

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
TYNEDALE IN  
NORTHUMBERLAND

*Report to the Secretary of State for  
the Environment*

*March 1997*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Tynedale in Northumberland.

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## Local Government Commission for England

25 March 1997

Dear Secretary of State

On 19 March 1996 the Commission commenced a periodic electoral review of the district of Tynedale under the Local Government Act 1992. It published its draft recommendations in October 1996 and undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

The Commission has now formulated its final recommendations in the light of consultation. It has, in some areas, confirmed its draft recommendations, although it has modified some of its initial warding proposals in the light of further evidence. This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in the area.

The Commission is therefore recommending to you that Tynedale should be served by 52 councillors representing 31 wards, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the Commission's statutory criteria. It is recommended that the whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

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

Yours sincerely

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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Tynedale on 19 March 1996. It published its draft recommendations on electoral arrangements on 31 October 1996, after which it undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the submissions received by the Commission during consultation on its draft recommendations, and offers its final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

The Commission found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Tynedale because:

- **in 19 of the present 32 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district;**
- **nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **one ward varies by 41 per cent from the average;**
- **electoral equality is expected to deteriorate further by 2001.**

The Commission's final recommendations for the District Council's electoral arrangements (Figure 1) are that:

- **Tynedale should to be served by 52 councillors, compared with 47 at present;**
- **there should be 31 wards, rather than 32 as at present;**
- **the ward boundaries of 14 of the existing wards should be modified, while 18 wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years, with the next elections taking place in 1999.**

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

- **In 21 of the 31 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **By 2001 the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent in 23 wards.**
- **They are projected to provide only one ward (Upper North Tyne) in which the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 20 per cent from the average by 2001.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to town and parish council electoral arrangements.

- **They provide for changes to the warding arrangements of Hexham Town Council and Prudhoe Town Council, and changes to the number of parish (or town) councillors in Hexham, Ovingham, Prudhoe, Simonburn and Slaley.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 5 May 1997.

Figure 1:  
*The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

| <b>Ward name</b>              | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>  | <b>Map reference</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 Acomb                       | 1                            | Acomb with Sandhoe ward (part - the parish of Acomb)  | Map 2                |
| 2 Allendale                   | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Allendale and West Allen)   | Map 2                |
| 3 Bellingham                  | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Bellingham)   | Map 2                |
| 4 Broomhaugh and Riding       | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Broomhaugh and Riding)  | Map 2                |
| 5 Chollerton with Whittington | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Chollerton and Whittington)   | Map 2                |
| 6 Corbridge                   | 3                            | Corbridge ward (part - the parish ward of Corbridge)  | Map 2                |
| 7 East Tynedale               | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bywell, Horsley and Ovington)   | Map 2                |
| 8 Hadrian                     | 2                            | Bardon Mill ward (the parishes of Bardon Mill, Henshaw and Melkridge); Tipalt ward (part - the parishes of Thirlwall and Greenhead) | Map 2                |
| 9 Haltwhistle                 | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Haltwhistle)  | Map 2                |
| 10 Haydon                     | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Haydon)   | Map 2                |
| 11 Hexham Gilesgate           | 1                            | Hexham Gilesgate ward (part - the parish ward of Gilesgate as amended)  | Maps 2 and A1        |
| 12 Hexham Hencotes            | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of Hencotes)  | Map 2                |
| 13 Hexham Leazes              | 3                            | Hexham Leazes ward (the parish ward of Leazes) and Hexham Gilesgate ward (part)   | Maps 2 and A1        |
| 14 Hexham Priestpopple        | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of Priestpopple)  | Map 2                |
| 15 Humshaugh and Wall         | 1                            | Chesters ward (part - the parishes of Humshaugh and Wall)   | Map 2                |
| 16 Ovingham                   | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Ovingham)   | Map 2                |
| 17 Prudhoe Castle             | 2                            | Prudhoe Castle ward (the parish ward of Castle) and Mickley ward (part)   | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 18 Prudhoe North              | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of North)   | Map 2                |

Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

|    | <b>Ward name</b>         | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|--------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 19 | Prudhoe South            | 3                            | Prudhoe South ward (part), Prudhoe West ward (part)  | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 20 | Prudhoe West             | 2                            | Prudhoe West ward (part), Prudhoe South ward (part); Mickley ward (part)   | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 21 | Redesdale                | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Otterburn and Rochester)   | Map 2                |
| 22 | Sandhoe with Dilston     | 1                            | Acomb with Sandhoe ward (part - the parish of Sandhoe); Corbridge ward (part - the parish ward of Dilston)   | Map 2                |
| 23 | Slaley and Hexhamshire   | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Hexhamshire, Hexhamshire Low Quarter and Slaley)   | Map 2                |
| 24 | South Tynedale           | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Blanchland, Healey, Hedley and Shotley Low Quarter)  | Map 2                |
| 25 | Stocksfield with Mickley | 3                            | Broomley and Stocksfield ward (the parish of Broomley and Stocksfield); Mickley ward (part - the parish ward of Mickley as amended)                                  | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 26 | Upper North Tyne         | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Falstone, Greystead, Kielder and Taret)  | Map 2                |
| 27 | Wanney                   | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bavington, Corsenside and Kirkwhelpington)   | Map 2                |
| 28 | Warden and Newbrough     | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Newbrough and Warden)  | Map 2                |
| 29 | Wark                     | 1                            | Wark ward (the parishes of Birtley and Wark); Chesters ward (part - the parish of Simonburn)   | Map 2                |
| 30 | West Tynedale            | 1                            | West Tynedale ward (the parishes of Coanwood, Hartleyburn, Knaresdale with Kirkhaugh and Plenmeller with Whitfield); Tipalt ward (part - the parish of Featherstone) | Map 2                |
| 31 | Wylam                    | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Wylam)   | Map 2                |



# 1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Tynedale in Northumberland.

2 The Commission has now reviewed all the districts in Northumberland as part of its programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England. This is the Commission's first review of the electoral arrangements for Tynedale. The last such review was undertaken by the Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 77). The electoral arrangements of Northumberland County Council were last reviewed in January 1980 (Report No. 370). It is intended that a review of the County Council's electoral arrangements will follow in due course.

3 In undertaking these reviews, the Commission is required to have regard to:

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

4 The Commission has also had regard to its own *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996 and supplemented in September 1996), which sets out its approach to the reviews.

5 The review of Tynedale was in four stages (Figure 2).

6 Stage One commenced on 19 March 1996. The Commission wrote to Tynedale District Council inviting it to make proposals for its future electoral arrangements. Copies of that letter were sent to Northumberland County Council, the other borough and district councils in Northumberland, the Northumbria Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Northumberland Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the headquarters of the main political parties. The Commission also placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council itself to publicise the review.

7 At Stage Two the Commission considered all the representations received during Stage One and formulated its draft recommendations.

8 Stage Three began on 31 October 1996 with the publication of the Commission's report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Tynedale in Northumberland*. Copies were sent to all those to whom the Commission wrote at the start of the review as well as to those who had written to the Commission during Stage One, inviting comments on the Commission's preliminary conclusions. Again, the Commission placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the report more widely.

9 Finally, during Stage Four the Commission reconsidered its draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation.

Figure 2:  
*Stages of the Review*

| Stage | Description   |
|-------|---|
| One   | Submission of proposals to the Commission                                   |
| Two   | The Commission's analysis and deliberation                                  |
| Three | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation                       |
| Four  | Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State for the Environment |



## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

<sup>10</sup> Tynedale is the largest district in England and has an area larger than some English counties. Its 856 square miles (220,000 hectares) has a population of under 60,000, the majority of whom live in the small towns and villages of the Tyne Valley. It is therefore a very sparsely populated district, with overall only 67 people per square mile, and an uneven spread of population, with more than one third living in Tynedale's two largest settlements, Hexham and Prudhoe. The district contains many attractions, including the Kielder Forest and Hadrian's Wall, and is a popular area for tourism. Tynedale contains 52 parishes.

<sup>11</sup> The District Council presently has 47 members elected from 32 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Three wards are each represented by three councillors, nine wards elect two councillors each, while the other 20 are single-member wards. The whole council is elected every four years, the same as the other district councils in Northumberland, with the next election taking place in May 1999. The electorate of the district is 45,829 (February 1996) and each councillor represents an average of 975 electors. The District Council forecasts that the electorate will increase to 47,230 by the year 2001, which would bring the average number of electors per councillor to 1,005 (Figure 3).

<sup>12</sup> In order to compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the Commission calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the average for the area in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

<sup>13</sup> Since the last electoral review by the LGBC in 1975, changes in population and electorate have not been evenly spread across the district. As a result, the number of electors per councillor varies significantly from the average in many wards. In 19 of the 32 wards the variation is more than 10 per cent from the average, and in nine wards more than 20 per cent. Currently, Acomb with Sandhoe ward has 41 per cent more electors per councillor than the average for the district, so that the councillor for this ward represents 1,379 electors compared to the average of 975.

Map 1:  
*Existing Wards in Tynedale*

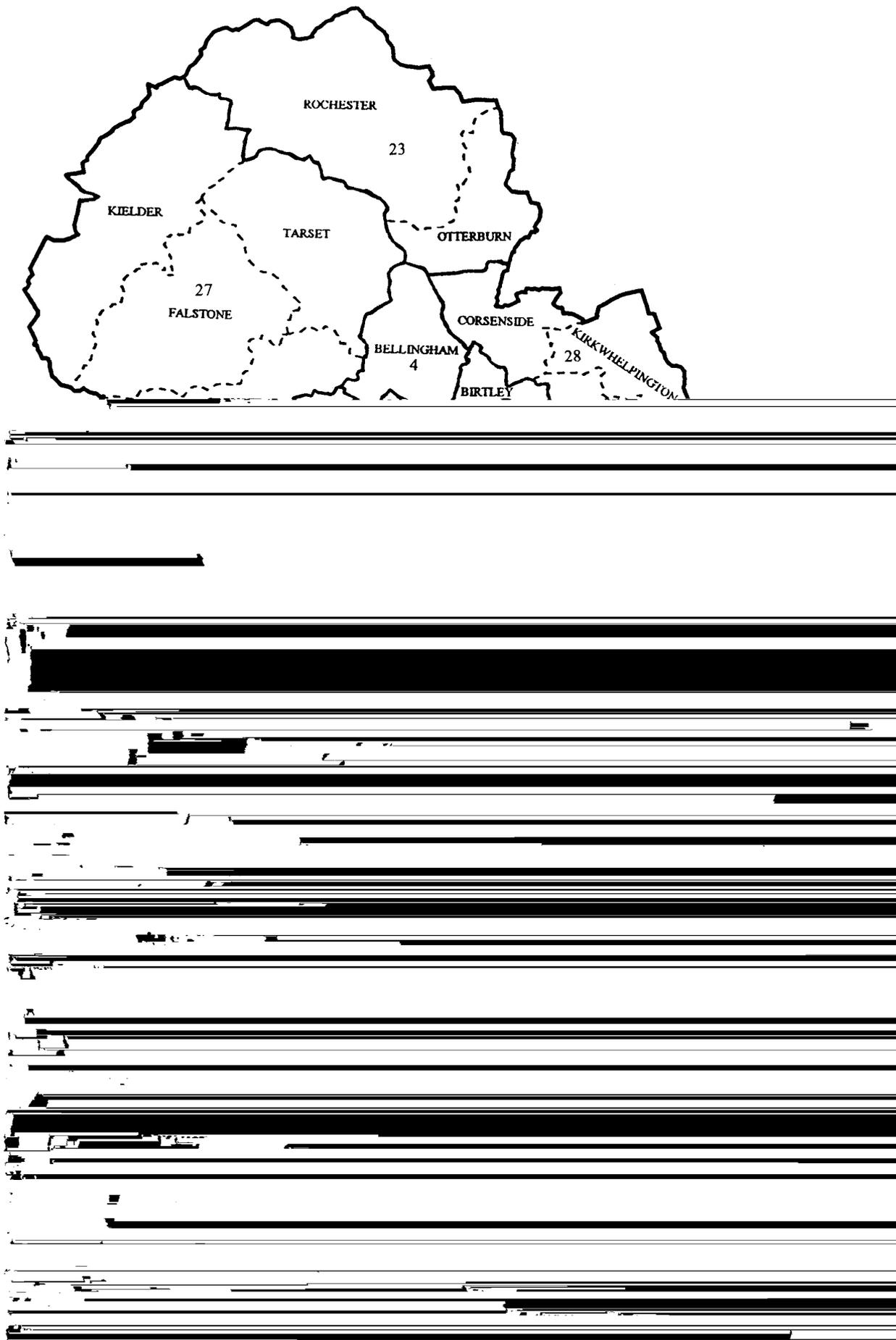


Figure 3:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name                     | Number of councillors | 1996       |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                               |                       | Electorate | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 1 Acomb with Sandhoe          | 1                     | 1,379      | 1,379                             | 41                      | 1,420            | 1,420                             | 41                      |
| 2 Allendale                   | 2                     | 1,758      | 879                               | -10                     | 1,790            | 895                               | -11                     |
| 3 Bardon Mill                 | 1                     | 985        | 985                               | 1                       | 1,030            | 1,030                             | 3                       |
| 4 Bellingham                  | 1                     | 979        | 979                               | 0                       | 1,040            | 1,040                             | 3                       |
| 5 Broomhaugh and Riding       | 1                     | 794        | 794                               | -19                     | 800              | 800                               | -20                     |
| 6 Broomley and Stocksfield    | 2                     | 2,445      | 1,223                             | 25                      | 2,480            | 1,240                             | 23                      |
| 7 Chesters                    | 1                     | 974        | 974                               | 0                       | 1,020            | 1,020                             | 2                       |
| 8 Chollerton with Whittington | 1                     | 885        | 885                               | -9                      | 880              | 880                               | -12                     |
| 9 Corbridge                   | 3                     | 2,993      | 998                               | 2                       | 3,070            | 1,023                             | 2                       |
| 10 East Tynedale              | 1                     | 1,007      | 1,007                             | 3                       | 1,000            | 1,000                             | 0                       |
| 11 Gilesgate (Hexham)         | 1                     | 1,038      | 1,038                             | 6                       | 1,040            | 1,040                             | 3                       |
| 12 Haltwhistle                | 3                     | 3,065      | 1,022                             | 5                       | 3,210            | 1,070                             | 6                       |
| 13 Haydon                     | 2                     | 1,598      | 799                               | -18                     | 1,710            | 855                               | -15                     |
| 14 Hencotes (Hexham)          | 2                     | 2,704      | 1,352                             | 39                      | 2,700            | 1,350                             | 34                      |
| 15 Leazes (Hexham)            | 2                     | 2,457      | 1,229                             | 26                      | 2,460            | 1,230                             | 22                      |
| 16 Mickley (Prudhoe)          | 1                     | 718        | 718                               | -26                     | 710              | 710                               | -29                     |
| 17 Ovingham                   | 1                     | 946        | 946                               | -3                      | 940              | 940                               | -6                      |
| 18 Priestpottle (Hexham)      | 3                     | 2,816      | 939                               | -4                      | 2,910            | 970                               | -3                      |
| 19 Prudhoe Castle             | 1                     | 1,105      | 1,105                             | 13                      | 1,710            | 1,710                             | 70                      |
| 20 Prudhoe North              | 2                     | 1,677      | 839                               | -14                     | 1,680            | 840                               | -16                     |
| 21 Prudhoe South              | 2                     | 2,300      | 1,150                             | 18                      | 2,330            | 1,165                             | 16                      |
| 22 Prudhoe West               | 2                     | 2,274      | 1,137                             | 17                      | 2,270            | 1,135                             | 13                      |

*Continued overleaf*

Figure 3 (continued):  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name                 | 1996                  |               |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                           | Number of councillors | Electorate    | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 23 Redesdale              | 1                     | 741           | 741                               | -24                     | 800              | 800                               | -20                     |
| 24 Slaley and Hexhamshire | 1                     | 1,035         | 1,035                             | 6                       | 1,040            | 1,040                             | 3                       |
| 25 South Tynedale         | 1                     | 832           | 832                               | -15                     | 840              | 840                               | -16                     |
| 26 Tipalt                 | 1                     | 797           | 797                               | -18                     | 810              | 810                               | -19                     |
| 27 Upper North Tyne       | 1                     | 634           | 634                               | -35                     | 630              | 630                               | -37                     |
| 28 Wanney                 | 1                     | 726           | 726                               | -26                     | 730              | 730                               | -27                     |
| 29 Warden and Newbrough   | 1                     | 924           | 924                               | -5                      | 950              | 950                               | -5                      |
| 30 Wark                   | 1                     | 776           | 776                               | -20                     | 770              | 770                               | -23                     |
| 31 West Tynedale          | 1                     | 765           | 765                               | -22                     | 760              | 760                               | -24                     |
| 32 Wylam                  | 2                     | 1,702         | 851                               | -13                     | 1,700            | 850                               | -15                     |
| <b>Totals</b>             | <b>47</b>             | <b>45,829</b> | —                                 | —                       | <b>47,230</b>    | —                                 | —                       |
| <b>Averages</b>           | —                     | —             | <b>975</b>                        | —                       | —                | <b>1,005</b>                      | —                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on Tynedale District Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1996 electors in Allendale ward were relatively over-represented by 10 per cent, while electors in Broomley and Stocksfield ward were relatively under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One, the Commission received a submission from Tynedale District Council on electoral arrangements in the district. It also received seven submissions from parish councils, local organisations and residents. In the light of these representations, the Commission formulated its preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Tynedale in Northumberland*. It proposed that Tynedale should be served by 52 councillors serving 26 wards, and that some existing wards be merged and that some ward boundaries be modified:

- (a) in the town of Hexham, the boundary between the wards of Gilesgate and Leazes be modified, and that the wards of Hencotes and Leazes should receive additional representation;
- (b) in the town of Prudhoe, the boundary between South and West wards be modified, and that the wards of Castle and South should receive additional representation;
- (c) in the Corbridge area, a new ward be created just for the town of Corbridge and that a new two-member ward be created for the parishes of Acomb and Sandhoe and the parish ward of Dilston;
- (d) the merging of many existing rural wards, including Bardon Mill with Haydon, Bellingham with Upper North Tyne, Broomhaugh & Riding with East Tynedale, Slaley & Hexhamshire with South Tynedale and Tipalt with West Tynedale;
- (e) the parish of Simonburn be transferred from Chesters ward to Wark ward.

15 The Commission's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 20 of the 26 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the average. By 2001, the number of electors per councillor was projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in 21 wards.

16 The Commission's draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

#### Draft Recommendation

Tynedale District Council should comprise 52 councillors, serving 26 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the Commission's draft recommendations report, 31 submissions were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission.

### **Tynedale District Council**

18 Tynedale District Council supported some of the Commission's recommendations while opposing others. The Council's original submission was for no change to the existing electoral arrangements throughout the district and that remained its preference at Stage Three. However, the Council stated that it had "no objections to the proposals for two extra members for (the town of) Hexham and the consequent minor change to ward boundaries". It also supported the Commission's recommendation for two additional district councillors for the town of Prudhoe, albeit putting forward an alternative to the Commission's proposed boundary modification.

19 The Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendation that the electoral ward of Acomb and Sandhoe should be merged with the Dilston ward of Corbridge parish, stating that "Dilston has strong community links with Corbridge which should be preserved ... it has nothing in common with the relatively large settlement of Acomb which lies on the opposite side of the river Tyne some five miles to the west". It preferred no change in this part of the district.

20 The Council also opposed all of the Commission's draft recommendations for mergers of the rural wards. By way of a background to its opposition, the Council reiterated that Tynedale is the largest district by area in England, and that three-quarters of the population live in the Tyne Valley area. These facts, the consequent uneven spread of electors and the fact that comparatively small changes to the numbers of electors can be shown as large percentage variations, all led the Council to oppose the merger of these wards, especially as most parish councils in the affected areas were generally of the same view.

21 The Council did not object to the Commission's proposal to transfer the parish of Simonburn from Chesters ward to Wark ward nor the consequential ward name change of Chesters ward to "Humshaugh and Wall". Nor did it oppose the proposed changes to the numbers of parish councillors serving Ovingham, Slaley and Simonburn parish councils.

### **Hexham Constituency Conservative Association**

22 The Conservative Association argued "that some of the changes put forward in the draft recommendations fail to reflect the identities of the rural communities" and regarded it as important that such communities be represented, as far as possible, by a 'local' district councillor in a single-member ward. The Association accepted the recommendations insofar as they would affect the towns of Hexham and Prudhoe, although ideally preferring no change in those towns if possible.

23 However, in the areas of the district where the Commission had proposed mergers of rural wards, the Association raised specific objections and put forward its own proposals. It proposed joining the parish of Sandhoe and the parish ward of Corbridge and creating a three-member ward; leaving Acomb on its own as a single-member ward; and placing the parish ward of Dilston with the parishes of Blanchland, Broomhaugh and Riding, Healey and Shotley Low Quarter to form a two-member ward. It further proposed that the parishes of Ovingham, Ovington and Horsley should form a new two-member ward; that Bywell and Broomley and Stocksfield should form a new three-member ward; and that the parish of Hedley should join the parish ward of Mickley to form a new single-member ward.

24 The Association accepted the Commission's proposals for no change (or only very minor change) where this had been put forward in the rural areas, and also proposed no change in other rural parts of the district where the Commission had proposed merging existing wards together.

## **Haltwhistle and District Local Labour Party**

25 The Local Labour Party put forward proposals for the wards in its locality as it considered that the Commission's draft recommendations did "not reflect sensible community groupings in this part of Tynedale". It objected to Haydon ward being merged with Bardon Mill ward to create a two-member ward, arguing that the two areas 'look' in different directions, Haydon towards Hexham and Bardon Mill towards Haltwhistle. It proposed a different configuration of rural wards in the south-western area of Tynedale, and recommended an increase in representation for the town of Haltwhistle, from three to four members.

## **Northumberland Association of Local Councils**

26 The Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) wrote regarding the whole of Northumberland, but also submitted comments regarding Tynedale specifically. It rejected the Commission's recommendations in respect of its proposed wards of Acomb, Sandhoe and Dilston, South-east Tynedale, East Tynedale, Bellingham and Kielder Forest, and Bardon Mill with Haydon. It also stated that there had been little demand for change to the current electoral arrangements. NALC considered that there should have been a parish review of Northumberland before the electoral reviews in the county took place.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

27 Representations were received from a total of 22 parish and town councils in Tynedale during Stage Three. Of these, five - Birtley, Broomley and Stocksfield, Hexham, Ovingham and Whittington - supported the Commission's recommendations in relation to district warding arrangements for their own areas. Hexham Town Council additionally requested that its town council electoral arrangements be modified to reflect the Commission's proposed new district council warding arrangements.

28 Prudhoe Town Council supported the Commission's proposals that the ward of Castle be given an extra district councillor to reflect the likely growth in electorate over the next few years, and that North ward remain unchanged. However, while it supported the recommendation to increase South ward's district representation by one (to

three members), it did not support the Commission's proposed boundary modification between the South and West wards. Instead, it proposed an alternative boundary adjustment which would still allow South and West wards to return three and two district councillors respectively.

29 The Town Council did not support the Commission's proposal that the Prudhoe Town Council ward of Mickley should be placed in a district ward with the neighbouring parish of Broomley and Stocksfield, stating that the community of Mickley is "indelibly linked" to Prudhoe. However, Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council did support this proposal, although suggesting an alternative name for the ward ('Stocksfield with Mickley') to reflect its preference for the larger, more populous area appearing first in the title.

30 Haltwhistle Town Council proposed that, should a 52-member authority be recommended by the Commission, four district councillors should serve the town rather than the present three as "the current level of under-representation [would increase] to what the Town Council consider[s] to be an unacceptable level".

31 Sandhoe Parish Council, presently in a district ward (Acomb with Sandhoe) in which the number of electors per councillor is more than 40 per cent above the district average, stated that an extra councillor for that part of the district "would be welcome to assist the present [one]" but objected to joining with Dilston ward of Corbridge parish, which is to the south of the Tyne. Corbridge Parish Council also expressed its opposition to the proposal that the Dilston parish ward be placed in a ward with the parishes of Acomb and Sandhoe, arguing that this would break local ties as "the river and the by-pass completely cut off the two areas and ... electors of Dilston consider themselves people of Corbridge".

32 Horsley Parish Council objected to the Commission's proposal to combine it (and two other parishes) in a ward with the neighbouring parish of Broomhaugh and Riding. It suggested that a more suitable combination would be Horsley with Ovington and Ovingham. Broomhaugh and Riding Parish Council also objected to the Commission's proposal, expressing the view that if it were to be placed in a ward with adjoining areas, a more suitable solution would be for it to be combined with Healey with which it was felt to have more in common.

33 Ovington Parish Council similarly objected to the Commission's proposal, preferring the retention of the present East Tynedale ward, which comprises the parishes of Ovington, Bywell and Horsley. Bywell Parish Council argued that the communities within the present East Tynedale ward are still very rural in character and that each of the three main villages still have working farms in or immediately adjacent to them. This, it said, was not a characteristic of Riding Mill, the principal settlement of Broomhaugh and Riding parish. It also argued that the river Tyne acted as a natural barrier between the two present wards.

34 Hedley Parish Council disagreed with the Commission's draft recommendation to merge the existing South Tynedale and Slaley wards to form a new two-member ward. It argued that the geography of that part of Tynedale meant that the two present wards have little in common so that it would be "almost inevitable that the two councillors representing the new ward would agree to divide [it], for all practical purposes, between them". The Parish Council put forward an alternative suggestion for the area which would broadly retain the existing South Tynedale ward. Slaley Parish Council also objected to the Commission's proposal on the grounds that "there is certainly no community identity [between Slaley and Hexhamshire ward and South Tynedale ward] and to force the two wards together would have strong opposition".

35 Haydon Parish Council opposed the Commission's proposal to create a three-member Bardon Mill with Haydon ward, preferring instead no change, i.e. a two-member ward covering so67.6 i.e T0.020prises theat pl witheyBar

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## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

42 As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Tynedale was to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria and to Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

43 However, the Commission's function is not merely arithmetical, for three reasons. First, its recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. Second, it has had regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, the Commission has had to consider the desirability of servicing effective and convenient local government, and reflecting the interests and identities of local communities.

44 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. In conducting its electoral reviews, the Commission's predecessor, the LGBC, considered that variations from the average number of electors per councillor for an authority as a whole should be kept to the absolute minimum: a variation of up to plus or minus 10 per cent in a particular ward might be "acceptable", although variations in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent were generally accepted only in very exceptional circumstances.

45 The Commission's view is that the LGBC's approach to this issue had merit insofar as it combined a clearly defined tolerance threshold with the degree of flexibility necessary to achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality across a local authority's area. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to adopt this approach for the purposes of its reviews.

46 In its March 1996 *Guidance*, the Commission expressed the view that "proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should therefore be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances ... and will have to be justified in full". However, as the Commission emphasised in its September 1996 supplement to the *Guidance*: "While the Commission accepts that absolute equality of representation is likely to be unattainable, it considers that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such equality should be the starting point in any electoral review".

### Electorate Projections

47 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2001, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 3 per cent over the five-year period from 1996, from 45,829 to 47,230. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period. Reasonable estimates have been made of the changes in electorate that will arise. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of ward boundary changes has been obtained. The Commission accepts that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to projected electorates, is content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

### Council Size

48 The Commission has indicated in its March 1996 *Guidance* that it would normally expect the number of councillors serving a district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

49 Tynedale District Council is at present served by 47 councillors. The Council proposed no change to its electoral arrangements during Stage One of the review. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. The Commission concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be served by a council of 52 members. Although the Council retained a first preference for no change to its electoral arrangements (47 members) it stated that it had “no objections in principle” to granting additional representation to the towns of Hexham and Prudhoe, and indeed argued in its Stage Three submission for a council size of 51 members. The Commission, however, has not received sufficient evidence to persuade it to move away from its draft recommendation for a 52-member council for Tynedale.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

### **Tynedale in general**

50 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission explained that, while it acknowledged the particular geographic nature of Tynedale, a district in which more than one third of the electorate live in the two main settlements of Hexham and Prudhoe which between them account for less than 2 per cent of the district’s land area, it was also concerned about the present high degree of electoral imbalance. In general terms, the sparsely populated rural areas of Tynedale were over-represented while the settlements along the Tyne Valley which have experienced some growth over the past two decades, particularly Hexham, were relatively under-represented.

51 Against this background, and having given due consideration to the District Council’s proposal for no change to the existing electoral arrangements, the Commission proposed arrangements which, in its view, secured improved electoral equality while also reflecting the statutory criteria. The Commission’s proposals involved additional representation for those areas which are presently under-represented (in the main the towns of Hexham and Prudhoe) while maintaining the same level of representation in the more sparsely populated rural areas. The draft recommendations would have had the effect of increasing the council size to 52 members, would reduce the number of wards from 32 to 26, and would considerably

improve electoral equality: only five wards were projected by 2001 to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor.

52 Having considered all representations received during both Stage One and Stage Three of the review, the Commission has given further consideration to its draft recommendations. For ease of reference, the following areas are considered in turn:

- (a) Hexham (the wards of Gilesgate, Hencotes, Leazes and Priestpopple);
- (b) Prudhoe (the wards of Castle, North, South and West);
- (c) Mickley (in Prudhoe) and Broomley and Stocksfield wards;
- (d) Broomhaugh and Riding, East Tynedale, Ovingham, Slaley and Hexhamshire, South Tynedale and Wylam wards;
- (e) Acomb with Sandhoe and Corbridge wards;
- (f) Allendale, Bardon Mill, Haltwhistle, Haydon, Tipalt and West Tynedale wards;
- (g) Chesters, Chollerton with Whittington, Warden and Newbrough and Wark wards;
- (h) Bellingham, Redesdale, Upper North Tyne and Wanney wards.

### **Hexham (the wards of Gilesgate, Hencotes, Leazes and Priestpopple)**

53 As previously indicated, the Commission maintains its view that Tynedale District Council should be served by 52 members. Given this, the town of Hexham merits a total of ten councillors on the district council, compared with eight at present. The Commission proposed as part of its draft recommendations to modify the boundary between the district wards of Gilesgate and Leazes, transferring some 164 electors to the latter ward. This boundary modification would enable the district wards of Hencotes and Leazes each to be represented by an additional (third) councillor, for the ward of Priestpopple to remain with three councillors and for Gilesgate to remain with one councillor.

54 The Commission’s draft proposals for Hexham would produce a good level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in each of the wards of Gilesgate, Hencotes, Leazes and Priestpopple varying from the district average by less than 10 per cent, in both 1996 and 2001.

55 During Stage Three, the District Council stated that it had “no objections to the proposals for two extra members for Hexham and the consequent minor change to ward boundaries”. Similarly the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association “accept[ed] the Commission’s recommendation to alter the boundary between the Gilesgate and Leazes wards in Hexham”. Hexham Town Council also wrote to the Commission in agreement with the draft recommendations insofar as they affect the town.

56 With such widespread agreement, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations in respect of the town of Hexham as final. However, the Commission proposes a slight modification to ward names. Ordnance Survey pointed out to the Commission that there is presently an inconsistency in the way in which ward names are referred to in Tynedale. The wards in the town of Prudhoe generally have the town name as a prefix (e.g. Prudhoe North, Prudhoe West) while those of Hexham do not. For the sake of clarity and consistency, therefore, the Commission proposes that the four district wards in the town of Hexham be renamed Hexham Gilesgate, Hexham Hencotes, Hexham Leazes and Hexham Priestpopple.

57 As a consequence of the boundary adjustment between Hexham Gilesgate ward and Hexham Leazes ward, illustrated in Map A1 in Appendix A, it will also be necessary for the same adjustment to be made to the parish wards of Hexham so that they are coterminous with the district council wards.

### **Prudhoe (the wards of Castle, North, South and West)**

58 Prudhoe is at present divided into five wards: Castle, North, South and West, together with Mickley ward which is considered below. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed that, taking into account the projected increase in electors as a result of the Broomhouse Lane development, the wards of Castle, North, South and West between them merited nine district councillors in a council of 52 members, rather than the present seven for that combined area.

59 The Commission proposed that Castle ward should be represented by an additional (second) district councillor, to reflect the fact that nearly all the expected electorate increase in Prudhoe was forecast to take place in that ward. This would have the effect of producing an electoral imbalance,

under the Commission’s scheme, of 37 per cent on 1996 figures, but improving to just 6 per cent by 2001. The Commission also proposed no change to the two-member Prudhoe North ward in which the number of electors per councillor would vary by 5 per cent from the average in 1996, 8 per cent in 2001.

60 General acceptance of these proposals was received during Stage Three from Tynedale District Council, the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association and Prudhoe Town Council. As a result, the Commission has decided to confirm the draft recommendations as final in respect of these two wards, including a minor boundary amendment (requested by Prudhoe Town Council) between the Castle and Mickley wards as shown in Map A2. As with Hexham, it is also recommended that the town prefix be included in each of the ward names, such that they are referred to as Prudhoe Castle and Prudhoe North.

61 The Commission proposed a boundary modification between the wards of Prudhoe South and Prudhoe West in order to facilitate an extra councillor for that combined area of the town which, under the Commission’s scheme, merited five district councillors rather than the present four (South and West are both presently two-member wards). The Commission’s proposal would produce a good level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in both wards varying by less than 5 per cent from the district average in both 1996 and 2001.

62 During Stage Three the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association supported this proposal. However, both Tynedale District Council and Prudhoe Town Council opposed it, the District Council stating that it supported the submission of Prudhoe Town Council. While the Town Council supported the principle of South ward gaining an additional district councillor, it did not support the Commission’s proposed transfer of the ‘Bewick Grange Estate’ from West ward to South ward, proposing instead an alternative area for transfer.

63 Having carefully considered the evidence presented during Stage Three, the Commission has concluded that the Town Council’s proposal in respect of South and West wards would better reflect local community identities than the Commission’s draft recommendation. Accordingly, the Commission’s final recommendation is that the area as shown on Map A2 in Appendix A be transferred from Prudhoe West ward to Prudhoe South ward. The area shown incorporates the Town Council’s proposal, with an additional

transfer of the houses on the northern side of West Road to improve electoral equality and better reflect local community interests.

64 The number of electors per councillor in the revised three-member Prudhoe South ward would vary from the district average by 1 per cent in 1996, and is projected to vary by 3 per cent by 2001. The revised two-member Prudhoe West ward would vary by 11 per cent on 1996 figures, and is projected to improve to 7 per cent by 2001.

### **Mickley (in Prudhoe) and Broomley & Stocksfield**

65 The Commission came to the view during the formulation of its draft recommendations that the Mickley area of Prudhoe parish was distinct, and indeed was geographically separate from the 'town' area of Prudhoe. This, plus the particular geography of the surrounding area, led the Commission to recommend that Mickley be linked with the neighbouring parish of Broomley and Stocksfield to form a new three-member ward. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed ward would be 20 per cent above the district average in 1996, improving to 17 per cent above in 2001. However, the Commission concluded that such electoral inequality was unavoidable given the particular size and nature of the neighbouring parishes in this part of Tynedale.

66 The proposal was opposed by the District Council and by Prudhoe Town Council, the latter arguing that Mickley was "indelibly linked" to the town of Prudhoe. This opposition was shared by the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association, which proposed alternatively that Mickley should join with the neighbouring parish of Hedley to form a new single-member ward. However, while the Commission can see some merit in such a proposal - a single-member 'Mickley and Hedley' ward would be just 2 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor - the consequential effect on the rest of its scheme for this part of the district precludes that option.

67 For example, if a Mickley and Hedley ward was to be created, Broomley and Stocksfield parish would either be retained on its own as a two-member ward, a ward which would be 39 per cent above the average number of electors per councillor, be retained as a three-member ward, thereby increasing the overall council size further to 53, or it would need to be placed in a ward with adjoining parishes such as Broomhaugh and

Riding or Bywell. The Commission believes that all these options are inappropriate for this part of the district. As discussed below, one reason for Bywell (presently in the East Tynedale ward) not being placed in a ward with Broomley and Stocksfield is the perceived barrier of the river Tyne.

68 The Commission did receive support for its proposal to link Mickley with Broomley and Stocksfield from the Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council, although it requested a different name ('Stocksfield with Mickley') for the ward. Given this support, and notwithstanding the opposition of Prudhoe Town Council (and others), the Commission remains of the view that the proposed ward is cohesive, makes geographical sense and fits in well with its overall electoral scheme for that part of Tynedale. Accordingly, the proposal for Stocksfield with Mickley ward (with a minor boundary adjustment with Prudhoe Castle ward to reflect better local community identities and interests, as shown at Map A2 in Appendix A) is put forward as a final recommendation to the Secretary of State.

### **Broomhaugh and Riding, East Tynedale, Ovingham, Slaley and Hexhamshire, South Tynedale and Wylam**

69 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed merging the present single-member Broomhaugh and Riding and East Tynedale wards into a new two-member ward, proposed merging the present single-member Slaley and Hexhamshire and South Tynedale wards into a new two-member ward, and proposed leaving the single-member Ovingham and two-member Wylam wards unchanged.

70 The recommendation concerning the Ovingham ward was supported by the District Council, by Ovingham Parish Council and by the Ovingham Village Trust. The Hexham Constituency Conservative Association proposed that Ovingham be placed with Ovington and Horsley in a new two-member ward. However, given the widespread local support for its draft proposal in respect of Ovingham, in which the number of electors per councillor would vary from the district average by 7 per cent on 1996 figures and 3 per cent in 2001, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendation as final.

71 The recommendation to leave the two-member Wylam ward unaltered was also supported locally, by both the District Council and the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association. This was in addition to the Stage One submission of Wylam Parish Council requesting no change to the present arrangements in the area. The number of electors per councillor would vary from the district average by 3 per cent in 1996 (6 per cent in 2001). The Commission therefore puts forward its draft recommendation in respect of Wylam ward as final.

72 The Commission considered that the existing district wards of Slaley and Hexhamshire and South Tynedale generally reflected local community identities well at present. However, in view of the electoral imbalance which would result under the Commission's scheme if Slaley and Hexhamshire were to remain a single-member ward (17 per cent in 1996 and 15 per cent in 2001) the Commission proposed in its draft recommendations report that the two wards be merged together into a new ward which would vary by only 6 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996, improving to 3 per cent in 2001.

73 The proposal was opposed by the District Council and by the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association, the latter suggesting a different configuration of parishes to create a new two-member ward. It was also opposed by two of the parish councils which would be affected by such a change. Slaley Parish Council argued that there was no community of interest between the two 'halves' of the proposed ward. This view was supported by Hedley Parish Council, which added that the physical geography of the area was a major factor to be taken into consideration.

74 Although both parish councils preferred no change in that part of Tynedale, Hedley Parish Council did put forward a boundary adjustment which would, in its opinion, better reflect local community identities. This involved the transfer of an area known as 'High Mickley' from the parish of Prudhoe (within the present Mickley parish ward) to the present South Tynedale ward. While the Commission considers that this suggestion may have merit, it is unwilling to put forward a further division of Prudhoe parish without additional consultation (an option which is not available to it under the provisions of the 1992 Act), given the community of interest between Mickley and High Mickley.

75 As indicated previously, the Commission has to balance its objective of electoral equality with the statutory criteria of reflecting community identities and interests and securing effective and convenient local government. The Commission's draft recommendation would secure good electoral equality but respondents have argued that this may be at the expense of community factors. Conversely, no change in this part of the district (i.e. maintaining single-member wards for Slaley and Hexhamshire and South Tynedale) suffers from a degree of electoral inequality but may better reflect local community identities and interests.

76 In this instance, and taking all relevant factors into account, the Commission judges that it should recommend no change to the existing ward pattern in this part of Tynedale to the Secretary of State. Indeed, an unchanged South Tynedale ward would, under the Commission's scheme, be only 6 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor, becoming 8 per cent in 2001, although an unchanged Slaley and Hexhamshire ward would, as indicated above, be 17 per cent from the average (15 per cent in 2001). As part of its consideration, the Commission has borne in mind a point reiterated throughout this review by Tynedale District Council and others, which is that comparatively small variations in 'real' numbers of electors are shown as considerable percentage changes because of the relatively small average number of electors per councillor in the district. For example, although Slaley and Hexhamshire ward is 17 per cent above the district average, it has in fact only just over 150 more electors than the average for a single-member ward under the Commission's scheme.

77 The Commission had a similar judgement to make when it came to reconsider its draft recommendation in respect of the two-member East Tynedale ward. Again, opposition to the proposal - which would add the parish of Broomhaugh and Riding to the existing East Tynedale district ward to produce just 2 per cent electoral variance in 1996 (1 per cent in 2001) - was argued strongly on community grounds.

78 All four parish councils which would be affected by the proposal - Broomhaugh and Riding, Bywell, Horsley and Ovington - wrote to oppose the proposal, as did the District Council. The Hexham Constituency Conservative Association proposed an alternative configuration of parishes in the area. Opposition was also expressed by County

Councillor Mrs Jacobson and District Councillor Latham. The underlying argument put forward in most of these submissions was that Broomhaugh and Riding was not only different in its nature from the other three parishes, being comparatively more urban, but was also geographically separate from them, being on the opposite (south) side of the river Tyne.

79 Accordingly, having considered the weight of representations against the draft proposal, the Commission has decided to recommend no change to this area of Tynedale. The number of electors per councillor in Broomhaugh and Riding ward, comprising solely the parish of that name would vary by 10 per cent from the district average in 1996, rising to 12 per cent by 2001. East Tynedale ward, consisting of the parishes of Bywell, Horsley and Ovington, would be 14 per cent from the average in 1996 and 10 per cent by 2001.

### **Acomb with Sandhoe and Corbridge**

80 The present ward of Acomb with Sandhoe proved to be an area with which the Commission found much difficulty. The ward, presently with an electoral variance of 41 per cent, the worst imbalance in Tynedale, is 'sandwiched' between the relatively urban areas of Hexham and Corbridge, which limits the options available to the Commission. The proposals for the Hexham area

consider themselves people of Corbridge". Sandhoe Parish Council stated that an extra district councillor for that part of the district would be welcome, but "strongly objected" to the suggestion of joining it with Dilston ward.

87 The Commission, in this instance, could see little in the way of a simple solution. The options for the area were, in general terms, a proposal strong on electoral equality but arguably weaker on community identities and interests (i.e. Dilston being placed in a ward with communities on the opposite side of the river Tyne) or a proposal which might better reflect the community aspect of the equation (i.e. retaining Dilston with the rest of the parish of Corbridge) but at the considerable expense of electoral equality.

88 The Commission's draft recommendation in this part of the district would secure good electoral equality and, as explained, it is unable to recommend the alternatives suggested. The Commission's proposal for a three-member district ward for Corbridge parish ward not only improves electoral equality but would, in its view, better reflect community identities and interests, in that the ward would cover solely the northern, more urban side of the parish of Corbridge. Accordingly, the Commission confirms its draft recommendation in respect of Corbridge ward as final.

89 The Commission, after weighing up all the evidence and having regard to its statutory criteria, has concluded that it should recommend two district councillors to represent the combined area of Acomb, Sandhoe and Dilston. However, the view has been expressed to the Commission that the parish of Acomb would, by itself, merit its own district councillor. That being the case, as Dilston is geographically much closer to Sandhoe than it is to Acomb, and as the effect on electoral equality would not be too deleterious, the Commission proposes to recommend two single-member wards for this part of Tynedale. The number of electors per councillor in Acomb ward, consisting just of that parish, would be 10 per cent from the district average, in both 1996 and 2001, while Sandhoe with Dilston ward, consisting of the parish and parish ward of those names respectively, would be 5 per cent from the district average in 1996, 6 per cent in 2001.

## **Allendale, Bardon Mill, Haltwhistle, Haydon, Tipalt and West Tynedale**

90 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission recommended that the present district wards of Allendale and Haltwhistle be retained on existing boundaries (respectively as two- and three-member wards), that Bardon Mill and Haydon be merged together into a new three-member ward ('Bardon Mill with Haydon') and that Tipalt and West Tynedale be merged together to form a new two-member ward ('South-west Tynedale'). The Commission argued that the ward (and town) of Haltwhistle should be slightly under-represented and the proposed South-west Tynedale ward be slightly over-represented, in part so as to avoid the necessity of warding the town of Haltwhistle and thereby placing a substantial number of Haltwhistle electors with those from neighbouring rural parishes, which may have cut across local community identities.

91 The proposal for the Allendale ward, which would consist of the parishes of Allendale and West Allen and in which the number of electors per councillor would be almost exactly the same as the district average, received support from both the District Council and the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association. The Commission commented in its draft recommendations report that it considered that the village of Whitfield, in the parish of Plenneller with Whitfield, might be better placed in the Allendale ward than in its current ward, due to better geographic links. However, as no local respondent has made views known on the issue, the Commission proposes to leave the area, as now, in a separate ward (see below). In the absence of any opposition to its proposal, the Commission confirms its draft recommendation in respect of the Allendale ward as final.

92 The Commission's proposal to merge the existing wards of Bardon Mill and Haydon into a new three-member ward (which would be just 2 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996 and 1 per cent in 2001) received substantial opposition. Both the District Council and the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association opposed the proposition, as did the parish councils of Bardon Mill, Haydon and Henshaw. The main argument put forward was that the two present wards 'look' in different directions, Bardon Mill to Haltwhistle and Haydon to Hexham.

93 The Commission is aware that the number of electors per councillor in the existing two-member Haydon ward would, under its scheme, vary by 9 per cent from the district average in 1996, forecast to improve to 6 per cent by 2001. In the light of the evidence on community identity, the acceptable level of electoral equality and the positive proposals for the parishes further to the west of Haydon (see below), the Commission has decided to make a final recommendation for a two-member ward of Haydon, consisting just of that parish.

94 The town of Haltwhistle, under the Commission's draft recommendations, merits between three and four councillors. The Commission, as explained in the draft recommendations report, concluded that the town should remain with three councillors, given the number of electors in the south-western part of Tynedale as a whole, and given the undesirability of warding the town (or granting four district councillors to an unwarded parish).

95 The Hexham Constituency Conservative Association agreed with this proposal, while the District Council made no specific reference to Haltwhistle ward in its submission. However, representations in favour of four district councillors for Haltwhistle were received from both Haltwhistle Town Council and the Haltwhistle and District Labour Party. The Town Council stated that it would be happy for Haltwhistle to retain its three councillors if Tynedale remained a 47-member authority, but believed it merited four if Tynedale grew to 52 members, especially given the likely length of time before the next electoral review of the area. This view was supported and indeed expanded upon by the District Labour Party.

96 The Commission has some sympathy with this but maintains its view that, at this present time, three members is marginally more appropriate than four for Haltwhistle. Although Haltwhistle's electorate may grow further beyond the next five years, the Commission is required to have regard to five-year forecasts (not a period of time beyond that). The Commission's recommendation is not put forward solely as part of a desire to keep three members maximum per ward, since it would be perfectly feasible to ward the town of Haltwhistle, and the Commission would have had no hesitation in recommending that if it had concluded the town merited four district councillors. However, at this

present time the Commission's final recommendation is that Haltwhistle ward, consisting just of that parish, should be represented by three councillors on the District Council.

97 The Commission's draft recommendation for a two-member South-west Tynedale ward, in which there would be 11 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996, rising to 14 per cent in 2001, received some opposition during Stage Three. The ward, which would effectively be a merger of the existing West Tynedale and Tipalt wards, was opposed because the existing areas "lie on opposite sides of the river Tyne with no common lines of communication" according to the District Council. The Hexham Constituency Conservative Association also opposed the proposal, preferring instead no change (i.e. the maintenance of the two present single-member wards), an option also favoured by Thirlwall Parish Council.

98 A scheme put to the Commission by the Haltwhistle and District Labour Party for this part of Tynedale appeared not only to improve electoral equality in this part of the district but also to reflect better local community identities and interests. Given the desire of respondents to preserve the present single-member West Tynedale ward, the Commission now proposes to achieve this by adding to it the parish of Featherstone, which appears to sit comfortably in such a ward and produces good electoral equality (1 per cent from the average in 1996, 2 per cent in 2001). This modified single-member West Tynedale ward, consisting of the parishes of Coanwood, Featherstone, Harlleyburn, Knaresdale with Kirkhaugh and Plenneller with Whitfield, is therefore recommended to the Secretary of State.

99 The transfer of the parish of Featherstone to the modified West Tynedale ward would reduce the number of electors in the present Tipalt ward to 670. Bardon Mill ward - as described above, now 'divorced' from Haydon Bridge - has 985. Together, these wards merit two district councillors, and, as described in detail by the Haltwhistle and District Labour Party submission, the parishes making up this combined area have much in common: "Apart from pure numbers, there are much more sensible community links achieved by joining these two wards than by joining Bardon Mill with Haydon or Tipalt with West Tynedale ... the two existing wards are linked

by the A69 trunk road to the east and west of Haltwhistle, the B6318 Military Road and Hadrian's Wall ... Hadrian ward might well be considered an appropriate name for the new ward."

100 The Commission has concluded that this proposal better reflects the statutory criteria for the western area of Tynedale and accordingly puts it forward as a final recommendation. The number of electors per councillor in the two-member ward covering the parishes of Bardon Mill, Henshaw, Greenhead, Melkridge and Thirlwall, which the Commission agrees should be known as Hadrian, would be 6 per cent from the district average, in both 1996 and 2001.

### **Chesters, Chollerton with Whittington, Warden and Newbrough and Wark**

101 This was an area of the district about which the Commission received few comments during Stage Three, and those that were received were generally in support of the draft recommendations. The proposal to retain a single-member ward for Chollerton with Whittington, which would consist of the two parishes of those names and have the average number of electors per councillor in 1996, forecast to be just 3 per cent from the average in 2001, was supported by the District Council, the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association and Whittington Parish Council. The Commission has therefore decided to confirm its draft recommendation as final.

102 Broad support was similarly received in respect of the Commission's recommended single-member Warden and Newbrough ward, consisting of those two parishes, in which the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent from the average, in both 1996 and 2001. Both the District Council and the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association concurred with the proposal, which is now also confirmed as final.

103 The Commission proposed the transfer of Simonburn parish from the existing single-member Chesters ward to the existing single-member Wark ward. It also proposed that the Chesters ward be renamed 'Humshaugh and Wall' to reflect its new composition (the two parishes of those names). The District Council stated that "there are no objections to the proposal to transfer the parish of Simonburn from Chesters to Wark ward and to change the name of Chesters ward to Humshaugh and Wall".

104 With similar support from the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association and from Birtley Parish Council (of Wark ward), the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations in respect of these two wards as final. The revised Wark ward, comprising the parishes of Birtley, Simonburn and Wark, would be 5 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996, and 2 per cent in 2001, while the new Humshaugh and Wall ward would be 7 per cent from the average in 1996, and 5 per cent in 2001.

### **Bellingham, Redesdale, Upper North Tyne and Wanney**

105 The Commission's draft recommendations in relation to these wards were for no change to the existing single-member Redesdale and Wanney wards, but for Bellingham and Upper North Tyne to be merged together to form a new two-member ward.

106 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission concluded that some electoral imbalance in Redesdale and Wanney wards appeared to be unavoidable given the geography of that part of Tynedale and the nature of the ward boundaries. The number of electors per councillor in Redesdale ward, for instance, would be 16 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996 (12 per cent in 2001) but the ward has parts which are over 500 metres above sea level and has only one proper road link to other parts of Tynedale. Wanney ward, which would be 18 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor (20 per cent in 2001), is bounded to the north and east by the Tynedale district boundary with Alnwick district and because of this there are very few alternative configurations of parishes which might be appropriate. It is for these reasons that the Commission considered the two wards on an 'exceptional' basis and therefore recommended no change to them, despite their relatively high electoral imbalance.

107 During Stage Three, the only representations received by the Commission in relation to these wards were two expressing general support for the proposals, one from the District Council and the other from the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association. The Commission has therefore decided to confirm as final its draft recommendations in respect of the Redesdale ward, which would consist of the parishes of Otterburn and Rochester, and Wanney ward, which would consist of the parishes of Bavington, Corsenside and Kirkwhelpington.

108 In its deliberations regarding the Bellingham and Upper North Tyne areas of Tynedale, the Commission had to consider a number of very exceptional factors. Firstly, the existing Upper North Tyne ward comprises an area of 173 square miles, one fifth of the total size of Tynedale, which, as indicated earlier, is the biggest district council by area in England. Secondly, this area, which is considerably larger than the districts of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck combined, contains only 634 electors scattered within its four parishes of Falstone, Greystead, Kielder and Tarsset, some 35 per cent below the present district average number of electors per councillor, and 28 per cent below the average for a single-member ward on the Commission's scheme. Thirdly, the Commission also had to consider the exceptional physical geography of the Upper North Tyne ward - not only is it very large but also consists almost entirely of upland hills and forests, with poor communication links both within the ward and to neighbouring areas.

109 Another factor for the Commission to bear in mind was the fact that Bellingham ward on its own would, under the proposed scheme, be relatively under-represented on the district council - it would have 11 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor in 1996, 15 per cent in 2001. Bellingham also appeared to the Commission to sit comfortably in a ward with Upper North Tyne, given that the main route from southern Tynedale to the Upper North Tyne area is via Bellingham and that Bellingham is the local service centre for that part of Tynedale.

110 Careful consideration was paid to these factors. The Commission acknowledged the particular nature of the area, but was also mindful of its statutory duty to seek electoral equality, so far as this is reasonably practicable, taking into account local circumstances. The Commission, on balance, concluded that it should put forward a proposal that the Upper North Tyne ward be merged with the neighbouring Bellingham ward to form a new two-member ward. The number of electors per councillor in the 'Bellingham and Kielder Forest' ward would be 8 per cent from the district average in 1996, projected to remain at that level by 2001. The Commission considered that, despite the geographic and other arguments for leaving the two wards apart, there were also strong arguments in terms of electoral equality for placing them together.

111 Seven submissions received during the consultation period specifically referred to the Commission's proposal for Bellingham and Kielder Forest ward. Tynedale District Council opposed

the proposal as "unworkable and unreasonable", Hexham Constituency Conservative Association stated that it would prefer the status quo if at all possible, while the Northumberland Association of Local Councils argued that "even though the ward would have two district councillors, there is no certainty that this would reduce the size of territory which each district councillor has to cover: either they would both have to cover the 50,000 hectare ward, or they would operate an unofficial sub-warding arrangement which is itself an argument for retaining the current wards".

112 The three parish councils from the present Upper North Tyne ward, those of Falstone, Kielder and Tarsset and Greystead, along with a local resident, all opposed the Commission's draft recommendation for the new ward. Each of these respondents argued that the new ward was unacceptably large, and Tarsset and Greystead Parish Council added that, in its view, "there is a diversity of interest between the town of Bellingham and the much more scattered population of the Upper North Tyne valley and that, in forming a new two-member ward, there would be no guarantee that both members would not be elected from Bellingham ... leaving the electors of Upper North Tyne unrepresented."

113 In the light of these representations, the Commission has reconsidered its draft recommendation for this ward very carefully. The Commission's judgement, as in other parts of Tynedale, has to be made in the light of both the need to secure electoral equality and the need to reflect community identities and interests, and to secure effective and convenient local government. In this particular case, the arguments are relatively polarised: either the Commission accepts a large degree of electoral equality, or it secures good electoral equality but apparently at the expense of the statutory criteria.

114 Given the statutory criteria, in particular the part of it relating to effective and convenient local government, and given the responses received during consultation, the Commission has concluded that it should modify its draft recommendation in respect of this ward, and recommend to the Secretary of State that there should be no change to the existing arrangements. This will result in an electoral imbalance of 28 per cent in Upper North Tyne ward (forecast to be 31 per cent in 2001) and of 11 per cent in Bellingham ward (15 per cent in 2001), but the Commission concludes that the existing arrangements provide an adequate basis for future electoral arrangements, given the specific and exceptional nature of the area involved.

## Electoral Cycle

<sup>115</sup> In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed that the present system of whole-council elections be retained. At Stage Three, the District Council reiterated its support for this proposal. No other representations were received on this issue, and the Commission has therefore decided to confirm its draft recommendation as final.

## Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

<sup>116</sup> At Stage One of the review, the parish councils of Ovingham, Simonburn and Slaley each proposed additional representation on their respective councils. The Commission therefore proposed as part of its draft recommendations that each parish council should have its representation increased by one, such that Ovingham, Simonburn and Slaley parish councils would respectively be represented by eight, six and six parish councillors.

<sup>117</sup> During the consultation period, both Ovingham and Slaley parish councils wrote to the Commission in support of the proposal affecting their own parish. Simonburn Parish Council did not respond. Tynedale District Council stated that it had “no objections” to the proposed changes to the number of parish councils in these three areas. Given this, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations regarding parish council electoral arrangements as final in Ovingham, Simonburn and Slaley.

<sup>118</sup> Since the publication of its draft recommendations, the Commission has received two other proposals for an increase in parish representation, from the town councils of Hexham and Prudhoe.

<sup>119</sup> Prudhoe Town Council requested an additional seat for the town of Hexham. The Commission has recommended that the town of Hexham should have seven councillors, as recommended in the draft recommendations.

Commission's final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, as based on 1996 electorate figures and projected electorates in the year 2001.

125 As Figure 4 shows, the Commission's recommendations would result in a reduction from 19 to ten in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average, with a further reduction to eight by 2001. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would fall from 975 to 881. The Commission concludes that its recommendations best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

### Final Recommendation

Tynedale should comprise 52 councillors serving 31 wards, as detailed in Figures 1 and 5, Map 2 and Appendix A. The whole Council should continue to be elected every four years.

126 As indicated above, changes in parish council electoral arrangements are also recommended, partly as a consequence of the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the District Council.

127 In the Hexham Town Council area, the Commission recommends that the parish wards be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards in the town. It also recommends changes to the number of town councillors being returned from each ward.

### Final Recommendation

Hexham Town Council should comprise 14 councillors representing four wards, with the wards of Hencotes, Leazes and Priestpopple each returning four councillors and the ward of Gilesgate returning two councillors. The ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards illustrated in Map A1 in Appendix A.

128 In the Prudhoe Town Council area, the Commission recommends that the parish wards be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards in the town. It also recommends a change to the number of town councillors being returned from the ward of Prudhoe Castle.

### Final Recommendation

Prudhoe Town Council should comprise 17 councillors representing five wards, with the ward of Prudhoe Castle returning three councillors. The other four wards in the town - Mickley, North, South and West - should continue to return the same number of town councillors as at present. The ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards illustrated in Map A2 in Appendix A.

129 The Commission also proposes changes to the number of parish councillors elected to the parish councils of Ovingham, Slaley and Simonburn.

### Final Recommendation

Ovingham Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, compared with seven at present. Slaley Parish Council should comprise six councillors, compared with five at present. Simonburn Parish Council should comprise six councillors, compared with five at present.

130 The Commission also proposes that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of town and parish councils in the district.

### Final Recommendation

For town and parish councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

*Figure 4:  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Arrangements*

|  | 1996 electorate      |                       | 2001 projected electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements      | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors  | 47                   | 52                    | 47                        | 52                    |
| Number of wards  | 32                   | 31                    | 32                        | 31                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                              | 975                  | 881                   | 1,005                     | 908                   |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 19                   | 10                    | 21                        | 8                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 9                    | 2                     | 10                        | 1                     |

Map 2:  
*The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tynedale*

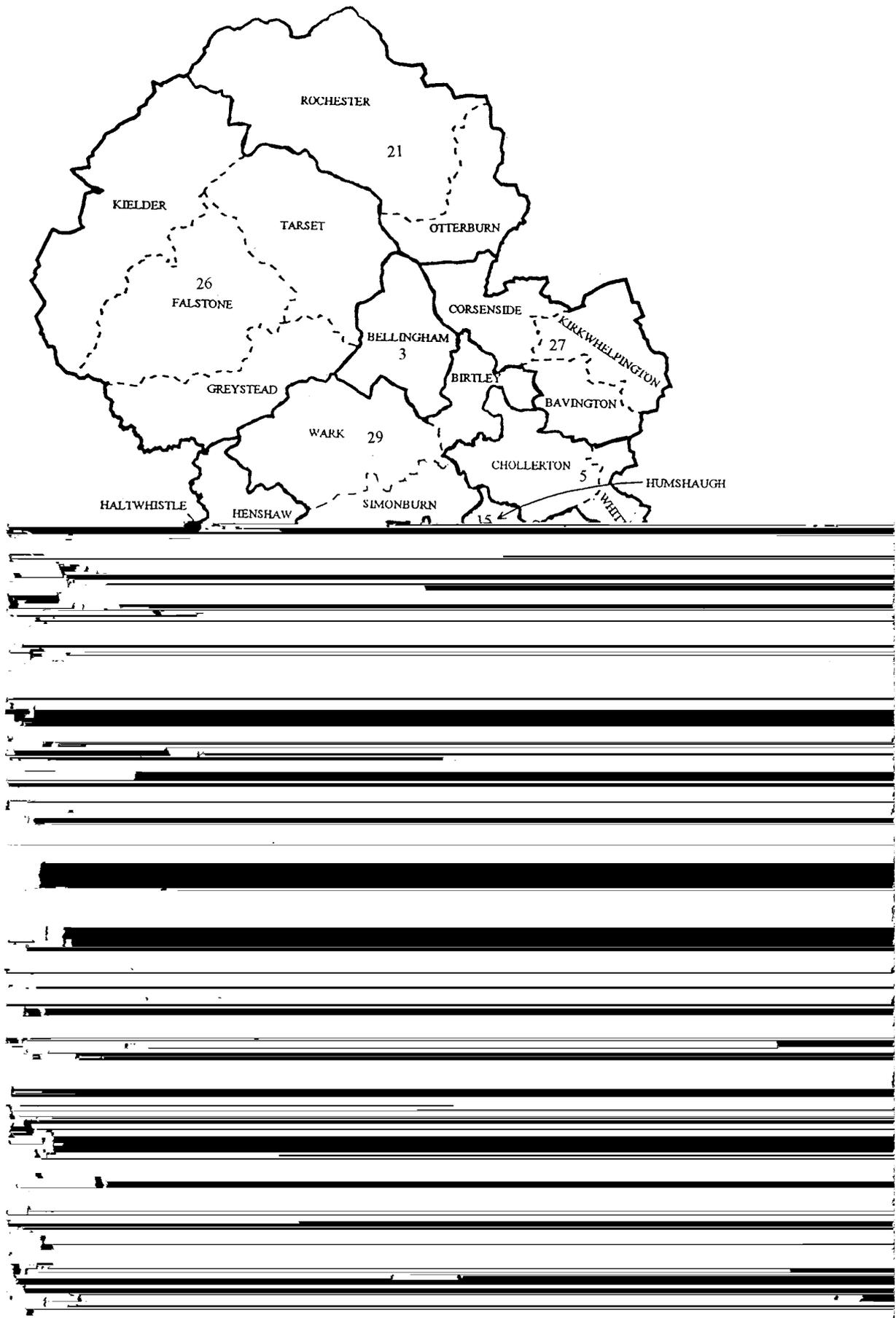


Figure 5:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tynedale

| Ward name                     | 1996                  |            |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                               | Number of councillors | Electorate | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 1 Acomb                       | 1                     | 968        | 968                               | 10                      | 997              | 997                               | 10                      |
| 2 Allendale                   | 2                     | 1,758      | 879                               | 0                       | 1,790            | 895                               | -1                      |
| 3 Bellingham                  | 1                     | 979        | 979                               | 11                      | 1,040            | 1,040                             | 15                      |
| 4 Broomhaugh & Riding         | 1                     | 794        | 794                               | -10                     | 800              | 800                               | -12                     |
| 5 Chollerton with Whittington | 1                     | 885        | 885                               | 0                       | 880              | 880                               | -3                      |
| 6 Corbridge                   | 3                     | 2,571      | 857                               | -3                      | 2,637            | 879                               | -3                      |
| 7 East Tynedale               | 1                     | 1,007      | 1,007                             | 14                      | 1,000            | 1,000                             | 10                      |
| 8 Hadrian                     | 2                     | 1,655      | 828                               | -6                      | 1,711            | 856                               | -6                      |
| 9 Haltwhistle                 | 3                     | 3,065      | 1,022                             | 16                      | 3,210            | 1,070                             | 18                      |
| 10 Haydon                     | 2                     | 1,598      | 799                               | -9                      | 1,710            | 855                               | -6                      |
| 11 Hexham Gilesgate           | 1                     | 874        | 874                               | -1                      | 876              | 876                               | -4                      |
| 12 Hexham Hencotes            | 3                     | 2,704      | 901                               | 2                       | 2,700            | 900                               | -1                      |
| 13 Hexham Leazes              | 3                     | 2,621      | 874                               | -1                      | 2,624            | 875                               | -4                      |
| 14 Hexham Priestpopple        | 3                     | 2,816      | 939                               | 7                       | 2,910            | 970                               | 7                       |
| 15 Humshaugh and Wall         | 1                     | 821        | 821                               | -7                      | 860              | 860                               | -5                      |
| 16 Ovingham                   | 1                     | 946        | 946                               | 7                       | 940              | 940                               | 3                       |
| 17 Prudhoe Castle             | 2                     | 1,122      | 561                               | -36                     | 1,727            | 864                               | -5                      |
| 18 Prudhoe North              | 2                     | 1,677      | 839                               | -5                      | 1,680            | 840                               | -8                      |
| 19 Prudhoe South              | 3                     | 2,623      | 874                               | -1                      | 2,653            | 884                               | -3                      |
| 20 Prudhoe West               | 2                     | 1,951      | 976                               | 11                      | 1,947            | 974                               | 7                       |
| 21 Redesdale                  | 1                     | 741        | 741                               | -16                     | 800              | 800                               | -12                     |
| 22 Sandhoe with Dilston       | 1                     | 833        | 833                               | -5                      | 856              | 856                               | -6                      |
| 23 Slaley and Hexhamshire     | 1                     | 1,035      | 1,035                             | 17                      | 1,040            | 1,040                             | 15                      |

Continued overleaf

Figure 5 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tynedale

| Ward name                   | Number of councillors | 1996          |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                             |                       | Electorate    | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 24 South Tynedale           | 1                     | 832           | 832                               | -6                      | 840              | 840                               | -8                      |
| 25 Stocksfield with Mickley | 3                     | 3,146         | 1,049                             | 19                      | 3,173            | 1,058                             | 16                      |
| 26 Upper North Tyne         | 1                     | 634           | 634                               | -28                     | 630              | 630                               | -31                     |
| 27 Wanney                   | 1                     | 726           | 726                               | -18                     | 730              | 730                               | -20                     |
| 28 Warden and Newbrough     | 1                     | 924           | 924                               | 5                       | 950              | 950                               | 5                       |
| 29 Wark                     | 1                     | 929           | 929                               | 5                       | 930              | 930                               | 2                       |
| 30 West Tynedale            | 1                     | 892           | 892                               | 1                       | 889              | 889                               | -2                      |
| 31 Wylam                    | 2                     | 1,702         | 851                               | -3                      | 1,700            | 850                               | -6                      |
| <b>Totals</b>               | <b>52</b>             | <b>45,829</b> | —                                 | —                       | <b>47,230</b>    | —                                 | —                       |
| <b>Averages</b>             | —                     | —             | <b>881</b>                        | —                       | —                | <b>908</b>                        | —                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on Tynedale District Council's submission.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The five-year electorate forecast figures provided by Tynedale District Council broke figures down only to present district ward level. Therefore where, in the Commission's proposed scheme, wards have been created from parts of more than one existing ward, the five-year electorate forecast has been calculated on a pro-rata basis.

## 6. NEXT STEPS

131 Having completed its review of electoral arrangements in Tynedale and submitted its final recommendations to the Secretary of State, the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role under the Local Government Act 1992.

132 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to the Commission's recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that the Commission's recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

133 All further correspondence concerning the Commission's recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State at the following address:

The Secretary of State for the Environment  
Local Government Review  
Department of the Environment  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



# APPENDIX A

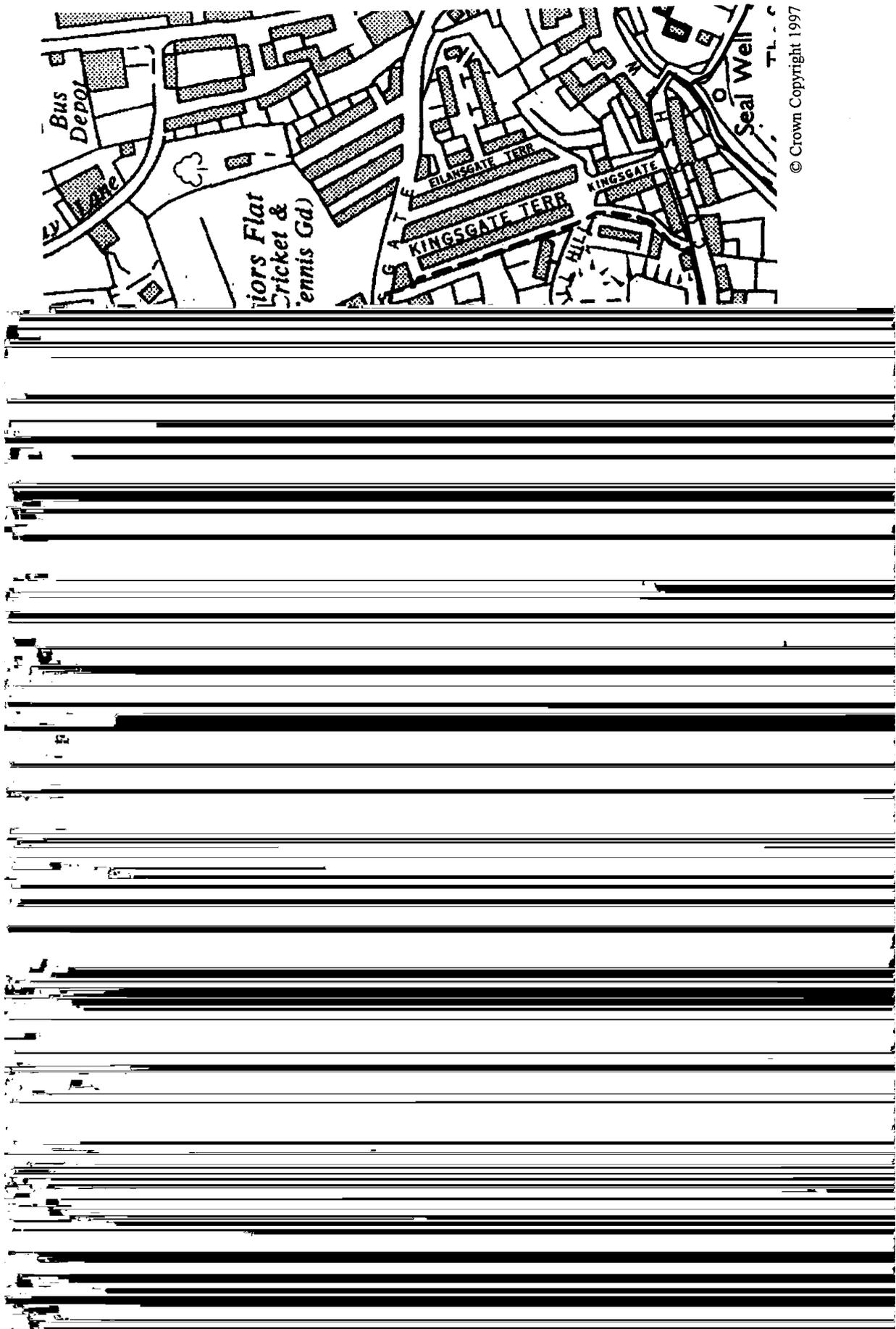
## Final Recommendations for Tynedale: Detailed Mapping

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

**Map A1** illustrates the proposed boundary change between the wards of Hexham Gilesgate and Hexham Leazes.

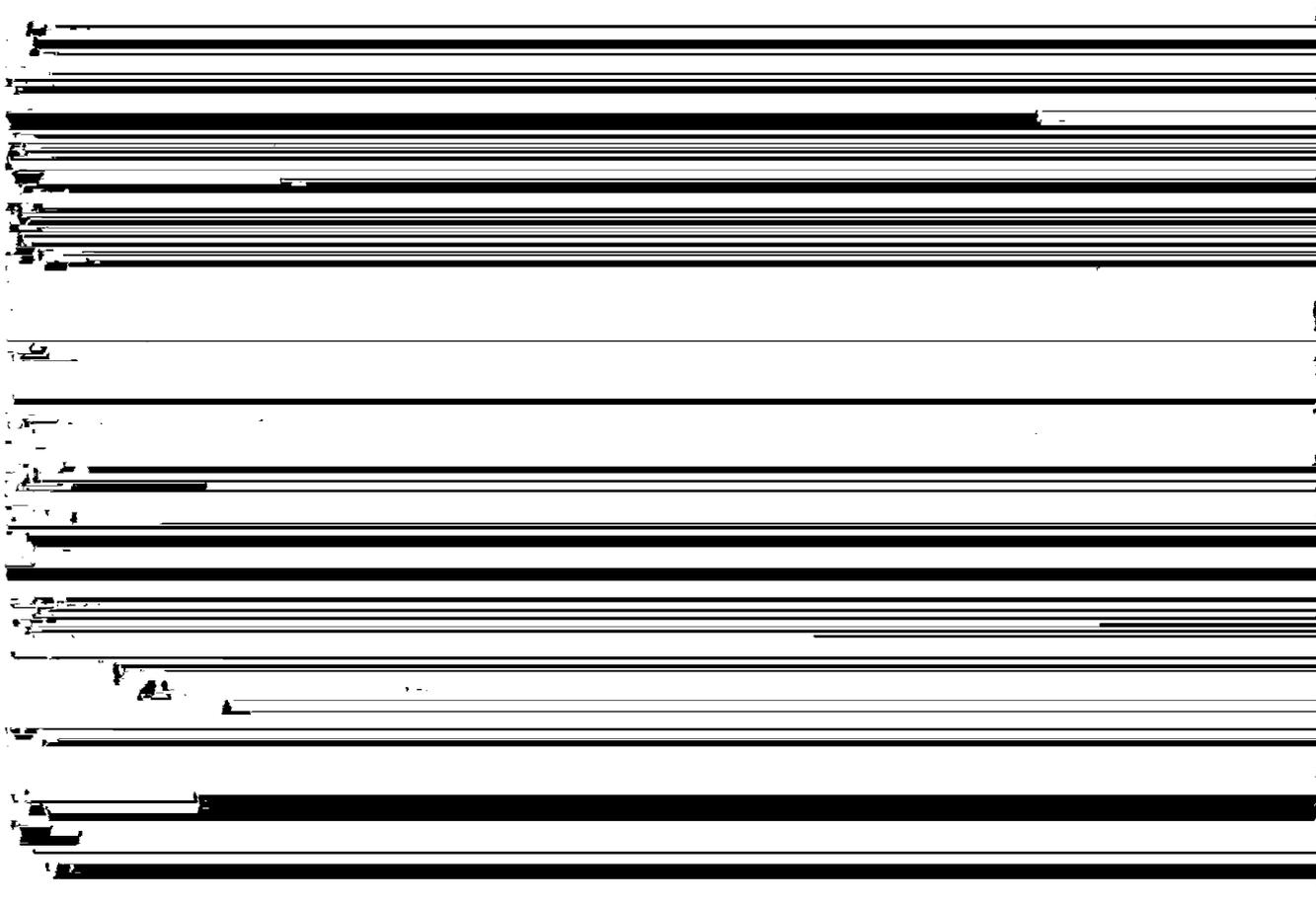
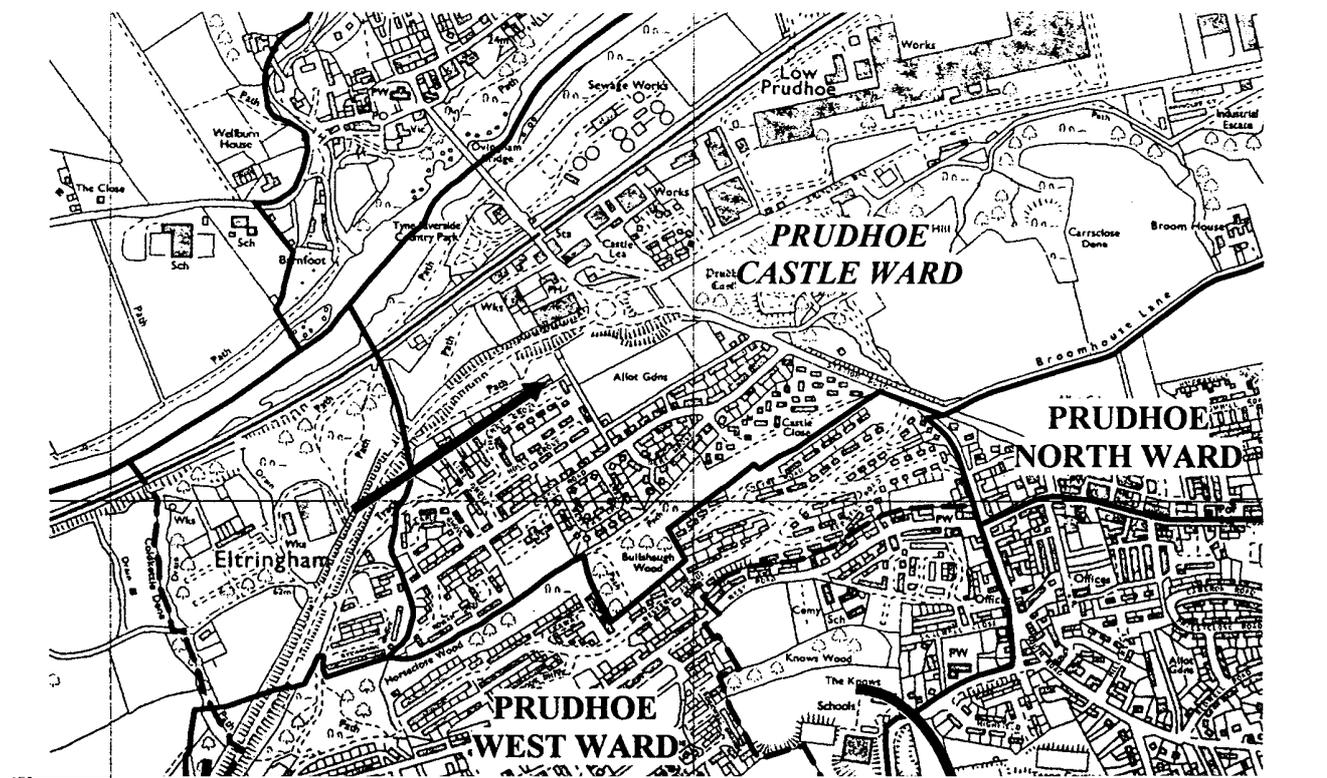
**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundary changes between the wards of Prudhoe South and Prudhoe West, and between the wards of Prudhoe Castle and Stocksfield with Mickley.

Map A1:  
Proposed boundary change between the wards of Hexham Gilesgate and Hexham Leazes



Map A2:

*Proposed boundary changes between the wards of Prudhoe South and Prudhoe West, and between the wards of Prudhoe Castle and Stocksfield with Mickley*





# APPENDIX B

## The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Tynedale

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

| Ward name                       | Constituent areas   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Acomb, Sandhoe and Dilston    | Acomb with Sandhoe ward (the parishes of Acomb and Sandhoe); Corbridge ward (part - the parish ward of Dilston)                     |
| 2 Allendale                     | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Allendale and West Allen)   |
| 3 Bardon Mill with Haydon       | Bardon Mill ward (the parishes of Bardon Mill, Henshaw and Melkridge); Haydon ward (the parish of Haydon)                           |
| 4 Bellingham and Kielder Forest | Bellingham ward (the parish of Bellingham); Upper North Tyne ward (the parishes of Falstone, Greystead, Kielder and Tarsset)        |
| 5 Chollerton with Whittington   | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Chollerton and Whittington)   |
| 6 Corbridge                     | Corbridge ward (part - the parish ward of Corbridge)  |
| 7 East Tynedale                 | East Tynedale ward (the parishes of Bywell, Horsley and Ovington); Broomhaugh and Riding ward (the parish of Broomhaugh and Riding) |
| 8 Gilesgate (Hexham)            | Gilesgate ward (part - the parish ward of Gilesgate as amended)   |
| 9 Haltwhistle                   | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Haltwhistle)  |
| 10 Hencotes (Hexham)            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of Hencotes)  |
| 11 Humshaugh and Wall           | Chesters ward (part - the parishes of Humshaugh and Wall)   |
| 12 Leazes (Hexham)              | Leazes ward; (the parish ward of Leazes); Gilesgate ward (part - parish ward)   |
| 13 Mickley with Stocksfield     | Broomley and Stocksfield ward (the parish of Broomley and Stocksfield); Mickley ward (the parish ward of Mickley)                   |
| 14 Ovingham                     | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Ovingham)   |
| 15 Priestpopple (Hexham)        | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of Priestpopple)  |
| 16 Prudhoe (Castle)             | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of Castle)  |
| 17 Prudhoe (North)              | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish ward of North)   |

*Continued overleaf*

Figure B1 (continued):

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

| <b>Ward name</b>        | <b>Constituent areas</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|
| 18 Prudhoe (South)      | Prudhoe South ward (the parish ward of South); Prudhoe West ward (part - parish ward)  |
| 19 Prudhoe (West)       | Prudhoe West ward (part - the parish ward of West as amended)  |
| 20 Redesdale            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Otterburn and Rochester)   |
| 21 South-east Tynedale  | South Tynedale ward (the parishes of Blanchland, Healey, Hedley, and Shotley Low Quarter); Slaley and Hexhamshire ward (the parishes of Hexhamshire Low Quarter, Hexhamshire and Slaley) |
| 22 South-west Tynedale  | West Tynedale ward (the parishes of Coanwood, Knaresdale with Kirkhaugh, Hartleyburn and Plenmeller with Whitfield); Tipalt ward (the parishes of Featherstone, Greenhead and Thirlwall) |
| 23 Wanney               | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bavington, Corsenside and Kirkwhelpington)   |
| 24 Warden and Newbrough | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Newbrough and Warden)  |
| 25 Wark                 | Wark ward (the parishes of Birtley and Wark); Chesters ward (part - the parish of Simonburn)   |
| 26 Wylam                | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Wylam)   |

Figure B2:  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Tynedale

| Ward name                       | 1996                  |            |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                 | Number of councillors | Electorate | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 1 Acomb, Sandhoe and Dilston    | 2                     | 1,801      | 901                               | 2                       | 1,853            | 927                               | 2                       |
| 2 Allendale                     | 2                     | 1,758      | 879                               | 0                       | 1,790            | 895                               | -1                      |
| 3 Bardon Mill with Haydon       | 3                     | 2,583      | 861                               | -2                      | 2,740            | 913                               | 1                       |
| 4 Bellingham and Kielder Forest | 2                     | 1,613      | 807                               | -8                      | 1,670            | 835                               | -8                      |
| 5 Chollerton with Whittington   | 1                     | 885        | 885                               | 0                       | 880              | 880                               | -3                      |
| 6 Corbridge                     | 3                     | 2,571      | 857                               | -3                      | 2,637            | 879                               | -3                      |
| 7 East Tynedale                 | 2                     | 1,801      | 901                               | 2                       | 1,800            | 900                               | -1                      |
| 8 Gilesgate (Hexham)            | 1                     | 874        | 874                               | -1                      | 876              | 876                               | -4                      |
| 9 Haltwhistle                   | 3                     | 3,065      | 1,022                             | 16                      | 3,210            | 1,070                             | 18                      |
| 10 Hencotes (Hexham)            | 3                     | 2,704      | 901                               | 2                       | 2,700            | 900                               | -1                      |
| 11 Humshaugh and Wall           | 1                     | 821        | 821                               | -7                      | 860              | 860                               | -5                      |
| 12 Leazes (Hexham)              | 3                     | 2,621      | 874                               | -1                      | 2,624            | 875                               | -4                      |
| 13 Mickley with Stocksfield     | 3                     | 3,163      | 1,054                             | 20                      | 3,190            | 1,063                             | 17                      |
| 14 Ovingham                     | 1                     | 946        | 946                               | 7                       | 940              | 940                               | 3                       |
| 15 Priestpopple (Hexham)        | 3                     | 2,816      | 939                               | 7                       | 2,910            | 970                               | 7                       |
| 16 Prudhoe (Castle)             | 2                     | 1,105      | 553                               | -37                     | 1,710            | 855                               | -6                      |
| 17 Prudhoe (North)              | 2                     | 1,677      | 839                               | -5                      | 1,680            | 840                               | -8                      |
| 18 Prudhoe (South)              | 3                     | 2,734      | 911                               | 3                       | 2,764            | 921                               | 1                       |
| 19 Prudhoe (West)               | 2                     | 1,840      | 920                               | 4                       | 1,836            | 918                               | 1                       |
| 20 Redesdale                    | 1                     | 741        | 741                               | -16                     | 800              | 800                               | -12                     |
| 21 South-east Tynedale          | 2                     | 1,867      | 934                               | 6                       | 1,880            | 940                               | 3                       |

*Continued overleaf*

Figure B2 (continued):  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Tynedale

| Ward name               | 1996                  |               |                                   |                         | 2001 (Projected) |                                   |                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Number of councillors | Electorate    | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate       | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
| 22 South-west Tynedale  | 2                     | 1,562         | 781                               | -11                     | 1,570            | 785                               | -14                     |
| 23 Wanney               | 1                     | 726           | 726                               | -18                     | 730              | 730                               | -20                     |
| 24 Warden and Newbrough | 1                     | 924           | 924                               | 5                       | 950              | 950                               | 5                       |
| 25 Wark                 | 1                     | 929           | 929                               | 5                       | 930              | 930                               | 2                       |
| 26 Wylam                | 2                     | 1,702         | 851                               | -3                      | 1,700            | 850                               | -6                      |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>52</b>             | <b>45,829</b> | —                                 | —                       | <b>47,230</b>    | —                                 | —                       |
| <b>Average</b>          | —                     | —             | <b>881</b>                        | —                       | —                | <b>908</b>                        | —                       |

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The five-year electorate forecast figures provided by Tynedale District Council broke figures down only to present district ward level. Therefore where, in the Commission's proposed scheme, wards have been created from parts of more than one existing ward, the five-year electorate forecast has been calculated on a pro-rata basis.