

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Doncaster

*February 2003*

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones  
Ann M Kelly  
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.



# Summary

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for Doncaster on 8 May 2002.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Doncaster:

- **in 15 of the 21 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and six wards vary by more than 20% from the average;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20% in seven wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 129-130) are that:

- **Doncaster Borough Council should have 63 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in no change to the total number of wards, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In one of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10% from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in no ward expected to vary by more than 10% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Adwick upon Dearne, Brodsworth, Conisbrough Parks, Hatfield and Rossington;**
- **increase in the number of councillors for Auckley Parish Council;**
- **a minor amendment to the boundary between the Moorends and Town parish wards of Thorne parish.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 11 February 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**

- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 7 April 2003:

**Team Leader  
Doncaster Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large Map reference
1	Adwick	3	part of Adwick ward, part of Bentley Central ward	2 and 6
2	Armthorpe	3	the parish of Armthorpe	7
3	Askern Spa	3	the parishes of Askern, Burghwallis, Norton and Owston, part of Adwick ward	1 and 2
4	Balby	3	part of Balby ward	6
5	Bentley	3	part of Bentley Central ward, part of Bentley North Road ward	2, 3, 6 and 7
6	Bessacarr & Cantley	3	Bessacarr ward, part of Town Field ward	6 and 7
7	Central	3	part of Balby ward, Central ward, part of Town Field ward	6
8	Conisbrough & Denaby	3	part of Conisbrough ward	5 and 6
9	Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn	3	the parishes of Barnby Dunn with Kirk Sandall and Edenthorpe	3 and 7
10	Edlington & Warmsworth	3	the parishes of Edlington and Warmsworth, the proposed Conisbrough Parks North parish ward of Conisbrough Parks parish, unparished part of Southern Parks ward and part of Conisbrough ward	6 and 9
11	Finningley	3	the parishes of Auckley, Blaxton, Cantley and Flaxton and a non-parished area of Doncaster from the existing South East ward	7 and 8
12	Great North Road	3	part of Bentley North Road ward, the Cusworth and Stadium parish wards of Sprotbrough and Cusworth parish, the proposed Scawsby parish ward of Brodsworth parish	6
13	Hatfield	3	the Dunsville and Duncroft parish wards of Hatfield parish and the proposed Hatfield parish ward of Hatfield parish	3 and 7
14	Mexborough	3	Mexborough ward, proposed Adwick upon Dearne South parish ward of Adwick upon Dearne parish	5
15	Rossington	3	<i>unchanged</i> ; the parish of Rossington	6, 7 and 10
16	Sprotbrough	3	the parishes of Barnburgh, Cadeby, Clayton with Frickley, Hampole, Hickleton, High Melton, Hooton and Marr, the proposed Adwick upon Dearne North parish ward of Adwick upon Dearne parish, the proposed Brodsworth parish ward of Brodsworth parish, the Central, East and Stonecross parish wards of Sprotbrough and Cusworth parish	1, 2, 5 and 6
17	Stainforth & Moorends	3	the parishes of Fenwick, Fishlake, Kirk Bramwith, Moss, Sykehouse, Thorpe in Balne and the Moorends parish ward of Thorne parish	2,3 and 4

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18	Thorne	3	the Town parish ward of Thorne parish, the proposed Hatfield Woodhouse parish ward of Hatfield parish	3, 4, 7 and 8
19	Torne Valley	3	the parishes of Austerfield, Bawtry, Braithwell, Loversall, Stainton, Tickhill, Wadworth, the proposed Conisbrough Parks South parish ward of Conisbrough Parks parish	5, 6, 7, 9 and 10
20	Town Moor	3	part of Intake ward, part of Town Field ward	6 and 7
21	Wheatley	3	Wheatley ward, part of Intake ward, part of Town Field ward	6 and 7

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*Notes:*

- 1) *Doncaster, Conisbrough and Mexborough urban areas are the only unparished parts of the borough.*
- 2) *The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*

*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.*

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Doncaster

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Adwick	3	10,881	3,627	5	11,448	3,816	7
2	Armthorpe	3	9,935	3,312	-4	10,328	3,443	-3
3	Askern Spa	3	10,077	3,359	-3	10,873	3,624	2
4	Balby	3	9,975	3,325	-4	10,754	3,585	1
5	Bentley	3	9,905	3,302	-4	10,407	3,469	-3
6	Bessacarr & Cantley	3	10,836	3,612	5	11,179	3,726	5
7	Central	3	11,059	3,686	7	11,062	3,687	4
8	Conisbrough & Denaby	3	9,927	3,309	-4	10,745	3,582	1
9	Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn	3	10,629	3,543	3	10,903	3,634	2
10	Edlington & Warmsworth	3	10,738	3,579	4	10,891	3,630	2
11	Finningley	3	11,564	3,855	12	11,592	3,864	9
12	Great North Road	3	11,391	3,797	10	11,383	3,794	7
13	Hatfield	3	10,057	3,352	-3	10,264	3,421	-4
14	Mexborough	3	11,023	3,674	6	11,392	3,797	7
15	Rossington	3	10,059	3,353	-3	10,135	3,378	-5
16	Sprotbrough	3	9,341	3,114	-10	9,670	3,223	-9
17	Stainforth & Moorends	3	9,520	3,173	-8	9,658	3,219	-10
18	Thorne	3	10,397	3,466	0	11,009	3,670	3
19	Torne Valley	3	9,898	3,299	-5	10,330	3,443	-3
20	Town Moor	3	10,443	3,481	1	10,342	3,447	-3
21	Wheatley	3	10,016	3,339	-3	9,930	3,310	-7
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>217,671</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>224,295</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,455</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,560</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Doncaster Borough Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Doncaster, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Doncaster. Doncaster's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1978 (Report no. 284).

3 In carrying out these metropolitan reviews we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
  - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Doncaster is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against an 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit on the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan borough ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan borough wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution

of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Stages of the review*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

10 Stage One began on 8 May 2002, when we wrote to Doncaster Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified South Yorkshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Yorkshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire and the Humber Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Doncaster Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 August 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 11 February 2003 and will end on 7 April 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

13 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

14 Doncaster is a metropolitan authority covering 57,000 hectares with a population of 292,877. Founded by the Romans at the lowest crossing point of the River Don, Doncaster is at the centre of an extensive road and rail network, with the historic Great North Road running through the heart of the town. The borough features large areas of unspoiled and attractive countryside with numerous small villages of charm and character.

15 The borough contains 43 parishes, but Doncaster town itself is unparished. The electorate of the borough is 217,671 (December 2001). The Council presently has 63 members who are elected from 21 wards, 11 of which are relatively urban in the Doncaster and Mexborough areas and the remainder being predominantly rural. All wards are three-member wards.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,455 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,560 by the year 2006 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 15 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average, in six wards by more than 20% and in two wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in South East ward where the councillor represents 41% more electors than the borough average.

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

*Map 1: Existing wards in Doncaster*

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate 2001	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Adwick	3	11,962	3,987	15	12,517	4,172	17
2	Armthorpe	3	13,711	4,570	32	14,132	4,711	32
3	Askern	3	8,438	2,813	-19	9,326	3,109	-13
4	Balby	3	10,402	3,467	0	11,214	3,738	5
5	Bentley Central	3	8,456	2,819	-18	8,965	2,988	-16
6	Bentley North Road	3	8,710	2,903	-16	9,023	3,008	-16
7	Bessacarr	3	10,836	3,612	5	11,179	3,726	5
8	Central	3	7,469	2,490	-28	7,454	2,485	-30
9	Conisbrough	3	10,393	3,464	0	11,206	3,735	5
10	Edlington & Warmsworth	3	8,962	2,987	-14	9,114	3,038	-15
11	Hatfield	3	11,579	3,860	12	11,797	3,932	10
12	Intake	3	7,827	2,609	-24	7,751	2,584	-27
13	Mexborough	3	10,926	3,642	5	11,296	3,765	6
14	Richmond	3	11,000	3,667	6	11,014	3,671	3
15	Rossington	3	10,059	3,353	-3	10,135	3,378	-5
16	South East	3	14,599	4,866	41	14,914	4,971	40
17	Southern Parks	3	11,952	3,984	15	12,083	4,028	13
18	Stainforth	3	12,217	4,072	18	12,484	4,161	17
19	Thorne	3	12,378	4,126	19	13,022	4,341	22
20	Town Field	3	7,631	2,544	-26	7,579	2,526	-29
21	Wheatley	3	8,164	2,721	-21	8,090	2,697	-24
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>217,671</b>	–	–	<b>224,295</b>	–	–
	<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>3,455</b>	–	–	<b>3,560</b>	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Doncaster Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Central ward were relatively over-represented by 28%, while electors in South East ward were relatively under-represented by 41%.*



### 3 Submissions received

18 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Doncaster Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

19 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the BCFE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 19 representations during Stage One, including two borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Community Group, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

#### Doncaster Borough Council

20 The Borough Council proposed a council of 63 members, serving 21 wards, as at present. The Borough Council considered the impact of the new system of internal political management on the running of the council before concluding that it would best function under the current council size of 63 members.

21 The Council proposed a new warding arrangement across the borough with only one ward, Rossington ward, retaining its existing boundaries. The Borough Council recognised the fact that the urban area was over-represented while the rural area was under represented and it sought to address this in its submission. The Borough Council's proposals received cross-party support with main opposition from the Community Group which submitted its own proposals.

#### The Community Group

22 The Community Group proposed a council size of 54 members, nine fewer than at present, serving 18 wards. The Community Group considered that the adoption of the new internal system of political management would allow the council to function with a reduced number of councillors and therefore proposed a scheme based on a 54-member council.

23 The Community Group proposed a new warding arrangement across the borough which it considered to be least disruptive to parishes, with six wards retaining their existing boundaries. The Community Group also based its scheme on the transfer of whole polling districts.

#### Members of Parliament

24 We received a submission from a Member of Parliament proposing an alternative warding arrangement for his constituency and the surrounding area. Mr Jeff Ennis MP proposed wards which were similar to those wards proposed by a local resident and were based on a council size of 63.

#### Parish and town councils

25 Representations were received from eight parish councils and one town council. Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangement for its parish and suggested an alternative arrangement for the area. Rossington Parish Council proposed new internal parishing arrangements for its parish. Moss and District Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed Stainforth and Moorends ward and Fishlake Parish Council also objected to the proposed ward. Sykehouse Parish Council commented on Stainforth ward. Armthorpe Parish Council proposed that the existing ward be dissolved and a new ward coterminous with the parish boundaries be created. Brodsworth Parish Council would like no change to the existing borough ward arrangements and proposed

some parish boundary amendments. Auckley Parish Council proposed new internal parishing arrangements. Thorne-Moorends Town Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed separation of Thorne and Moorends.

## Other representations

26 A further seven representations were received from a local political party, resident associations, a community group and local residents. Doncaster North Conservative Association considered it sensible to link Barnby Dun and Kirk Sandall with Edenthorpe in a single ward and suggested combining the existing Thorne ward with Stainforth town. The Conservative Association also suggested that more rural parishes be joined together in a single ward. Moorends North Tenants' and Residents' Association did not wish to see the historic links between Thorne and Moorends abolished but supported a proposal to divide Thorne south and east of the canal. A parish councillor proposed splitting the existing Rossington ward into three separate wards. Highwoods Community Base considered that everyone living in Mexborough town should vote in Mexborough ward. A local resident raised the possibility that, under the new system of internal political management, the present number of councillors was too high. One local resident considered that the urban overspill area from Mexborough should be included in Mexborough ward. A local resident, Mr Roger Luffman, proposed a partial scheme covering the existing Barnsley East, Don Valley and Doncaster North parliamentary constituencies. He also considered the proposals made for the rest of the area to be satisfactory and based his scheme on a council size of 63 members.

## 4 Analysis and final recommendations

**27 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Doncaster and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

28 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Doncaster is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

29 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

30 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

31 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### Electorate forecasts

32 Since 1975 there has been a 7% increase in the electorate of Doncaster borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 3% from 217,671 to 224,295 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects the growth to be spread throughout the borough. In order to prepare these forecasts, 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.

33 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

### Council size

34 Doncaster Borough Council presently has 63 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 63 members which, it considered, provided for the correct allocation in the borough and addressed the issues of representation between the urban and rural areas. The retention of

a 63-member council was also proposed by Mr Jeff Ennis MP and a local resident, who both submitted partial borough-wide schemes based on this council size. The Community Group proposed a council size of 54, a reduction of nine. Another local resident queried whether, given the new system of internal political management, there was justification for Doncaster having 63 members.

35 Having considered all the evidence and argumentation received we propose adopting a council size of 63, as at present. We noted the argumentation and justification put forward by the Community Group and acknowledge the fact that it considered the impact of a 54-member council on the council's functions in light of the implementation of the new system of internal management. However, we did not consider the Community Group's argumentation substantial enough to justify the implementation of a 54-member council size for Doncaster Borough in light of the recent changes to internal political management.

36 The Borough Council's Working Group considered that any reduction in the number of councillors would risk damaging the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's political structures. The Working Group also considered that any reduction would impact on councillors' ability to represent communities in Doncaster. The view towards the scrutiny function is that it is more likely to expand and to reduce the number and time available to councillors to carry out the overview and scrutiny function will weaken the essential balance and positive input to local governance.

37 The Council is of the view that the characteristics and needs of the borough of Doncaster, together with the development of a mayoral structure, means that a decrease in the number of councillors will bring less effective local governance. The Council did not consider that efficiency would be increased if the number of councillors rises and it is therefore of the view that 63 councillors representing 21 wards would best serve local governance in the borough.

38 We noted the consensus for a 63-member council and considered it to provide for the correct allocation between the urban and rural areas as this issue was addressed by the Borough Council in its submission, we are therefore content to base our draft recommendations on a council size of 63 as proposed by the Borough Council, an MP and a local resident.

39 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 63 members.

## Electoral arrangements

40 Having agreed on a council size of 63 members it was not possible to consider the Community Groups' submission as it provided for a substantially different warding arrangement to that of the schemes based on a 63-member council. It was also not possible to recommend any of the Community Groups' proposed wards as, based on a 63 member council, they would have resulted in poor electoral variances, although we did note the similarity between the Community Group scheme and the draft recommendations in the south and west of the borough. As the Borough Council's proposals and the schemes proposed by a local resident and an MP were based on a council size of 63 members, we looked closely at combining the schemes where we felt they best met the statutory criteria. We noted areas of similarity between the schemes based on a 63-member council in the west, south and southeast of the borough, in particular the Mexborough area.

41 After careful consideration of all the evidence received at Stage One, we consider that the Borough Council's proposals would represent a better balance between the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One and we are content to substantially endorse these proposals.

42 In the north of the borough the Borough Council identified the need to address the existing high electoral variance in Thorne ward. We consider the Borough Council's proposal to divide Thorne and Moorends, placing them in separate borough wards, to best address this issue as, although it separates the two communities, it avoids arbitrarily dividing the communities of Thorne or Moorends. We acknowledge that this arrangement, in the northeast of the borough, does not provide the most ideal ward but we consider it to best meet the statutory criteria in light of all proposals received and options investigated. This proposed wards in the northeastern area also facilitate a suitable arrangement in the north and east of the borough.

43 In the east of the borough we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals subject to one amendment between the proposed Hatfield and Thorne wards. The new boundary would follow the M18 motorway as we consider this to be a more identifiable boundary.

44 In the south of the borough we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals without amendment as we consider that they best satisfy the statutory criteria through respecting local communities and obtaining good levels of electoral equality. We acknowledge the fact that there was similarity between the Borough Council, MP and local residents schemes in this area and the latter two schemes wards and boundaries have been adopted were similar to the Borough Council's.

45 In the west of the borough we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals without amendment. We considered all the proposals for this area in detail and concluded that the Borough Council's proposals best satisfied the statutory criteria as they grouped similar communities in single wards and utilised strong boundaries in the area. We considered that the two other schemes had merit, but found that they focused on the Bentley area, and produced a geographically unwieldy ward, Bentley North Road/Bentley Highfields, which did not facilitate effective and convenient local government. We noted Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council's alternative for this area but we did not consider that it facilitated a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding area and we considered our proposed recommendations to group the Sprotbrough community in a single ward to best meet the statutory criteria. We also acknowledge the similarity between all schemes in the Mexborough area and considered the Borough Council's proposal to provide better community identity by grouping part of Adwick upon Dearne parish within the proposed Mexborough ward. The Borough Council's proposals also received local support and facilitated a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding wards.

46 In the Doncaster urban area we propose substantially adopting the Borough Council's proposals with two boundary amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards and to tie boundaries to better ground detail. The proposed amendments would be between the proposed Wheatley and Town Moor wards and the proposed Central and Town Moor wards.

47 We received a number of submissions during Stage One in relation to issues we are unable to deal with such as the amendment to external parish boundaries or the creation of single member wards.

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

- a) Askern, Hatfield, Stainforth and Thorne wards;
- b) Conisbrough, Mexborough and Richmond wards;
- c) Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth and Southern Parks wards;
- d) Armthorpe, Rossington and South East wards;
- e) Adwick, Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards;
- f) Bessacarr, Central, Intake, Town Field and Wheatley wards.

49 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

## Askern, Hatfield, Stainforth and Thorne wards

50 The existing wards of Askern, Hatfield, Stainforth and Thorne cover the north and northeastern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the borough average by 19%, 12%, 18% and 19% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Askern, Hatfield and Stainforth wards while deteriorating slightly in Thorne ward to vary from the borough average by 13%, 10%, 17% and 22% respectively by 2006.

51 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by five wards, with the proposed Askern Spa, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn, Hatfield, Stainforth & Moorends and Thorne wards being represented by three councillors each.

52 The Borough Council's proposed Askern Spa ward would contain the parishes of Askern, Burghwallis, Norton and Owston. The proposed ward would also include part of the existing Adwick ward west of Crossfield Lane and Ings Lane and north of the railway line. Its proposed Stainforth & Moorends ward would contain the parishes of Fenwick, Fishlake, Kirk Bramwith, Moss, Stainforth and Thorpe in Balne. The proposed ward would also include the entire settlement of Moorends from the existing Thorne ward. The proposed boundary would follow Leonard's Drain, to the rear of properties south of Wilkinson Avenue, along Marshland Road and around the playing fields, finally running to the rear of properties west of Ferndale Drive and along Bloomhill Road and Pleasant Road until it reaches the M18 motorway.

53 The Borough Council's proposed Hatfield ward would include part of the existing Hatfield ward to the west of the motorway, Rake Bridge Road and West Moor Lane. The proposed Thorne ward would include the Town parish ward of Thorne parish and that part of the existing Hatfield ward east of the motorway, Rake Bridge Road and West Moor Lane. This area would also make up the proposed Hatfield Woodhouse parish ward. The Borough Council's proposed Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn ward would include the parishes of Edenthorpe and Barnby Dunn with Kirk Sandall.

54 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Askern Spa, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn, Hatfield, Stainforth & Moorends and Thorne wards by 3%, 3%, 1%, 8% and 4% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Askern Spa, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn, Hatfield and Thorne wards while deteriorating slightly in Stainforth & Moorends ward to vary from the borough average by 2%, 2%, equal to the average, 1% and 10% by 2006.

55 A local resident proposed a new Askern Rural ward which would include the parishes of Adwick on Dearne, Barnburgh, Clayton, Hampole, Skelbrooke, Hickleton, Hooton Pagnell and part of Brodsworth parish from the existing Richmond ward and the parishes of Askern, Moss and Norton from the existing Askern ward. Under the local resident's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Askern Rural ward by 4%. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in the proposed ward to vary from the borough average by 9% by 2006.

56 An MP proposed a new Askern Rural ward which would be identical to that proposed by the local resident apart from including only part of the parish of Adwick upon Dearne. Under the MP's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from

the borough average in the proposed Askern Rural ward by 3%. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in the proposed ward to vary from the borough average by 8% by 2006.

57 The Community Group proposed that this area be represented by four wards. The Community Group's proposed Askern ward would retain the existing Askern ward and would also include polling districts IB, IH and IG from the existing Bentley Central ward. It proposed retaining Hatfield, Stainforth and Thorne wards on their existing boundaries and proposed renaming Thorne ward as Thorne & Moorends ward.

58 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Askern, Hatfield, Stainforth and Thorne & Moorends wards by 15%, 4%, 1% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Askern and Stainforth wards while deteriorating slightly in Hatfield and Thorne & Moorends wards to vary from the borough average by 10%, equal to the average, 5% and 5% by 2006.

59 Thorne-Moorends Town Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed division of Thorne and Moorends. Moorends North Tenants and Residents Association objected to the Borough Council's proposal to place Moorends in a ward with Stainforth and supported the suggestion that the canal should be used as a border and all properties south of the canal become part of Stainforth ward.

60 Moss and District Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed Stainforth and Moorends ward and stated that it wished to remain in Askern ward but if this were not possible suggested the new ward to be named Stainforth, Moorends & Moss ward. Sykehouse Parish Council suggested that Stainforth ward be given a rural ward as there is a large rural area within its boundaries. Fishlake Parish Council objected to being included in the Borough Council's proposed Stainforth & Moorends ward and considered it more appropriate to be included in Thorne ward.

61 Doncaster North Conservative Association considered it sensible to unite Edenthorpe, Barnby Dunn & Kirk Sandall in a single ward and suggested combining Thorne-Moorends with Stainforth town to form a ward. The Conservative Association also suggested that small villages should be grouped together so they could have a united voice. A local resident raised the issue of a parish boundary anomaly between Edenthorpe and Kirk Sandall parishes.

62 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for this area subject to one amendment. We propose that the boundary between the proposed Thorne and Hatfield wards should follow the M18 motorway as we consider this to be a more solid boundary. We note the difficulty that arises in the northeast of the borough with the existing Thorne ward. The existing Thorne ward, which currently contains the entire Thorne parish, by 2006 is expected to have an electoral variance of 22%. We have endeavoured to retain Thorne parish in a single ward but in order to address the high electoral variance in the northeast of the borough have found it necessary to divide the parish. We consider the Borough Council's proposals to best satisfy the statutory criteria as it does not further arbitrarily divide the natural communities of Thorne and Moorends and also facilitates a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding area.

63 We note the objections to the proposed Thorne and Stainforth & Moorends wards in the northeastern area and we acknowledge that the proposed wards are not ideal. However, given the constraints of the borough boundary and the geographical location of Thorne and Moorends, we consider the proposed Thorne and Stainforth & Moorends wards to best satisfy the statutory criteria. We do not consider that a 22% variance could be justified should we propose to retain the existing Thorne ward. The proposed Stainforth & Moorends ward also groups similar parishes in a single ward in the north of the borough and we also note the

endorsement for the Borough Council's proposals in this area from those who submitted partial schemes. We do, however, encourage locally generated proposals at Stage Three for this area.

64 We consider the Borough Council's proposed Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn ward to respect local communities and are content to endorse it as part of our draft recommendations, we also note Doncaster North Conservative Association's support for this proposed ward. We also propose to adopt the Borough Council's proposed Askern Spa ward as we consider it to group similar communities, such as the northern parishes, in a single ward. We consider the proposed Hatfield ward to adopt good boundaries such as the M18 and it retains the Hatfield area in a single ward.

65 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Askern Spa, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn, Hatfield, Stainforth & Moorends and Thorne wards by 3%, 3%, 3%, 8% and equal to the average, respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Askern Spa, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall & Barnby Dunn wards while deteriorating slightly in Hatfield, Stainforth & Moorends and Thorne wards to vary from the borough average by 2%, 2%, 4%, 10% and 3% by 2006.

### Conisbrough, Mexborough and Richmond wards

66 The existing wards of Conisbrough, Mexborough and Richmond cover the western area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by being equal to the borough average, 5% and 6% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Richmond ward while deteriorating in Conisbrough and Mexborough wards to vary from the borough average by 3%, 5% and 6% respectively by 2006.

67 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards, with the proposed Conisbrough & Denaby, Mexborough and Sprotbrough wards being represented by three councillors each.

68 The Borough Council's proposed Conisbrough & Denaby ward would include the majority of the existing Conisbrough ward with the Corn Hill estate being transferred to the proposed Edlington & Warmsworth ward. Its northern boundary, shared with the proposed Mexborough ward should follow the railway line between Rowms Lane and Doncaster Road. The Borough Council proposed including the existing Mexborough ward with part of Adwick upon Dearne parish to accommodate urban overspill from Mexborough in Mexborough ward. Its proposed Sprotbrough ward would include the parishes of Barnburgh, Cadeby, Clayton with Frickley, Hampole, Hickleton, High Melton, Hooton Pagnell and Marr. It would also include part of Adwick upon Dearne, Brodsworth and Sprotbrough & Cusworth parishes and an unparished area of Doncaster.

69 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Conisbrough & Denaby, Mexborough and Sprotbrough wards by 4%, 6% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Conisbrough & Denaby and Sprotbrough wards while deteriorating in Mexborough ward to vary from the borough average by 1%, 9% and 7% by 2006.

70 A local resident proposed a new Richmond ward for this area which would include polling districts MF-MH from the existing Southern Parks ward, polling districts OM-OP from the existing Richmond ward and part of Brodsworth parish. Under the local resident's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Richmond ward by 8%. This level of electoral equality is projected to

improve to vary by 5% by 2006. He also proposed no change to the existing Mexborough ward but stated that, should the Commission consider it desirable, the parish of Adwick upon Dearne could be added to the proposed Mexborough ward. He also endorsed the Borough Council's proposed Conisbrough & Denaby ward. This area would also be partially covered by the local residents proposed Askern Rural ward, as outlined earlier.

71 An MP proposed a new Richmond ward similar to that of the local resident, and also endorsed the Borough Council's Mexborough ward. His proposed Askern Rural ward would cover part of this area, as outlined earlier.

72 The Community Group proposed that this area be represented by three wards. Its proposed Richmond ward would include most of the existing Richmond ward and Scawthorpe/Scawsby and Bentley Rise from Bentley North Road ward. Its proposed Mexborough ward would include Adwick upon Dearne parish, formerly in Richmond ward while its proposed Conisbrough & Denaby ward would retain the existing ward along with an additional part of Conisbrough, formerly in Southern Parks ward.

73 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Richmond, Mexborough, Conisbrough & Denaby wards by 5%, 7% and 4% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Conisbrough & Denaby ward to vary from the borough average by 1% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Mexborough and Richmond wards are expected to remain constant by 2006.

74 Highwoods Community Base suggested that everyone who lived in Mexborough town should vote in Mexborough ward. A local resident suggested that part of Adwick upon Dearne parish, within which he resides, be transferred to Mexborough ward. Brodsworth Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposals to divide the parish between two electoral wards and it also proposed parish boundary changes.

75 Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposals for its area and provided an alternative arrangement. This alternative arrangement would include Sprotbrough & Cusworth parish and part of Brodsworth parish, as well as polling districts OC, OM and OP.

76 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area without amendment. We consider the proposed Mexborough ward to respect the entire Mexborough community as it includes that part of Adwick upon Dearne parish which is urban overspill from Mexborough. We also note the local support received for the proposed Mexborough ward. We noted the Borough Council's request to amend the southern boundary of the proposed Mexborough ward, however, we consider the river to be a strong boundary and propose to retain it in this area. We consider the Borough Council's proposed Conisbrough & Denaby ward to respect communities in the area and utilises a strong boundary in the east of the proposed ward. The proposed ward also facilitates the inclusion of similar communities within the adjoining Edlington & Warmsworth ward and allows the two parishes to be retained in a single ward. We note the local support for the Borough Council's proposals in this area.

77 We consider the Borough Council's proposed Sprotbrough ward to best satisfy the statutory criteria in this area as it utilises strong boundaries and reflects local communities as it includes the Sprotbrough community in a single ward, something which was applauded by the Parish Council. The proposed ward also facilitates a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding area. We noted Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council's proposed alternative Sprotbrough ward but considered that it did not allow for a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding area. Although we considered Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council's proposed alternative to have merit we could not consider this area in isolation and such was the knock on effect to the

surrounding area on adopting this proposal we considered the Borough Council's proposals to best satisfy the statutory criteria in light of all options received. We also noted the local resident's and MP's proposed Richmond ward but found that it resulted in an unwieldy Bentley North Road/Bentley Highfields ward which we did not consider satisfies the statutory criteria or promote effective and convenient local government. We also considered that the proposed Askern Rural ward did not facilitate effective and convenient local government and its implementation would not result in a suitable warding arrangement in the northeastern area of the borough.

78 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Conisbrough & Denaby, Mexborough and Sprotbrough wards by 4%, 6% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Conisbrough & Denaby and Sprotbrough wards while deteriorating in Mexborough ward to vary from the borough average by 1%, 9% and 7% by 2006.

### Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth, and Southern Parks wards

79 The existing wards of Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth, and Southern Parks cover the southwestern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by being equal to the borough average, 14% and 15% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Southern Parks ward while deteriorating in Balby and Edlington & Warmsworth wards to vary from the borough average by 13%, 5% and 15% respectively by 2006.

80 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards, with the proposed Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth and Torne Valley wards being represented by three councillors each.

81 The Borough Council's proposed Torne Valley ward would contain the parishes of Austerfield, Bawtry Braithwell, Loversall, Stainton, Tickhill and Wadworth. The proposed ward would also comprise the proposed Conisbrough Parks South parish ward of Conisbrough Parks parish which would contain that part of the parish south of Carr Lane. The proposed Edlington & Warmsworth ward would contain the parishes of Edlington and Warmsworth and the Corn Hill estate from the existing Conisbrough ward, as previously mentioned. It would also contain the proposed Conisbrough Parks North parish ward, the area north of Carr Lane, of Conisbrough Parks parish.

82 The Borough Council's proposed Balby ward would contain the existing Balby ward apart from that part north of Church Lane, east of Oswin Avenue and north of High Road until it reaches Greenfield Lane, which would be included in the proposed Central ward.

83 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth and Torne Valley wards by 4%, 4% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in all wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 2% and 3% by 2006.

84 A local resident proposed a new Edlington & Warmsworth ward which would include the existing Edlington & Warmsworth ward plus part of Conisbrough Parks (polling districts MD and MM) and a new South ward which would include polling districts VB, VC VI and VK from the existing South East ward and polling districts MA, ME, MI-MJ, MK, ML and MN from the existing Southern Parks ward. The local resident and MP endorsed the Borough Council's proposed Balby ward.

85 Under the local resident's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Edlington & Warmsworth and South wards by 1% and 6%. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in the proposed South ward to vary by 5% by 2006. The electoral variance of the proposed Edlington & Warmsworth ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

86 The Community Group proposed that this area be covered by two wards. Its proposed Edlington & Warmsworth ward would include the existing ward along with part of the existing Balby ward. Its proposed Southern Parks ward would include most of the existing ward with part of Conisbrough transferring to the proposed Conisbrough & Denaby ward, as well as including part of the existing Balby ward.

87 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Edlington & Warmsworth and Southern Parks wards by 2% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Southern Parks ward while deteriorating slightly in Edlington & Warmsworth ward to vary from the borough average by 3% and 3% by 2006.

88 Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposals for its area and provided an alternative arrangement as outlined earlier.

89 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for this area without amendment as we consider them to group similar communities in single wards, such as the southern parishes in the proposed Torne Valley ward and the parishes of Edlington and Warmsworth in the proposed Edlington & Warmsworth ward. The proposed wards also achieve good levels of electoral equality. We also consider the Borough Council's proposals to utilise strong boundaries in this area. We note the support for the Borough Council's proposed Balby ward and propose to adopt this without amendment. We also note the similarity between the schemes in this area but consider the Borough Council's to best meet the statutory criteria.

90 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Balby, Edlington & Warmsworth and Torne Valley wards by 4%, 4% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in all wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 2% and 3% by 2006.

## Armthorpe, Rossington and South East wards

91 The existing wards of Armthorpe, Rossington and South East cover the southeastern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 32%, 3% and 41% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in South East ward while deteriorating slightly in Rossington ward to vary from the borough average by 40% and 5% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for Armthorpe ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

92 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards, with the proposed Armthorpe, Finningley and Rossington wards being represented by three councillors each.

93 The Borough Council's proposed Finningley ward would include the majority of the existing South East ward with the parishes of Austerfield and Bawtry, formerly in South East ward, being transferred into the proposed Torne Valley ward. Its proposed Armthorpe ward would be coterminous with the parish boundary. The Council also proposed retaining Rossington ward on its existing boundaries.

94 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Armthorpe, Finningley and Rossington wards by 4%, 12% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Armthorpe and Finningley wards while deteriorating slightly in Rossington ward to vary from the borough average by 3%, 9% and 5%, respectively, by 2006.

95 A local resident and MP endorsed the Borough Council's proposed Armthorpe, Finningley and Rossington wards in this area.

96 The Community Group proposed that this area be covered by three wards. Its proposed Rossington and Bawtry ward would include the existing Rossington ward with Bawtry parish from the existing South East ward. Its proposed Armthorpe ward would be coterminous with the parish boundary and its proposed South East ward would retain the existing South East ward without Bawtry parish which would transfer to the proposed Rossington ward.

97 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Armthorpe, Rossington and Bawtry and South East wards by 4%, 5% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Rossington and Bawtry ward while deteriorating slightly in South East ward to vary from the borough average by 4% and 3% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Armthorpe ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

98 Armthorpe Parish Council proposed that the existing Armthorpe ward be dissolved and replaced by a new ward based solely on the parish of Armthorpe. One local resident proposed that the existing Rossington ward be divided into three separate wards, while Rossington Parish Council proposed new internal parishing arrangements. Auckley Parish Council enquired about a possible change to its internal parish warding arrangements.

99 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area without amendment. We consider the proposed Rossington and Armthorpe wards to respect community identities by being coterminous with their respective parish boundaries and both wards also provide good levels of electoral equality. The proposed Armthorpe ward allows for the inclusion of Edenthorpe in a ward with Barnby Dunn and Kirk Sandall, an area we consider it to have more in common with than Armthorpe. We also note the similarity between the Borough Council and Community Groups proposed Armthorpe wards and consider this to lend further support in adopting an Armthorpe ward coterminous with its parish boundaries.

100 We consider the Borough Council's proposed Finningley ward to group similar communities in a single ward and to utilise good boundaries in the unparished area of the ward. We note the relatively high variance of 9% for this proposed ward but consider it justified in that it respects local communities and facilitates a suitable warding arrangement in the adjoining Armthorpe and Rossington areas.

101 We note the local support and endorsement from a local resident, an MP and Armthorpe Parish Council for the Borough Council's proposals in this area.

102 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Armthorpe, Finningley and Rossington wards by 4%, 12% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Armthorpe and Finningley wards while deteriorating slightly in Rossington ward to vary from the borough average by 3%, 9% and 5% by 2006.

## Adwick, Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards

103 The existing wards of Adwick, Bentley Central and Bentley North Road cover the urban north area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 15%, 18% and 16% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Bentley Central ward while deteriorating slightly in Adwick ward to vary from the borough average by 16% and 17% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for Bentley North Road ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

104 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards, with the proposed Adwick, Bentley and Great North Road wards being represented by three councillors each.

105 The Borough Council's proposed Adwick ward would include that part of Carcroft east of Crossfield Lane and Ings Lane, and would also include the entire Adwick le Street and Woodlands East areas with the southern boundary following a dismantled railway, Great North Road and Langthwaite Lane. Its eastern boundary would follow Doncaster Road, Bentley Moor Lane and a drain running south along Bentley Moor Wood until it reaches a dismantled railway.

106 The Borough Council's proposed Great North Road ward would include the entire Cusworth, Scawsby and Highfield areas while its eastern boundary would follow a dismantled railway. Its southern boundary would follow Swaithe Dike, York Road, a track to the south side of Bridge Grove and Charnock Drive. The proposed boundary would continue along this track and to the rear of properties on the north side of Valiant Gardens until it reaches the parish boundary. The Borough Council's proposed Bentley Central ward would include the area to the east of the proposed Great North Road ward eastern boundary and north of the River Don. Its northern boundary would be shared with Thorpe in Balne parish.

107 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Adwick, Bentley and Great North Road wards by 5%, 4% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Bentley and Great North Road wards while deteriorating in Adwick ward to vary from the borough average by 3%, 7% and 7% by 2006.

108 A local resident proposed new Adwick, Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards in this area. The proposed Adwick ward would include polling districts IB-IH from the existing Askern ward and the parishes of Burghwallis and Owston. The proposed Bentley North Road ward would include the existing ward and polling districts IA, OE, OL, OJ from the existing Richmond ward and MB from the existing Southern Parks ward. The local resident also proposed the possibility of transferring polling district OD from Brodsworth parish in that this had numerical advantage and was beneficial in uniting the rural parts of Brodsworth parish.

109 The proposed Bentley Central ward would include the existing IB-IH polling districts, Woodlands GE and GF and Thorpe in Balne (GF) from the existing Adwick and Askern wards respectively.

110 Under the local residents proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Adwick, Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards by 3%, 1% and 3%. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in the proposed Adwick and Bentley Central wards to vary by 4% and 5% by 2006. The electoral variance of the proposed Bentley North Road ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

111 An MP proposed new Bentley Highfields and Bentley Woodlands wards for this area that were similar to the local resident's proposed Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards.

112 The Community Group proposed that this are be covered by two wards. Its proposed Adwick ward would include the existing Adwick ward and would also include part of the existing Bentley Central ward. Its proposed Bentley ward would include part of the existing Bentley Central and Bentley North Road wards.

113 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Adwick and Bentley wards by 4% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Adwick ward to vary from the borough average by 5% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Bentley ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

114 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for this area without amendment. We consider the Borough Council's scheme to utilise good boundaries such as a dismantled railway, in the proposed Bentley ward, and group similar communities in a single ward such as the Adwick le Street area, in the proposed Adwick ward. The Borough Council's scheme also achieved good levels of electoral equality and facilitated a suitable warding arrangement for the remainder of the urban and rural western area and grouped the Sprotbrough area in a single ward.

115 We noted the local residents and MP's proposals for this area but did not consider these proposals to best satisfy the statutory criteria as they created a geographically unwieldy Bentley North Road/Bentley Highfields ward and did not facilitate a suitable warding arrangement for the remainder of the urban and western rural area. We also considered their proposed North Road/Bentley Highfields wards to not provide for effective and convenient local government due to its unwieldy shape and lack of internal links from the rural area to the urban area of the proposed ward.

116 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Adwick, Bentley and Great North Road wards by 5%, 4% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Bentley and Great North Road wards while deteriorating in Adwick ward to vary from the borough average by 3%, 7% and 7% by 2006.

## Bessacarr, Central, Intake, Town Field and Wheatley wards

117 The existing wards of Bessacarr, Central, Intake, Town Field and Wheatley cover the urban central area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the five wards varies from the borough average by 5%, 28%, 24%, 26% and 21% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Central, Intake, Town Field and Wheatley wards to vary from the borough average by 30%, 27%, 29% and 24% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for Bessacarr ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

118 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards, with the proposed Bessacarr & Cantley, Central, Town Moor and Wheatley wards being represented by three councillors each.

119 The Borough Council's proposed Bessacarr & Cantley ward would be based on the existing Bessacarr ward apart from Sandall Beat Wood area, in the northeast of the existing ward, being brought together in the proposed Town Moor ward. The proposed Central ward would include the existing Central ward and it would also include the area west of Sandy Lane and south of High Street, Hall Gate, South Parade and Bennetthorpe, formerly in Town Field ward.

120 The Borough Council's proposed Town Moor ward would include the existing Intake ward and the area east of Sandy Lane including the racecourse, and north of Bennetthorpe, the Town Field playing field and east of Thorne Road, formerly in Town Field ward, as well as the entire Sandall Beat Wood, as previously mentioned. The proposed Wheatley ward would include the existing Wheatley ward and the area north of Hall Gate and South Parade, west of Town Field playing field and east of Thorne Road, formerly in Town Field ward.

121 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Bessacarr & Cantley, Central, Town Moor and Wheatley wards by 5%, equal to the average, 6% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Town Moor ward while deteriorating in Central and Wheatley wards to vary from the borough average by 2%, 2% and 6% by 2006. The electoral variance for Bessacarr & Cantley ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

122 A local resident and an MP endorsed the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangement in this area.

123 The Community Group proposed that this area be covered by four wards. Its proposed Central ward would include the existing Central ward with part of the existing Balby ward. Its proposed Town Moor ward would include part of the existing Central, Intake and Town Field wards while the proposed Wheatley ward would include the existing Wheatley ward and would also include part of Edenthorpe parish and part of the existing Intake and Town Field wards. It proposed retaining Bessacarr ward on its existing boundaries.

124 Under the Community Group's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Bessacarr, Central, Town Moor and Wheatley wards by 10%, 3%, 10% and 8% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Town Moor and Wheatley wards while deteriorating slightly in Central ward to vary from the borough average by 6%, 4% and 6% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Bessacarr ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

125 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals for this area subject to two amendments. We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Town Moor and Wheatley wards so that it would follow Chestnut Road and to the rear of Wellcroft Close and Danesthorpe Close until it reaches the existing boundary on Armthorpe Road. We consider this amendment to better reflect local communities by grouping Danesthorpe Close in the proposed Town Moor ward and also allows for effective local government as this area has its access into the proposed Town Moor ward.

126 We also propose amending the boundary between the proposed Central and Town Moor wards so that it would follow Bawtry Road continuously and include the Belle Vue area south of Bawtry Road and east of Sandy Lane in the proposed Central ward. We consider this amendment to utilise a stronger boundary in Bawtry Road and also groups the Belle Vue area within a similar ward. We noted the support received for the Borough Council's proposals for this area and, subject to our two proposed amendments, consider its proposals to best meet the statutory criteria for this urban area as they achieve good levels of electoral equality and respect local communities. We noted the similarity between the Borough Council and Community Groups proposed Bessacarr & Cantley and Bessacarr wards and have adopted the Community Groups boundaries where identical to that of the Borough Council.

127 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Bessacarr & Cantley, Central, Town Moor and Wheatley wards by 5%, 7%, 1% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Central ward while deteriorating in Town Moor and Wheatley wards to vary from the borough average by 4%, 3% and 7% by 2006. The electoral variance for Bessacarr & Cantley ward is expected to remain constant by 2006.

## Electoral cycle

128 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all metropolitan boroughs have a system of elections by thirds.

## Conclusions

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

- a council of 63 members should be retained;
- there should be 21 wards;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in no change to the number of wards, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries.

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

- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Hatfield and Thorne wards so that it follows the M18 motorway;
- we propose amending the boundaries between the proposed Central and Town Moor wards, and between Town Moor and Wheatley wards in order to better reflect local communities.

131 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

*Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements*

	2001 Electorate		2006 Electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	63	63	63	63
Number of wards	21	21	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	3,455	3,455	3,560	3,560
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	1	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	0	7	0

132 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Doncaster Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 15 to one. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%.

*Draft recommendation*

Doncaster Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and on the large maps.

## Parish and Town Council electoral arrangements

133 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Adwick upon Dearne, Auckley, Brodsworth, Conisbrough Parks, Hatfield, Rossington and Thorne to reflect the proposed borough wards.

134 The parish of Adwick upon Dearne is currently served by five councillors and is not warded. As a result of adopting the Borough Council's proposed Mexborough ward in this area we have had to create a parish ward in Adwick upon Dearne parish. We propose that Adwick upon Dearne North parish ward should be represented by four parish councillors and Adwick upon Dearne South parish ward should be represented by one parish councillor.

*Draft recommendation*

Adwick upon Dearne Parish Council should comprise five councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Adwick upon Dearne North (returning four councillors) and Adwick upon Dearne South (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on large map 5.

135 The parish of Auckley is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. At Stage One Auckley Parish Council requested an increase in the number of councillors to nine and the creation of a parish ward for the former RAF Finningley Estate, to ensure that it is properly represented. We propose to increase the number of councillors to nine, however, we would request detailed mapping from the Parish Council to illustrate the proposed parish wards within its parish with a view to endorsing the proposed parish wards in the final recommendations.

*Draft recommendation*

Auckley Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, two more than at present, representing the entire parish, as at present.

136 The parish of Brodsworth is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. Having adopted the Borough Council's proposals in this area and in order to reflect our draft recommendations we propose creating a parish ward in Brodsworth parish. We propose that the proposed Brodsworth parish ward should be represented by two parish councillors and the proposed Scawsby parish ward should be represented by seven parish councillors.

*Draft recommendation*

Brodsworth Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Brodsworth (returning two councillors) and Scawsby (returning seven councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary, as illustrated and named on large map 5 and 6.

137 The parish of Conisbrough Parks is currently served by five councillors and is not warded. Having adopted the Borough Council's proposals in this area and in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose creating a parish ward in Conisbrough Parks parish. We propose that Conisbrough Parks North parish ward should be represented by one parish councillor and Conisbrough Parks South parish ward should be represented by four parish councillors.

*Draft recommendation*

Conisbrough Parks Parish Council should comprise five councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Conisbrough Parks North (returning one councillor) and Conisbrough Parks South (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on large map 5, 6 and 9.

138 The parish of Hatfield is currently served by 14 councillors representing four wards with Duncroft parish ward, returning six councillors, Dunsville parish ward, returning two councillors, Hatfield parish ward, returning three councillors, and Hatfield Woodhouse parish ward, returning three councillors. The Borough Council proposed a new warding arrangement for this area but proposed retaining the existing parish ward boundaries. As a result of adopting the Borough Council's proposed Hatfield and Thorne wards, with one amendment, the boundary between the proposed wards would now follow the M18 motorway. We propose new Hatfield and Hatfield Woodhouse parish wards in order to reflect the proposals at Borough level.

139 We therefore propose that Hatfield Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards Duncroft parish ward, returning six councillors, Dunsville parish ward, returning two councillors, Hatfield parish ward, returning three councillors, and Hatfield Woodhouse parish ward, returning three councillors.

*Draft recommendation*

Hatfield Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Duncroft (returning six councillors), Dunsville (returning two councillors), Hatfield (returning three councillors), and Hatfield Woodhouse (returning three councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary, as illustrated and named on large map 3, 4, 7 and 8.

140 The parish of Rossington is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards. The parish is currently warded with Rossington East parish ward returning three parish councillors and Rossington West parish ward returning 12 parish councillors. At Stage One the Parish Council proposed abolishing the existing parish wards and having the parish, as a whole, represented by 15 parish councillors.

141 We therefore propose adopting the Parish Council's proposal to abolish the existing parish wards leaving Rossington parish unwarded and represented by 15 councillors, as at present.

*Draft recommendation*

Rossington Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing the parish as a whole.

142 The parish of Thorne is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards. The parish is currently warded with Town parish ward returning nine parish councillors and Moorends parish ward returning six parish councillors. As a result of adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area at borough level we propose one minor boundary amendment to the boundary between the two existing parish wards. The parish ward boundaries would now follow the proposed borough ward boundaries between the proposed Stainforth & Moorends ward and Thorne ward.

*Draft recommendation*

Thorne Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Town (returning nine councillors) and Moorends (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on large map 3, 4 and 8.

*Map 2: Draft recommendations for Doncaster*

## What happens next?

143 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Doncaster contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 7 April 2003. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

144 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Team Leader  
Doncaster Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

145 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, ***whether or not*** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.



# Appendix A

## Draft recommendations for Doncaster: **Detailed mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Doncaster area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Doncaster.

*Map A1: Draft recommendations for Doncaster: Key map*

# Appendix B

## 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](http://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. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, 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.

*Table B1: Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We consult 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.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.