

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for North Lincolnshire

Report to the Secretary of State for the
Environment, Transport and the Regions

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North Lincolnshire.

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Local Government Commission for England

15 May 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 16 May 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of North Lincolnshire under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 2000 and undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 113-114) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in North Lincolnshire.

We recommend that North Lincolnshire Council should be served by 43 councillors representing 17 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

The Local Government Act 2000 contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

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

Yours sincerely

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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of North Lincolnshire on 16 May 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 12 December 2000, after which we undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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 final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 113-114) are that:

- **North Lincolnshire Council should have 43 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, instead of the current 15;**
- **the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 12 of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by less than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all but one ward 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 council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **two parish wards to cover Burringham parish;**
- **the parish of Keadby with Althorpe ceasing to be warded for parish council election purposes.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 26 June 2001:

**The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

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 – Barton-upon-Humber parish)	Map 2
6	Bottesford	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Bottesford parish)	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	2	Haven ward (part – Broughton parish); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Appleby and Roxby cum Risby)	Map 2
9	Brumby (Scunthorpe)	3	Ashby ward (part); Brumby ward (part); Kingsway ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
10	Burringham & Gunness	1	Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward (part – Gunness parish); Ridge ward (part – Burringham parish)	Map 2
11	Burton upon Stather & Winterton	3	Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward (part – the parishes of Burton upon Stather and Flixborough); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Alkborough, West Halton, Whitton, Winterringham and Winterton)	Map 2
12	Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	Crosby & Park ward; Frodingham & Town ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
13	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

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

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

2 Map 2 and the large map at the back of this 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	2	4,958	2,479	-10	5,054	2,527	-14
9 Brumby (Scunthorpe)	3	8,707	2,902	6	8,727	2,909	-1
10 Burringham & Gunness	1	2,948	2,948	7	3,199	3,199	9
11 Burton upon Stather & Winterton	3	8,523	2,841	4	9,444	3,148	7
12 Crosby & Park (Scunthorpe)	3	8,520	2,840	3	9,107	3,036	3
13 Ferry	3	7,800	2,600	-5	8,153	2,718	-7
14 Frodingham (Scunthorpe)	2	5,809	2,905	6	5,952	2,976	1
15 Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens (Scunthorpe)	3	8,418	2,806	2	8,752	2,917	-1

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 %
16 Ridge	3	9,227	3,076	12	9,602	3,201	9
17 Town (Scunthorpe)	2	5,388	2,694	-2	5,719	2,860	-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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North Lincolnshire. We have now reviewed 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 was 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 have had 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.

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 have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), which 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, so far as practicable, 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 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. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. In unitary authorities the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. 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 Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. 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. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 12 December 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North Lincolnshire*, and ended on 19 February 2001. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

12 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.

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

14 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'.

15 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, while the remainder are predominantly rural. Twelve of the wards are each represented by three councillors, while the remaining three are each represented by two councillors. The whole council is elected every four years.

16 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 3: 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 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received 18 representations, including district-wide schemes from North Lincolnshire Council, the Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council and the North Lincolnshire Liberal Democrats, and representations from two Conservative associations, nine parish and town councils, a local residents group and three local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North Lincolnshire*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the Conservative Group's scheme, which achieved significant improvements in electoral equality and gave the correct balance of representation between Scunthorpe and the rural area. However, we moved away from its scheme in Scunthorpe, affecting five wards, in order to further improve electoral equality, better reflect community identities and provide more identifiable boundaries. We based our recommendations for Scunthorpe on information and evidence received as part of our consultation exercise and visited the town to look at particular boundaries. We proposed that:

- North Lincolnshire Council should be served by 43 councillors, compared with the current 42, representing 16 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Burringham parish and Keadby with Althorpe parish.

Draft Recommendation

North Lincolnshire Council should comprise 43 councillors, serving 16 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 16 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to have an electoral variance of less than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 34 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of North Lincolnshire Council and the Commission.

North Lincolnshire Council

21 North Lincolnshire Council expressed support for the majority of the draft recommendations, including the proposal to increase the council size from 42 to 43 and most of the draft recommendations for Scunthorpe. However, it suggested a minor modification to the boundary between the proposed Kingsway and Town wards and that Kingsway ward be renamed Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens.

22 The Council opposed the proposed Broughton with Appleby and East Trent wards, “on the grounds of lack of community interest”. It proposed an alternative configuration of parishes to form wards for this area which would provide marginally worse levels of electoral equality, but in its opinion, would better reflect community identities.

23 It supported proposals to unward Keadby with Althorpe parish and ward Burringham parish.

Conservative Groups

24 The Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council expressed support for the draft recommendations for the rural area. However, it proposed an alternative scheme for Scunthorpe, which it argued would better reflect community identities.

25 Scunthorpe Conservative Association also opposed the draft recommendations for Scunthorpe, on the basis that “the proposed boundaries destroy all the history of a town formed from five villages”. It proposed an alternative arrangement for the area.

Scunthorpe County Constituency Labour Party

26 Scunthorpe County Constituency Labour Party expressed support for the draft recommendations for Ashby, Bottesford, Brumby, Crosby & Park, Frodingham and Ridge wards. However, it suggested a minor modification to the boundary between Kingsway and Town wards.

Parish and Town Councils

27 Barton-upon-Humber Town Council, Bottesford Town Council, Brigg Town Council, Kirton-in-Lindsey Town Council, Cadney cum Howsham Parish Council, Elsham Parish Council, Scawby Parish Council and Holme Parish Meeting expressed support for the draft recommendations. Burringham Parish Council expressed support for the district warding

arrangements for its area, but stated that the “warding of Burringham ... would be a retrograde step and would divide the parish rather than unite it”.

28 Broughton Town Council objected to the proposed Broughton & Appleby ward, for reasons of community identity. It stated that it would prefer the retention of the status quo, but would support North Lincolnshire Council’s Stage Three proposal as an alternative. Burton upon Stather Parish Council proposed modifying the draft recommendations to create a ward including the parishes of Alkborough, Burton upon Stather, Flixborough, West Halton, Whitton and Winteringham. Gunness Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations for its area, suggesting that they would not reflect community identities and proposing that the status quo be retained. Messingham Parish Council suggested that East Butterwick parish be included in the proposed Ridge ward to better reflect the rural community identities. Winteringham Parish Council expressed support for North Lincolnshire Council’s Stage Three proposal for a three-member Burton with Stather & Winterton ward. Winterton Town Council opposed our draft recommendation to include Broughton and Winterton parishes in a single ward for reasons of community identity, and proposed an alternative arrangement for the area.

Members of Parliament

29 Eliot Morley, Member of Parliament for Scunthorpe, supported our proposals for Scunthorpe but suggested modifying the boundary between Kingsway and Town wards. He also supported North Lincolnshire Council’s Stage Three submission for change to the parished area immediately surrounding Scunthorpe.

Other Representations

30 A further 14 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, councillors and residents.

31 Scunthorpe Charter Trustees expressed support for the Scunthorpe Constituency Labour Party’s submission. Lincoln Gardens Junior School proposed the retention of Lincoln Gardens as a ward name. The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland (covering the caravan parks in Burringham parish, currently in Ridge ward) supported the recommendation to ward Burringham parish but expressed disappointment that we had not endorsed their proposal to include them in a ward with part of Scunthorpe.

32 Councillor Smith, member for the existing North West & Winterton ward, opposed our proposal to include the parishes of Broughton and Winterton in a single ward on the basis that such a proposal would not accurately reflect community identities. He supported North Lincolnshire Council’s Stage Three proposals for change to this area. Councillor Dobbs, of Gunness Parish Council, opposed the proposed East Trent ward, for reasons of community identity. He suggested that the status quo be retained, or alternatively proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Burringham, Gunness and Flixborough.

33 Two residents of Scunthorpe made representations; one stated that the draft recommendations for Scunthorpe would not reflect community identities, while the other

proposed that the modified Kingsway ward be renamed Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens, to better reflect community identities. A resident of Appleby suggested that Appleby and Winterton parishes be included in a single ward, for reasons of community identity. A resident of Brigg suggested that we base our final recommendations on the existing electorate only, rather than five-year forecasts. A resident of Broughton opposed our proposal to include Broughton and Brigg parishes in separate wards, on the basis that the two settlements are a contiguous community. A resident of Burringham expressed support for North Lincolnshire Council's Stage Three proposal to include Burringham and Gunness parishes in a single-member ward. Two residents of Gunness expressed opposition to our draft recommendations, suggesting a new Burringham & Gunness ward, to better reflect community identities.

34 A resident of Scawby proposed that the council be elected by thirds, rather than the whole council being elected once every four years, as at present.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL 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 ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

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, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

39 At Stage One 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 to verify the accuracy of its projected electorate figures and was assured by officers at the Council that they are a reasonable approximation. The Council 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 was obtained. We accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council’s figures, were content that they represented the best estimates that could be made at the time.

40 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

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

42 North Lincolnshire Council presently has 42 members. At Stage One, 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 the 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.

43 Given the evidence provided during Stage One, we concurred 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 visited the area and agreed 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.

44 With 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 was based on current workloads.” From this it appeared that the internal management of the Council is not hindered by the existing council size. Consequently, we were not persuaded that there is sufficient justification for an increase in the council size to 44. We also considered proposals from East Butterwick Parish Council for a 40-member council and a local resident for a significant reduction in council size, but did not consider either proposal to be supported by sufficient argumentation or local support. We therefore proposed an increase in council size of one, to 43.

45 At Stage Three there was general acceptance of the proposed council of 43 members and no alternative proposals were received. We therefore confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 43 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

46 It was necessary for us to address a number of issues in drawing up our draft recommendations. At present Scunthorpe itself is over-represented while the surrounding rural area is under-represented. It was important to note that, in order to achieve electoral equality across the district, any proposals we put forward needed 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 is 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 did not consider that this reflected community identities and therefore did not endorse such a proposal as part of the draft recommendations.

48 We also 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 earlier), we were not able to make detailed comparisons in all areas with the boundaries proposed under East Butterwick Parish Council's scheme. However, we attempted to build on the local knowledge that the alternative scheme provided, and made comparisons where appropriate.

49 We noted that the Conservative Group's scheme would provide the best 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 based our draft recommendations on its scheme. However, to improve electoral equality further and provide more identifiable boundaries, we proposed modifying the Conservative Group's scheme for Scunthorpe.

50 At Stage Three we were pleased to note that a significant number of respondents expressed support for our draft recommendations, particularly the proposal to align ward boundaries with the municipal boundary of Scunthorpe and the warding arrangements for the Isle of Axholme, Scunthorpe and the eastern part of the district. However, we have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence received, particularly regarding the community identities of those parishes immediately surrounding Scunthorpe. Consequently, we have recommended a number of changes to our draft proposals.

51 We have noted the alternative proposals for Scunthorpe put forward by the Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council and Scunthorpe Conservative Association. We are concerned that the proposals do not build on the draft recommendations, rather they appear to be based on the existing arrangements. In our opinion, neither scheme would be based on identifiable boundaries, retaining many of the boundary anomalies we attempted to rectify in our draft recommendations. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, neither scheme was made available for public inspection. Therefore, we do not propose endorsing either scheme as part of the final recommendations.

52 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 & Gunness and Ridge wards;
- Ferry and Wold wards.

53 Details of our final 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

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

55 At Stage One 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).

56 The Conservative Group proposed modifying the southern boundary of Crosby & Park ward 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).

57 We 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, but were concerned that neither would provide clear boundaries or,

in our opinion, best reflect communities. We were particularly concerned that under both schemes the proposed Frodingham & Town ward would breach the railway line where there are few crossing points. We based a new Frodingham ward on the Conservative Group's Frodingham & Town ward, but proposed modifying it 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. 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 noted that Brumby Wood Lane is situated to the south of the railway line, but having visited the area, we considered 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 proposed adopting the Conservative Group's three-member Crosby & Park ward without modification. Under our proposals, 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).

58 At Stage Three the Council, Scunthorpe County Constituency Labour Party, Scunthorpe Charter Trustees and Eliot Morley MP supported our proposals for Crosby & Park and Frodingham wards, but suggested that the southern boundary of Town ward should be modified to follow the railway line. This proposal would have little impact on electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor being 3 per cent below the district average in the revised Town ward by 2005.

59 The Conservative Group and Conservative Association proposed similar arrangements. They broadly suggested little change to the proposed Frodingham ward. However, they proposed a new Crosby Town ward, to broadly include that part of the town north of the railway line and east of Crosby Avenue and Oswald Avenue and a new Park ward, to broadly include the remainder of our proposed Crosby & Park ward. As stated earlier, we do not consider that the Conservatives' proposals provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or the draft recommendations.

60 Consequently, and in the light of the comments received regarding the use of the railway line as a ward boundary, we propose adopting the Council's recommendation to modify Town ward. We have been convinced that such a proposal would provide a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and the provision of identifiable boundaries. In the light of local support expressed during Stage Three, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations for Crosby & Park and Frodingham wards as part of the final recommendations, without modification. Under these recommendations, outlined on the large map at the back of this report, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations for Crosby & Park and Frodingham wards and 2 per cent below the district average in Town ward (3 per cent by 2005).

Kingsway and Lincoln Gardens wards

61 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).

62 At Stage One 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 should 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).

63 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 should 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).

64 At Stage Two we were concerned that the existing Kingsway ward (retained under both district-wide schemes) would include the urban settlements either side of the railway line, and polling district ATC (broadly Plymouth Road, Mendip Road and Chiltern Rise) in a single ward. Additionally, we did not consider that the ward would be based on identifiable boundaries and consequently proposed an alternative arrangement. We proposed a modified three-member Kingsway ward to broadly include that part of the existing Kingsway ward south of the railway line and that part of Lincoln Gardens ward west of Queensway. Polling district ATC (as detailed above) 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 proposed arrangements. The remainder of Kingsway ward would be included in a new two-member Town ward (see above). Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Kingsway ward would be 2 per cent below the district average initially (4 per cent by 2005).

65 At Stage Three the Council, Scunthorpe County Constituency Labour Party, Scunthorpe Charter Trustees and Eliot Morley (MP for Scunthorpe) proposed that the northern boundary of Kingsway ward be modified to follow the railway line, and that the ward be renamed Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens, to better reflect community identities. This proposal would result in a slight improvement in electoral equality, with the new Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens ward being only 1 per cent over-represented by 2005.

66 The schemes proposed by the Conservatives at Stage Three had a number of areas of consensus between them. They proposed a modified Kingsway ward, broadly reflecting the existing Kingsway ward. However, that part of the existing Kingsway ward south of West Common Lane would be included in a modified Brumby ward (outlined below). They also

proposed new Ashby Grange and Ashby with Lincoln Gardens wards to broadly cover that part of Scunthorpe included in Ashby and Kingsway wards under the draft recommendations.

67 Lincoln Gardens Junior School and a resident of Scunthorpe suggested that the existing ward name of Lincoln Gardens should form part of the final recommendations, as it represents a significant community focus in Scunthorpe.

68 As stated earlier, we do not consider that the Conservatives' proposals provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or the draft recommendations. We are particularly concerned that their proposals would retain the inclusion of electors either side of the railway line, in a single ward. Consequently, and in the light of the comments received regarding the use of the railway line as a ward boundary, we propose adopting the Council's recommendations to modify Kingsway ward. We have been convinced that such a proposal would provide a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and the need to provide identifiable boundaries. We also propose renaming Kingsway ward Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens, to better reflect the community identities outlined by Stage Three respondents. Under these recommendations, outlined on the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average in Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens ward (1 per cent below by 2005).

Ashby, Bottesford and Brumby wards

69 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).

70 At Stage One 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. 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).

71 The Conservative Group also proposed no change to the existing Bottesford ward. It further proposed a new Ashby East ward comprising that part of the existing Ashby ward broadly east of Bottesford Road; and a new Ashby West ward comprising 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).

72 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.

73 In the light of the cross-party support and local consensus for a three-member Bottesford ward we adopted 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). However, we were 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 noted the Conservative Group’s proposed Brumby ward, but were concerned that it would not provide for strong or identifiable boundaries. In the light of this we proposed an alternative Brumby ward which would provide even higher levels of electoral equality, and in our opinion would be based on stronger boundaries. We proposed that the existing Brumby ward be extended northwards to include part of the existing Kingsway ward and eastwards to include part of the existing Ashby ward (broadly polling district APC), using Messingham Road as a boundary.

74 We also considered the proposals for Ashby and noted that the Council’s proposal was for no change. In the light of our proposals elsewhere in Scunthorpe, we were unable to endorse this proposal as part of our draft recommendations, as it would not facilitate electoral equality in neighbouring wards. We were concerned that the Conservative Group’s proposed Ashby West ward would not cover an identifiable area and would include two disparate communities. We did 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 proposed a modified Ashby ward including 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). We noted 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 considered 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. Under these proposals, 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).

75 At Stage Three, the Council, Scunthorpe County Constituency Labour Party, Scunthorpe Charter Trustees and Eliot Morley MP expressed support for our recommendations in this area. Bottesford Town Council “welcomes the Commission’s findings to keep Bottesford as one electoral area”. Again, it was possible to identify a number of areas of consensus between the proposals from the Conservative Group and Conservative Association for this area. They broadly

proposed two wards to cover the area included in our Ashby and Kingsway wards. A modified Brumby ward would include that part of the new Brumby ward north of Meredith Avenue and that part of Kingway ward south of West Common Lane and west of Ashby Road. The remainder of Brumby and Ashby wards would form a new Ridings ward. A resident of Ashby suggested that the draft recommendations for Scunthorpe would not represent the constituent communities of the town.

76 As stated earlier, we do not consider that the Conservatives' proposals provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or the draft recommendations. Consequently, and in the light of the support expressed for these proposals by other Stage Three respondents, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for this area, as final. Under these recommendations, outlined on the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations.

The rural area

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

77 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.

78 At Stage One the Council proposed three two-member wards to cover this area and the correct total allocation of councillors under a 44-member council. 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 the proposed ward names, and provided identical levels of electoral equality.

79 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.

80 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.

81 We agreed with respondents that the River Trent should be maintained as a ward boundary, as it is identifiable, reflects community identities and has few crossing points. In the light of this, and the local consensus for warding arrangements in the area, we proposed adopting the Council's, Conservative Group's and Liberal Democrats' scheme in this area. Under our draft recommendations for a 43-member council the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the Conservative Group's scheme.

82 At Stage Three, the Council fully supported our recommendations in this area. The Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council, although supporting the proposed boundaries, suggested that Axholme North ward be renamed North Axholme, Axholme Central ward be renamed Mid Axholme and Axholme South ward be renamed South Axholme.

83 In the light of the support expressed during Stage Three for our draft recommendations for this area we propose endorsing them as final. We have identified a general consensus for ward names in this area and do not consider the Conservatives' alternative names better reflect community identities and therefore do not propose adopting them. Under our final recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations.

Haven and North West & Winterton wards

84 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).

85 At Stage One 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.

86 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).

87 Brigg Town Council proposed an enlarged four-member Haven ward to better reflect community identities. It recognised that the Commission considers that four-member wards 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.”

88 We noted 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 noted that the Conservative Group's ward would include a greater number of parishes in a single ward, we considered it to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the possible alternatives. We also noted that the Conservative Group's scheme would facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the district. We proposed that the Conservative Group's West Ancholme & Ancholme Vale ward form part of our draft recommendations but suggested that it be renamed Broughton & Appleby ward. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above the district average in Broughton & Appleby ward (8 per cent by 2005).

89 At Stage Three, the Council, with the support of Winteringham Parish Council and Eliot Morley MP, opposed our proposed Broughton & Appleby ward and suggested an alternative ward including the parishes of Appleby, Broughton, Holme and Roxby cum Risby. It stated that such an arrangement would better reflect community identities given that “Appleby relies on Broughton for community facilities, not Winterton”. The respondents suggested that Broughton and Winterton parishes, and neighbouring parishes, would benefit from being a community focus and that each is a sphere of influence. The revised ward would be 12 per cent over-represented by 2005. The remainder of Broughton & Appleby ward would be included in a new Burton upon Stather & Winterton ward, outlined below. The Conservative Group on North Lincolnshire Council proposed that Broughton & Appleby ward be renamed Ermine, to better reflect community identities.

90 Broughton Town Council opposed Broughton & Appleby ward and proposed the retention of the status quo. However, it stated that it would support the Council's Stage Three proposal as an alternative. Burton upon Stather Parish Council also opposed our recommendations in this area, but suggested a new ward to include the parishes of Alkborough, Burton upon Stather,

Flixborough, West Halton, Whitton and Winteringham. Winterton Town Council also opposed our proposed Broughton & Appleby ward for reasons of community identity. It suggested two alternatives; a three-member ward including the parishes of Appleby, Burton upon Stather, Roxby cum Risby, West Halton, Whitton and Winterton or a two-member ward including the parishes of Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, Winteringham and Winterton.

91 A resident of Appleby outlined a number of community ties between the parishes of Appleby and Winterton and proposed that the warding arrangements reflect this. A resident of Broughton opposed the proposal to include Broughton and Winterton in a single ward, for reasons of community identity. He suggested that the warding arrangements should reflect the community ties between Broughton and Brigg parishes.

92 We have noted the proposal to include the parishes of Broughton and Brigg in a single ward, however, we do not consider such an arrangement to facilitate an effective district-wide scheme or provide a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria at present. We therefore do not propose endorsing such a proposal as part of the final recommendations. However, in the light of the comments received during Stage Three we have carefully considered our draft recommendations in this area. We have noted the opposition to our proposal to include the parishes of Broughton and Winterton in a single ward. We concur with the arguments that both parishes would benefit from being a community focus for a ward. Additionally, we have noted the arguments that Burton upon Stather and Winterton parishes should be placed in a ward together, on the basis that they have forged a working relationship. In the light of the evidence received, we propose modifying the proposed Broughton & Appleby ward. Although we consider the Council's Stage Three submission to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations, we propose modifying it in the light of other Stage Three submissions. We were particularly concerned that the Council's scheme would isolate Holme parish and noted that the parish had expressed support for the draft recommendations. We propose that Holme parish, included in Broughton & Appleby ward under the Council's scheme, be included in Ridge ward (as it was under the draft recommendations). Although such a proposal would result in Broughton & Appleby ward being 14 per cent over-represented by 2005, we consider such an arrangement to strike a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our final recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor in the modified Broughton & Appleby ward would be 10 per cent below the district average (14 per cent by 2005). Given the evidence received during Stage Three we consider such electoral inequality to be justified and that our proposals would strike a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or those put forward as part of the draft recommendations.

Burton upon Stather & Gunness and Ridge wards

93 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 this ward is currently 7 per cent below the district average (6 per cent above the average by 2005). The three-member Ridge ward comprises ten 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).

94 At Stage One 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). 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). 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.

95 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).

96 Gunness, Redbourne and Scawby parish councils proposed that the existing arrangements be retained. 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 [the] current Ridge ward by the River Ancholme".

97 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.

98 We noted the Council's and Residents of Polling Districts Ashby Decoy and Parkland's proposal to include parished and unparished areas in a single ward. We were not convinced by the argumentation submitted by the Council that its proposed Brumby & Burringham ward would reflect the interests and identity of Burringham village and East Butterwick parish. We also noted that the proposed ward would not facilitate particularly good levels of electoral equality in the surrounding wards. 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 were 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.

99 We 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. Therefore, we proposed that the Conservative Group's East Trent and Ridge wards be adopted as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, the levels of electoral equality achieved would be the same as those under the Conservative Group's scheme.

100 At Stage Three the Council, with the support of Eliot Morley MP, Councillor Smith (member for North West & Winterton ward) and a local resident, opposed our draft recommendations in this area, for reasons of community identity. As an alternative, the Council proposed a new Burringham & Gunness ward, to include the parishes of the same name, and a new Burton upon Stather & Winterton ward, to include the parishes of Alkborough, Burton upon Stather, Flixborough, West Halton, Whitton, Winteringham and Winterton. It argued that such an arrangement would better reflect community identities, particularly as Winterton would act as a community focus for the new Burton upon Stather & Winterton ward. To facilitate these changes the Council proposed modifying Ridge ward, to exclude Holme parish (to be included in the modified Broughton & Appleby ward, outlined above) and include East Butterwick parish. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Burringham & Gunness ward (9 per cent by 2005), 4 per cent above the average in Burton upon Stather & Winterton ward (7 per cent by 2005) and 11 per cent above the average in Ridge ward (8 per cent by 2005).

101 Burringham Parish Council supported our draft recommendations in this area and made a number of comments relating to its own electoral arrangements, which are outlined later in the chapter. Cadney cum Howsham Parish Council, Kirton-in-Lindsey Town Council and Scawby Parish Council supported the proposed Ridge ward. Messingham Parish Council proposed that East Butterwick parish form part of Ridge ward, on the basis that "historically, East Butterwick has always had links with Messingham".

102 Burton upon Stather and Winteringham parish councils opposed our proposed East Trent ward and both recommended alternative arrangements, to better reflect community identities. Gunness Parish Council opposed the proposed East Trent ward, suggesting that the geographical area to be covered would be too large and that the constituent parishes have few community ties. Winterton Town Council also opposed our recommendations for this area, suggesting two alternatives; a three-member ward to include the parishes of Appleby, Burton upon Stather, Roxby cum Risby, West Halton, Whitton and Winterton or a two-member ward to include the parishes of Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, Winteringham and Winterton. Holme Parish Meeting opposed any proposal to include it in a revised Broughton & Appleby ward.

103 The Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland, although supporting our proposal to ward Burringham parish (the details of which are outlined later in the chapter), expressed disappointment that we did not endorse their Stage One proposal to include this area in a ward with Scunthorpe. Councillor Dobbs, member of Gunness Parish Council, opposed the

proposed East Trent ward for reasons of community identity, and proposed that Gunness parish be included in a ward with Flixborough or Burringham parishes, “to form a more identifiable and community based ward”. A resident of Gunness stated that the proposed East Trent ward would include parishes with little community ties and proposed a new Burringham & Gunness ward.

104 In the light of the comments received during Stage Three we have carefully considered our draft recommendations in this area. We have noted the comments from the Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland that they were disappointed that we had not endorsed their Stage One proposals for district warding in this area. However, we continue to consider that such an arrangement would not strike the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria or a suitable district-wide scheme, at this time. We have noted the opposition to our proposal to include the parishes of Broughton and Winterton in a single ward. We concur with the arguments that both parishes, and those which surround them, would benefit from being a community focus for a ward. We have also noted the suggestion that Burringham and Gunness parishes have a similar community identity and that Burton upon Stather and Winterton parishes have forged ties by working together. In the light of the evidence received we propose modifying the proposed, East Trent and Ridge wards and creating new Burringham & Gunness and Burton upon Stather & Winterton wards. However, we suggest that Holme parish be included in Ridge ward, rather than Broughton & Appleby ward (as proposed by North Lincolnshire Council), to better reflect community identities. We consider this arrangement to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or those put forward in the draft recommendations. Under our final recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Burringham & Gunness ward (9 per cent by 2005), 4 per cent above the average in Burton upon Stather & Winterton ward (7 per cent by 2005) and 12 per cent above the average in Ridge ward (9 per cent by 2005).

Ferry and Wold wards

105 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).

106 At Stage One 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).

107 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. 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.

108 In view of the consensus between the three district-wide schemes for a three-member Barton ward, we adopted it as part of our draft recommendations, considering it to provide a good reflection of community identities and excellent electoral equality. We also proposed adopting the Conservative Group's and Liberal Democrats' Brigg & Wolds and Ferry wards. The wards were largely similar to those proposed by the Council, but included Melton Ross parish in Brigg & Wolds ward. We considered the arrangement to provide the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the Conservative Group's scheme.

109 At Stage Three the Council fully supported our draft recommendations in this area. Barton-upon-Humber Town Council supported our proposals in so far as they relate to Barton, and Brigg Town Council and Elsham Parish Council expressed their support for the proposed Brigg & Wolds ward.

110 In the light of the support expressed for our draft recommendations in this area during Stage Three we are endorsing them as final, without modification. We continue to consider them to strike the best balance presently available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our final recommendations, outlined on Map 2, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as those under the draft recommendations.

Electoral Cycle

111 At Stage One we received no proposals relating to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

112 At Stage Three we received a representation from a local resident proposing the introduction of elections by thirds. However, given the absence of any widespread support for such a proposal, particularly from the Council or political parties, we confirm our draft recommendation to retain whole-council elections every four years, as final.

Conclusions

113 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- in Scunthorpe – we propose modifying the boundary between Kingsway and Town wards to follow the railway line, and that Kingsway ward be renamed Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens ward;
- in the rural area – we propose reconfiguring the parishes immediately surrounding Scunthorpe, to better reflect community interests, as outlined by Stage Three respondents.

114 We conclude that, in North Lincolnshire:

- there should be a increase in council size from 42 to 43;
- there should be 17 wards, two more than at present;
- the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

115 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	42	43	42	43
Number of wards	15	17	15	17
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	3	8	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	0	2	0

116 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from seven to three with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2005, with only one ward having an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

North Lincolnshire Council should comprise 43 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including 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

117 The parish of Burringham is currently served by ten 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 agreed that warding the parish would be in the interests of both the village of Burringham and the electors east of the M181. We therefore proposed that this arrangement form part of our draft recommendations.

118 In response to our consultation report, we received opposition to our proposal to ward Burringham parish from the Parish Council itself, but support from North Lincolnshire Council and the Residents of the Polling Districts of Ashby Decoy and Parkland.

119 Having considered all the evidence received we have reconsidered our proposal to ward Burringham parish. We remain convinced that the two parish wards would cover areas with significantly different community identities and interests, both of which, in our opinion, would benefit from individual representation. Consequently, and in the light of some local support, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Burringham parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Burringham Parish Council should comprise ten 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.

120 The parish of Keadby with Althorpe is currently served by 15 councillors, who represent three wards. As part of the draft recommendations we are adopting Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council’s proposals that the parish cease to be warded. This proposal was supported by North

Lincolnshire Council at Stage Three. Given the consensus for such a proposal the Commission is endorsing it as part of its final recommendations.

Final Recommendation

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

121 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for North Lincolnshire

6 NEXT STEPS

122 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in North Lincolnshire and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

123 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 26 June 2001.

124 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final 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 on 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 proposed warding arrangements for Scunthorpe.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for North Lincolnshire: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Burringham Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for North Lincolnshire

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of five wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Broughton & Appleby	Haven ward (part – the parish of Broughton); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Appleby, Roxby cum Risby, Winteringham and Winterton)
East Trent	Burton upon Stather & Gunness ward (the parishes of Burton upon Stather, Flixborough and Gunness); North West & Winterton ward (part – the parishes of Alkborough, West Halton and Whitton); Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Burringham and East Butterwick)
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	Brumby ward (part); Kingsway ward (part); Lincoln Gardens ward (part)
Ridge	Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Cadney, Hibaldstow, Holme, Kirton in Lindsey, Manton, Messingham, Redbourne and Scawby)
Town (Scunthorpe)	Frodingham & Town ward (part); Kingsway ward (part)

Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: 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 %
Broughton & Appleby	3	9,368	3,123	14	9,507	3,169	8
East Trent	3	7,203	2,401	-13	8,332	2,777	-5
Kingsway (Scunthorpe)	3	8,090	2,697	-2	8,424	2,808	-4
Ridge	3	9,085	3,028	10	9,460	3,153	7
Town (Scunthorpe)	2	5,716	2,858	4	6,047	3,024	3

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.

APPENDIX C

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Figure C1: Commission compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies with this requirement
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain	The Commission complies with this requirement
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals	The Commission complies with this requirement
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement