

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council

Electoral review

March 2011

Translations and other formats

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Summary

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

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in 2010.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
Council Size	20 July 2010	Submission of proposals for council size to the LGBCE
One	28 September 2010	Submission of proposals of warding arrangements to the LGBCE
Two	21 December 2010	LGBCE's analysis and deliberation
Three	29 March 2011	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	20 June 2011	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

The Commission received 80 representations during the council size consultation and Stage One, including district-wide schemes from Hartlepool Borough Council ('the Council'), Mayor Drummond, the Hartlepool Labour Party, the Independent Group and a local resident. The Commission also received localised evidence of community identity from parish councils and local residents in the borough. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

Hartlepool Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2016, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2011. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 2.8% over this period. The Council provided a robust methodology to support this increase and we are content to accept the Council's electorate forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Hartlepool currently has a council size of 47 councillors. During the council size consultation the Commission received proposals from Hartlepool Borough Council to retain the current council size. Mayor Drummond proposed a council size of 32

members. Both the Mayor and the Council took an evidence-based approach in their considerations and detailed their governance structure in addition to providing information on the roles, responsibilities and workload of its members. Having considered the evidence provided by the Mayor, and in line with current legislation that in an authority that elects by thirds there should be a presumption in favour of three-member wards, we have decided to adopt a council size of 33 members as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that a council size of 33 members will ensure the council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively and will provide for a ward pattern that best reflects community identities in Hartlepool.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals which are based broadly on those of the Council. The Council's proposals would provide good electoral equality and a clear warding pattern using man-made and natural boundaries. The Council's proposals were also supported by evidence of community identity. Where we have moved away from the Council's proposals, we have sought to use clearer ward boundaries that will result in good communication links across each ward.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comments on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by **20 June 2011**. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

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

Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Officer
Hartlepool Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
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London EC1M 5LG
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The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk.

1 Introduction

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

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

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council in autumn 2011.

What is an electoral review?

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

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

Why are we conducting a review in Hartlepool?

6 We have decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2009 electorate figures, 35% of wards in the borough have electoral variances greater than 10% from the average. Most notably, Dyke House ward has 22% fewer electors than the average. This situation is forecast to worsen following significant development planned over the next five years.

How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

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

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 20 June 2011. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in autumn 2011. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 19 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

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

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Jane Earl
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2. Analysis and draft recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 Under the 2009 Act, where a council elects by thirds or halves (as opposed to the whole council being elected every four years), there is a presumption that the authority should have a uniform pattern of three-member and two-member wards respectively. We will only move away from this presumption where we receive compelling evidence to do so and where it can be demonstrated that an alternative

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

warding pattern will better reflect our statutory criteria. Our starting point for this review was that Hartlepool should have a uniform pattern of three-member wards given its current electoral cycle.

Submissions received

16 Prior to and during the initial stage of the review, we visited Hartlepool Borough Council and met with the Mayor, members, officers and parish and town councils. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 68 submissions during Stage One, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Electorate figures

17 As part of this review, Hartlepool Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2016, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2.8% over the period from 2010 to 2016.

18 The increase in electorate will be concentrated mainly around the harbour (the existing Stranton ward) and in the north-west (the existing Hart ward). Work on both of these developments has already commenced, with a large number of houses on the harbour already built. There are also core strategy sites in Claxton parish (the current Elwick ward). The Council provided a comprehensive spreadsheet displaying the number, type and precise location of developments with planning permission. The core strategy sites do not have planning permission but, after discussions with the Council and following a visit to Hartlepool, we are satisfied that these developments are likely to proceed.

19 It should be noted that during Stage One the Council did not use the polling district break-down of forecast electoral figures they had submitted at the start of the electoral review. Instead, they created a new forecast from the new warding pattern they submitted during this stage. This resulted in the Council's forecast electorates differing slightly from that previously agreed, with the largest difference being in the rural area. The Mayor, Hartlepool Constituency Labour Party ("the Labour Party") and Independent Group also each used slightly different electoral figures. Having discussed this issue with the Council, we are satisfied that the electoral figures originally provided are accurate and consistent. The original electoral figures are used for our draft recommendations.

20 Noting the Council's supporting methodology, and the lack of evidence to contradict the electorate forecasts, we are content to accept the Council's forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

21 Hartlepool Borough Council currently has 47 councillors elected from 17 wards. During our initial consultation, the Commission received 12 comments in relation to council size. The Council proposed the current size of 47 members be retained, while the Mayor submitted a proposal for a reduction to 32 councillors.

22 We took an evidence-based approach in our consideration of council size and proposed a council size of 33, a reduction of 14 from the current number.

23 During the council size consultation the Council and the Mayor both provided details of the proposed political management structure, and outlined the responsibilities of the current executive and non-executive councillors. We considered that the recent and future reorganisations of Hartlepool Borough Council, as proposed by the Mayor, supported a reduction in council size.

24 We considered the Mayor's proposals provided good evidence for a reduction in council size. However, as stated above, as the 2009 Act provides that for authorities that elect by thirds there should be a presumption in favour of three-member wards, we increased the Mayor's proposed council size from 32 to 33.

25 Based on the evidence received, we have decided to adopt the proposed council size of 33 members as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Electoral fairness

26 As discussed in the introduction to this report, the prime aim of an electoral review is to achieve electoral fairness within a local authority.

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

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (69,416 in 2010 and 71,371 by 2016) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 33 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,104 in 2010 and 2,163 by 2016.

29 Under the draft recommendations, all of our proposed 11 wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the authority by 2016. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our draft recommendations for Hartlepool.

General analysis

30 During Stage One, five full district-wide schemes were received. These were from the Council, Mayor Drummond, the Hartlepool Labour Party, the Independent Group and a local resident. A total of 68 individual submissions were received, as well as groups of identical letters. All the submissions received can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

31 The Council proposed a pattern of 11 three-member wards. Five of these wards would have variances of more than 10% from the borough average in 2010,

improving to three wards by 2016. These three wards would be East, (14% more electors than the average), Victoria (13% fewer) and De Bruce (14% fewer). The Council's submission used strong and easily identifiable boundaries. The Conservative Group supported the Council's proposal with a suggested amendment that the Council's West ward be renamed Park & Villages ward.

32 The Labour Party submitted a very similar scheme, which differed from the Council's proposals, predominantly in the Foggy Furze, Middleton and Jesmond areas. The Labour Party also proposed different ward names.

33 The Mayor submitted a pattern of ten three-member wards and one two-member ward, which was to the west of the main urban area. He argued that his two-member ward allowed the rural parishes to form a ward separate from the urban Hartlepool area, so providing for better community identity. However, this ward gave poor electoral equality, with a variance of 39% fewer electors than the average in 2010 and 18% fewer by 2016.

34 The Independent Group submitted a scheme with ten three-member wards and a rural ward with either one or two councillors. The submission suggested a preference for a council size of 31 and a single-member rural ward containing 45% more electors than the average in 2016, but also proposed that this rural ward could be represented by two councillors, resulting in a council size of 32 and a two-member rural ward containing 25% fewer electors than the average in 2016. The Independent Group scheme differed significantly from the Mayor and the Council's scheme in the urban area and provided for poor electoral equality.

35 A local resident suggested a single-member ward scheme, but provided no specific argument for single-member wards in any of the particular locations, beyond the assertion that single-member wards were better in principle.

36 The remainder of the submissions received focused on key areas. In the Stranton and Dyke House area, three submissions were received, as well as 12 identical letters from residents in the Dent and Derwent area and 50 identical letters from residents in the Furness, Cameron and Belk Street area. In the Greatham and the Fens area six submissions were received, while in the Elwick and Hart area 45 submissions were received, of which 24 were variants on a standard letter.

37 Greatham Parish Council submitted a request for the parish not to be warded on account of the difficulty in finding parish councillors to represent the northern section, Greatham Fens. The parish of Greatham contains 1,700 electors, with approximately half in the village of Greatham and the other half in an area of urban overspill. This overspill is in the north of the parish and is known as the Fens area. The two sections are clearly distinct, having no direct road links and being separated by a busy main road. All authority-wide schemes divided Greatham parish, placing Greatham Fens in South ward.

38 Having considered the authority-wide schemes received during Stage One, we consider that overall, the proposals submitted by the Council and the Labour Party provide for strong, easily identifiable boundaries. Where we have moved away from either of these schemes, the change has been based on evidence of community links and identity, the consideration of direct road links, or in order to improve electoral

equality. Where residents have provided evidence of community identity, we have sought to reflect this wherever possible.

39 Our proposals are for a pattern of 11 three-member wards. We consider our proposals ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

40 During Stage Three we welcome comments on these draft recommendations, particularly in relation to those areas where we did not receive representations other than the authority-wide schemes received during Stage One.

Electoral arrangements

41 This section of the report details the warding recommendations for each area of Hartlepool in context of the submissions received. The following areas are considered in turn:

- The villages and Seaton Carew (pages 9–11)
- The northern urban area and the harbour (pages 11–13)
- The southern and central urban area (pages 13–15)

42 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table C1 on page 29, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

The villages and Seaton Carew

43 The western part of Hartlepool consists of rural parished villages, connected by small roads. The parish of Hart is the most northerly, while the parish of Greatham is the most southerly. Seaton Carew is to the south-east of Hartlepool. Under the current arrangements, the area broadly comprises Elwick, Greatham and Seaton wards, with parts of Rossmere and Park wards.

44 During Stage One, we received submissions from Elwick Parish Council, Hart Parish Council, Greatham Parish Council, Councillor Barker (Hart Ward), Councillor Lilley (Greatham Ward), Councillor Preece (Fens Ward), Councillor Wright (Hart Ward) and 45 local residents. We also received a joint submission from the Parish Councils of Dalton Piercy, Elwick, Greatham and Hart and the Parish Meeting of Newton Bewley. We received detailed borough-wide suggestions from the Council, the Mayor, the Labour Party, the Independent Group and a local resident.

45 Our draft recommendations in this area are for an East ward containing 2% more electors than the borough average and a West ward containing 7% more electors than the average by 2016. Both wards return three members. Our East ward includes Seaton Carew and part of Hartlepool to the south-east of the A689. West ward includes the villages of Elwick, Claxton, Newton Bewley, Dalton Piercy and Greatham, as well as part of the Park area of Hartlepool.

46 Our draft recommendations are based on the Council's proposals, with the exception of Greatham, which we recommend is placed in West ward instead of East ward, due to lack of access into East ward. The Council's proposed West ward

contained 6% fewer electors and their East ward contained 14% more electors than the average by 2016.

47 The Conservative Group supported the Council's warding pattern. The Mayor suggested a two-member ward containing only the rural villages, which would result in very poor electoral equality, with 39% fewer electors in 2010 and 18% fewer electors in 2016. The Independent Group supported a rural ward similar to the Mayor's proposal and represented by either one or two councillors.

The villages

48 The existing wards in this area are the single-member Elwick and Greatham wards, which are projected to have variances of 75% more and 10% more electors than the average respectively by 2016. The neighbouring Park ward is part of the urban area, and is a three-member ward predicted to have a variance of 3% in 2016.

49 Our draft recommendation is for a three-member West ward based on the Council's proposal, with the additional inclusion of Greatham village. As mentioned earlier, we consider that Greatham village should be included in West Ward due to the lack of direct access between Greatham and Seaton Carew and the community evidence provided by Greatham Parish Council. This would provide for good electoral equality in West ward, with 6% fewer electors in 2010 and 7% more electors than the average in 2016.

50 Submissions were received from the rural parishes (Elwick, Hart, Greatham, Newton Bewley and Dalton Piercy) requesting that they be in a rural ward on the grounds of community identity. A total of 43 submissions were received regarding this area, of which 24 were standard letters supporting a separate rural ward. In general, the letters argued that the rural areas had little in common with the urban town. Although many submissions mentioned that Hart Primary School and Elwick Primary School shared a headteacher, they tended to emphasise the differences rather than the connections between the villages. If Hart village were to be included in West ward in addition to the inclusion of Greatham village, the electoral variance would increase to 2% more electors in 2010 and 15% more electors than the average in 2016. We do not consider that the evidence provided by Hart Parish Council, the rural parish councils and local residents is sufficiently strong to allow an electoral variance of 15%.

51 Alternative names suggested for West ward were Park & Villages (the Conservative Group), Tunstall (Labour Party) and Hartlepool Villages (the Mayor). We welcome further comments on the most appropriate name.

Seaton Carew

52 The existing wards in this area are the three-member Seaton ward, which is projected to have a variance of 12% more electors than the average by 2016, and the three-member St Hilda and Stranton wards, which are projected to have variances of 7% fewer and 11% more electors than the average respectively by 2016.

53 Our draft recommendation is for a three-member East ward containing Seaton Carew and part of the urban area of Hartlepool bordered by Seaton Lane and the A689. This ward would contain 2% more electors than the average in 2016. Having toured the area, we consider there is a good road connection between the Seaton Lane area and Seaton Carew. The A689 provides a strong boundary separating the Seaton Lane area from the neighbouring Foggy Furze and Rossmere areas to the north. As mentioned in the paragraphs above, we do not include Greatham village in this ward as we noted that there were no road connections between Greatham village and Seaton Carew. Furthermore, Greatham Parish Council has stated that they would prefer to be included with the other villages in West ward, with which they have direct road links.

54 There was a lack of consensus among the submissions received. The Labour Party agreed with the Council's proposal to include Greatham within the area of Seaton Carew, while the Independent Group and the Mayor placed Greatham in the rural West ward. The Independent Group also included the Seaton Lane area with Seaton Carew, while the Mayor and the Labour Party suggested that the area should be included in Foggy Furze ward to the north. The Mayor also suggested that the new harbour-side developments should be joined with Seaton Carew.

55 Alternative names suggested for East ward were Seaton Carew (a local resident), South (the Labour Party) and Seaton Coastal (the Mayor). We welcome further comments on the most appropriate name.

56 Table C1 (on page 29) provides details of the electoral variances of the draft recommendations for wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

The northern urban area and the harbour

57 The northern urban area broadly comprises the current wards of Brus, Dyke House, Hart and Throston, as well as the parish of Hart. The harbour-side area is the former ward of St Hilda's and part of the Stranton area. Extensive development has occurred in the harbour-side area during the last few years, with more development still taking place. Development is also occurring in the former ward of Hart, to the south of the A179.

58 During Stage One we received submissions from Clavering & Hart Station Residents' Association, Dent and Derwent Residents' Association (enclosing 12 identical letters from local residents), Furness, Cameron & Belk Street Residents' Association (enclosing 50 identical letters from local residents), and a local resident. We also received borough-wide suggestions from the Council, the Mayor, the Labour Party, the Independent Group and a local resident.

59 We have developed proposals for this area which are based on the submissions from the Council and from the Labour Party; they submitted almost identical schemes, with the Labour Party's proposals providing for slightly better electoral equality. The Independent Group's submission did not provide for good electoral equality, and we considered that the Mayor's submission did not use strong boundaries.

The harbour-side

60 The existing wards in this area are the three-member St Hilda's and Stranton wards, which are projected to have variances of 7% fewer and 11% more electors than the average respectively by 2016.

61 Our draft recommendation is for a three-member Heritage ward combining the new harbour-side developments with Headland parish. This ward has strong boundaries and would have a variance of 2% more electors than the average by 2016. This ward is adopted from the Council's proposals.

62 The Mayor suggested putting the harbour-side developments in East ward with Seaton Carew. We considered that the Mayor's scheme had adverse knock-on effects in the area to the north and that the harbour-side developments (which are ongoing) have little in common with Seaton Carew. The Furness, Cameron & Belk Street Residents Association and the Dent and Derwent Residents' Association suggested that the southern part of the Council's proposed Heritage ward be placed in Victoria, citing the locations of existing services and community relations, despite the area being divided by a dual carriageway. However, having toured this area, we consider the Council's proposal to be the most appropriate pattern for this area.

63 Alternative names suggested for Heritage ward were Headland (the Labour Party) and St Hilda's (the Mayor).

Northern urban area

64 The existing wards in this area are the three-member Brus, Dyke House, Hart and Throston wards, which are projected to have variances of 8% more, 29% fewer, 20% more and 3% fewer electors than the average respectively by 2016.

65 Our draft recommendation in this area is for three three-member wards called De Bruce, Jesmond and Warren Grange, which would contain 9% fewer, 4% fewer and 4% fewer electors respectively by 2016. These wards are adopted from the Labour Party's proposals.

66 The proposed De Bruce ward, in the north of the authority, uses a main road as a strong external boundary, and provides clear boundaries and acceptable electoral equality by 2016. This ward was proposed by the Labour Party. Almost identical proposals were submitted by the Council, with a minor boundary change to the south of this ward. The Mayor suggested dividing the ward in two with the main road bridged. The Independent Group's proposal was similar to the Council's scheme, but used a different southern boundary, providing very poor electoral equality.

67 Our proposed Jesmond ward unites two areas around Jesmond Park. It uses strong, identifiable boundaries and provides for good electoral equality. This ward was suggested by the Labour Party. The Council's submission was similar, with minor changes on the northern boundaries, but provided for slightly worse electoral equality. The Mayor and Independent Group suggested warding patterns with considerably weaker boundaries and worse electoral equality.

68 The proposed Warren Grange ward contains the parish of Hart and part of urban Hartlepool to the east of Hart village. It also includes a large new development to the south of the A179, which joins the areas of Hart Station and Throston. The Council's scheme was similar, with the only difference being a slightly different boundary with their proposed Jesmond ward. The Mayor and Independent Group proposed that the urban area to the east of Hart village be combined with part of De Bruce ward, while Hart parish would be in a rural ward.

69 Hart Parish Council, local residents of Hart and the neighbouring parish councils have expressed their wish that Hart be in a rural ward. Hart is linked to Elwick by a single-track direct road or by a main road which briefly exits the borough. The same main road leads from Hart into the urban area. If Hart village was transferred from our proposed Warren Grange ward into the proposed West ward, it would result in an electoral variance of 15% more electors in West ward and 11% fewer electors in Warren Grange ward by 2016. We do not consider that we have received sufficient community evidence to justify these electoral variances.

70 Furthermore, if Hart village were to be placed in West ward, Hart parish would have to become warded, as there is an area of urban overspill (the Kingfisher estate) which has no direct road access to the village of Hart and so would remain in Warren Grange ward.

71 An alternative name suggested for De Bruce ward was King Oswy (the Labour Party). Alternative names suggested for Jesmond ward were Throston (the Labour Party) and St Oswald's (the Mayor). Alternative names suggested for Warren Grange ward were Hart (the Labour Party) and Saxon (the Mayor). We welcome further comments on the most appropriate names for these wards.

72 Table C1 (on page 29) provides details of the electoral variances of the draft recommendations for wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

The southern and central urban area

73 The southern and central areas of Hartlepool include the main town centre. They broadly comprise the current wards of Grange, Burn Valley, Foggy Furze, Rift House, Rossmere, Owton and Fens, as well as part of Park and part of Stranton.

74 During Stage One we received submissions from Dent and Derwent Residents' Association (enclosing 12 identical letters from local residents), Furness, Cameron & Belk Street Residents' Association (enclosing 50 identical letters from local residents), Greatham Parish Council, Councillor Lilley and five local residents.

75 We have developed proposals for this area which are broadly based on the Council's proposals. In the southern urban area there was a broad consensus on the warding arrangements, although a variety of different ward names were suggested.

76 In the central urban area the various schemes suggested differed significantly. While part of the Council's warding pattern is similar to the proposal from the Labour Party, both differ significantly from the schemes proposed by the Mayor and the

Independent Group. The Mayor's submission emphasised community identity, while the Council argued that its proposal provided for clear boundaries. We have based our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme, with modifications made for community identity and electoral equality.

Southern urban area

77 The existing wards in this area are the three-member Fens, Owton, Rift House and Rossmere wards, which are projected to have variances of 12% fewer, 12% fewer, 3% more and 4% more electors than the average respectively by 2016.

78 Our draft recommendation is for two three-member wards, called Manor House and South, which would contain 8% more and 9% more electors respectively by 2016. These wards are adopted from the Council's proposals.

79 The proposed South ward has particularly strong boundaries. Similar wards were proposed by the Council, by the Mayor, the Independent Group and the Labour Party. There was opposition to the Council's scheme from Greatham Parish Council, as South ward would include the 'Greatham Fens' area, resulting in parish warding. However, the two parts of the parish are divided by a dual carriageway, across which there is no footpath or direct road. Two local residents argued that Greatham village and Greatham Fens are separate communities, while one local resident asserted that the parish should not be divided. We toured this area and consider that there is little to unite the separate parts of Greatham parish.

80 Our proposed Manor House ward was suggested by the Council, the Mayor, the Conservative Group and the Labour Party. The Council argued that this ward rests on strong boundaries, while the Mayor reasoned that the area contains strong community and voluntary groups. The Independent Group's proposal divided this area and neighbouring Foggy Furze into northern and southern sections, resulting in poor electoral equality.

81 An alternative name suggested for Manor House ward was Brierton (the Labour Party and the Mayor). Alternative names suggested for South ward were Catcote (Labour Party) and St Teresa's (the Mayor). We welcome further comments on the most appropriate names for these wards.

Central urban area

82 The existing wards in this area are the three three-member Burn Valley, Foggy Furze and Grange wards, which are projected to have variances of 10% fewer, 14% fewer and 11% fewer electors than the average respectively by 2016.

83 Our draft recommendation is for three three-member wards called Foggy Furze, Middleton and Victoria, which would contain 1% more, 4% fewer and 8% fewer electors respectively by 2016. These wards are based a number of different proposals for this area.

84 The draft recommendation for Victoria ward is based on the Council's proposal and provides for strong, clear boundaries and good electoral equality. We consider that the western boundary of the proposed Victoria ward, which meets West ward, is

particularly strong. Our draft recommendation differs from the Council's submission along the southern boundary, where we were persuaded by community evidence provided by the Dent and Derwent Residents' Association.

85 Submissions were received from the, Furness, Cameron & Belk Street Residents' Association and the Dent and Derwent Residents' Association. Both groups expressed their wish to remain in their current ward due to the relationships already created between neighbourhoods and the facilities available in the area. The Dent and Derwent Residents' Association argued that they had a shared community identity with the neighbouring streets, in particular with five separate groups including one in an area in the historic town (placed by the Council in Heritage ward) and another in an area to the immediate west of the shopping centre (placed by the Council in Middleton ward). We do not consider that sufficient evidence of community links with the historic town has been provided, particular given that a busy main road divides the historic town from the other areas mentioned by Dent and Derwent Residents' Association. Having toured the area, we consider that our modification to the Council's proposal is in the interests of local communities.

86 Our proposed Foggy Furze ward is based on the proposals of the Council, and is similar to the suggestions of the Mayor and the Labour Party. Our proposed boundary differs from the Council's recommendation in the north-east corner of this ward, where we continue the boundary along Oxford Street, as proposed by the Labour Party and the Mayor, rather than using Stockton Road, as proposed by the Council. This provides for better electoral equality in both Middleton and Foggy Furze wards.

87 Our proposed Middleton ward lies to the south of the proposed Victoria ward and to the north of the proposed Foggy Furze ward. It is broadly based on the Council's submission, with modifications to the boundary with Victoria and Foggy Furze as described in the paragraphs above. We consider that this provides for good electoral equality and facilitates a good pattern of wards in the central urban area of Hartlepool.

88 An alternative name suggested for Foggy Furze ward was St Aidan's (the Mayor). Alternative names suggested for Middleton ward were Burn (the Labour Party) and Burn Valley (the Mayor). An alternative name suggested for Victoria ward was Jackson (the Labour Party). We welcome further comments on the most appropriate names for these wards.

89 Table C1 (on page 29) provides details of the electoral variances of the draft recommendations for wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1, Map 2 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

90 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2008 and 2013 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2010	2016
Number of councillors	33	33
Number of electoral wards	11	11
Average number of electors per councillor	2,104	2,163
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendation

Hartlepool Borough Council should comprise 33 councillors serving 11 wards, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

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

93 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Greatham.

94 We would particularly welcome comments on these proposals from the parish council concerned and local residents during this consultation stage.

95 The parish of Greatham should be divided into two parish wards: Greatham Fens (returning four members) and Greatham Village (returning three members). We welcome comments on these arrangements during this consultation period.

Draft recommendation

Greatham Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Greatham Fens (returning four members), and Greatham Village (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3.

3 What happens next

Draft recommendations

96 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which time everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 20 June 2011. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

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

98 Express your views by writing directly to:

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

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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

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

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

101 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and

evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

102 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Hartlepool Borough Council in 2012.

4. Mapping

Draft recommendations for Hartlepool

103 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Hartlepool Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Hartlepool Borough Council.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed wards in the north of Hartlepool.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed wards in the south of Hartlepool and the proposed warding arrangements for Greatham parish.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty is so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee for England	The Boundary Committee for England was a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Boundary Committee's functions were assumed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections

Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of

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

Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (November 2000) (http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/_consultation.pdf) 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 Local Government Boundary Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 November 2008, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's 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.	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 at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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.

Appendix C

Table C1: Draft recommendations for Hartlepool Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2010)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	De Bruce	3	5,786	1,929	-8%	5,880	1,960	-9%
2	East	3	6,661	2,220	6%	6,607	2,202	2%
3	Foggy Furze	3	6,479	2,160	3%	6,549	2,183	1%
4	Heritage	3	5,595	1,865	-11%	6,650	2,217	2%
5	Jesmond	3	6,285	2,095	0%	6,242	2,081	-4%
6	Manor House	3	6,962	2,321	10%	6,993	2,331	8%
7	Middleton	3	6,322	2,107	0%	6,217	2,072	-4%
8	South	3	7,225	2,408	14%	7,084	2,361	9%
9	Victoria	3	6,188	2,063	-2%	5,938	1,979	-8%
10	Warren Grange	3	5,980	1,993	-5%	6,241	2,080	-4%
11	West	3	5,933	1,978	-6%	6,970	2,323	7%
	Totals	33	69,416	–	–	71,371	–	–
	Averages	–	–	2,104	–	–	2,163	–

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward 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.