

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Durham County Council

February 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to division boundaries, and the number of councillors and division names.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Durham County Council.

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SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Durham County Council on 24 August 1999.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Durham:

- **in 25 of the 61 divisions, each of which are represented by a single councillor, the number of electors varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the county and 10 divisions vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is expected to worsen, with the number of electors forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 27 divisions and by more than 20 per cent in 11 divisions.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 142–143) are that:

- **Durham County Council should have 63 councillors, two more than at present, representing 63 divisions;**
- **as the divisions are based on district wards which have themselves changed as a result of the recent district reviews, the boundaries of all divisions, except twelve, will be subject to change.**

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

- **In 41 of the proposed 63 divisions the number of electors would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average, with only one varying by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **This improved electoral equality is forecast to deteriorate slightly, with the number of electors in 37 divisions expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the county in 2004, with only three divisions expected to vary by more than 20 per cent.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **new warding arrangements for the parishes of Cassop-cum-Quarrington, Seaham and Great Aycliffe.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited. Our proposals are set out in Figures 1 and 2 following this summary, and illustrated on the large map inside the back cover and in Appendix A.

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 22 February 2000. We have not yet decided on our final recommendations and wish to use this period to seek further evidence. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses if, in our judgement, the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be better served. It is important, therefore, that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 17 April 2000:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by district council area)	Constituent district wards
CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT	
1 Chester-le-Street North & East	Chester East ward; Chester North ward
2 Chester-le-Street South	Chester South ward; Edmondsley & Waldrige ward
3 Chester-le-Street West Central	Chester Central ward; Chester West ward; Pelton Fell ward
4 Lumley	<i>Unchanged</i> (Bournmoor ward; Lumley ward)
5 Ouston & Urpeth	Grange Villa & West Pelton ward; Ouston ward; Urpeth ward
6 Pelton	North Lodge ward; Pelton ward
7 Sacriston	Kimbleworth & Plawsworth ward; Sacriston ward
DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT	
8 Annfield Plain	Annfield Plain ward; Catchgate ward
9 Benfieldside	Benfieldside ward; Blackhill ward (part)
10 Burnopfield & Dipton	Burnopfield ward; Dipton ward
11 Consett North	Blackhill ward (part); Consett North ward
12 Craghead & South Moor	Craghead & South Stanley ward (part); South Moor ward
13 Delves Lane & Consett South	Consett East ward; Consett South ward; Delves Lane ward
14 Esh	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cornsay ward; Esh ward)
15 Lanchester	<i>Unchanged</i> (Burnhope ward; Castleside ward; Lanchester ward)
16 Leadgate & Medomsley	Ebchester & Medomsley ward; Leadgate ward
17 Stanley	Craghead & South Stanley ward (part); Havannah ward (part); Stanley Hall ward
18 Tanfield	Havannah ward (part); Tanfield ward
DURHAM CITY	
19 Belmont	Belmont ward; Carrville & Gilesgate Moor ward (part – Carrville parish ward of Belmont parish)
20 Brandon	Brancepath, Langley Moor & Meadowfield ward (part – the parish of Brancepath and the East parish ward of Brandon & Byshottles parish); Brandon ward
21 Coxhoe	Cassop-cum-Quarrington ward (part); Kelloe ward

Division name (by district council area)	Constituent district wards
22 Deerness Valley	Deerness ward; New Brancepath & Ushaw Moor ward
23 Durham South	Brancepath, Langley Moor & Meadowfield ward (part – South parish ward of Brandon & Byshottles parish); Cassop-cum-Quarrington ward (part); Shincliffe ward
24 Elvet	Elvet ward; St Nicholas ward
25 Framwellgate Moor	Bearpark & Witton Gilbert ward; Framwellgate Moor ward (part)
26 Gilesgate	Carrville & Gilesgate Moor ward (part – Gilesgate Moor parish ward of Belmont parish); Pelaw & Gilesgate ward
27 Nevilles Cross	Crossgate & Framwelgate ward; Nevilles Cross ward
28 Newton Hall	<i>Unchanged</i> (Framwellgate Moor ward (part); Newton Hall North ward; Newton Hall South ward)
29 Sherburn	<i>Unchanged</i> (Pittington & West Rainton ward; Shadforth & Sherburn ward)
EASINGTON DISTRICT	
30 Blackhalls	<i>Unchanged</i> (Blackhalls ward; Hutton Henry ward (part – Hutton Henry parish ward of Hutton Henry parish, Hesledon parish ward of Monk Hesleden parish and the parishes of Nesbitt and Sheraton with Hulam); Wingate ward (part – Station Town parish ward of Hutton Henry parish))
31 Dawdon	Dawdon ward; Seaham Harbour ward (part)
32 Deneside	Deneside ward; Seaham North ward (part)
33 Easington	<i>Unchanged</i> (Easington Colliery ward; Easington Village & South Hetton ward (part – the parishes of Easington Village and Hawthorn))
34 Horden	<i>Unchanged</i> (Horden North ward; Horden South ward)
35 Murton	Murton East ward; Murton West ward
36 Peterlee East	Dene House ward; Edenhill ward
37 Peterlee West	Acre Rigg ward; Howletch ward
38 Seaham	Seaham Harbour ward (part); Seaham North ward (part)
39 Shotton	<i>Unchanged</i> (Easington Village & South Hetton ward (part – the parish of South Hetton); Haswell & Shotton ward)
40 Thornley	<i>Unchanged</i> (Thornley & Wheatley Hill ward; Wingate ward (part – the parish of Trimdon Foundry))
41 Wingate	Passfield ward; Hutton Henry ward (part – the parish of Castle Eden); Wingate ward (part – the parish of Wingate)
SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH	
42 Aycliffe East	Neville & Simpasture ward (part); Sedgfield ward (part – the parishes of Bradbury & the Isle and Mordon); Shafto St Marys ward (part)

Division name (by district council area)	Constituent district wards
43 Aycliffe North	Shafto St Marys ward (part); Woodham ward
44 Aycliffe West	Neville & Simpature ward (part); West ward
45 Chilton	Chilton ward; Middlestone ward (part – Merrington parish ward of Spennymoor parish)
46 Ferryhill	Broom ward; Ferryhill ward
47 Greenfield Middridge & Sunnydale	Greenfield Middridge ward; Sunnydale ward
48 Sedgfield	Bishop Middleham & Cornforth ward; Sedgfield ward (part – the parish of Sedgfield)
49 Shildon South West	Byerley ward; Thickey ward
50 Spennymore & Middlestone	Middlestone ward (part – Byers Green and Middlestone parish wards of Spennymoor parish); Spennymoor ward
51 Trimdon	<i>Unchanged</i> (Fishburn & Old Trimdon ward; New Trimdon & Trimdon Grange ward)
52 Tudhoe	Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange ward; Tudhoe ward
TEESDALE DISTRICT	
53 Barnard Castle East	Barnard Castle East ward; Barnard Castle North ward; Eggleston ward; Gainford & Winston ward; Ingleton ward; Staindrop ward; Streatlam & Whorlton ward
54 Barnard Castle West	Barnard Castle West; Barningham & Ovington ward; Cotherstone with Lartington ward; Greta ward; Middleton-in-Teesdale ward; Romalldkirk ward; Startforth ward
55 Evenwood	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cockfield ward; Etherley ward; Evenwood, Ramshaw & Lands ward; Hamsterley & South Bedburn ward; Lynesack ward)
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT	
56 Bishop Auckland Town	Bishop Auckland Town ward; Cockton Hill ward
57 Coundon	Coundon ward; Dene Valley ward
58 Crook North & Tow Law	Crook North ward; Howden ward; Tow Law & Stanley ward
59 Crook South	Crook South ward; Wheatbottom & Helmington Row ward
60 Weardale	St John's Chapel ward; Stanhope ward; Wolsingham & Witton-le-Wear ward
61 West Auckland	Escomb ward; West Auckland ward
62 Willington	Hunwick ward; Willington Central ward; Willington West End ward

Division name (by district council area)	Constituent district wards
63 Woodhouse Close	Henknowle ward; Woodhouse Close ward

Notes: 1 The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the seven Durham districts which were completed in 1998. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.

2 The large map inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed divisions outlined above and the maps in Appendix A illustrate some of the proposed boundaries in more detail.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Durham

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER LE STREET DISTRICT					
1 Chester-le-Street North & East	1	6,636	7	6,699	7
2 Chester-le-Street South	1	6,670	7	6,933	11
3 Chester-le-Street West Central	1	6,217	0	6,295	0
4 Lumley	1	5,757	-7	6,331	1
5 Ouston & Urpeth	1	6,380	3	6,433	3
6 Pelton	1	6,781	9	6,904	10
7 Sacriston	1	5,178	-17	5,274	-16
DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT					
8 Annfield Plain	1	6,222	0	6,120	-2
9 Benfieldside	1	5,404	-13	5,508	-12
10 Burnopfield & Dipton	1	6,112	-2	6,007	-4
11 Consett North	1	5,801	-7	5,799	-7
12 Craghead & South Moor	1	5,997	-4	5,885	-6
13 Delves Lane & Consett South	1	7,310	17	7,231	15
14 Esh	1	5,161	-17	5,150	-18
15 Lanchester	1	5,983	-4	5,882	-6
16 Leadgate & Medomsley	1	7,280	17	7,170	14
17 Stanley	1	6,590	6	6,766	8
18 Tanfield	1	6,467	4	6,388	2
DURHAM CITY					
19 Belmont	1	5,303	-15	5,363	-14
20 Brandon	1	6,155	-1	6,289	0
21 Coxhoe	1	5,193	-17	5,302	-15
22 Deerness Valley	1	6,901	11	6,945	11
23 Durham South	1	6,558	5	6,693	7
24 Elvet	1	6,803	9	7,005	12

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
25 Framwellgate Moor	1	7,116	14	7,288	16
26 Gilesgate	1	5,874	-6	5,815	-7
27 Nevilles Cross	1	6,703	8	6,946	11
28 Newton Hall	1	6,575	6	6,614	6
29 Sherburn	1	7,074	14	7,440	19
EASINGTON DISTRICT					
30 Blackhalls	1	6,143	-1	6,071	-3
31 Dawdon	1	5,311	-15	5,209	-17
32 Deneside	1	5,640	-9	5,576	-11
33 Easington	1	5,977	-4	6,383	2
34 Horden	1	6,479	4	6,381	2
35 Murton	1	5,780	-7	5,665	-10
36 Peterlee East	1	6,121	-2	6,072	-3
37 Peterlee West	1	5,918	-5	5,981	-5
38 Seaham	1	5,632	-9	6,098	-3
39 Shotton	1	6,503	5	6,429	3
40 Thornley	1	5,666	-9	5,551	-11
41 Wingate	1	7,216	16	7,164	14
SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH					
42 Aycliffe East	1	5,390	-13	5,329	-15
43 Aycliffe North	1	5,471	-12	5,520	-12
44 Aycliffe West	1	5,846	-6	5,792	-8
45 Chilton	1	4,998	-20	4,934	-21
46 Ferryhill	1	7,689	24	7,638	22
47 Greenfield Middridge & Sunnydale	1	6,882	11	6,942	11
48 Sedgefield	1	6,920	11	6,897	10
49 Shildon South West	1	5,467	-12	5,377	-14
50 Spennymoor & Middlestone	1	7,226	16	7,640	22
51 Trimdon	1	5,716	-8	5,715	-9

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
52 Tudhoe	1	6,985	12	6,916	10
TEESDALE DISTRICT					
53 Barnard Castle East	1	6,830	10	6,821	9
54 Barnard Castle West	1	6,264	1	6,295	0
55 Evenwood	1	6,862	10	6,848	9
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT					
56 Bishop Auckland Town	1	6,099	-2	6,110	-2
57 Coundon	1	5,561	-11	5,576	-11
58 Crook North & Tow Law	1	5,544	-11	5,540	-12
59 Crook South	1	6,148	-1	6,173	-1
60 Weardale	1	6,537	5	6,580	5
61 West Auckland	1	6,135	-1	6,165	-2
62 Willington	1	6,453	4	6,431	3
63 Woodhouse Close	1	6,402	3	6,385	2
Totals	63	392,012	-	394,679	-
Averages	-	6,222	-	6,265	-

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

Note: The electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor as each division is represented by a single councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 We are currently undertaking a review of the electoral arrangements for Durham County Council. This report contains our draft recommendations on which we are now consulting. Our review of the county is part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 In each two-tier county, our approach is first to complete the PERs of all the constituent districts and, when Orders for the resulting changes in those areas have been made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, then to commence a PER of the county council's electoral arrangements. The Secretary of State made Orders for new electoral arrangements in the districts in Durham, which we reviewed in 1997/98, in September 1999 and we are now embarking on our county review in this area.

Our Approach to County Reviews

3 In undertaking all our PERs we must have regard to:

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

4 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties*, which we supplemented in October 1998 on our approach to county reviews.

5 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the County Council, and the number, boundaries and names of electoral divisions. Current legislation requires that county council electoral divisions should each return one councillor. In addition, the statutory Rules set out in the 1972 Act provide that each division should be wholly contained within a single district and that division boundaries should not split unwarded parishes or parish wards.

6 In considering the approach we should take to county reviews, we valued the responses to the consultation we undertook in 1995 prior to the start of our PER programme, and the more recent discussions we have had with county council officers and the Local Government Association. We have also welcomed the opportunity to brief chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members of individual county councils, about our policies and procedures.

7 In October 1998 we wrote to all county councils setting out further advice on our approach to county reviews which supplemented our *Guidance*. First, as with all our reviews, we wish

wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and configuration is most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

8 Second, the broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the county as a whole. For example, we will continue to require justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any division. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in exceptional circumstances, and will require strong justification.

9 Similarly, we will seek to ensure that the number of county councillors representing each district area within the county is commensurate with the district's proportion of the county's electorate.

10 Third, the Rules provide that, in considering county council electoral arrangements, we should have regard to the boundaries of district wards. We attach considerable importance to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. Where wards or groups of wards are not coterminous with county divisions, this can cause confusion for the electorate at local elections, lead to increased election costs and, in our view, may not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

11 We recognise, however, that it is unlikely that optimum electoral equality and greatest coterminosity will be simultaneously achievable. In this respect, county reviews are different to those of districts. The Commission will seek to achieve the best available balance between electoral equality and coterminosity, taking into account the statutory criteria. While the proportion of electoral divisions that will be coterminous with the boundaries of district wards is likely to vary between counties, we would normally expect coterminosity to be achieved in a significant majority of divisions.

12 Where coterminosity is not possible in parished areas, and a district ward is to be split between electoral divisions, we would normally expect this to be achieved without dividing (or further dividing) a parish between divisions. There are likely to be exceptions to this, however, particularly where larger parishes are involved.

13 Fourth, we are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that county but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a county's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a county council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other counties.

14 Fifth, a further area of difference between county and district reviews is that we recognise it will not be possible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse

communities, for example, combining urban and rural areas. We have generally sought to avoid this in district reviews, in order to reflect the identities and interests of local communities. Some of the existing county council electoral divisions comprise a number of distinct communities, which is inevitable given the larger number of electors represented by each councillor, and we would expect that similar situations will continue under our recommendations in seeking the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the statutory criteria.

15 Finally, before we started our county reviews, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, in July 1998, setting out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. The Government's proposals provided for elections by halves in alternate years for all two-tier authorities. This would mean that district and county councils would each move to a cycle of elections by halves, with elections for district councils and county councils taking place in alternate years. The White Paper also refers to local accountability being maximised where the whole electorate in a council's area is involved in elections each time they take place, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member divisions in county councils to reflect a system of elections by halves. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

16 In October 1998, we wrote to all local authorities, setting out our understanding of the White Paper proposals, following discussions that we had had with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Local Government Association and the Association of London Government. In brief, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, and our present *Guidance*, until such time as the legislation changes. We have power only to recommend single-member divisions in county council areas.

17 As part of this review we may also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the county. However, we made some recommendations for new parish electoral arrangements as part of our district reviews. Furthermore, this is now a power that is open to district and unitary councils. We therefore only expect to put forward such recommendations during county reviews on an exceptional basis. In any event, we are *not* able to review the administrative boundaries *between* local authorities or parishes, or consider the establishment of new parish areas as part of this review.

The Review of Durham

18 We completed the reviews of the seven district council areas in Durham in October 1998, and the Secretary of State has since made the Orders for the new electoral arrangements. This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Durham County Council. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1980 (Report No. 406).

19 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: 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 on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

20 Stage One of this review began on 24 August 1999, when we wrote to Durham County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the seven district councils in the county, the Durham Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the county, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the county, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the County Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 14 December 1999.

21 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

22 Stage Three began on 22 February 2000 with the publication of this draft recommendations report, and public consultation on them will end on 17 April 2000.

23 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

24 The county of Durham comprises the seven districts of Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, Durham City, Easington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley. With a population of approximately 492,000, covering some 223,000 hectares, the county has a population density of just over two persons per hectare. The county borders Cumbria to the west, Northumberland to the north-west, the metropolitan boroughs of Gateshead and Sunderland to the north-east, the unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington to the south-east and North Yorkshire to the south-west.

25 The western part of the county is mainly moorland with settlements concentrated in the three main valleys of the Derwent, Wear and Tees. The eastern part of the county is more urban with the largest centre of population being the main administrative centre and county town of Durham City. There are a number of other smaller towns including Chester-le-Street, Seaham, Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland, Stanley and Consett.

26 To compare levels of electoral inequality between divisions, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors represented by the councillor for each division varies from the county average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

27 The electorate of the county is 392,012 (February 1999). The Council presently has 61 members, with one member elected from each division (Figure 4).

28 Since the last review of the County Council's electoral arrangements there has been a slight increase in the electorate in County Durham, with around 1 per cent more electors than two decades ago. The most significant growth in the county has occurred in Chester-le-Street district, with around 13 per cent more electors than twenty years ago. Other notable increases have been in the City of Durham and Teesdale district. However, these increases in electorate have been largely off set by static or declining electorates elsewhere in the county, most notably in Easington which has 6 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago.

29 At present, each councillor represents an average of 6,426 electors, which the County Council forecasts will increase marginally to 6,470 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors in 25 of the 61 divisions varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average, in 10 divisions by more than 20 per cent and in three divisions by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalances are in Sacriston division (in Chester-le-Street district) and Spennymoor division (in Sedgefield borough), where the councillors each represent 40 per cent more electors than the county average.

30 As detailed previously, in considering the County Council's electoral arrangements, we must have regard to the boundaries of district wards. Following the completion of the reviews of district warding arrangements in County Durham, we are therefore faced with a new "starting point" for considering electoral divisions. Our proposals for county divisions will be based on the new district wards as opposed to those which existed prior to the recent reviews. In view of

the effect of these new district wards and changes in the electorate over the past twenty years which have resulted in electoral imbalances across the county, changes to most, if not all, of the existing county electoral divisions are inevitable.

31 In considering county council electoral arrangements, we have regard to the boundaries of district wards. The term 'coterminosity' is used throughout the report and refers to situations where the boundaries of county electoral divisions and district wards are the same, that is to say where county divisions comprise either one or more whole district wards.

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT					
1 Chester-le-Street Central	1	6,716	5	6,779	5
2 Chester-le-Street North East	1	7,456	16	7,527	16
3 Chester-le-Street South	1	6,738	5	6,804	5
4 Lumley	1	5,757	-10	6,328	-2
5 Pelton	1	7,976	24	8,099	25
6 Sacriston	1	8,976	40	9,332	44
DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT					
7 Annfield Plain	1	5,425	-16	5,323	-18
8 Benfieldside	1	8,083	26	8,105	25
9 Burnopfield & Dipton	1	6,112	-5	6,002	-7
10 Consett	1	5,658	-12	5,560	-14
11 Craghead & South Moor	1	5,267	-18	5,147	-20
12 Delves Lane	1	4,973	-23	5,129	-21
13 Esh	1	5,161	-20	5,136	-21
14 Lanchester	1	5,983	-7	5,909	-9
15 Leadgate & Medomsley	1	7,081	10	6,968	8
16 Stanley	1	6,630	3	6,796	5
17 Tanfield	1	7,954	24	7,831	21
DURHAM CITY					
18 Belmont	1	7,667	19	7,718	19
19 Brandon	1	7,407	15	7,522	16
20 Coxhoe	1	8,014	25	8,213	27
21 Deerness Valley	1	6,901	7	6,960	8
22 Elvet	1	6,625	3	6,836	6
23 Framwellgate Moor	1	6,999	9	7,138	10
24 Gilesgate	1	6,398	0	6,347	-2

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
25 Nevilles Cross	1	6,595	3	6,808	5
26 Newton Hall	1	6,575	2	6,606	2
27 Sherburn	1	7,074	10	7,552	17
EASINGTON DISTRICT					
28 Blackhalls	1	6,143	-4	6,057	-6
29 Dawdon	1	4,173	-35	4,078	-37
30 Deneside	1	5,889	-8	5,834	-10
31 Easington	1	5,977	-7	6,406	-1
32 Horden	1	6,479	1	6,435	-1
33 Murton	1	5,531	-14	5,416	-16
34 Peterlee Central	1	6,494	1	6,408	-1
35 Peterlee Dene	1	6,286	-2	6,287	-3
36 Seaham	1	6,770	5	7,251	12
37 Shotton	1	6,503	1	6,420	-1
38 Thornley	1	5,666	-12	5,559	-14
39 Wingate	1	6,475	1	6,429	-1
SEDFIELD BOROUGH					
40 Aycliffe East	1	5,064	-21	5,032	-22
41 Aycliffe North	1	6,932	8	6,978	8
42 Aycliffe West	1	4,834	-25	4,780	-26
43 Chilton	1	6,088	-5	5,963	-8
44 Ferryhill	1	7,689	20	7,631	18
45 Sedgfield	1	5,290	-18	5,303	-18
46 Shildon North East	1	5,922	-8	5,996	-7
47 Shildon South West	1	5,978	-7	5,885	-9
48 Spennymoor	1	9,010	40	9,414	45
49 Trimdon	1	5,716	-11	5,715	-12
50 Tudhoe	1	6,067	-6	6,003	-7

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
TEESDALE DISTRICT					
51 Barnard Castle East	1	6,401	0	6,323	-2
52 Barnard Castle West	1	6,693	4	6,869	6
53 Evenwood	1	6,862	7	6,772	5
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT					
54 Bishop Auckland Town	1	7,240	13	7,237	12
55 Coundon	1	5,277	-18	5,285	-18
56 Crook North	1	6,268	-2	6,256	-3
57 Crook South	1	6,176	-4	6,207	-4
58 Weardale	1	6,146	-4	6,175	-5
59 West Auckland	1	5,926	-8	5,957	-8
60 Willington	1	6,112	-5	6,121	-5
61 Woodhouse Close	1	5,734	-11	5,722	-12
Totals	61	392,012	-	394,679	-
Averages	-	6,426	-	6,470	-

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

Note: Each division is represented by a single councillor, hence the electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Dawdon division in Easington were relatively over-represented by 35 per cent, while electors in Sacriston division in Chester-le-Street district were significantly under-represented by 40 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

32 At the start of the review, we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Durham County Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

33 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the County Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received six representations during Stage One, including a county-wide scheme from the County Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the County Council and the Commission by appointment. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission.

Durham County Council

34 As part of the review process, the County Council established a County Electoral Review Member/Officer Working Party (comprising councillors from all the political parties represented on the Council, including the co-ordinator of the Independent members) and seven district-based Member/Officer Working Parties, for the purpose of discussing and developing detailed proposals. It stated that this approach ensured that all members of the Council participated in the review process.

35 The Council proposed a council of 63 councillors, two more than at present, representing 63 divisions. The Council proposed that the districts of Chester-le-Street and Durham should each receive one additional county councillor and that Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley districts should maintain their existing levels of representation “in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of seats on the County Council”.

36 Under the Council’s scheme, the number of electors in 11 of the 63 divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average, with all divisions varying by less than 20 per cent. This level of electoral equality would deteriorate slightly by 2004, when 12 divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent, although no division would vary by more than 20 per cent. However, under the Council’s proposals only 19 divisions would be coterminous with district ward boundaries (only 30 per cent of the total number of proposed divisions in the county). The County Council’s proposals are summarised in Appendix B.

District and Borough Councils

37 Chester-le-Street District Council contended that the district is currently under-represented at County Council level, as a result of “rapid population growth”. It hoped that this would be addressed by the review, but that “any new County Council Electoral Division [reflected] the real communities within the District”.

Parish and Town Councils

38 We received direct representations from two parish councils. Pelton Parish Council proposed that the Newfield area be included in Pelton division, arguing that it shares close community ties with Pelton village and that both areas are included in the same district council ward. Cornforth Parish Council stated that the existing Chilton division (in Sedgefield) should be retained unchanged, contending that it was “a strong administrative area, with community links ... and should not be divided”. It opposed the County Council’s proposals affecting this area and suggested an alternative Sedgefield division.

Other Representations

39 We received two further representations. County Councillor Bates and Chester-le-Street District Councillors Dunn, Laverick and Smith submitted a joint representation contending that a revised Pelton division should incorporate the small area of Newfield, arguing that it is linked to Pelton parish by “family, social and recreational ties”. The North Durham Constituency Labour Party put forward proposals for electoral divisions in the North Durham Constituency area (covering all of Chester-le-Street district and part of Derwentside district), which were the same as those put forward by the County Council.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

40 As with our reviews of districts, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Durham County Council is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every division of the county”.

41 In relation to Schedule 11, our 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. We must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken, and to the boundaries of district wards.

42 We have discussed in Chapter One the additional parameters which apply to reviews of county council electoral arrangements and the need to have regard to the boundaries of district wards and coterminosity. We will also seek to ensure that the number of county councillors representing each district council area within the county is commensurate with the district’s proportion of the county’s electorate.

43 It is impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors in every division of a county. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

44 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, especially when also seeking to achieve coterminosity in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review.

45 We therefore recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as the boundaries of district wards and community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any division. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in exceptional circumstances and will require strong justification.

Electorate Forecasts

46 The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a marginal increase in the electorate of just under 1 per cent from 392,012 to 394,679 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the Chester-le-Street and

Durham City areas. The County Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the County Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to division boundaries has been obtained.

47 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science. We have examined the methodology and assumptions used by the County Council and are content that their figures represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

48 As explained earlier in this report, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

49 Durham County Council presently has 61 members. The County Council proposed a council of 63 members in order to provide for greater equality of representation between the seven districts within the county. It proposed that the districts of Chester-le-Street and Durham should each receive one additional county councillor and that Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley districts maintain their existing levels of representation. The North Durham Constituency Labour Party also proposed that Chester-le-Street district be represented by an additional county councillor.

50 The Commission does not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but is prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. Given the general consensus regarding the number of councillors that should represent County Durham, and in view of the fact that under a council size of 63 the number of county councillors representing each district area within the county would be commensurate with its proportion of the county's electorate, we concur with the County Council's proposals in respect of council size.

51 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that, in County Durham, a council size of 63 members would best meet the statutory criteria.

Electoral Arrangements

52 We have carefully considered all the representations received, including the county-wide scheme from the County Council. As detailed above, we concluded that a council size of 63 would provide a fair level of representation across the county and facilitate a good electoral scheme.

53 We are grateful for the positive approach taken by the County Council in putting forward proposals for new electoral arrangements which would improve the electoral imbalances which exist under the current arrangements. The Council's proposals would improve electoral equality, compared to the current arrangements, with the number of divisions where the number of electors would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average reducing from 25 to 11. However,

its proposals would not achieve a high level of coterminosity – only 19 of its proposed 63 county divisions (30 per cent) would be formed from whole district council wards.

54 As outlined earlier in this report, we seek to achieve coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and district wards in formulating new county electoral arrangements where possible, as this can be conducive to securing effective and convenient local government. We acknowledge, however, that the size and configuration of a number of district wards (the ‘building blocks’ of the new divisions) across the county do not facilitate the creation of coterminous divisions.

55 However, while we acknowledge the very good level of electoral equality that would be secured overall by the County Council’s proposals, we consider that a better balance of all the criteria governing this review (ie securing electoral equality, coterminosity and effective and convenient local government, and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities) can be achieved. Consequently, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the County Council’s scheme, but we also propose incorporating the proposals submitted by Pelton Parish Council, County Councillor Bates and District Councillors Dunn, Laverick and Smith, in addition to putting forward some of our own proposals.

56 Our proposals would also involve the warding or re-warding of three parishes, Cassop-cum-Quarrington, Seaham and Great Aycliffe, in order to meet the requirements of Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act (see Appendix C). While we generally seek to avoid further warding of parishes as part of a county review, in the case of Durham County Council we believe this is unavoidable if the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria is to be achieved. Our parishing proposals are detailed later in this chapter. For the purposes of county divisions, the seven district areas in the county are considered in turn, as follows:

- (a) Chester-le-Street district;
- (b) Derwentside district;
- (c) Durham city;
- (d) Easington district;
- (e) Sedgefield borough;
- (f) Teesdale district;
- (g) Wear Valley district.

57 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of this report.

Chester-le-Street district

58 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Chester-le-Street is represented by six county councillors serving six county divisions: Chester-le-Street Central, Chester-le-Street North East, Chester-le-Street South, Lumley, Pelton and Sacriston. There is a degree of electoral imbalance in these divisions, with the number of electors in three of the six divisions varying by more than 10 per cent from the average for the county, and in two divisions by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in the Sacriston division which is currently under-represented by 40 per cent (44 per cent in 2004).

59 The district has experienced an increase in electorate since the last review such that it is now under-represented overall on the County Council (as highlighted in Chester-le-Street District Council's representation). As detailed earlier in this chapter, both the County Council and the North Durham Constituency Labour Party proposed that Chester-le-Street be represented by an additional (seventh) county councillor. Under our proposed 63-member scheme, Chester-le-Street would be correctly represented by seven county councillors.

60 The County Council submitted district-wide proposals for Chester-le-Street during Stage One. Under these proposals electoral equality would improve with the number of electors in all seven of the proposed divisions varying by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the county both initially and in 2004. However, a poor level of level of coterminosity would be achieved, with only three of the seven divisions comprising whole district wards. The North Durham Constituency Labour Party put forward proposals for seven divisions in Chester-le-Street district which were the same as those proposed by the County Council.

61 We also received a joint submission from County Councillor Bates and Chester-le-Street District Councillors Dunn, Laverick and Smith contending that the small area of Newfield should be incorporated into a revised Pelton division as it is linked to Pelton parish by "family, social and recreational ties". Similarly, Pelton Parish Council proposed including Newfield in Pelton division, arguing that it shares close community ties with Pelton village and that both areas are included in the same district council ward.

62 Having considered all the representations that we received during Stage One we have noted that while the County Council's scheme would secure good electoral equality, it would not provide for a high level of coterminosity between division and district ward boundaries. We therefore propose building on the County Council's scheme, incorporating the modifications put forward by Pelton Parish Council, County Councillor Bates and District Councillors Dunn, Laverick and Smith, and our own modifications, in order to secure an improved degree of coterminosity.

63 In the east of the district the County Council proposed a Lumley division, based on the existing boundaries, comprising the district wards of Lumley and Bournmoor. The number of electors in the proposed division would be 7 per cent below the average for the county initially (1 per cent above in 2004). Given the good electoral equality and coterminous boundaries that would be secured, we propose endorsing the County Council's proposed Lumley division, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

64 In the north of the district the County Council proposed a new Ouston & Urpeth division (comprising the district wards of Ouston, Urpeth and Grange Villa & West Pelton) and a new Pelton division (comprising North Lodge district ward and the majority of Pelton ward, less the unparished area around Newfield). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Ouston & Urpeth and Pelton would vary from the average for the county initially by 3 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (3 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004). Given that the Council's proposed Ouston & Urpeth division would secure good electoral equality and be fully coterminous, we propose endorsing it as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

65 However, we are of the view that the Council's proposed Pelton division can be modified slightly in order to secure improved coterminosity, thus providing for effective and convenient local government. We are therefore proposing to include the Newfield area in the revised Pelton division, as proposed by Pelton Parish Council, County Councillor Bates and Chester-le-Street District Councillors Dunn, Laverick and Smith. This modification would also provide for a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities, without having a significant effect on electoral equality. The number of electors in our proposed Pelton division, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, would vary from the county average by 9 per cent initially (10 per cent in 2004).

66 In and around the town of Chester-le-Street, the County Council proposed a new Chester-le-Street West Central division (comprising the district wards of Chester Central, Chester West and Pelton Fell, and the Newfield area from Pelton ward), a revised Chester-le-Street North East division (comprising the district wards of Chester North and Chester East) and a revised Chester-le-Street South division (comprising Chester South district ward and the unparished area and Waldrige parish from Edmondsley & Waldrige district ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Chester-le-Street West Central and Chester-le-Street North East divisions would vary from the average for the county by 3 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, both initially and in 2004. The number of electors in the Council's proposed Chester-le-Street South division would be almost equal to the county average initially (varying by 4 per cent in 2004).

67 As outlined above, we propose including the Newfield area in a revised Pelton division. As a consequence of this modification, the Council's proposed Chester-le-Street West Central division would also be coterminous with district ward boundaries and would secure improved electoral equality, with the number of electors in the division almost equalling the average for the county both initially and in 2004. In the light of this improved coterminosity and electoral equality we therefore propose putting it forward as part of our draft recommendations. Similarly, given the good electoral equality and coterminosity of boundaries secured under the Council's proposed Chester-le-Street North East division, we propose endorsing it as part of our draft recommendations. However, we are of the view that it would be a more accurate description of the areas comprising this division if it were named Chester-le-Street North & East. We would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

68 We have considered the County Council's proposed Chester-le-Street South division and noted that the County Council proposed splitting Edmondsley & Waldrige district ward. It proposed including the Edmondsley parish ward with the district wards of Sacriston and Kimblesworth & Plawsworth in a revised Sacriston division, in order to secure a high level of electoral equality. However, if the whole of the Edmondsley & Waldrige district ward were included in the proposed Chester-le-Street South division, thus achieving coterminosity of boundaries, the number of electors in the modified Chester-le-Street South division would vary from the county average by 7 per cent initially (11 per cent in 2004) and the number of electors in the modified Sacriston division would vary from the county average by 17 per cent initially (16 per cent in 2004). Although electoral equality would worsen under these modified proposals, we are of the view that they would provide for more effective and convenient local government, in terms of coterminosity of boundaries. We are therefore putting forward the revised divisions

of Chester-le-Street South and Sacriston, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations and would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

69 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors in six of the proposed seven divisions in Chester-le-Street would vary by less than 10 per cent from the county average, with Sacriston division varying by 17 per cent (16 per cent in 2004). This level of electoral equality would deteriorate slightly by 2004, when two divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent. Under these proposals all of the seven divisions would be formed from whole district wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report. We are putting forward these proposals for consultation as providing a substantially better balance of representation across the district as a whole and would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

Derwentside district

70 Derwentside district is currently represented by 11 county councillors serving 11 divisions: Annfield Plain, Benfieldside, Burnopfield & Dipton, Consett, Craghead & South Moor, Delves Lane, Esh, Lanchester, Leadgate & Medomsley, Stanley and Tanfield. There are considerable electoral imbalances within the district area with the number of electors represented by each councillor in seven of the 11 divisions varying by more than 10 per cent from the county average, and in three divisions by more than 20 per cent.

71 The most over-represented divisions in the district are Delves Lane and Esh which are over-represented by 23 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. However, the over-representation in these divisions is somewhat balanced by the under-representation in Benfieldside and Tanfield divisions which are under-represented by 26 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. Overall, at present, Derwentside district is slightly over-represented on the County Council. However, under our proposed 63-member scheme the district would be correctly represented by 11 county councillors.

72 At Stage One the County Council submitted district-wide proposals for Derwentside. Under these proposals electoral equality would improve, but they would provide for a poor level of coterminosity, with only four of the 11 divisions comprising whole district wards. The number of electors in all but one of the 11 proposed divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the county both initially and in 2004. The worst electoral imbalance would be in the proposed Esh division which would vary by 17 per cent initially (18 per cent in 2004). The North Durham Constituency Labour Party put forward proposals for divisions in the part of Derwentside district included in the North Durham Constituency, which were the same as those proposed by the County Council.

73 Given the local consensus in support of the County Council's scheme, and having considered alternative configurations of district wards to create electoral divisions, we are of the view that the majority of the County Council's proposals provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities. However, we are proposing modifications to four of the County Council's proposed divisions, in and around the town of Consett, in order to secure an increased level of coterminosity.

74 In the southern, parished part of the district the County Council proposed an Esh division, based on existing boundaries (comprising the district wards of Esh and Cornsay) and a Lanchester division, based on existing boundaries (comprising the district wards of Lanchester, Burnhope and Castleside). The Council's proposed Esh and Lanchester divisions would be over-represented by 17 per cent and 4 per cent initially (18 per cent and 6 per cent in 2004). Given the constraints of the external district boundary, and in view of the fact that both the proposed divisions would comprise whole district wards, therefore providing for effective and convenient local government, and would facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the district, we are prepared to accept such a level of electoral imbalance. We therefore propose adopting the Council's proposed Esh and Lanchester divisions, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

75 In the central and northern parts of the district the County Council put forward a revised Annfield Plain division (comprising the district wards of Annfield Plain and Catchgate) and a revised Burnopfield & Dipton division (comprising the district wards of Burnopfield and Dipton). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Annfield Plain and Burnopfield & Dipton divisions would be initially equal to and 2 per cent below the average for the county respectively (2 per cent below and 4 per cent below by 2004). Given the good electoral equality and the coterminosity of boundaries that would be secured under these proposals we have decided to put forward the County Council's proposed Annfield Plain and Burnopfield & Dipton divisions, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

76 In the eastern part of the district, in and around the town of Stanley, the Council put forward three revised divisions. It proposed a revised Tanfield division (comprising the district ward of Tanfield and a part of Havannah district ward, to the north of East Stanley), a revised Stanley division (comprising all of Stanley Hall district ward, the southern part of Havannah district ward and two areas from the northern part of Craghead & South Stanley ward: the area to the east of Durham Road and to the north-east of Mendip Terrace, and the area to the west of Durham Road north of Stanley Burn) and a revised Craghead & South Moor division (comprising the remaining southern part of Craghead & South Stanley district ward and all of South Moor district ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Tanfield, Stanley and Craghead & South Stanley divisions would vary from the average for the county by 4 per cent, 6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (2 per cent, 8 per cent and 6 per cent in 2004).

77 We have considered the County Council's proposals for three county divisions in this area and are of the view that they would provide for the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the reflection of local communities. As the area as a whole comprises five three-member district wards, it is not possible to achieve coterminous divisions without having a detrimental effect on electoral equality. Therefore, given the consensus locally in support of these proposals, we are putting forward the Council's proposed Tanfield, Stanley and Craghead & South Moor divisions, as shown on Map A1 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

78 In the north-western part of the district, the Council proposed four divisions covering the area in and around the town of Consett. It proposed a revised Leadgate & Medomsley division (comprising the district ward of Leadgate and the majority of the Ebchester & Medomsley district

ward, excluding an area around Shotley Bridge) and a revised Benfieldside division (comprising the remainder of Ebchester & Medomsley district ward, all of Benfieldside district ward and two areas from Blackhill ward: the western part of the ward to the west of Pemberton Road, and the area to the west of Queen's Road and to the north of Durham Road). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Leadgate & Medomsley and Benfieldside would vary from the average for the county by 10 per cent and 6 per cent initially (8 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004).

79 The County Council also proposed a revised Consett division (comprising the remaining south-eastern part of Blackhill district ward, the majority of Consett North district ward, except an area in the centre of the ward to the south of Belle Vue park and to the north of Park Road, and all of Consett South district ward) and a revised Delves Lane division (comprising the remaining central part of Consett North district ward, Consett East district ward and Delves Lane district ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Consett and Delves Lane divisions would vary from the average for the county by 8 per cent and 3 per cent initially (7 per cent and 1 per cent in 2004).

80 Notwithstanding the good level of electoral equality that would be secured under the Council's proposals, we are of the view that they can be modified to achieve greater coterminosity, thus providing for more effective and convenient local government, and a better reflection of the identities of local communities. We therefore propose including all of Ebchester & Medomsley ward in a modified Leadgate & Medomsley division. The number of electors in the revised division would vary from the county average by 17 per cent initially (improving to 14 per cent in 2004). As a consequence, the number of electors in our modified Benfieldside division would vary from the county average by 13 per cent initially (12 per cent in 2004). Although electoral equality under our proposed divisions, as shown on Map A2 in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of the report, would be slightly worse than under the County Council's scheme, we are of the view that this is justified by the improvement in coterminosity that would be achieved.

81 Similarly, we propose modifying the Council's proposed Consett and Delves Lane divisions. We have noted that the Council proposed including the central part of Consett North in a revised Delves Lane division, but we do not believe that this proposal would secure identifiable boundaries or provide for the most appropriate reflection of local communities: there are limited links between the different areas comprising the division and some of the electors resident in the northern part of Consett North ward would be effectively 'cut off' from the remainder of the ward and would have to travel through the proposed Delves Lane division to reach the southern part of Consett.

82 We have considered alternative configurations of district wards in this area and propose modifying the Council's proposals in order to achieve improved coterminosity while providing for a better reflection of local communities. We therefore propose combining the district wards of Delves Lane, Consett East and Consett South to form a new Delves Lane & Consett South division (areas linked by the A692 road) and propose joining the eastern part of Blackhill ward with Consett North ward to create a new Consett North division (linked by Durham Road and Park Road). The number of electors in our proposed Delves Lane & Consett South division and

Consett North division would vary from the county average by 17 per cent and 7 per cent initially (15 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004). While we acknowledge that these proposals would not secure as good electoral equality as under the Council's proposals, we are of the view that this configuration would provide improved coterminosity and more identifiable boundaries (thus providing for more effective and convenient local government) and a slightly better reflection of local communities. Our draft recommendations for this area are shown on Map A2 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

83 Overall in Derwentside district under our draft recommendations, seven of the proposed 11 divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average, with all divisions varying by less than 20 per cent, both initially and in 2004. The worst electoral imbalance would be in Esh division which would vary by 17 per cent initially (18 per cent by 2004). Under these proposals six of the proposed 11 divisions would be coterminous. Our draft recommendations for the whole of Derwentside district are detailed on the large map inserted at the back of this report and on Maps A1 and A2 in Appendix A. We would very much welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three, particularly regarding division names.

Durham City

84 At present, Durham City district area is served by 10 county councillors, representing the ten divisions of Belmont, Brandon, Coxhoe, Deerness Valley, Elvet, Framwellgate Moor, Gilesgate, Nevilles Cross, Newton Hall and Sherburn. The number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average in three divisions, with one, Coxhoe, varying by 25 per cent (27 per cent in 2004). The district has experienced an increase in electorate since the last review such that it is now significantly under-represented overall on the County Council. As detailed earlier in this chapter, the County Council proposed that Durham City district be represented by an additional (eleventh) county councillor. Under our proposed 63-member scheme, Durham City district would be correctly represented by 11 county councillors.

85 The Council put forward a district-wide scheme during Stage One. Seven of its proposed 11 divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average initially with no division varying by more than 20 per cent from the average. By 2004, five divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average, with the worst electoral imbalance being 19 per cent in the proposed Sherburn division. However, the County Council's proposals would secure coterminosity in only three of its proposed 11 divisions. It also proposed a detached division in the north-eastern part of the city of Durham, linking Belmont district ward with the majority of Pelaw & Gilesgate ward and a small eastern area of St Nicholas district ward.

86 As outlined in our *Guidance*, we have some concern over the use of detached divisions. We are of the view that they do not lend themselves to the creation of electoral areas which reflect local community identities and we will not normally put them forward as our recommendations, other than to recognise the particular circumstances of, for example, offshore islands. In view of this, and in order to improve the level of coterminosity in the district (thus providing for more effective and convenient local government), we propose modifying some of the Council's divisions. However, we recognise that the size and configuration of the district wards and constituent parishes in the district do not facilitate the creation of coterminous divisions and

acknowledge that a large part of the Council's proposals provide the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the reflection of local communities.

87 In the south-eastern part of the district the Council highlighted the fact that the large parish of Cassop-cum-Quarrington effectively 'cuts off' the district ward of Coxhoe from the rest of the district. It further noted that if the whole of Cassop-cum-Quarrington ward were joined with Coxhoe ward to form a revised Coxhoe division it would vary above the county average by 43 per cent. Even if only the parish of Cassop-cum-Quarrington were joined with Coxhoe ward to form a division the resultant electoral variance would still be unacceptable at 29 per cent above the county average. In view of this, the County proposed warding the parish of Cassop-cum-Quarrington (using the A1 motorway as the parish ward boundary) and including the eastern part of the parish in a revised Coxhoe division. It consequently proposed including the western part of Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish and the parish of Croxdale & Hett (ie the remainder of Cassop-cum-Quarrington district ward) in a new Durham South division, together with Shincliffe district ward and the South parish ward of the parish of Brandon & Byshottles from Brancepath, Langley Moor & Meadowfield district ward. The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Coxhoe and Durham South would vary from the average for the county initially by 17 per cent and 5 per cent respectively (15 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004).

88 We have considered alternative configurations of district wards, parishes and parish wards in this southern part of the district to create new electoral divisions. However, we have concluded that the Council's proposals provide the best balance between securing electoral equality, providing for effective and convenient local government and reflecting local communities. Any alternative configuration would result in unacceptable levels of electoral imbalance or have a detrimental effect on the provision of an effective electoral scheme elsewhere in the district. We have considered the Council's proposals for this part of the district and concur with its proposal that Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish should be warded in order to achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality, and agree that the A1 motorway would provide an easily identifiable boundary.

89 We therefore propose endorsing the Council's proposed divisions of Coxhoe and Durham South, as shown on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations. Consequent proposals in respect of the electoral arrangements of Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council are outlined at the end of this chapter.

90 In the south-western part of the district the Council proposed a revised Brandon division comprising Brandon district ward and the remainder of Brancepath, Langley Moor & Meadowfield ward – the East parish ward of Brandon & Byshottles parish and the parish of Brancepath. It also proposed a revised Deerness Valley division comprising the district wards of Deerness and New Brancepath & Ushaw Moor. In the Council's proposed Brandon and Deerness divisions the number of electors would be initially 1 per cent below and 11 per cent above the average for the county respectively (almost equal to and 11 per cent above in 2004).

91 Given the constraints of the district boundary in this area and the consequent effect of the Council's proposed Durham South division, we consider that the Council's proposals provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality, securing identifiable boundaries and

reflecting local community identity. We therefore propose putting them forward as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on Map A4 and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

92 In the northern part of the district the Council proposed a revised Newton Hall division (comprising the district wards of Newton Hall North and Newton Hall South and the unparished area around Priory Road from Framwellgate Moor ward) and a revised Framwellgate Moor division (comprising the remainder of Framwellgate Moor ward and Bearpark & Witton Gilbert ward). The number of electors in the proposed Newton Hall and Framwellgate Moor divisions would vary from the county average by 6 per cent and 14 per cent respectively (6 per cent and 16 per cent in 2004). Given the constraints of the district boundary to the north and west of this area, and the River Wear to the east, we are of the view that the Council's proposals would secure the best balance of the statutory criteria in this part of the district and propose putting them forward as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on Map A6 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

93 In the north-eastern part of the district the Council put forward a Sherburn division, based on existing boundaries (comprising the district wards of Pitlington & West Rainton and Shadforth & Sherburn). The number of electors in the proposed division would vary above the county average by 14 per cent initially (19 per cent in 2004). We have noted that this proposal would result in a fairly high electoral imbalance by 2004; however, we consider that this is acceptable given that the division would comprise whole district wards and provide a good reflection of local communities, in addition to facilitating a good scheme in the south-eastern and central parts of the district. We therefore propose putting forward the Council's proposed Sherburn division, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

94 In the central part of the district, in and around Durham City, the Council put forward four divisions. It proposed a revised Nevilles Cross division (comprising the district wards of Nevilles Cross and Crossgate & Framwelgate) and a revised Elvet division (comprising Elvet ward and the majority of St Nicholas ward, to the west of the A690 Leazes Road). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Nevilles Cross and Elvet divisions would initially vary from the county average by 8 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (11 per cent and 4 per cent in 2004).

95 While we propose putting forward the Council's proposed Nevilles Cross division as part of our recommendations, as it would comprise whole district wards and secure reasonable electoral equality, we propose modifying the proposed Elvet division to include the whole of St Nicholas ward in order to improve coterminosity. A reasonable level of electoral equality would still be achieved under our modified Elvet division with the number of electors in the division varying from the county average by 9 per cent initially (12 per cent in 2004).

96 The Council further proposed a detached division of Gilesgate, comprising the district ward of Belmont, the small eastern area of St Nicholas ward not included in Elvet division and the majority of Pelaw & Gilesgate ward (less an area to the north of Sunderland Road). It also proposed a revised Belmont division comprising Carrville & Gilesgate Moor ward and the remainder of Pelaw & Gilesgate ward. The number of electors in the Council's proposed

Gilesgate and Belmont divisions would vary from the average for the county by 4 per cent and 8 per cent initially (5 per cent and 8 per cent in 2004).

97 As detailed earlier, we do not seek to put forward detached divisions, therefore, we propose modifying the Council's proposed divisions in this area in order to secure a better reflection of local community identities and interests, while securing reasonable electoral equality and identifiable boundaries. We propose putting forward for consultation a modified Belmont division (comprising the district ward of Belmont and the Carrville parish ward of Belmont parish from Carrville & Gilesgate Moor ward) and a modified Gilesgate division (comprising the district ward of Pelaw & Gilesgate and the Gilesgate Moor parish ward from Carrville & Gilesgate ward). The number of electors in our proposed divisions of Belmont and Gilesgate would vary from the average for the county by 15 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (14 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004). We are of the view that these proposals, as shown on Map A5 in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of the report, would provide for more cohesive divisions and secure a more identifiable boundary between the two (ie the A1 motorway), thus providing for more effective and convenient local government.

98 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors in all of the proposed divisions in the Durham City area would vary by less than 20 per cent from the county average initially and in 2004. The worst electoral imbalance in 2004 would be in Sherburn division which would vary by 19 per cent from the county average, but we consider that this is acceptable in order to achieve coterminosity of district ward and division boundaries, therefore providing for effective and convenient local government, and in order to facilitate a good scheme elsewhere in the district.

99 While only four out of the 11 proposed divisions would be formed from whole district wards, a relatively poor level of coterminosity is almost inevitable given the size and configuration of a number of the multi-member district wards under a 63-member county council size. However, parish and parish ward boundaries have been utilised to divide wards as appropriate, in addition to creating two new parish wards in Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish, with the new parish boundary following the A1 motorway. We acknowledge that satisfying all the competing criteria is difficult in Durham City district, but we believe that our proposals represent a good balance of the competing criteria governing this review. Our proposals are shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report and on Maps A3, A4, A5 and A6 in Appendix A. We would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

Easington district

100 Under the current arrangements, Easington is represented by 12 county councillors serving the divisions of Blackhalls, Dawdon, Deneside, Easington, Horden Murton, Peterlee Central, Peterlee Dene, Seaham, Shotton, Thornley and Wingate. The number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average in three divisions, with one, Dawdon, varying by 35 per cent (37 per cent in 2004). The district has experienced a decrease in electorate since the last review, such that under the current arrangements it is over-represented on the County Council. However, under our proposed 63-member council, the district would continue to be entitled to 12 county councillors.

101 During Stage One the County Council submitted a district-wide scheme for Easington. It noted that following the district review, some of the new district wards, which would form the 'building blocks' for the new county divisions, had significantly increased in size. It argued that most of the existing divisions in the district had reasonable electoral equality and that "to substantially disturb those divisions to try and address other imbalances would have a knock-on effect throughout the district and was, therefore, deemed counter-productive."

102 Under the County Council's scheme three of its proposed 12 divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average initially and no division would vary by more than 20 per cent from the average. By 2004, four divisions would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average, with the worst electoral imbalance being 17 per cent in the proposed Dawdon division. However, the County Council's proposals would secure coterminosity in only three of the proposed 12 divisions in the district.

103 Having considered alternative configurations of district wards to create electoral divisions, we are of the view that the majority of the Council's proposals provide the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the reflection of community identities and interests. We agree that the configuration of district wards in Easington (predominantly two- and three-member) do not lend themselves to the creation of coterminous divisions and makes a lack of coterminosity almost inevitable if reasonable electoral equality is to be attained. We therefore propose adopting the Council's scheme as our draft recommendations in this area, albeit with one slight modification which would slightly improve coterminosity.

104 In the south of the district the Council proposed a Blackhalls division, based on the existing boundaries (comprising Blackhalls ward, the majority of Hutton Henry ward excluding Castle Eden parish, and the Station Town parish ward of Hutton Henry parish from Wingate ward) and a revised Wingate division (comprising Wingate parish from Wingate ward, Castle Eden parish from Hutton Henry ward and all of the Passfield ward). The number of electors in the proposed divisions of Blackhalls and Wingate would vary from the average for the county by 1 per cent and 16 per cent (3 per cent and 14 per cent in 2004). As outlined earlier, we are of the view that these proposals would provide for the best balance between electoral equality and coterminosity. Any alternative configuration of wards and parishes in this area would result in an unacceptable level of electoral imbalance and have a detrimental effect on the coterminosity of the Council's proposed divisions in the remainder of Peterlee and in Horden. We therefore propose putting forward these divisions, as shown on the large map in the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

105 In the remaining area of the town of Peterlee, the Council proposed two coterminous divisions: Peterlee East (comprising the district wards of Dene House and Eden Hill) and Peterlee West (comprising the district wards of Acre Rigg and Howletch). The number of electors in the proposed Peterlee East and Peterlee West divisions would vary from the average for the county by 2 per cent and 5 per cent initially (3 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004). The Council also proposed a coterminous Horden division, based on the existing boundaries, comprising the district wards of Horden North and Horden South. The number of electors in the proposed Horden division would vary from the county average by 4 per cent initially (2 per cent in 2004). Given the very good electoral equality and coterminosity of boundaries that would be secured under the Council's proposals in this area, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, we propose adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

106 In the western part of the district the Council proposed a Thornley division, based on the existing boundaries (comprising Thornley & Wheatley Hill ward and Trimdon Foundry parish from Wingate ward) and a Shotton division, based on existing boundaries (comprising Haswell & Shotton ward and South Hetton parish from the Easington Village & South Hetton ward). The number of electors in the proposed Thornley and Shotton divisions would vary from the county average by 9 per cent and 5 per cent initially (11 per cent and 3 per cent in 2004). As outlined earlier, we are of the view that the Council's proposals, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria, particularly given the constraints of the district boundary in this area, and propose endorsing them as part of our draft recommendations.

107 To the north of Peterlee, the Council proposed an Easington division, based on existing boundaries (comprising Easington Colliery ward and the parishes of Easington Village and Hawthorn from Easington Village & South Hetton ward). The number of electors in the proposed division would be 4 per cent below the county average initially (2 per cent above in 2004). As outlined earlier, the configuration of district wards and constituent parishes in this area do not lend themselves to the creation of coterminous divisions, with any configurations of whole wards resulting in an unacceptably high level of electoral imbalance. For example, if the district wards of Easington Colliery and Easington Village & South Hetton were joined in a single division the resultant electoral variance would be 34 per cent above the average for the county. We therefore propose putting forward the Council's proposed Easington division as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map at the back of this report.

108 In the northern part of the district, in and around the town of Seaham, the Council proposed four divisions. It proposed a revised Murton division (comprising Murton West ward and the Murton East parish ward from Murton East ward), a revised Dawdon division (comprising Dawdon ward and the southern part of Seaham Harbour ward), a revised Deneside division (comprising Deneside ward, Dalton Village parish ward from Murton East ward and the West Lea area of Seaham parish from Seaham North ward) and a revised Seaham division (comprising the remainder of Seaham North ward and the northern part of Seaham Harbour ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Murton, Dawdon, Deneside and Seaham divisions would initially vary from the average for the county by 11 per cent, 15 per cent, 5 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (14 per cent, 17 per cent, 7 per cent and 3 per cent in 2004).

109 We have considered the Council's proposals in this area and acknowledge that, given the configuration of the district wards and parishes in the area, and in order to secure reasonable electoral equality while reflecting local community identities, a lower level of coterminosity would have to be accepted.

110 We are of the view that the majority of the Council's proposals would secure the best balance of the statutory criteria governing the review in this area. However, we propose one minor modification which will slightly improve coterminosity without having too significant effect on electoral equality. We propose including the whole of Murton East ward in the Murton division, resulting in the number of electors in the modified division varying from the county average by 7 per cent initially (10 per cent in 2004). As a consequence of this modification, the number of electors in the revised Deneside division would vary from the county average by 9 per

cent initially (11 per cent in 2004). Our draft recommendations for this area are shown in Map A7 and A8 in Appendix A and on the large map in the back of this report. Consequent proposals in respect of the electoral arrangements of Seaham Town Council are outlined at the end of this chapter.

111 Overall in Easington district under our draft recommendations, 10 of the proposed 12 divisions would vary initially by no more than 10 per cent from the county average, with all divisions varying by less than 20 per cent. This level of electoral equality would worsen slightly in 2004 when only eight of the divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent, with the worst electoral imbalance being in Dawdon division which would vary by 17 per cent at that time.

112 Under these proposals only four of the proposed 12 divisions would be comprise whole district wards. However, a relatively poor level of coterminosity is almost inevitable in Easington under a 63-member council size given the pattern of multi-member wards in the district. Nevertheless, we believe that good boundaries have been utilised to divide wards as appropriate and we are of the view that our proposals provide for a better balance of the competing criteria governing our work. Our draft recommendations for the whole of Easington district are detailed on the large map inserted at the back of this report and on Maps A7 and A8 in Appendix A. We would very much welcome views on all aspects of our proposals during Stage Three.

Sedgefield borough

113 Under the current arrangements, Sedgefield borough is represented by 11 county councillors serving the divisions of Aycliffe East, Aycliffe North, Aycliffe West, Chilton, Ferryhill, Sedgefield, Shildon North East, Shildon South West, Spennymoor, Trimdon and Tudhoe. There are significant electoral imbalances within the borough area with the number of electors represented by each councillor in six of the 11 divisions varying by more than 10 per cent from the county average, and in three divisions by more than 20 per cent.

114 The most over-represented divisions in the district are Aycliffe East, Aycliffe West and Sedgefield, which are over-represented by 21 per cent, 25 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. However, the over-representation in these divisions is somewhat balanced by the under-representation in Ferryhill and Spennymoor divisions which are under-represented by 20 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Overall, under the current arrangements Sedgefield is slightly over-represented. However, under our proposed 63-member scheme the district would be correctly represented by 11 county councillors.

115 In the eastern part of the borough the Council proposed a Trimdon division, based on existing boundaries (comprising the district wards of New Trimdon & Trimdon Grange and Fishburn & Old Trimdon). It also proposed a revised Sedgefield division (comprising the district ward of Bishop Middleham & Cornforth and the parish of Sedgefield from Sedgefield district ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Trimdon and Sedgefield divisions would vary from the average for the county initially by 8 per cent and 11 per cent (9 per cent and 10 per cent in 2004).

116 Cornforth Parish Council stated that the existing Chilton division (of which it is currently part) should be retained unchanged, contending that it was “a strong administrative area, with community links ... and should not be divided”. It opposed the County Council’s proposals affecting its area and suggested an alternative division comprising the whole of Sedgefield district ward, the parish of Bishop Middleham from Bishop Middleham ward and the Aycliffe Village parish ward of Great Aycliffe parish from Neville & Simpasture ward. The number of electors in the proposed division would vary below the average for the county by 4 per cent, both initially and in 2004.

117 Having considered both the representations that we received during Stage One for this area, we have noted that while Cornforth Parish Council’s proposed Sedgefield division would secure good electoral equality, it would result in two district wards being split, as compared to the Council’s proposed division which would only split one district ward between divisions. We are of the view, therefore, that the Council’s proposed Sedgefield division would provide for a slightly better balance between securing electoral equality, providing for effective and convenient local government and reflecting local community identities. We therefore propose adopting the Council’s proposed Trimdon and Sedgefield divisions, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

118 In the north-western part of the borough the Council proposed a revised Ferryhill division (comprising the district ward of Broom, the north-eastern part of Ferryhill ward and the Ferryhill Station parish ward of Ferryhill parish from Chilton ward), a revised Tudhoe division (comprising the district ward of Tudhoe and the eastern part of Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange ward), a revised Spennymoor division (comprising the district ward of Spennymoor and the remaining western part of Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange ward) and a new Middlestone & Dean Bank division (comprising the district ward of Middlestone and the south-western part of Ferryhill ward). The number of electors in the Council’s proposed divisions of Ferryhill, Tudhoe, Spennymoor and Middlestone & Dean Bank would vary from the county average initially by 2 per cent, 2 per cent, 19 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 4 per cent, 13 per cent and 3 per cent in 2004).

119 We have considered the Council’s proposals in this area and have noted that, notwithstanding the good electoral equality that would be secured, none of its four proposed divisions would comprise whole district wards. Additionally, its proposals would also result in the consequential re-warding of both Ferryhill and Spennymoor parishes. In view of this we have considered alternative configurations of district wards in this area and have concluded that it is possible to improve coterminosity and avoid any consequential parish warding by being slightly less strict on pure arithmetic electoral equality. We therefore propose modifying the Council’s proposed divisions in this area.

120 We propose putting forward for consultation a Ferryhill division (comprising the district wards of Ferryhill and Broom), a Tudhoe division comprising the district wards of Tudhoe and Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange), a Spennymoor & Middlestone division (comprising the district ward of Spennymoor and the parish wards of Byers Green and Middlestone of Spennymoor parish from Middlestone district ward) and a Chilton division (comprising the district ward of Chilton and the Merrington parish ward of Spennymoor parish from Middlestone

ward). The number of electors in our proposed divisions of Ferryhill, Tudhoe, Spennymoor & Middlestone and Chilton would vary from the average for the county initially by 24 per cent, 12 per cent, 16 per cent and 20 per cent respectively (22 per cent, 10 per cent, 22 per cent and 21 per cent in 2004).

121 We acknowledge that a poorer level of electoral equality would be secured under our proposals than under the Council's proposals. However, we are of the view that this level of electoral imbalance is acceptable, given that our proposals would secure more easily identifiable boundaries (thus providing for more effective and convenient local government), while still reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. Furthermore, our proposals would only split one district ward (using an existing parish ward boundary), therefore avoiding the need for any consequential parish warding, and would facilitate achieving an improved level of coterminosity across the borough as a whole. Our draft recommendations for divisions in this area are shown on the large map at the back of this report. We would very much welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

122 In the western part of the borough the Council proposed a new Chilton & Sunnydale division (comprising Sunnydale ward and the parishes of Chilton and Windlestone from the Chilton district ward) and a revised Shildon South West division (comprising the district wards of Byerley and Thickley and the parish of Middridge from Greenfield Middridge ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Chilton & Sunnydale and Shildon South West would vary from the average for the county by 1 per cent and 7 per cent initially (3 per cent and 9 per cent in 2004).

123 As a consequence of our proposed Chilton division (notwithstanding the good electoral equality that would be secured under the Council's proposals in this western area), we are proposing modifications to the Council's proposals in order to secure improved coterminosity, therefore providing for more effective and convenient local government. We are putting forward for consultation a Greenfield Middridge & Sunnydale division (comprising the district wards of Greenfield Middridge and Sunnydale) and a Shildon South West division (comprising the district wards of Byerley and Thickley). The number of electors in our proposed divisions of Greenfield Middridge & Sunnydale and Shildon South West would vary from the average for the county by 11 per cent and 12 per cent initially (11 per cent and 14 per cent in 2004). We are of the view that these divisions, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, would provide for the best balance of the criteria governing this review and would welcome all views during Stage Three.

124 In and around the town of Newton Aycliffe the Council proposed three revised divisions: Aycliffe West (comprising the Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall parish ward of Great Aycliffe parish from Greenfield Middridge ward and the southern part of the West district ward); an Aycliffe North division (comprising Woodham district ward, the remaining northern part of the West district ward and the western part of Shafto St Marys ward) and an Aycliffe East division (comprising the district ward of Neville & Simpasture, the remaining eastern part of Shafto St Marys ward and the parishes of Bradbury & the Isle and Mordon from Sedgfield ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Aycliffe West, Aycliffe North and Aycliffe East would vary from the average for the county initially by 9 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (9 per cent, 8 per cent and 8 per cent in 2004).

125 We acknowledge that the size and configuration of the district wards in this area do not lend themselves to the creation of coterminous divisions, however, as a consequence of our proposed Greenfield Middridge & Sunnydale division, and in order to facilitate a good electoral scheme across the borough as a whole, we propose building on the Council's proposals in this area.

126 We propose putting forward for consultation, as providing a better balance of the competing criteria governing our work, an Aycliffe West division (comprising West district ward and an area in the north-western part of Neville & Simpasture district ward, to the west of St Cuthbert's Way), an Aycliffe North division (comprising Woodham district ward and the western part of Shafto St Marys ward) and an Aycliffe East division (comprising the remaining eastern part of Shafto St Marys ward, the remaining eastern part of Neville & Simpasture ward and the parishes of Bradbury & the Isle and Mordon from Sedgfield ward). The number of electors in our proposed divisions of Aycliffe West, Aycliffe North and Aycliffe East would vary from the average for the county by 6 per cent, 12 per cent and 13 per cent respectively (8 per cent, 12 per cent and 15 per cent in 2004). Our draft recommendations for this area are shown on Map A9 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report. Consequent proposals in respect of the electoral arrangements of Great Aycliffe Parish Council are outlined at the end of this chapter.

127 Under our draft recommendations three divisions would vary from the county average by slightly more than 20 per cent in 2004. However, we are of the view that this deterioration in electoral equality is justified in order to secure a higher level of coterminosity while also adhering to the statutory criteria. The worst electoral imbalances by 2004 would be in our proposed Ferryhill and Spennymoor & Middlestone divisions which would both be under-represented by 22 per cent, and the proposed Chilton division which would be over-represented by 21 per cent. Our draft recommendations for the whole of Sedgfield borough are detailed on the large map inserted at the back of this report. We would very much welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

Teesdale district

128 Teesdale is currently represented by three county councillors serving the divisions of Barnard Castle East, Barnard Castle West and Evenwood. The number of electors represented by each councillor in all three of the divisions varies by less than 10 per cent from the average for the county. Compared to other districts in the county, Teesdale is correctly represented on the County Council at present.

129 As part of its Stage One submission the County Council proposed that Teesdale continue to be represented by three county councillors. It put forward an Evenwood division, based on existing boundaries, comprising the district wards of Cockfield, Etherley, Evenwood, Ramshaw & Lands, Hamsterley & South Bedburn and Lynesack. The number of electors in the Council's proposed Evenwood division would vary from the county average by 10 per cent initially (9 per cent in 2004). Given the reasonable electoral equality that would be secured, the coterminous boundaries that would be achieved and in order to facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the district, we propose endorsing the Council's proposed Evenwood division, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

130 The Council also proposed a revised Barnard Castle East division (comprising the district wards of Barnard Castle East, Barnard Castle North, Gainford & Winston, Ingleton, Staindrop, Streatlam & Whorlton, the Marwood Rural parish ward of Marwood parish from Eggleston ward and the parishes of Barforth, Hutton Magna, Ovington and Wycliffe with Thorpe from Barningham & Ovington ward) and a revised Barnard Castle West division (comprising the district wards of Barnard Castle West, Cotherstone with Larthington, Greta, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Romalldkirk, Startforth, the parish of Eggleston from Eggleston ward and the parishes of Barningham, Hope and Scargill from Barningham & Ovington ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Barnard Castle East and Barnard Castle West divisions would vary from the average for the county initially by 9 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (8 per cent and 1 per cent in 2004).

131 Notwithstanding the good electoral equality that would be secured under the Council's proposals, we are of the view that they can be built upon in order to achieve greater coterminosity of boundaries, thus providing for effective and convenient local government. We therefore propose modifying the boundary between the two divisions so that the whole of Eggleston district ward is included in the proposed Barnard Castle East division, and that the whole of Barningham & Ovington district ward is included in the proposed Barnard Castle West division. Under our modified divisions of Barnard Castle East and Barnard Castle West the number of electors would be initially 10 per cent above and 1 per cent above the average for the county respectively (9 per cent above and almost equal to the average in 2004).

132 Under our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, the number of electors in all three of the proposed divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the county, both initially and in 2004, and all three divisions would be formed from whole district wards. We would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three.

Wear Valley district

133 Under the current arrangements Wear Valley is served by eight county councillors representing the divisions of Bishop Auckland Town, Coundon, Crook North, Crook South, Weardale, West Auckland, Willington and Woodhouse Close. The number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average in three divisions, with the worst electoral imbalance being in Coundon division which varies by 18 per cent (18 per cent in 2004). Under the current arrangements, Wear Valley is slightly over-represented, but under our proposed 63-member scheme the district would be correctly represented by 8 county councillors.

134 The Council put forward a district-wide scheme during Stage One. All but one of its proposed eight divisions would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average, both initially and in 2004, with no division varying by more than 20 per cent. The worst electoral imbalance would be 11 per cent in the proposed Coundon division, both initially and in 2004. However, the County Council's proposals would secure coterminosity in only four of the proposed eight divisions in the district. It also proposed a detached division in the central part of the district, linking Tow Law with the northern part of Crook.

135 In and around the town of Bishop Auckland the Council proposed four revised divisions: Bishop Auckland Town (comprising the district wards of Bishop Auckland Town and Cockton Hill), Coundon (comprising the district wards of Coundon and Dene Valley), Woodhouse Close (comprising the district wards of Woodhouse Close and Henknowle) and West Auckland (comprising the district wards of West Auckland and Escomb). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Bishop Auckland Town, Coundon, Woodhouse Close and West Auckland would initially vary from the average for the county by 2 per cent, 11 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (2 per cent, 11 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent in 2004).

136 Given that all four of the Council's proposed divisions in this part of the district would comprise whole district wards, thus providing for effective and convenient government, and in view of the reasonable electoral equality that would be secured, we propose adopting these proposals as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map at the back of this report.

137 In the central and western parts of the district the Council proposed four further divisions. It proposed a revised Willington division (comprising the district wards of Willington Central and Willington West End and the eastern part of Hunwick ward) and a revised Crook South division (comprising the district wards of Howden and Wheatbottom & Helmington Row, the eastern part of Crook South ward, the western part of Hunwick ward and the south-eastern corner of Walsingham & Witton-le-Wear ward (the new parish of Witton-le-Wear)). The number of electors in the Council's proposed Willington and Crook South divisions would be 2 per cent below and 1 per cent below initially (3 per cent below and 1 per cent below in 2004).

138 The Council also proposed a detached Crook North division (comprising the remaining western part of Crook South ward, Crook North ward and the majority of Tow Law & Stanley ward, excluding Thornley parish ward) and a revised Weardale division (comprising the district wards of St Johns Chapel, and Stanhope, the western part of Wolsingham & Witton-le-Wear ward and the Thornley parish ward from Tow Law & Stanley ward). The number of electors in the Council's proposed divisions of Crook North and Weardale would initially be 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the average for the county respectively (almost equal to and 1 per cent below in 2004).

139 While we acknowledge the very good level of electoral equality that would be secured by the County Council's proposals in this area, we do not seek to put forward detached divisions, as outlined earlier in this report. We consider that a better balance of all the criteria governing this review (ie securing electoral equality, coterminosity and effective and convenient local government, and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities) can be achieved. We therefore propose modifying the Council's proposed divisions in this area.

140 We propose putting forward for consultation a Willington division (comprising the district wards of Willington Central, Willington West End and Hunwick), a Crook South division (comprising the district wards of Crook South and Wheatbottom & Helmington Row), a Crook North & Tow Law division (comprising the district wards of Crook North, Tow Law & Stanley and Howden) and a Weardale division (comprising the district wards of St John's Chapel, Stanhope and Wolsingham & Witton-le-Wear). The number of electors in our modified divisions

of Willington, Crook South, Crook North & Tow Law and Weardale would vary from the average for the county initially by 4 per cent, 1 per cent, 11 per cent and 5 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 1 per cent, 12 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004).

141 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors in six of the proposed eight divisions in Wear Valley would vary by less than 10 per cent from the county average, both initially and in 2004. The worst level of electoral imbalance would be in the proposed divisions of Coundon and Crook North & Tow Law which would both vary from the county average initially by 11 per cent (11 per cent and 12 per cent respectively in 2004). Under these proposals all of the eight divisions would be formed from whole district wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report. We would welcome all views on our proposals during Stage Three, particularly regarding division names.

Conclusions

142 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 61 to 63, serving 63 divisions;
- (b) the boundaries of all but 12 divisions will be subject to change as the divisions are based on district wards which have themselves changed as a result of the recent district reviews.

143 Our draft recommendations are based on the County Council's proposals which we judged would provide the best electoral scheme, having regard to the statutory criteria. However, we proposed a number of modifications to the Council's proposals in order, in our view, to improve the scheme further, which are set out below:

- (a) In Chester-le-Street we have adopted the majority of the County Council's proposals, with a modification in the north of the district proposed by Pelton Parish Council, a county councillor and three district councillors, and our own modification in the south-west of the district;
- (b) In Derwentside we have adopted the majority of the County Council's scheme, with our own modifications in Consett;
- (c) In Durham City we have adopted the majority of the County Council's scheme, with our own modifications in the north and east of Durham;
- (d) In Easington we have adopted almost all the County Council's scheme, with one minor modification in Murton;
- (e) In Sedgefield we have adopted the County Council's scheme in the east of the borough and our own proposals elsewhere in the borough;

- (f) In Teesdale we have adopted the majority of the County Council's scheme, with two minor modifications around the town of Barnard Castle;
- (g) In Wear Valley we have adopted the County Council's scheme in the south of the district, with our own modifications in the centre and north of the district.

144 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

*Figure 5:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors / divisions	61	63	61	63
Average number of electors per councillor	6,426	6,222	6,470	6,265
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	25	22	27	26
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	10	1	11	3

145 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Durham County Council would result in a reduction in the number of divisions with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the county average from 25 to 22. By 2004, 26 divisions are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average. However, in only three divisions would variances exceed 20 per cent from the average. Our draft recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Maps A1 to A9 in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Draft Recommendation

Durham County Council should comprise 63 councillors serving the same number of divisions, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

146 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different county divisions, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division of the county. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Cassop-cum-Quarrington, Seaham and Great Aycliffe to reflect the proposed county divisions.

147 The parish of Cassop-cum-Quarrington is currently served by 15 councillors and is unwarded. To reflect the proposed county divisions in the area, we are proposing that the parish be divided into two new parish wards: Cassop-cum-Quarrington East parish ward (represented by four parish councillors) and Cassop-cum-Quarrington West parish ward (represented by 11 parish councillors).

Draft Recommendation

That part of Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish which lies within the proposed Coxhoe county division should be named Cassop-cum-Quarrington East parish ward and be represented by four parish councillors. That part of Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish which lies within the proposed Durham South county division should be named Cassop-cum-Quarrington West parish ward and be represented by 11 parish councillors. The proposed boundary between the new parish wards of Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish is shown on Map A3 in Appendix A.

148 The parish of Seaham is currently divided into four parish wards; Dawdon (returning five councillors), Deneside (returning five councillors), Seaham Harbour (returning six councillors) and Seaham North (returning five councillors). To reflect the proposed county divisions in the Seaham area, we are proposing that Seaham Harbour parish ward be divided into two new parish wards: Seaham Harbour North and Seaham Harbour South, to be represented by four councillors and two councillors respectively. We are also proposing that Seaham North parish ward be divided into two new parish wards: Seaham North and Westlea, represented by three councillors and two councillors respectively.

Draft Recommendation

That part of Seaham Harbour parish ward which lies within the proposed Seaham county division should be renamed Seaham Harbour North parish ward and be represented by four councillors. That part of Seaham Harbour parish ward that lies within the proposed Dawdon county division should be renamed Seaham Harbour South parish ward and be represented by two councillors. That part of Seaham North parish ward that lies within the proposed Seaham county division should be named Seaham North parish ward and be represented three councillors. That part of Seaham North parish ward that lies within the proposed Deneside county division should be renamed Westlea parish ward and be represented by two councillors. The proposed boundaries between the new parish wards of Seaham parish are shown on Maps A7 and A8 in Appendix A.

149 The parish of Great Aycliffe is currently divided into six parish wards: Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall (returning six councillors), Shafto St Marys (returning six councillors), West (returning six councillors), Woodham North (returning six councillors), Neville & Simpasture (returning five councillors) and Aycliffe Village (returning one councillor). To reflect the proposed county divisions in the area, we are proposing that Shafto St Marys parish ward be divided into two new parish wards: Shafto St Marys and Woodham South, each to be represented by three councillors. We are also proposing that Neville & Simpasture parish ward be divided into two new parish wards: Neville and Simpasture, represented by three councillors and two councillors respectively.

Draft Recommendation

That part of Shafto St Marys parish ward that lies within the proposed Aycliffe North county division should be renamed Woodham South parish ward and be represented by three councillors. That part of Shafto St Marys parish ward that lies within the proposed Aycliffe East county division should be named Shafto St Marys parish ward and be represented by three councillors. That part of Neville & Simpasture parish ward that lies within the proposed Aycliffe East county division should be named Neville parish ward and be represented by three councillors. That part of Neville & Simpasture parish ward that lies within the proposed Aycliffe West county division should be named Simpasture parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors. The proposed boundaries between the new parish wards of Great Aycliffe parish are shown on Map A9 in Appendix A.

150 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Durham County Council and welcome comments from the County Council and others relating to the proposed division boundaries, number of councillors, division names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

5 NEXT STEPS

151 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Durham County Council. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 17 April 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the County Council by appointment, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

152 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
County Durham Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

153 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for County Durham: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed division boundaries for County Durham.

Map A1 illustrates the proposed electoral divisions in Stanley, in Derwentside district.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed electoral divisions in the northern and central parts of Consett, in Derwentside district.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Coxhoe and Durham South divisions, in Durham City.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary between Brandon and Durham South divisions, in Durham City.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed boundary between Belmont and Gilesgate divisions, in Durham City.

Map A6 illustrates the proposed boundary between Framwellgate Moor and Newton Hall divisions, in Durham City.

Map A7 illustrates the proposed electoral divisions in the southern part of Seaham, in Easington district.

Map A8 illustrates the proposed electoral divisions in the northern part of Seaham, in Easington district.

Map A9 illustrates the proposed electoral divisions in Newton Aycliffe, in Sedgefield borough.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates, in outline form, the Commission's proposed divisions for County Durham, including constituent district wards and parishes.

*Map A1:
Proposed electoral divisions in Stanley*

*Map A2:
Proposed electoral divisions in the northern and central parts of Consett*

*Map A3:
Proposed boundary between Coxhoe and Durham South divisions*

*Map A4:
Proposed boundary between Brandon and Durham South divisions*

*Map A5:
Proposed boundary between Belmont and Gilesgate divisions*

*Map A6:
Proposed boundary between Framwellgate Moor and Newton Hall divisions*

*Map A7:
Proposed electoral divisions in the southern part of Seaham*

*Map A8:
Proposed electoral divisions in the northern part of Seaham*

*Map A9:
Proposed electoral divisions in Newton Aycliffe*

APPENDIX B

Durham County Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the County Council only in the following divisions, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

*Figure B1:
Number of Councillors and Electors by Division*

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT					
Chester-le-Street South	1	6,233	0	6,498	4
Chester le Street West Central	1	6,398	3	6,475	3
Pelton	1	6,600	6	6,724	7
Sacrison	1	5,615	-10	5,709	-9
DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT					
Benfieldside	1	5,840	-6	5,935	-5
Consett	1	6,697	8	6,676	7
Delves Lane	1	6,414	3	6,354	1
Leadgate & Medomsley	1	6,844	10	6,743	8
DURHAM CITY					
Belmont	1	5,718	-8	5,747	-8
Elvet	1	6,291	1	6,486	4
Gilesgate	1	5,971	-4	5,950	-5
EASINGTON DISTRICT					
Deneside	1	5,889	-5	5,827	-7
Murton	1	5,531	-11	5,414	-14
SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH					
Aycliffe East	1	6,851	10	6,790	8

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
Aycliffe North	1	6,727	8	6,759	8
Aycliffe West	1	6,768	9	6,809	9
Chilton & Sunnysdale	1	6,150	-1	6,084	-3
Ferryhill	1	6,100	-2	6,049	-3
Middlestone & Dean Bank	1	6,464	4	6,450	3
Sildon South West	1	5,771	-7	5,681	-9
Spennymoor	1	5,056	-19	5,463	-13
Tudhoe	1	6,067	-2	6,003	-4
TEESDALE DISTRICT					
Barnard Castle East	1	6,779	9	6,771	8
Barnard Castle West	1	6,315	1	6,345	1
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT					
Crook North	1	6,268	1	6,254	0
Crook South	1	6,178	-1	6,220	-1
Weardale	1	6,146	-1	6,184	-1
Willington	1	6,090	-2	6,066	-3

Figure B2:
Durham County Council's Proposals: Constituent District Wards

Division name	Constituent district wards
CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT	
Chester-le-Street South	Chester South ward; Edmondsley & Waldrige ward (part)
Chester-le-Street West Central	Chester Central ward; Chester West ward; Pelton Fell ward; Pelton ward (part)
Pelton	North Lodge ward; Pelton ward (part)
Sacrison	Edmondsley & Waldrige ward (part); Kimblesworth & Plawsworth ward; Sacrison ward
DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT	
Benfieldside	Benfieldside ward; Blackhill ward (part); Ebchester & Medomsley ward (part)
Consett	Blackhill ward (part); Consett North ward (part); Consett South ward
Delves Lane	Consett East ward; Consett North ward (part); Delves Lane ward
Leadgate & Medomsley	Ebchester & Medomsley ward (part); Leadgate ward
DURHAM CITY	
Belmont	Carrville & Gilesgate Moor ward; Pelaw & Gilesgate ward (part)
Elvet	Elvet ward; St Nicholas ward (part)
Gilesgate	Belmont ward; Pelaw & Gilesgate ward (part); St Nicholas ward (part)
EASINGTON DISTRICT	
Deneside	Deneside ward; Murton East ward (part – the Dalton Village parish ward of Murton parish); Seaham North ward (part)
Murton	Murton East ward (part – the East Parish ward of Murton parish); Murton West ward
SEDFIELD BOROUGH	
Aycliffe East	Neville & Simpasture ward; Sedgfield ward (part – the parishes of Bradbury & the Isle and Mordon); Shafto St Marys ward (part)
Aycliffe North	Shafto St Marys ward (part); West ward (part); Woodham ward
Aycliffe West	Greenfield Middridge ward (part – the parish ward of Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall from Great Aycliffe parish); West ward (part)
Chilton & Sunnydale	Chilton ward (part – the parishes of Chilton and Windlestone); Sunnydale ward
Ferryhill	Broom ward; Chilton ward (part – the Ferryhill Station parish ward of Ferryhill parish); Ferryhill ward (part)
Middlestone & Dean Bank	Ferryhill ward (part); Middlestone ward

Division name	Constituent district wards
Shildon South West	Byerley ward; Greenfield Middridge ward (part – the parish of Middridge); Thickley ward
Spennymoor	Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange ward (part); Spennymoor ward
Tudhoe	Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange ward (part); Tudhoe ward
TEESDALE DISTRICT	
Barnard Castle East	Barnard Castle East ward; Barnard Castle North ward; Barningham & Ovington ward (part – the parishes of Barforth, Hutton Magna, Ovington and Wycliffe with Thorpe); Eggleston ward (part – the Marwood Rural parish ward of Marwood parish); Gainford & Winston ward; Ingleton ward; Staindrop ward; Streatlam & Whorlton ward
Barnard Castle West	Barnard Castle West ward; Barningham & Ovington ward (part – the parishes of Barningham, Hope and Scargill); Cotherstone with Lartington ward; Eggleston ward (part – the parish of Eggleston); Greta ward; Middleton-in-Teesdale ward; Romalldkirk ward; Startforth ward
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT	
Crook North	Crook North ward; Crook South ward (part); Tow Law & Stanley ward (part)
Crook South	Crook South ward (part); Howden ward; Hunwick ward (part); Wheatbottom & Helmington Row ward; Wolsingham & Witton-le-Wear ward (part)
Weardale	St John's Chapel ward; Stanhope ward; Wolsingham & Witton-le-Wear ward (part); Tow Law & Stanley (part)
Willington	Hunwick ward (part); Willington Central ward; Willington West End ward;

Note: The constituent areas reflect the new district wards resulting from electoral reviews of the seven Durham districts which were completed in 1998. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed (where appropriate).

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;

¹ The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to counties:

Having regard to any change in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the county likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the number of local government electors shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every electoral division of the county;
- (b) every electoral division shall lie wholly within a single district;
- (c) every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single electoral division; and
- (d) every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single electoral division.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a) – (d) above, regard should be had to:

- (e) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable;
- (f) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary; and
- (g) the boundaries of the wards of the districts in the county.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (h) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (i) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (j) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (k) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (l) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish, regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.