

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
North Lincolnshire

December 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 local authorities' 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 ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Scunthorpe is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for North Lincolnshire on 16 May 2000.

- **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 North Lincolnshire:

- **in seven of the 15 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and three wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in eight wards and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 98-99) are that:

- **North Lincolnshire Council should have 43 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, instead of 15 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In four of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **two parish wards to cover Burringham parish;**
- **the parish of Keadby with Althorpe to become unwarded for parish council election purposes.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for ten weeks from 12 December 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important 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 also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 19 February 2001:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ashby (Scunthorpe)	3	Ashby ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
2	Axholme Central	2	South Axholme ward (part – the parishes of Belton and Epworth)	Map 2
3	Axholme North	2	Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe ward (the parishes of Amcotts, Crowle, Eastoft, Garthorpe & Fockerby, Keadby with Althorpe and Luddington & Haldenby)	Map 2
4	Axholme South	2	South Axholme ward (part – the parishes of Haxey, Owston Ferry, West Butterwick and Wroot)	Map 2
5	Barton	3	Wold ward (part – the parish of Barton-upon-Humber)	Map 2
6	Bottesford	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Bottesford)	Large map and Map 2
7	Brigg & Wolds	3	Ferry ward (part – the parishes of Barnetby le Wold and Melton Ross); Haven ward (part – the parishes of Brigg, Elsham and Wrawby); Wold ward (part – the parishes of Bonby, Horkstow, Saxby All Saints, South Ferriby and Worlaby)	Map 2
8	Broughton & Appleby	3	Haven ward (part – the parish of Broughton); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, Winteringham and Winterton)	Map 2
9	Brumby (Scunthorpe)	3	Ashby ward (part); Brumby ward (part); Kingsway ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
10	Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	Crosby & Park ward; Frodingham & Town ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
11	East Trent	3	Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward (the parishes of Burton upon Stather, Flixborough and Gunness); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Alborough, West Halton and Whitton); Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick)	Maps 2 and A2
12	Ferry	3	Ferry ward (part – the parishes of Barrow upon Humber, Croxton, East Halton, Goxhill, Kirmington, New Holland, North Killingholme, South Killingholme, Thornton Curtis, Ulceby and Wooton)	Map 2
13	Frodingham (Scunthorpe)	2	Frodingham & Town ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)	Large map and Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
14	Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	Brumby ward (part); Kingsway ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
15	Ridge	3	Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Cadney, Hibaldstow, Holme, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby)	Map 2
16	Town (Scunthorpe)	2	Frodingham & Town ward (part); Kingsway ward (part)	Large map and Map 2

Notes: 1 Scunthorpe is unparished and comprises the six wards indicated above.

2 Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for North Lincolnshire

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashby (Scunthorpe)	3	7,026	2,342	-15	8,675	2,892	-1
2 Axholme Central	2	5,192	2,596	-5	5,339	2,670	-9
3 Axholme North	2	5,530	2,765	1	5,863	2,932	0
4 Axholme South	2	5,314	2,657	-3	5,421	2,711	-8
5 Barton	3	7,269	2,423	-12	8,531	2,844	-3
6 Bottesford	3	9,079	3,026	10	9,342	3,114	6
7 Brigg & Wolds	3	8,285	2,762	1	9,256	3,085	5
8 Broughton & Appleby	3	9,368	3,123	14	9,507	3,169	8
9 Brumby (Scunthorpe)	3	8,707	2,902	6	8,727	2,909	-1
10 Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	8,520	2,840	3	9,107	3,036	3
11 East Trent	3	7,203	2,401	-13	8,332	2,777	-5
12 Ferry	3	7,800	2,600	-5	8,153	2,718	-7
13 Frodingham (Scunthorpe)	2	5,809	2,905	6	5,952	2,976	1
14 Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	8,090	2,697	-2	8,424	2,808	-4
15 Ridge	3	9,085	3,028	10	9,460	3,153	7
16 Town (Scunthorpe)	2	5,716	2,858	4	6,047	3,024	3
Totals	43	117,993	-	-	126,136	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,744	-	-	2,933	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North Lincolnshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the new unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire as 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 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of North Lincolnshire. The last such reviews of the former Boothferry, Glanford and Scunthorpe district councils were undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 on Boothferry District Council (Report No. 65), January 1976 on Glanford District Council (Report No. 128) and November 1975 on Scunthorpe District Council (Report No. 109). The electoral arrangements of the new unitary authority, which came into existence in April 1996, were put in place as part of the Structural Change Order which abolished the county of Humberside and its County Council.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained 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* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that 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 ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level

of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 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 district 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 district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including North Lincolnshire, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 16 May 2000, when we wrote to North Lincolnshire Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Humberside Police Authority, the local authority associations, East Riding & Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire & Humber Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press

release and invited the Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 21 August 2000.

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

13 Stage Three began on 12 December 2000 and will end on 19 February 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

14 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

15 North Lincolnshire Unitary Authority is situated to the south of the Humber Estuary and comprises the former Scunthorpe and Glanford districts and part of Boothferry district. North Lincolnshire Council came into existence in April 1996, covers an area of approximately 85,000 hectares and serves a population of approximately 152,000. The district is bisected by the River Trent, with the area to the west of the river being known as the Isle of Axholme. Much of the authority is rural in character, but there are significant areas of industry, primarily steel, oil refineries and manufacturing.

16 The district contains 56 parishes. Scunthorpe town itself is unparished and comprises 37 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 117,993 (February 2000). The Council presently has 42 members who are elected from 15 wards, seven of which are relatively urban in character and cover Scunthorpe and Bottesford and the remainder are predominantly rural. Twelve of the wards are each represented by three councillors and three are each represented by two councillors. The whole Council is elected every four years.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,809 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 3,003 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in seven of the 15 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and three wards vary by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in South Axholme ward, where the councillor represents 25 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in North Lincolnshire

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashby (Scunthorpe)	3	7,689	2,563	-9	9,397	3,132	4
2 Bottesford	3	9,079	3,026	8	9,342	3,114	4
3 Brumby (Scunthorpe)	3	6,634	2,211	-21	6,654	2,218	-26
4 Burton upon Stather & Gunness	2	5,221	2,611	-7	6,350	3,175	6
5 Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	7,442	2,481	-12	8,029	2,676	-11
6 Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe	2	5,530	2,765	5	5,863	2,932	5
7 Ferry	3	9,116	3,039	8	9,543	3,181	6
8 Frodingham & Town (Scunthorpe)	3	7,115	2,372	-16	7,434	2,478	-17
9 Haven	3	9,577	3,192	14	10,552	3,517	17
10 Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	8,037	2,679	-5	8,430	2,810	-6
11 Lincoln Gardens (Scunthorpe)	3	6,951	2,317	-18	6,987	2,329	-22
12 North West & Winterton	2	6,028	3,014	7	6,071	3,036	1
13 Ridge	3	10,262	3,421	22	10,637	3,546	18
14 South Axholme	3	10,506	3,502	25	10,759	3,586	19
15 Wold	3	8,806	2,935	4	10,088	3,363	12
Totals	42	117,993	-	-	126,136	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,809	-	-	3,003	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Lincolnshire Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Brumby ward were over-represented by 21 per cent, while electors in South Axholme ward were under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

20 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 North Lincolnshire Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 18 representations during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Council and the Commission.

North Lincolnshire Council

22 North Lincolnshire Council proposed a council of 44 members, two more than at present, serving 17 wards, compared to the existing 15. It argued that the increase in council size would secure greater electoral equality. It proposed no change to the current cycle of whole council elections every four years.

23 In Scunthorpe the Council proposed six wards, represented by 17 councillors, including a new Brumby & Burringham ward comprising part of unparished Scunthorpe and the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick in a single ward. In the remainder of the town the proposed boundaries would broadly reflect the existing arrangements. In its submission the Council stated that “there is clearly no point in proposing change when none is necessary”. Under this scheme no ward in this area would have an electoral variance of more than 9 per cent.

24 In the parished area the Council used whole parishes as building blocks for wards and the River Trent as a ward boundary. The proposals would provide significant improvements in electoral equality, with no ward having an electoral variance of more than 11 per cent by 2005. The Council’s scheme is summarised in Appendix B.

Conservative Groups

25 The Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council proposed a 43-member council, one more than at present, serving 16 wards in a mixed two- and three-member pattern. It argued that the small increase in council size would provide better electoral equality across the district, particularly in the rural areas.

26 The Conservative Group stated that “Scunthorpe wards should remain within the municipal boundary.” It proposed six wards in Scunthorpe, represented by 16 councillors. The proposed wards would broadly reflect the existing arrangements. Under these proposals all wards would have an electoral variance of less than 8 per cent by 2005. In the parished area the Conservative Group used whole parishes as building blocks for wards and the River Trent as a boundary. Under its proposals for this area no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 9 per cent by 2005. The Conservative Group’s scheme is summarised inat Appendix B.

27 Both Brigg & Goole Conservative Association and Cleethorpes Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's submission, particularly the proposals for the Isle of Axholme, and Barton and Ferry areas respectively.

Liberal Democrats

28 The North Lincolnshire Liberal Democrats proposed a district-wide scheme, based on a 44-member council, two more than at present. It provided no argumentation for the proposed increase in council size, detailed boundaries for Scunthorpe or 2000 electorate figures. The Liberal Democrats' proposals were for a mix of two- and three-member wards; in Scunthorpe they proposed six wards represented by 16 councillors, and in the remainder of the district they proposed a further 11 wards, represented by 28 councillors; again the proposals would utilise whole parishes for wards and use the River Trent as a boundary. Under this scheme no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 12 per cent by 2005.

Parish and Town Councils

29 We received representations from nine parish and town councils. Bottesford Town Council proposed that "it should remain as one electoral area." Brigg Town Council proposed a modified four-member Haven ward, to better reflect community identities. East Butterwick Parish Council proposed new electoral arrangements for the rural area, based on a council size of 40. Its proposals would utilise whole parishes as building blocks for wards and the River Trent as a boundary, but would not provide significant improvements in electoral equality.

30 Gunness, Redbourne and Scawby parish councils proposed that the existing warding arrangements be retained for their areas. Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council proposed that its three parish wards be abolished, to provide more effective representation for electors. Messingham Parish Council proposed "that the number of Parish Councillors on each Parish Council be reviewed to take into consideration the number of electors being represented per parish".

31 During Stage One we received a submission from Wooton Parish Council, which stated that it had no comment to make about the review process.

Other Representations

32 We received four further representations, three from local residents and one from the Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland (covering the caravan parks in Burringham parish currently in Ridge ward).

33 The representation received from The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland proposed that Burringham parish be warded, to better reflect the different community identities of the two settlements which constitute the parish. They also proposed that Ashby Decoy and Parkland polling districts be included in a district ward with part of unparished Scunthorpe, arguing that their community ties were with the town of Scunthorpe, rather than the village of Burringham.

34 A resident of Messingham suggested that, due to the forecast increase in electorate, the existing Ridge ward should be represented by four councillors. A resident of Brigg proposed a significant reduction in council size and a pattern of single-member wards. A resident of Scunthorpe opposed the Council's proposal to include the existing Brumby ward (part of unparished Scunthorpe) in a ward with a number of surrounding parishes, for community identity reasons.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

35 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for North Lincolnshire is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

36 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 next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

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

38 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. 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. We therefore strongly 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 community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

39 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 7 per cent from 117,933 to 126,136 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in the wards of Ashby, Burton upon Stather & Gunness and Wold. In the light of such a significant forecast growth in electorate, the Commission asked that the Council verify the accuracy of its projected electorate figures and have been assured by officers at the Council that they are a reasonable estimate. The 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 Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

40 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

41 North Lincolnshire Council presently has 42 members. The Council proposed a council size of 44, stating that “there is considerable imbalance in the number of electors represented by each councillor and this slight increase in the total number makes it possible to secure a greater equality.” The Liberal Democrats also proposed a council size of 44, but did not provide argumentation in support of its proposal. The Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council proposed a council size of 43, arguing that it would facilitate improvements in electoral equality across the district.

42 East Butterwick Parish Council submitted a scheme for the rural (parished) area and, although it did not specifically propose a council size for the whole district, its scheme would result in a council size of 40. A resident of Brigg proposed that the Commission consider a significant reduction in council size.

43 The Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government. However, given the evidence provided during Stage One, we concur with the view that the existing council size of 42 does not facilitate a convenient distribution of councillors between the three separate areas of the district; Scunthorpe, the Isle of Axholme and the remaining rural area. Under a council size of 42, the electorate on the Isle of Axholme (that part of the district to the west of the River Trent) entitles the area to 5.5 councillors, so that allocating either five or six councillors to the area (under a 42-member scheme) without breaching the River Trent would result in an inherent level of electoral imbalance. Officers from the Commission have visited the area and are minded to agree with local opinion that the river provides the most significant and identifiable boundary in the district. In such circumstances, the Commission would suggest that a small change in council size is considered locally. An increase in council size of either one or two would entitle the Isle of Axholme to closer to six councillors. We have considered the proposals from East Butterwick Parish Council for a 40-member council and a local resident for a significant reduction in council size, but do not consider either proposal to be supported by sufficient argumentation or local support.

44 In reference to new political management structures, North Lincolnshire Council stated that it is “too early to predict what effect this will have on the workloads of members and whether this will lead to a need for more or fewer members. The Council’s submission is based on current workloads.” From this it appears that the internal management of the council is not hindered by the existing council size. In the light of this we have not been persuaded that there is sufficient justification for increasing the council size by two members. Consequently, we are minded to propose a 43-member council size, as it would require minimal departure from the existing number of members.

45 In view of this and 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 the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 43 members.

Electoral Arrangements

46 It has been necessary for us to address a number of overarching issues in drawing up our draft recommendations. At present Scunthorpe is served by 18 of the 42 councillors which make up North Lincolnshire Council. However, based on a council size of 42 and the forecast electorate for 2005, Scunthorpe is only entitled to representation by 15.6 councillors and is therefore significantly over-represented at present. The rural parished area of the district is currently represented by 24 councillors, when in fact it is entitled to 26.3 councillors, and is therefore significantly under-represented. It is important to note that, in order to achieve electoral equality across the district any proposals we put forward need to rectify this inbuilt imbalance. Consequently, any scheme would require changing the balance of representation between the urban and rural areas of North Lincolnshire, irrespective of any proposed change in council size.

47 Scunthorpe has grown beyond its boundaries, with the urban development now extending into a number of the surrounding parishes, much of this development being situated between the town and the River Trent. During Stage One we did not receive any representations proposing that the overspill development should be included in Scunthorpe wards. Conversely, the Council proposed joining the existing Brumby ward with surrounding parishes. We do not consider this to reflect community identities. Given the lack of argumentation on the effect on communities of including the urban overspill in wards with unparished Scunthorpe, we propose warding arrangements which would reflect the current external boundary of Scunthorpe (as defined by the adjoining parish boundaries). However, we are concerned about how well the current municipal boundary of Scunthorpe continues to reflect the different communities in the area and ask that during the consultation process local interest groups provide further evidence on this issue.

48 We have considered East Butterwick Parish Council's proposed scheme for the rural area, based on a council size of 40. In view of our recommendation for a council size of 43 (outlined above), we have not been able to make detailed comparisons in all areas with the boundaries proposed under East Butterwick Parish Council's scheme, as ward sizes and configurations would vary substantially. It is important to note that (based on the 2000 electorate) under a council size of 40 the number of electors per councillor would be 2,950, while under a council size of 43 the number of electors per councillor would be 2,744, a difference of over 200 electors per ward. Such a difference in ward size in a parished area such as North Lincolnshire could necessitate district wards containing a completely different configuration of parishes. However, we have attempted to build on the local knowledge that the alternative scheme provides and have made comparisons where appropriate.

49 We have noted Messingham Parish Council's proposal to review the electoral arrangements of each parish council in the district. However, we do not consider that it would be appropriate for us to undertake such a review or that it would command local support. Additionally, there is no provision in legislation for electoral equality between parishes or parish wards. Our recommendations in respect of parishes are outlined later in the chapter.

50 We note that both the Council's and Liberal Democrats' schemes would provide significant improvements in electoral equality, whilst reflecting the statutory criteria. However, the Conservative Group's scheme would provide even better levels of electoral equality, with no

ward having an electoral variance of more than 9 per cent by 2005. In view of this and a proposed council size of 43, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Conservative Group's scheme. We consider that it would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further, better reflect community identities and to provide more identifiable boundaries, we propose modifying the Conservative Group's scheme for Scunthorpe. We have based our recommendations for Scunthorpe on information and evidence received as part of our consultation exercise and have visited the town to look at particular boundaries.

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

(a) Scunthorpe

- Crosby & Park and Frodingham & Town wards;
- Kingsway and Lincoln Gardens wards;
- Ashby, Bottesford and Brumby wards;

(b) The rural area

- Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe and South Axholme wards;
- Haven and North West & Winterton wards;
- Burton upon Stather & Guinness and Ridge wards;
- Ferry and Wold wards.

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

Scunthorpe

Crosby & Park and Frodingham & Town wards

53 These two three-member wards are situated in the north of Scunthorpe. There are currently 12 per cent fewer electors than the district average in Crosby & Park ward (11 per cent by 2005) and 16 per cent fewer electors than the district average in Frodingham & Town ward (17 per cent by 2005).

54 North Lincolnshire Council proposed no change to the existing Crosby & Park ward. However, it proposed a modified Frodingham & Town ward, to include the existing ward of the same name and part of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward, with the new southern boundary following Healy Road and Warley Road. Both wards would retain their existing levels of representation. Under these proposals Crosby & Park ward would be 7 per cent over-represented (unchanged in 2005) and Frodingham & Town ward would be 1 per cent over-represented (4 per cent by 2005).

55 The Conservative Group proposed that the southern boundary of Crosby & Park ward should be modified to follow Doncaster Road, Berkeley Street and Winterton Road and that Frodingham & Town ward be modified to include part of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward, with the southern boundary following the A18 from the town boundary to its junction with Ashby Road. Each ward would be represented by three members. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the district average in Crosby & Park ward (unchanged by 2005) and 8 per cent above the average in Frodingham & Town ward (4 per cent by 2005).

56 We have considered all the representations received regarding warding arrangements for this part of Scunthorpe. We have noted that both the Council's and Conservative Group's district-wide schemes for the area would facilitate improvements in electoral equality, without significantly moving away from the existing arrangements. However, we are concerned that neither scheme would provide clearly identifiable boundaries or, in our opinion, best reflect communities. We are particularly concerned that the Council's proposal to retain the existing Crosby & Park ward would include retaining its southern boundary, which, in our opinion, is neither clear nor identifiable. In addition, we are concerned that the proposed Frodingham & Town ward (under both schemes) would breach the railway line where there are few crossing points. In the light of this, we have devised an alternative scheme for the area, based broadly on the Conservative Group's proposals.

57 We propose adopting the Conservative Group's three-member Crosby & Park ward without modification, as we consider it would be based on clear boundaries and note that it would provide much improved levels of electoral equality. However, we propose significant modifications to the Conservative Group's Frodingham & Town ward. We propose a new two-member Frodingham ward to include that part of the existing Frodingham & Town ward south of the railway line and part of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward. The southern boundary of the proposed Frodingham ward would follow Queensway and Grange Lane North (to broadly include Bellingham Road in Ashby ward; see below). The remainder of Frodingham & Town ward would be included in a new two-member Town ward, with that part of the existing Kingsway ward north of the railway line and Brumby Wood Lane. We have noted that Brumby Wood Lane is situated to the south of the railway line, but having visited the area, consider the proposal would reflect communities ties and note that there are two crossing points linking electors on the two sides of the railway line at this point. We consider that the proposed Town ward would accurately reflect local community ties, but would be interested to receive comments from local interest groups during Stage Three.

58 We consider that our proposals for this area as a whole would provide good boundaries, reflect communities and facilitate excellent electoral equality. Under our proposals, outlined on the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the district average in Crosby & Park ward (unchanged by 2005), 6 per cent above the average in Frodingham ward (1 per cent by 2005) and 4 per cent above the average in Town ward (3 per cent by 2005).

Kingsway and Lincoln Gardens wards

59 These two wards cover the central area of Scunthorpe town. The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Kingsway ward is currently 5 per cent below the district average (6 per cent by 2005) and 18 per cent below the district average in the three-member Lincoln Gardens ward (22 per cent by 2005).

60 The Council proposed no change to the existing three-member Kingsway ward. It also proposed that the northern boundary of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward be modified to follow Healy Road and Warley Road. Lincoln Gardens ward would be represented by two members. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent above the district average in Kingsway ward (2 per cent below the average by 2005) and equal to the average in Lincoln Gardens ward (7 per cent above the average by 2005).

61 The Conservative Group proposed no change to the existing Kingsway ward. It also proposed that the part of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward west of the A18 be included in a new three-member Ashby West ward with that part of the existing Ashby ward west of Bottesford Road (see below). The remainder of Lincoln Gardens ward would be included in a modified Frodingham & Town ward (see above). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the district average in Kingsway ward (4 per cent by 2005).

62 We have considered both the proposals from the Council and Conservative Group for this area. We are concerned that the existing Kingsway ward (retained under both district-wide schemes) would not cover a continuous urban settlement. It would include electors on both sides of the railway line (in an area with few crossing points), and polling district ATC (broadly Plymouth Road, Mendip Road and Chiltern Rise) in a single ward. Additionally, we do not consider that the ward would be based on identifiable boundaries and consequently we propose an alternative arrangement to better reflect community identities and provide more identifiable boundaries. We propose a modified three-member Kingsway ward to broadly include that part of the existing Kingsway ward south of the railway line (except Brumby Wood Lane and polling district ATC) and that part of Lincoln Gardens ward west of Queensway. Polling district ATC would be included in a modified Brumby ward (see below). The remainder of Lincoln Gardens ward would be included in a new two-member Frodingham ward (outlined above) and would therefore cease to exist under the new arrangements. The remainder of Kingsway ward would be included in a new two-member Town ward (see above). Under our proposals, outlined on the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor in Kingsway ward would be 2 per cent below the district average by 2005 (4 per cent by 2005).

Ashby, Bottesford and Brumby wards

63 The existing Ashby and Brumby wards cover the south of Scunthorpe town; Bottesford ward is coterminous with Bottesford parish. Each of the three wards is represented by three members. The number of electors per councillor in Ashby ward is currently 9 per cent below the district average (4 per cent above the average by 2005), 8 per cent above the average in Bottesford ward (4 per cent by 2005) and 21 per cent below the district average in Brumby ward (26 per cent by 2005).

64 North Lincolnshire Council proposed no change to the boundaries or level of representation of the existing Ashby and Bottesford wards. However, it proposed that the whole of the existing Brumby ward (retaining its existing eastern boundary) be included in a new three-member Brumby & Burringham ward with the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick. It argued that although such a proposal would combine rural and urban settlements in a single ward, the ward would reflect community identities. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Ashby ward would be 4 per cent below the district average (9 per cent above by 2005), 5 per cent above the average in Bottesford ward (unchanged by 2005) and 3 per cent below the average in Brumby & Burringham ward (9 per cent by 2005).

65 The Conservative Group proposed no change to the existing Bottesford ward. However, under its proposals the existing Ashby ward would be divided into two new wards: a two-member Ashby East ward and a three-member Ashby West ward. Ashby East ward would comprise that part of the existing Ashby ward broadly east of Bottesford Road; Ashby West ward would include that part of the existing Lincoln Gardens ward west of the A18, that part of Ashby ward west of Bottesford Road and that part of Brumby ward east of Searby Road and Ormsby Road. The boundaries of a modified two-member Brumby ward would otherwise remain unchanged. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 19 per cent below the average in Ashby East ward (4 per cent above by 2005), 2 per cent above the average in Ashby West ward (4 per cent below by 2005), 10 per cent above the average in Bottesford ward (6 per cent by 2005) and 3 per cent above the average in Brumby ward (4 per cent below by 2005).

66 Bottesford Town Council stated that Bottesford “should remain as one electoral area ... represented by no less than three representatives”. The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland proposed that they be included in a district ward with Brumby (part of unparished Scunthorpe). They argued that their community ties were with the town of Scunthorpe, rather than the village of Burringham.

67 In forming our draft recommendations we were pleased to note that there was cross-party support and local consensus for a three-member Bottesford ward, coterminous with Bottesford parish. In the light of this consensus, and the fact that such a proposal would provide good levels of electoral equality, whilst reflecting the statutory criteria, we adopt it as part of our draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average in Bottesford ward (6 per cent by 2005).

68 We are concerned that the Council’s proposed Brumby & Burringham ward would bring together unparished and parished areas in a single ward and would not provide particularly high levels of electoral equality (9 per cent by 2005), nor in our opinion reflect the statutory criteria. We are particularly concerned that the proposed ward would not reflect the interests and identities of Burringham village and East Butterwick parish. We have noted the Conservative Group’s proposed Brumby ward, but we are concerned that this would not provide for strong or identifiable boundaries. For example, the northern boundary would be drawn (as it is at present) to exclude polling district ATC, isolating a settlement which adjoins the area and appears to represent a contiguous community. In the light of this we propose an alternative Brumby ward which would provide even higher levels of electoral equality, and in our opinion would be based on stronger boundaries. We propose that the existing Brumby ward be extended northwards to

include polling district ATC and eastwards to include part of the existing Ashby ward (broadly polling district APC), using Messingham Road as a boundary.

69 We have also considered the proposals for Ashby, as included under both district-wide schemes. We have noted that the Council proposed no change to Ashby ward. In the light of our proposals elsewhere in Scunthorpe, we have been unable to endorse this proposal as part of our draft recommendations, as it would not provide electoral equality in neighbouring wards. We are concerned that the Conservative Group's proposed Ashby West ward would not cover an identifiable area and would include two areas which do not have a similar profile. We do not consider that either scheme would provide an arrangement which would best reflect community identities, provide effective and convenient local government or achieve the best levels of electoral equality available across Scunthorpe. In the light of this we propose a modified Ashby ward, to include that part of the existing Ashby ward east of Messingham Road and approximately 790 electors from Lincoln Gardens ward (parts of polling districts AUC and AUA1/2). The northern boundary would broadly follow Queensway, Grange Lane North and Ashby High Street. We note that this proposal would include electors on both sides of Queensway in a single ward, but breaching this road would simultaneously address the under-representation in Frodingham ward and the over-representation in Ashby ward. We consider that the Bellingham Road area would provide the most appropriate area for transfer between the two wards, as it forms a coherent area, isolated by main roads on either side.

70 Under these proposals, outlined on the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Ashby ward would be 15 per cent below the district average (1 per cent by 2005) and 6 per cent above the average in Brumby ward (1 per cent below by 2005). We have noted that the proposed Ashby ward would not provide good electoral equality initially, but it is important to note that by 2005 a significant amount of electoral growth is forecast for the area, thus improving the electoral equality achieved.

The rural area

Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe and South Axholme wards

71 The part of North Lincolnshire district situated to the west of the River Trent is known locally as the Isle of Axholme and is currently divided into two wards. Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe ward is served by two members who currently represent 5 per cent more electors than the district average (unchanged by 2005). It comprises the parishes of Amcotts, Crowle, Eastoft, Garthorpe & Fockerby, Keadby with Althorpe and Luddington & Haldenby. South Axholme ward is served by three members who currently represent 25 per cent more electors than the district average (19 per cent by 2005). It comprises the parishes of Belton, Epworth, Haxey, Owston Ferry, West Butterwick and Wroot. Both wards are situated wholly to the west of the River Trent.

72 The Council proposed three two-member wards to cover this area. It proposed no change to the boundaries of the existing Crowle, North Axholme & Keadby with Althorpe ward, but suggested that it be renamed Axholme North. It proposed a new Axholme Central ward, comprising the parishes of Belton and Epworth and a new Axholme South ward comprising the

parishes of Haxey, Owston Ferry, West Butterwick and Wroot. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the district average in Axholme Central ward (7 per cent by 2005), 3 per cent above the average in Axholme North ward (2 per cent by 2005) and 1 per cent below the average in Axholme South ward (5 per cent by 2005). The Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area mirrored those of the Council (except for ward names) and provided identical levels of electoral equality.

73 The Conservative Group's proposed ward boundaries in this area were also identical to those put forward by the Council, but due to the difference in council size upon which the Conservative Group's scheme was based (43 rather than 44), it provided slightly different levels of electoral equality. It also proposed different ward names. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the average in Mid Axholme ward (9 per cent by 2005), 1 per cent above the average in North Axholme, Crowle Keadby with Althorpe ward (equal to the average by 2005) and 3 per cent below the average in South Axholme ward (8 per cent by 2005). Brigg & Goole Conservative Association expressed support for the Conservative Group's proposals for the Isle of Axholme.

74 Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council proposed that its existing parish wards be abolished to provide more effective representation at parish level. The details of our recommendations in this respect are outlined later in the chapter.

75 We have considered all the Stage Three representations regarding this area and are particularly pleased to note that the three district-wide schemes provided for identical warding of the Isle of Axholme and that these schemes allocated six councillors to this area, the correct level of representation. We are minded to agree with the respondents that the River Trent should be maintained as a ward boundary, as it is identifiable, reflects communities identities and has few crossing points. In the light of this, and the local consensus for warding arrangements in the area, we propose adopting the Council's, Conservative Group's and Liberal Democrats' scheme in this area. We consider it would strike the best balance presently available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations, based on a council size of 43 and outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the Conservative Group's scheme.

Haven and North West & Winterton wards

76 The two wards of Haven and North West & Winterton cover a significant part of the parished area of the district. Haven ward comprises the parishes of Brigg, Broughton, Elsham and Wrawby and is represented by three members. The number of electors per councillor in Haven ward is currently 14 per cent above the district average (17 per cent by 2005). North West & Winterton ward comprises the parishes of Alkborough, Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, West Halton, Whitton, Winterringham and Winterton and is represented by two members. The number of electors per councillor in North West & Winterton ward is currently 7 per cent above the district average (1 per cent by 2005).

77 In this area the Council proposed a new two-member Broughton & Appleby ward, to include the parishes of Broughton (part of the existing Haven ward), Holme (part of the existing Ridge

ward) and Appleby and Roxby cum Risby (part of the existing North West & Winterton ward). The remainder of Haven ward would form part of a new Brigg & Wold ward, whilst the remainder of the existing North West & Winterton ward would form a new two-member Winterton ward. The remainder of Ridge ward would be divided between a new Brumby & Burringham ward (see above) and a modified Ridge ward (see below). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the average in Broughton & Appleby ward (10 per cent by 2005) and 3 per cent below the average in Winterton ward (8 per cent by 2005). The Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area mirrored those of the Council, except for one ward name.

78 The Conservative Group proposed a new three-member West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward, to include the parishes of Broughton (part of the existing Haven ward), Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, Winteringham and Winterton (part of the existing North West & Winterton ward). The remainder of Haven ward would form part of a new Brigg & Wolds ward (see below) and the remainder of North West & Winterton ward would form part of a new East Trent ward (see below). The number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above the district average in West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward (8 per cent by 2005).

79 Brigg Town Council proposed an enlarged four-member Haven ward, comprising the current ward, the parishes of Cadney (part of the existing Ridge ward), Bonby, Horkstow, Melton Ross, Saxby and Worlaby (parts of the existing Ferry and Wold wards), to better reflect community identities. It recognised the Commission's policy on four-member wards, which is that we consider them to reduce the accountability of councillors to the electorate, but argued that "the density of population in Brigg and Broughton would relieve the representatives of any adverse effects caused by the size of the ward."

80 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding warding arrangements in this area. We note that, under the proposed council size of 43, the electoral variance of the Council's Broughton & Appleby ward and the Liberal Democrats' Broughton ward would be 12 per cent by 2005, while the Conservative Group's proposed West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward would have an electoral variance of only 8 per cent by 2005. Although we have noted that the Conservative Group's ward for the area would include a greater number of parishes in a single ward, we consider it would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the alternatives proposed by the Council and Liberal Democrats or the existing arrangements. We have also noted that the Conservative Group's scheme would facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the district.

81 We have noted Brigg Town Council's proposals for a modified Haven ward. However, as acknowledged by the Town Council, the Commission does not favour the creation of four-member wards. Given that we have received locally generated alternative schemes which do not require the creation of a four-member ward, we are not minded to endorse such a proposal. We therefore propose that the Conservative Group's West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward form part of our draft recommendations. However, we propose that it be renamed Broughton & Appleby ward, to better reflect the constituent parishes of the proposed ward. Under our draft recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above the district average in Broughton & Appleby ward (8 per cent by 2005).

Burton upon Stather & Gunness and Ridge wards

82 The two-member Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward comprises the parishes of Burton upon Stather, Flixborough and Gunness. The number of electors per councillor in Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward is currently 7 per cent below the district average (6 per cent above the average by 2005). The three-member Ridge ward comprises 10 parishes; Burringham, Cadney, East Butterwick, Hibaldstow, Holme, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby. The number of electors per councillor in the existing Ridge ward is 22 per cent above the district average (18 per cent by 2005).

83 The Council proposed no change to the existing Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward. However, it proposed a new three-member Brumby & Burringham ward to include the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick (part of the existing Ridge ward) and the existing Brumby ward (part of unparished Scunthorpe town). The Council argued that although “the ward would be a mixture of urban Scunthorpe with rural parishes”, the electors from the caravan parks (in the east of Burringham parish) “have a much greater affinity with Scunthorpe than with the village of Burringham” (see above). A modified Ridge ward would retain its existing level of representation, but comprise the parishes of Cadney, Hibaldstow, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby. Holme parish (the remainder of Ridge ward) would be included in a new Broughton & Appleby ward (see above). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the district average in Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward (11 per cent above by 2005) and 12 per cent above the average in Ridge ward (9 per cent by 2005).

84 The Conservative Group proposed a new three-member East Trent ward to include the parishes of Alkborough, West Halton and Whitton (part of the existing North West & Winterton ward), Burringham and East Butterwick (part of the existing Ridge ward) and the existing Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward. Under these proposals East Trent ward would be 13 per cent over-represented initially (improving to 5 per cent by 2005). The remainder of Ridge ward (the parishes of Cadney, Hibaldstow, Holme, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby) would form a modified three-member Ridge ward. Under the Conservative Group’s scheme, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Ridge ward would be 10 per cent above the district average (7 per cent by 2005). The remainder of North West & Winterton ward would form part of a new three-member West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward (see above).

85 The Liberal Democrats’ proposed Ridge ward mirrored that of the Council. However, it proposed a different ward configuration to the west of Scunthorpe town, with a new three-member Trentside ward to include the parishes of Burringham, Burton upon Stather, East Butterwick, Flixborough and Gunness. Trentside ward would have 12 per cent fewer electors than the district average by 2005.

86 Gunness, Redbourne and Scawby parish councils proposed that the existing arrangements be retained. Messingham Parish Council proposed “that the number of Parish Councillors on each Parish Council be reviewed to take into consideration the number of electors being represented per parish”.

87 Brigg Town Council proposed that Cadney parish (part of the existing Ridge ward) be included in a modified four-member Haven ward. The Town Council stated that Cadney parish “has historical links with Brigg ... and is now divided from its current Ridge ward by the River Ancholme”, therefore arguing that its proposal would accurately reflect local community ties.

88 The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland proposed that they be included in a ward with part of Scunthorpe town and that Burringham parish be warded to better reflect the different community identities of the two settlements which constitute the parish. A resident of Scunthorpe opposed the Council’s proposal to include the existing Brumby ward (part of unparished Scunthorpe) in a ward with the parishes of Burringham and Gunness, for reasons of community identity. A resident of Messingham ward suggested that, due to the forecast increase in electorate, the existing Ridge ward should be represented by four councillors.

89 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding warding arrangements for this area. We have noted the Council’s and Residents of Polling Districts Ashby Decoy and Parkland proposal to include parished and unparished areas in a single ward and conversely the opposition expressed by others to joining parished and unparished areas in a single ward. We have also noted that the Council’s proposed Brumby & Burringham ward would not provide particularly good levels of electoral equality. Additionally, we have not been convinced by the argumentation submitted by the Council that such an arrangement would reflect the statutory criteria and are particularly concerned that the proposed ward would not reflect the interests and identity of Burringham village and East Butterwick parish. It is important to note that in drawing up electoral arrangements we must consider the warding of the district as a whole and cannot simply look at an area in isolation. We are concerned that the proposal from the Residents of Polling Districts Ashby Decoy and Parkland would not provide good electoral equality or a satisfactory scheme for the district as a whole. However, our proposals in response to the concerns expressed by the Residents of Polling Districts Ashby Decoy & Parkland at parish level are discussed later in the chapter. We have also noted that the Liberal Democrats’ scheme for the area would not provide good electoral equality (12 per cent by 2005).

90 We have also noted the proposals for a four-member ward from Brigg Town Council and a resident of Scunthorpe. The Commission considers that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, as we judge that numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. We are not proposing, therefore, that Brigg Town Council’s proposed Haven ward form part of our draft recommendations.

91 Therefore, we propose that the Conservative Group’s East Trent and Ridge wards be adopted as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that it strikes the best balance presently available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the levels of electoral equality achieved would be the same as those under the Conservative Group’s scheme.

Ferry and Wold wards

92 These two three-member wards are situated in the far east of the district. Ferry ward comprises the 13 parishes of Barnetby le Wold, Barrow upon Humber, Croxton, East Halton,

Goxhill, Kirmington, Melton Ross, New Holland, North Killingholme, South Killingholme, Thornton Curtis, Ulceby and Wootton. The number of electors per councillor in the existing Ferry ward is 8 per cent above the district average (6 per cent by 2005). Wold ward comprises the parishes of Barton-upon-Humber, Bonby, Horkstow, Saxby All Saints, South Ferriby and Worlaby. The number of electors per councillor in Wold ward is 4 per cent above the average for the district (12 per cent by 2005).

93 In this area the Council proposed that Barnetby le Wold parish (part of the existing Ferry ward) be included in a new three-member Brigg & Wold ward with the parishes of Brigg, Elsham and Wrawby (parts of the existing Haven ward) and Bonby, Horkstow, Saxby All Saints, South Ferriby and Worlaby (parts of the existing Wold ward). The remainder of Ferry ward would form a modified three-member Ferry ward. Additionally, Barton-upon-Humber parish (part of the existing Wold ward) would form a new three-member Barton-upon-Humber district ward and Broughton parish (part of the existing Haven ward) would be included in a new Broughton & Appleby ward (see above). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Ferry ward (3 per cent by 2005), 1 per cent above the average in Brigg & Wold ward (6 per cent by 2005) and 10 per cent below the average in Barton-upon-Humber ward (1 per cent by 2005).

94 The Conservative Group's proposals in this area reflected those of the Council, except that the parish of Melton Ross would be included in Brigg & Wold ward, rather than Ferry ward. However, it proposed that Brigg & Wold ward be named Brigg & Wolds and that Barton upon Humber ward be named Barton. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent below the average in Barton ward (3 per cent by 2005), 1 per cent above the average in Brigg & Wolds ward (5 per cent by 2005) and 5 per cent below the average in Ferry ward (7 per cent by 2005). Cleethorpes Conservative Association expressed support for the Conservative Group's proposed Barton and Ferry wards. The Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area reflected those of the Conservative Group.

95 Brigg Town Council proposed that the parishes of Bonby, Horkstow, Melton Ross, Saxby and Worlaby (parts of the existing Ferry and Wold wards), known locally as the Low Villages be included in a modified four-member Haven ward, to better reflect community identities.

96 We have considered carefully all the representations received during Stage One regarding warding arrangements for this area and are pleased to note that there is a degree of consensus between the three district-wide schemes, including a proposal for a three-member Barton ward. We, therefore, suggest that such a proposal form part of our draft recommendations, considering it to provide a good reflection of community identities and excellent electoral equality. We also propose adopting the Conservative Group's and Liberal Democrats' Brigg & Wold and Ferry wards. The wards are largely similar to those proposed by the Council, but include Melton Ross parish in Brigg & Wold ward. We have noted the views of the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats and Brigg Town Council that Melton Ross parish should be included in a ward with Bonby, Horkstow, Saxby and Worlaby, with which it has community ties. We consider the Conservative Group's and Liberal Democrats' arrangement to provide the best balance presently available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations,

outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the Conservative Group's scheme.

Electoral Cycle

97 We received no proposal to change the Council's current electoral cycle and therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 42 to 43;
- there should be 16 wards;
- the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

99 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Conservative Group's proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- in Scunthorpe we propose adopting the Conservative Group's proposed Crosby & Park ward but propose our own scheme for the remainder of the town, to provide better electoral equality, more identifiable boundaries and better reflect community identities.

100 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	42	43	42	43
Number of wards	15	16	15	16
Average number of electors per councillor	2,809	2,744	3,003	2,933
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	4	8	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	0	2	0

101 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for North Lincolnshire Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from four currently to none by 2005.

Draft Recommendation

North Lincolnshire Council should comprise 43 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

102 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible 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 district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. None of our proposed wards divides a parish between different district wards. Accordingly, we propose no consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of North Lincolnshire. However, in the light of comments received at Stage One, we propose modifications to the electoral arrangements of Burringham and Keadby with Althorpe parish councils.

103 The parish of Burringham is currently served by 10 councillors and is not warded. The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland proposed that Burringham parish be warded, to better reflect the different community interests of the two settlements that constitute the parish. Officers from the Commission visited the area and agree that warding the parish would

be in the interests of both the village of Burringham and the electors east of the M181. We therefore propose that this arrangement form part of our draft recommendations. However, as part of our consultation exercise, we are seeking the views of other local interest groups, particularly Burringham Parish Council.

Draft Recommendation
Burringham Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Burringham Village (returning six councillors) and Ashby Parkland (returning four councillors). The boundary between the two proposed parish wards should be the M181, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

104 The parish of Keadby with Althorpe is currently served by 15 councillors, who represent three wards. However, the Parish Council requested that “consideration be given to the abolition of the three ward system within this parish” as “the present system has a tendency to polarise different parts of the parish.” This proposal was supported by North Lincolnshire Council. Given the consensus for such a proposal the Commission is minded to endorse it as part of its draft recommendations.

Draft Recommendation
Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, and should not be warded.

105 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

Draft Recommendation
For parish and town councils, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

106 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for North Lincolnshire and welcome comments from the Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward 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.

Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for North Lincolnshire

5 NEXT STEPS

107 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 19 February 2001. 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 North Lincolnshire Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

108 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
North Lincolnshire 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
www.lgce.gov.uk

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

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the North Lincolnshire area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the area which is shown in more detail in Map A2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Burringham parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Scunthorpe.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for North Lincolnshire: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Burringham Parish

APPENDIX B

North Lincolnshire Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Council in 12 wards, where its proposals were as follows:

Figure B1: North Lincolnshire Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Ashby (Scunthorpe)	<i>Unchanged</i> (Ashby ward)
Brigg & Wold	Ferry ward (part – Barnetby le Wold parish); Haven ward (part – the parishes of Brigg, Elsham and Wrawby); Wold ward (part – the parishes of Bonby, Horkstow, Saxby All Saints, South Ferriby and Worlaby)
Broughton & Appleby	Haven ward (part – the parish of Broughton); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Appleby and Roxby cum Risby); Ridge ward (part – Holme parish)
Brumby & Burringham (Scunthorpe)	Brumby ward; Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick)
Burton upon Stather & Gunness	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Burton upon Stather, Flixborough and Gunness)
Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	<i>Unchanged</i> (Crosby & Park ward)
Ferry	Ferry ward (part – the parishes of Barrow upon Humber, Croxton, East Halton, Goxhill, Kirmington, Melton Ross, New Holland, North Killingholme, South Killingholme, Thornton Curtis, Ulceby and Wooton)
Frodingham & Town (Scunthorpe)	Frodingham & Town ward; Lincoln Gardens ward (part)
Lincoln Gardens (Scunthorpe)	Lincoln Gardens ward (part)
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	<i>Unchanged</i> (Kingsway ward)
Ridge	Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Cadney, Hibaldstow, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby)
Winterton	North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Alkborough, West Halton, Whitton, Winteringham and Winterton)

Figure B2: North Lincolnshire Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Ashby (Scunthorpe)	3	7,689	2,563	-4	9,397	3,132	9
Brigg & Wold	3	8,136	2,712	1	9,107	3,036	6
Broughton & Appleby	2	5,039	2,520	-6	5,135	2,568	-10
Brumby & Burringham (Scunthorpe)	3	7,811	2,604	-3	7,831	2,610	-9
Burton upon Stather & Gunness	2	5,221	2,611	-3	6,350	3,175	11
Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	7,442	2,481	-7	8,029	2,676	-7
Ferry	3	7,949	2,650	-1	8,302	2,767	-3
Frodingham & Town (Scunthorpe)	3	7,963	2,654	-1	8,282	2,761	-4
Lincoln Gardens (Scunthorpe)	2	6,103	2,679	0	6,139	3,070	7
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	8,037	3,001	12	8,430	2,810	-2
Ridge	3	9,004	3,001	12	9,379	3,126	9
Winterton	2	5,215	2,608	-3	5,258	2,629	-8

Source: Electorate figures are based on North Lincolnshire Council's submission.

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

The Conservative Group on the Council Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Conservative Group in five wards, where its proposals were as follows:

Figure B3: The Conservative Group's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Ashby East (Scunthorpe)	Ashby ward (part)
Ashby West (Scunthorpe)	Ashby ward (part); Brumby ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)
Brumby (Scunthorpe)	Brumby ward (part)
Frodingham & Town (Scunthorpe)	Frodingham & Town ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	<i>Unchanged</i> (Kingsway ward)

Figure B4: The Conservative Group's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Ashby East (Scunthorpe)	2	4,420	2,210	-19	6,129	3,065	4
Ashby West (Scunthorpe)	3	8,384	2,795	2	8,420	2,807	-4
Brumby (Scunthorpe)	2	5,632	2,816	3	5,652	2,826	-4
Frodingham & Town (Scunthorpe)	3	8,876	2,959	8	9,195	3,065	4
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	8,037	2,679	-2	8,430	2,810	-4

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Conservative Group's submission.

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

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

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

or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- 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 shire districts:

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

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

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

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

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

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) 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:

- (h) 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;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 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.