hill ward extended across the railway line and the A172 to incorporate a part of the central area of Middlesbrough. Having toured the area we are of the view that the railway line and the A172 represent significant barriers that

divide the communities on either side. We also had concerns about the western boundary of the Council's Brambles & Pallister ward. Part of this boundary runs along Gribdale Road and we are of the view that this arbitrarily divides the community on either side of the road.

42 Both the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed the two two-member wards of North Ormesby & Brambles Farm and Thorntree using identical boundaries. We had concerns about the proposed southern and western boundaries of their proposed Thorntree ward and having toured the area we are of the view that this proposal divides communities in these areas.

43 As a result of these concerns we investigated alternative warding arrangements that would better reflect our statutory criteria in this area. We noted that the North Ormesby community had strong boundaries on all sides; the A66 to the north, A171 to the east and Longlands Road (A1085) to the south, with the railway line to the west. We propose to use these boundaries to create a single-member North Ormesby ward as part of our draft recommendations. The Council's submission describes North Ormesby as 'one of Middlesbrough's older, most readily identifiable communities...' and we are of the view that our draft recommendation will reflect the strong and self-contained nature of this community. North Ormesby ward would have 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

44 We also propose a three-member Brambles & Thorntree ward combining the communities of Brambles Farm, Thorntree and the Town Farm estate as part of our draft recommendations. This ward ensures that the Thorntree community is not divided and makes good use of natural boundaries, including a beck to the west. Under our draft recommendations, Brambles & Thorntree ward would have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

45 Our draft recommendations for North Ormesby and Brambles & Thorntree wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Berwick Hills & Pallister and Park End & Beckfield

46 This area comprises the communities of Berwick Hills, Pallister, Park End and Beckfield. Again the Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed different patterns of two-member wards for this area. Representations from Councillor McTigue and Beckfield Community Council were received in respect of the Beckfield area.

47 The Council's proposals were for a two-member Park End & Priestfields ward and a two-member Berwick Hills ward. We had concerns about the boundary between the Council's proposed Berwick Hills and Brambles & Pallister wards using Gribdale Road (see paragraph 41). We were also concerned about the use of Cargo Fleet Lane as a boundary in the Beckfield area as this appears to divide the community. A submission from Councillor McTigue objected to the Council's proposals in Beckfield and described Beckfield as a 'thriving community'.

48 Councillor Williams and the Conservative Group both proposed a two-member Park End ward and a two-member Beckfield ward, with both proposals incorporating the Berwick Hills area into their proposed Pallister ward. As outlined in paragraph 42 we are of the view that the boundary between the Conservative Group's and Councillor Williams' proposed Thorntree and Beckfield wards arbitrarily divides the

Thorntree community. We were also of the view that the boundary between Councillor Williams' proposed Park End and Pallister wards also appears arbitrary and divides communities, particularly along Darenth Crescent. The Conservative group made a different proposal, dividing their proposed Park End and Pallister wards along Ampleforth Road. Again we are of the view that this proposal divides the Berwick Hills community.

49 As a result of these concerns and owing to the changes outlined in paragraphs 43–5, our draft recommendations are for a three-member Berwick Hills & Pallister ward and a three-member Park End & Beckfield ward.

50 For the boundary between these two wards we are content to adopt the boundary proposed by the Council, with a minor amendment to include Marrick Road in our Berwick Hills & Pallister ward, to further improve electoral equality.

51 Berwick Hills & Pallister ward is bounded by the railway to the west and Middle Beck and Cargo Fleet Lane to the east, which provide strong and identifiable boundaries and there is good road and pedestrian access across the ward. We are content that this ward appears to reflect community identities in the area.

52 Our Park End & Beckfield ward incorporates the communities of Park End, Priestfields and Beckfield. The ward is bounded by the neighbouring authority of Redcar & Cleveland to the south and east. In addition to the submission from Councillor McTigue noted in paragraph 47 above, Beckfield Community Council also described Beckfield as a 'strong community'. We are content that this ward provides a better reflection of community identity in the area than the proposals put forward by both the Council and Councillor Williams.

53 As part of our draft recommendations, Berwick Hills & Pallister and Park End & Beckfield wards would have 4% fewer and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendations for Berwick Hills & Pallister and Park End & Beckfield wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

South-east Middlesbrough

54 South-east Middlesbrough comprises the communities of Coulby Newham, Marton and the parish of Nunthorpe. The area is bounded by the authority boundary to the east and south and by the B1365 to the west.

55 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed different warding arrangements for this area. All three schemes provided for good levels of electoral equality and included evidence of community identity. We had concerns that the Council's proposals did not use strong boundaries and appeared to divide communities. We received 30 further representations in relation to this area from Nunthorpe Parish Council, Nunthorpe Community Council, Marton West Community Council, 26 members of the public and a joint submission from Councillor C Hobson (Conservative, Marton West ward) and Councillor J Hobson (Conservative, Marton West ward).

Nunthorpe and Coulby Newham

56 In Nunthorpe and Coulby Newham the Council proposed the three two-member wards of Nunthorpe, Coulby Farm and Newham Grange. The Conservative Group

and Councillor Williams both proposed a two-member Nunthorpe ward and a two-member Coulby Newham ward. Three additional submissions were received relating to this area, one from Nunthorpe Community Council and two from members of the public.

57 The Council's proposed Nunthorpe ward contains the whole of Nunthorpe parish and the area around De Brus Park, Brass Castle Lane and St Cuthbert Avenue. Councillor Williams' proposed Nunthorpe ward also includes the whole of Nunthorpe parish and the area by St Cuthbert Avenue and Yew Tree Grove. While the Conservative Group's proposed Nunthorpe ward is similar to the proposal of Councillor Williams, their northern boundary extends along Cypress Road to incorporate electors on Pinewood Road, Cedar Road and Clover Wood Close, with their western boundary running along Dixons Bank, placing electors on St Cuthbert Avenue in the neighbouring Marton West ward. All three proposals provided for good electoral equality. A submission from Nunthorpe Community Council stated that they believe the ward should remain as it currently is, with the addition of enough households to improve electoral equality.

58 We are content that the electors in St Cuthbert Avenue and Yew Tree Grove look towards Nunthorpe, as proposed by Councillor Williams. However, we are not persuaded by the Council's view that electors in De Brus Park relate to Nunthorpe rather than to Coulby Newham or Marton. We are also of the view that the proposals of the Conservative Group appear to divide the community along Cypress Road. As such we are persuaded to adopt Councillor Williams' proposals for Nunthorpe ward as part of our draft recommendations.

59 In Coulby Newham the Council proposed the two-member wards of Newham Grange and Coulby Farm, with the boundary between the two running along Stainton Way. We had a number of concerns about the Council's proposals. The Council's proposed Coulby Farm ward takes in some electors from the south of Marton. We consider that this unnecessarily divides Marton and would also result in poor transport links with the rest of the ward. The Council's proposed Newham Grange ward takes in some electors from neighbouring Hemlington to the west, on the other side of the B1365, and also a development site to the north of the A174. Having toured the area we are of the view that both roads constitute significant boundaries and that the Council's proposals would not be conducive to community identity or effective and convenient government. In addition, the Council's proposed Newham Grange ward takes in some electors from Marton to the east. As stated below in paragraph 69, we consider that this divides the Marton community unnecessarily.

60 The Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed identical Coulby Newham wards. We consider that the proposed ward uses the strong, identifiable boundaries of Marton West Beck to the east, the A174 to the north and B1365 to the west. Having toured the area we are of the view that this proposal better reflects community identities in the area and also avoids dividing communities. We are therefore content to adopt the Coulby Newham ward proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams as part of our draft recommendations. Our Nunthorpe and Coulby Newham wards would have 4% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

61 Our draft recommendations for Nunthorpe and Coulby Newham wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Marlon East and Marlon West

62 The Council proposed a three-member Marlon ward while the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams both proposed the two two-member wards of Marlon and Marlon West. While all three proposals secured good electoral equality we had some concerns about the Council's proposals for Marlon.

63 There was significant support for the retention of a Marlon West ward. Thirty local submissions were received relating to Marlon, and members of the public cited an 'excellent community spirit' and considered it a ward with 'clearly defined boundaries'. A joint submission from Councillors Chris and John Hobson stated that Marlon West 'is a complete community with strong definitive boundaries' and that it 'has an excellent community council'. These submissions objected strongly to the Council's proposals for this area.

64 We were persuaded by evidence that the Council's proposed Marlon ward appeared to divide the community, particularly in the area to the west of Tollesby Lane where the boundary isolated electors on Tollesby Lane and Marlon West Beck.

65 The proposals of the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams used stronger and more identifiable ward boundaries, including main roads and Marlon West Beck. We are satisfied that these proposals better reflect community identity in this area. As discussed in paragraph 57, the proposals of the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams differ slightly in the boundaries between Nunthorpe, Marlon and Marlon West wards. We consider that Councillor Williams' proposal provides for stronger boundaries in these areas and we are therefore adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

66 While we are content to adopt the proposals of Councillor Williams for Marlon, we consider that changing the name of the proposed Marlon ward to Marlon East would better reflect the nature of the ward and complement proposals for Marlon West ward. Our proposed Marlon East and Marlon West wards would have 3% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

67 Our draft recommendations for Marlon East and Marlon West wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Ladgate

68 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams all proposed a two-member Ladgate ward. The Conservative Group and Councillor Williams made an identical proposal while the Council proposed different boundaries. While all three proposals used clear and identifiable boundaries and provided for good electoral equality, we are of the view that the proposals of the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria.

69 Our primary concern with the Council's proposal was the exclusion of the development site on the current police headquarters. The Council proposed using Marlon West Beck as the western boundary of its proposed Ladgate ward and transferred the development site to Newham Grange ward. However, as access to the site is off Ladgate Lane it would have no direct communication links to the rest of the ward.

70 The Conservative Group's and Councillor Williams' proposed Ladgate ward used strong boundaries on all sides; Marlon Road to the east, Ladgate Lane to the

south and the golf course to the west. It also includes the aforementioned development site. Access across the ward is good and we are therefore content to adopt the Ladgate ward proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Ladgate ward would have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

71 Our draft recommendation for Ladgate ward can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

South-west Middlesbrough

72 South-west Middlesbrough comprises the parish of Stainton & Thornton, the community of Brookfield and the area south of Acklam. The area is bounded by the authority boundary to the west and south.

73 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed broadly similar warding arrangements for this area. All three schemes provided for good levels of electoral equality with evidence of community identity and used clear and identifiable ward boundaries. We received three additional representations in relation to this area from Councillor Arundale (Conservative, Kader ward), Brookfield Community Council and one member of the public.

Hemlington and Stainton & Thornton

74 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams all proposed a two-member Hemlington ward and a single-member Stainton & Thornton ward, although the Council proposed the name Stainton & Thornton Villages.

75 The Council's proposed Hemlington ward is bounded mostly by main roads. However, they proposed placing the electors in the north-west of Hemlington, immediately to the north of Hemlington Hall Primary School, in their proposed Stainton & Thornton Villages ward. They also proposed putting electors from the north-eastern corner of Hemlington, in the streets around Southdean Drive and Keilder Rise, into their neighbouring Newham Grange ward citing shared socioeconomic characteristics. The Conservative Group and Councillor Williams made similar proposals however; both retained the electors in the north-eastern corner of Hemlington within Hemlington ward.

76 Having toured the area we are persuaded that the area in the north-east of Hemlington should be in Hemlington ward. Transferring this area to a Newham Grange ward would divide the community and, as stated in paragraph 59, the B1365 represents a strong boundary. We are content that the proposals put forward by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams provide the best balance between our statutory criteria and we are adopting their proposed Hemlington ward as part of our draft recommendations.

77 The Council's, the Conservative Group's and Councillor Williams' proposals for Stainton and Thornton are identical. All three proposed a ward largely coterminous with Stainton & Thornton parish, with the addition of some electors from the north-west of Hemlington to improve electoral equality. We are persuaded that these proposals meet our statutory criteria and are therefore adopting them as part of our draft recommendations with the name Stainton & Thornton ward. Our proposed two-

member Hemlington and single-member Stainton & Thornton wards would have 6% more and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

78 Our draft recommendations for Hemlington and Stainton & Thornton wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Trimdon and Kader

79 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed a two-member ward named Trimdon by the Council and Councillor Williams and Brookfield by the Conservative Group, and a further two-member ward, named Kader by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams and Acklam South by the Council. The proposals were broadly similar. We also received two submissions relating to the existing Kader ward, from Councillor Arundale (Conservative, Kader ward) and a member of the public.

80 The Council and Councillor Williams proposed a Trimdon ward bounded by Blue Bell Beck to the north and the A174 to the south, with the eastern boundary running through a residential area. The submissions only differed in that Councillor Williams proposed running this eastern boundary along the middle of Malvern Drive and placing Aldwark Close in the neighbouring Kader ward, while the Council proposed running it behind the properties on the north side of Malvern Drive and including Aldwark Close in Trimdon ward. The Conservative Group's proposed Brookfield ward used identical boundaries to the proposal of Councillor Williams.

81 Having toured the area we are content that both proposals provided good electoral equality, used strong boundaries and had good internal communication links. We are of the view that the eastern boundary of Trimdon ward should run behind the properties on the north side of Malvern Road as proposed by the Council and to the north of Aldwark Close as proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams. Apart from this minor amendment we are content to adopt Trimdon ward as part of our draft recommendations.

82 To the east of Trimdon ward the Council and Councillor Williams made a broadly similar proposal. Both proposals used a similar western boundary with Trimdon ward, as outlined above.

83 The Council's proposed Acklam South ward incorporated several properties on Acklam Road, immediately to the north of the cemetery and adjacent to Teesside Crematorium, which the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams do not include in their proposed Kader wards. The Council's south-eastern boundary runs along Ladgate Lane to the north of a proposed development site on the police headquarters, and then along Marton West Beck. Councillor Williams' proposed eastern boundary runs along the western edge of Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre.

84 We are persuaded that the properties on Acklam Road clearly look towards the rest of the ward, as proposed by the Council. We are therefore content to adopt the Council's proposed boundary in this part of the ward. In the south-east of this ward we are of the view that the proposals of the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams, using the A174 and the western edge of Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre, provide far stronger boundaries and we are therefore adopting these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

85 We received two further submissions regarding this area. A representation from Councillor Arundale stated that ‘The ward [Kader] has clearly defined borders being bounded on three sides by main roads and a beck on the other’. A member of the public stated that ‘Kader ward is a thriving local community’. Whilst the proposed ward differs from the existing Kader ward, we are persuaded that members of the public identify with the name and we are therefore adopting it as part of our draft recommendations.

86 Under our draft recommendations, our proposed two-member Trimdon and Kader wards would have 1% fewer and 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendations for Trimdon and Kader wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Central Middlesbrough

87 Central Middlesbrough stretches from the industrial area to the north of the town centre, to the communities of Acklam and Beechwood. The area is bounded by the authority boundary to the north and west and the railway line to the east.

88 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed quite different warding arrangements for this area, apart from in the residential areas to the south of the town centre, where the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams made identical proposals for five wards. While all three schemes provided for good levels of electoral equality, we had concerns that the proposals did not use consistently clear boundaries and appeared to divide communities.

89 We received nine additional representations in relation to this area from Councillor Sanderson (Independent, Nunthorpe ward), Councillor Hawthorne (Independent, Ayresome ward), Gresham Community Council, Middlehaven Community Council, the Islamic Society of Cleveland and four members of the public.

Ayresome

90 The Council, the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed similar two-member wards on the western edge of the central area. The Council proposed naming their ward Acklam Green, while the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams proposed the name Ayresome ward. We received a further four submissions that commented on this area from Councillor Hawthorne and three members of the public. They expressed both their concern over the Council’s proposals for the area and their support for the existing Ayresome ward. Having considered the evidence we are of the view that people in the area identify with the name Ayresome and are therefore adopting it as the name of the proposed ward in this area.

91 All three warding proposals used clear and identifiable boundaries, resulting in good internal transport links and provided for good electoral equality. Under the Council’s proposal the northern boundary was the A66, while Councillor Williams proposal used the A19 to incorporate Maze Park Nature Reserve in the ward. The Conservative proposal used the A1032 as the northern and eastern boundary. We are of the view that the A19 represents the clearest boundary in this area and are therefore adopting this as part of our draft recommendations. In the north-eastern corner of this ward the Council proposed using the middle of West Lane as the

boundary whereas Councillor Williams proposed incorporating the whole of West Lane into Ayresome ward. Having toured the area we consider that the Council's proposal would result in a stronger boundary and are therefore adopting it as part of our draft recommendations for Ayresome ward.

92 Under our draft recommendations, our proposed two-member Ayresome ward would have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendation for Ayresome ward can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Central and Newport

93 In the area comprising the town centre, Teesside University and the community of Newport, the Council proposed three two-member wards of Ironmasters, Central and Crescent. Councillor Williams proposed a two-member Newport ward and a three-member Central ward. The Conservative Group's submission states that 'The Middlehaven, Gresham and University Wards should be combined into two wards with 5 councillors' although they made no specific proposals for this area.

94 We had a number of concerns about the Council's proposal for this area. Both the northern and southern boundaries of the Council's Crescent ward appeared to divide communities to the west of Albert Park. Similarly the boundary between the Council's proposed Ironmasters and Central wards also appeared to divide the community immediately to the north of Albert Park. Finally, and as discussed in paragraph 41, we were concerned that the boundary between the Council's Central and North Ormesby & Breckon Hill wards appeared to divide clearly defined communities. A representation from Gresham Community Council objected to the Council's proposal for this area and stated that the Council's proposed warding arrangements would result in 'yet another severe breakup of the community'. A submission from a member of the public stated that they 'Cannot see how the Crescent Ward will be beneficial to the residents of any of these areas'.

95 With regard to Councillor Williams' scheme, our primary concern was that the eastern boundary of his proposed Newport ward appeared to divide the Newport community. We also noted that the boundary between Councillor Williams' Central and Longlands wards appears to divide the community to the north of Breckon Hill Primary School.

96 As a result of our concerns we explored alternative warding arrangements for this area. Our draft recommendations are for a three-member Newport ward and a three-member Central ward. Our Newport ward is similar to the ward proposed by Councillor Williams subject to a number of amendments. As stated in paragraph 91, we have used the middle of West Lane as the boundary between Newport and Ayresome wards. For the eastern boundary we propose using Linthorpe Road. This is a clearer and more identifiable boundary and results in a three-member Newport ward that has good electoral equality.

97 Our proposed Central ward incorporates the largely industrial area to the north of the A66, the town centre, Teesside University and the residential area to the south of the town centre. This three-member ward uses strong boundaries following main roads, has good internal communication links and good electoral equality.

98 A submission relating to this area from a member of the public stated that the existing University ward 'has distinct and unique requirements'. A submission from

the Islamic Society of Cleveland stated that residents would be ‘negatively and adversely affected by such ill-considered proposals to split the existing [University] ward’. Our Central ward incorporates the existing University ward in its entirety and we therefore consider that it reflects community identities in this area.

99 As part of our draft recommendations, our proposed three-member Newport and Central wards would have 4% more and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendations for Newport and Central wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Linthorpe, Park and Acklam

100 In this densely populated area the Council proposed the two-member wards of Linthorpe West, Linthorpe Village, Green Lane and St Chads, while the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams made identical proposals for a three-member Linthorpe ward and two-member Park and Acklam wards. Having toured the area we felt that all three proposals would result in communities being divided unnecessarily in the Linthorpe area. We also considered that the boundary between the Council’s proposed Green Lane ward and St Chads ward clearly divided a community and that the proposed St Chads ward was further divided by Marton West Beck which runs through it.

101 We consider that the Acklam ward proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams used stronger boundaries and better reflected community identities in this area. We are therefore content to adopt these proposals as part of our draft recommendations subject to two minor amendments. In the north of the ward we have amended the boundary between Acklam and Park wards so that Acklam ward incorporates the houses on Ravenscroft Avenue. This improves electoral equality. In the south of the ward we have amended the boundary so that Teesside Crematorium and the properties adjacent to it on Acklam Road are included in the neighbouring Kader ward, as outlined in paragraph 83.

102 As part of our draft recommendations we also propose a two-member Linthorpe ward and a three-member Park ward. The external boundaries of these two wards are broadly similar to those proposed by the Conservative Group and Councillor Williams using as ward boundaries Green Lane and Emerson Avenue to the south, the A1032 to the west, Ayresome Street to the north and Marton West Beck to the east. We propose using Ayresome Green Lane and Roman Road as the boundary between our proposed Linthorpe and Park wards. These roads provide a strong boundary and avoid dividing communities. In the south of Park ward we have amended the boundary with Acklam ward as stated in paragraph 101 above. We have also made a small change to the eastern boundary of Park ward to improve electoral equality in the neighbouring Longlands & Beechwood ward (see paragraph 105).

103 Under our draft recommendations, our proposed two-member Linthorpe, three-member Park and two-member Acklam wards would have 5% more, 6% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendations for Linthorpe, Park and Acklam wards can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Longlands and Beechwood

104 In this area the Council proposed a two-member Belle Vue ward and a two-member St Chads ward. Councillor Williams proposed a two-member Beechwood ward and a two-member Longlands ward. The Conservative Group proposed a Beechwood ward identical to Councillor Williams and a Clairville ward to the north. As stated in paragraph 100 we had concerns about the Council's proposed St Chads ward and we have incorporated the western part of the proposed ward into our Acklam ward. We have also incorporated the northern portion of Councillor Williams' proposed Longlands ward into our Central ward (see paragraph 97). These amendments have had consequential effects on this area.

105 As a result, we propose combining the communities of Longlands and Beechwood into a three-member Longlands & Beechwood ward. This ward has clear and identifiable boundaries using Longlands Road to the north and the railway line to the east. To improve electoral equality in this ward we have used the back of properties on the eastern side of Valley Road as the western boundary as well as Marton West Beck in the south-west of the ward. We consider that our draft recommendations for this area avoid the arbitrary split of both communities.

106 As part of our draft recommendations, our proposed three-member Longlands & Beechwood ward would have 8% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018. Our draft recommendations for Longlands & Beechwood ward can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 26–7) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

107 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	46	46
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,206	2,208
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendation

Middlesbrough Council should comprise 46 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

108 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

109 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Middlesbrough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

110 Our draft recommendations do not result in any parish being divided by ward boundaries. Therefore consequential parish electoral arrangements are not required in any part of the authority.

3 What happens next?

111 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 5 August 2013. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

112 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during this stage. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

113 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
Middlesbrough Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, www.lgbce.org.uk or by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk

114 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Middlesbrough Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

115 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

116 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

117 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Middlesbrough Council in 2015.

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

4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Middlesbrough

119 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Middlesbrough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Middlesbrough Council.

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for Middlesbrough Council

	Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Acklam	2	4,772	2,386	8%	4,691	2,346	6%
2	Ayresome	2	4,317	2,159	-2%	4,222	2,111	-4%
3	Berwick Hills & Pallister	3	6,556	2,185	-1%	6,368	2,123	-4%
4	Brambles & Thorntree	3	6,256	2,085	-5%	6,331	2,110	-4%
5	Central	3	6,502	2,167	-2%	6,467	2,156	-2%
6	Coulby Newham	3	6,970	2,323	5%	6,751	2,250	2%
7	Hemlington	2	4,851	2,426	10%	4,696	2,348	6%
8	Kader	2	4,608	2,304	4%	4,538	2,269	3%
9	Ladgate	2	4,214	2,107	-4%	4,250	2,125	-4%
10	Linthorpe	2	4,762	2,381	8%	4,644	2,322	5%
11	Longlands & Beechwood	3	7,103	2,368	7%	7,156	2,385	8%
12	Marton East	2	3,847	1,924	-13%	4,279	2,140	-3%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Middlesbrough Council

Ward Name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Marton West	2	4,150	2,075	-6%	4,132	2,066	-6%
14 Newport	3	7,232	2,411	9%	6,881	2,294	4%
15 North Ormesby	1	2,231	2,231	1%	2,268	2,268	3%
16 Nunthorpe	2	4,228	2,114	-4%	4,253	2,127	-4%
17 Park	3	7,051	2,350	7%	7,026	2,342	6%
18 Park End & Beckfield	3	6,305	2,102	-5%	6,126	2,043	-8%
19 Stainton & Thornton	1	1,751	1,751	-21%	2,108	2,108	-5%
20 Trimdon	2	3,762	1,881	-15%	4,373	2,187	-1%
Totals	46	101,468	-	-	101,560	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,206	-	-	2,208	-

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

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

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

