

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
NORTH KESTIVEN  
IN LINCOLNSHIRE

*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 North Kesteven in Lincolnshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

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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 North Kesteven 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 the consultation. It has, for the most part, 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 North Kesteven should be served by 40 councillors representing 30 wards, and that some changes should be made to existing 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 North Kesteven 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 North Kesteven because:

- **in 19 of the 30 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district;**
- **in seven of these wards, the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **this electoral inequality is not expected to improve by the year 2001.**

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

- **North Kesteven District Council should be served by 40 councillors, compared with 39 at present;**
- **there should continue to be 30 wards as at present, but on modified boundaries;**
- **the ward boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, while six 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 24 of the 30 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 from the average in 29 wards.**

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

- **they provide for changes to the ward boundaries of Sleaford Town Council, North Hykeham Town Council, Skellingthorpe Parish Council and Heckington Parish Council;**
- **they provide for changes to the number of parish and town councillors in Sleaford and North Hykeham.**

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 Ashby de la Launde	1	Ashby de la Launde ward (part - the parishes of Ashby de la Launde and Bloxholm, Digby, Rowston and Scopwick); Ruskington ward (part - Dorrington parish)	Map 2
2 Bassingham	1	Bassingham ward (part - the parishes of Aubourn, Haddington, South Hykeham and Bassingham); Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe ward (part - Thurlby parish)	Map 2
3 Billingham	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Billingham and Dogdyke)	Map 2
4 Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East	3	Waddington East ward (part - Waddington East parish ward); Bracebridge Heath ward (part - Bracebridge Heath parish)	Map 2
5 Branston and Mere	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Branston and Mere and Potter Hanworth)	Map 2
6 Cliff Villages	2	Wellingore ward (the parishes of Leadenham, Welbourn and Wellingore); Navenby ward (the parishes of Boothby Graffoe, Coleby and Navenby); Waddington East ward (part - Harmston parish)	Map 2
7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Brauncewell and Temple Bruer with Temple High Grange)	Map 2
8 Eagle and North Scarle	1	Eagle and North Scarle ward (part - the parishes of Eagle and Swinethorpe and North Scarle); Bassingham ward (part - Thorpe on the Hill parish); Skellingthorpe ward (part - Doddington and Whisby parish)	Map 2
9 Heckington	2	Heckington ward (Heckington parish); Helpringham ward (part - the parishes of Helpringham, Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale and Little Hale)	Maps 2 and A4
10 Kyme	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Asgarby and Howell, Anwick, Ewerby and Evedon, Kirkby la Thorpe, North Kyme and South Kyme)	Map 2
11 Leasingham and Roxholm	1	Leasingham and Roxholm ward (part - the parishes of Leasingham, Roxholm, North Rauceby and South Rauceby)	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>
12	Martin	1	Martin ward (the parishes of Martin, Timberland and Walcott); Ashby de la Launde ward (part - Blankney parish)	Map 2
13	Metheringham	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Metheringham, Dunston and Nocton)	Map 2
14	North Hykeham Forum (North Hykeham Town)	1	North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
15	North Hykeham Memorial (North Hykeham Town)	1	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part); Skellingthorpe ward (part - Station ward of Skellingthorpe parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A2
16	North Hykeham Mill (North Hykeham Town)	1	North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
17	North Hykeham Moor (North Hykeham Town)	1	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
18	North Hykeham Witham (North Hykeham Town)	1	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
19	Osournby	1	Osournby ward (the parishes of Aswarby and Swarby, Aunsby and Dembleby, Culverthorpe and Kelby, Osournby, Newton and Hacey, Walcot near Folkingham, Silk Willoughby, Threekingham and Screddington); Leasingham and Roxholm ward (part - Wilsford parish); Helpringham ward (part - Swaton parish)	Map 2
20	Ruskington	2	Ruskington ward (part - Ruskington parish)	Map 2
21	Skellingthorpe	2	Skellingthorpe ward (part - Village ward of Skellingthorpe parish as proposed)	Map 2
22	Sleaford Castle (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford South parish and district ward (part); Sleaford West parish and district ward (part)	Large map

*continued overleaf*

*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>
23	Sleaford Holdingham (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford North parish and district ward (part)	Large map
24	Sleaford Mareham (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford South parish and district ward (part)	Large map
25	Sleaford Navigation (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford North parish and district ward (part)	Large map
26	Sleaford Quarrington (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford South parish and district ward (part)	Large map
27	Sleaford Westholme (Sleaford Town)	1	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford North parish and district ward (part); Sleaford West parish and district ward (part)	Large map
28	Swinderby	1	Eagle and North Scarle ward (part - Swinderby parish); Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe ward (part - the parishes of Norton Disney, Carlton-le-Moorland, Stapleford, Beckingham and Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe)	Map 2
29	Waddington West	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Waddington West parish and district ward)	Map 2
30	Washingborough and Heighington	3	Heighington ward (Heighington parish); Washingborough ward (Washingborough parish); Bracebridge Heath ward (part - Canwick parish)	Map 2

*Note: The large map inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Sleaford.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North Kesteven in Lincolnshire.

2 The Commission has now reviewed all the districts in Lincolnshire as part of its programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England. This is the Commission's first review for North Kesteven. 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 June 1977 (Report No. 208). The electoral arrangements of Lincolnshire County Council were last reviewed in September 1980 (Report No. 396). 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). This sets out its approach to the reviews.

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

6 Stage One commenced on 19 March 1996. The Commission wrote to North Kesteven District Council inviting it to make proposals for its future electoral arrangements. Copies of that letter were sent to Lincolnshire County Council, the other borough and district councils in Lincolnshire, the Lincolnshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Lincolnshire 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 newspapers, 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 North Kesteven in Lincolnshire*. 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

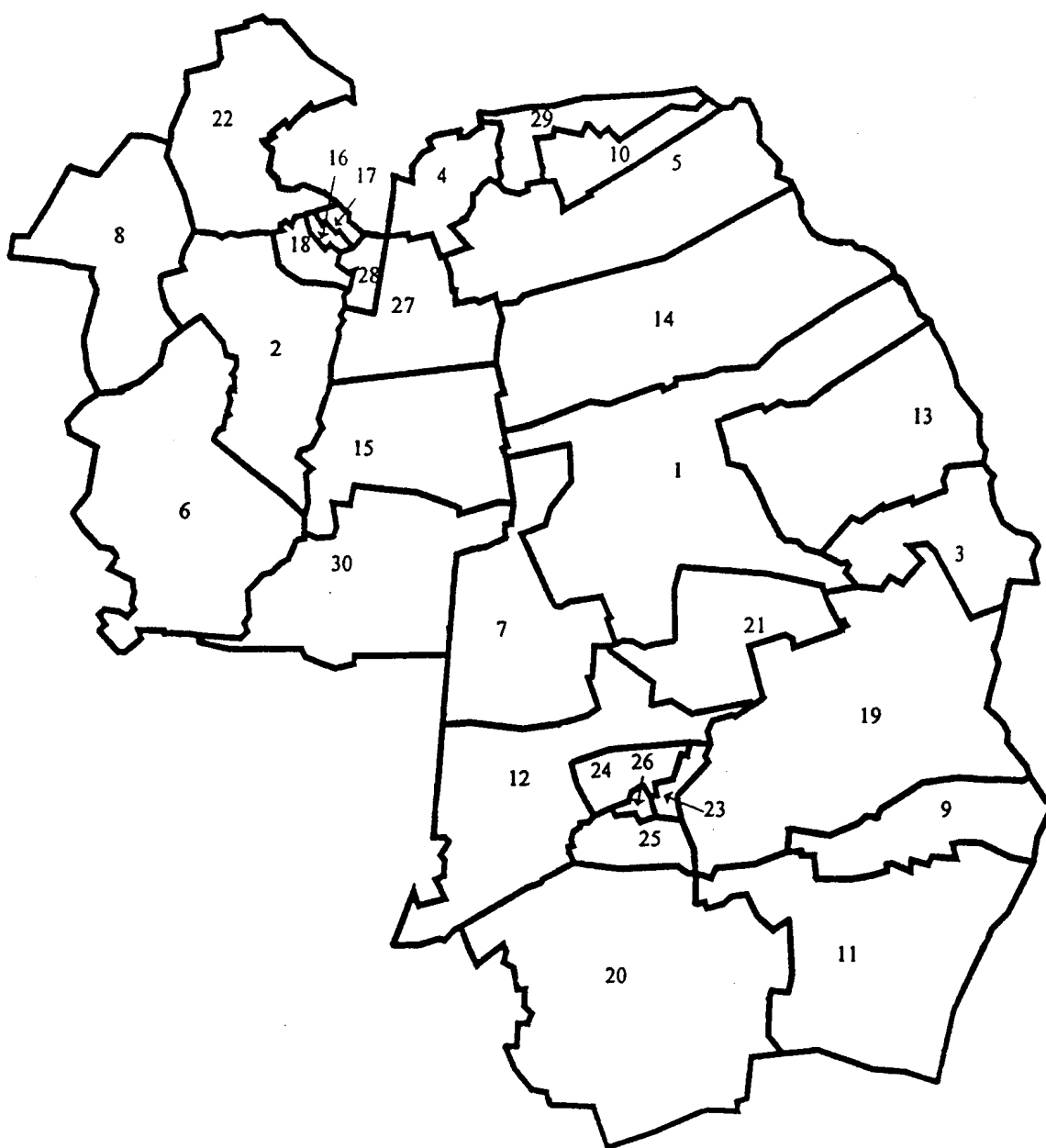


## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

<sup>10</sup> North Kesteven lies to the south of the City of Lincoln. It is largely rural in nature, has a population of 90,000 and covers some 92,300 hectares. The district is centred upon the administrative, shopping and market area of Sleaford town. The main employment activity in the district is agriculture, and there is comparatively little industry outside the two main urban areas, Sleaford and North Hykeham. These two areas combined comprise some 28 per cent of the total district electorate.

<sup>11</sup> The District Council has 39 councillors elected from 30 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Twenty one wards are represented by a single councillor and nine wards by two councillors. The whole Council

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in North Kesteven



Key To Wards

- |    |                                    |    |                       |    |                 |
|----|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1  | Ashby de la Launde                 | 11 | Helpringham           | 21 | Ruskington      |
| 2  | Bassingham                         | 12 | Leasingham            | 22 | Skellingthorpe  |
| 3  | Billinghay                         | 13 | Martin                | 23 | Sleaford East   |
| 4  | Bracebridge Heath                  | 14 | Metheringham          | 24 | Sleaford North  |
| 5  | Branston and Mere                  | 15 | Navenby               | 25 | Sleaford South  |
| 6  | Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe | 16 | North Hykeham Central | 26 | Sleaford West   |
| 7  | Cranwell and Byard's Leap          | 17 | North Hykeham North   | 27 | Waddington East |
| 8  | Eagle and North Scarle             | 18 | North Hykeham South   | 28 | Waddington West |
| 9  | Heckington                         | 19 | North Kyme            | 29 | Washingborough  |
| 10 | Heighington                        | 20 | Osbourneby            | 30 | Wellingore      |

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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 Ashby de la Launde	1	1,603	1,603	-6	1,711	1,711	-8
2 Bassingham	1	1,909	1,909	12	2,022	2,022	8
3 Billingham	1	1,648	1,648	-4	1,723	1,723	-8
4 Bracebridge Heath	2	2,654	1,327	-22	3,149	1,575	-16
5 Branston and Mere	2	3,508	1,754	3	3,801	1,901	2
6 Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe	1	1,445	1,445	-15	1,538	1,538	-18
7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap	1	1,612	1,612	-6	1,642	1,642	-12
8 Eagle and North Scarle	1	1,516	1,516	-11	1,607	1,607	-14
9 Heckington	1	2,005	2,005	17	2,282	2,282	22
10 Heighington	1	1,942	1,942	14	2,153	2,153	15
11 Helpringham	1	1,429	1,429	-16	1,512	1,512	-19
12 Leasingham and Roxholm	1	2,098	2,098	23	2,175	2,175	17
13 Martin	1	1,380	1,380	-19	1,575	1,575	-16
14 Metheringham	2	3,454	1,727	1	3,646	1,823	-2
15 Navenby	1	1,606	1,606	-6	1,689	1,689	-9
16 North Hykeham Central	2	2,806	1,403	-18	2,944	1,472	-21
17 North Hykeham North	2	3,017	1,509	-12	2,895	1,448	-22
18 North Hykeham South	1	3,037	3,037	78	3,684	3,684	98
19 North Kyme	1	1,685	1,685	-1	1,794	1,794	-4
20 Osbournby	1	1,171	1,171	-31	1,326	1,326	-29
21 Ruskington	2	3,786	1,893	11	4,073	2,037	9
22 Skellingthorpe	2	3,174	1,587	-7	3,879	1,940	4

*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 Sleaford East	1	1,739	1,739	2	1,857	1,857	0
24 Sleaford North	1	2,580	2,580	51	2,697	2,697	45
25 Sleaford South	1	3,389	3,389	98	4,335	4,335	132
26 Sleaford West	1	1,762	1,762	3	2,075	2,075	11
27 Waddington East	2	2,411	1,206	-29	2,430	1,215	-35
28 Waddington West	1	1,769	1,769	4	1,880	1,880	1
29 Washingborough	2	3,018	1,509	-12	3,051	1,526	-18
30 Wellingore	1	1,451	1,451	-15	1,578	1,578	-15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>66,604</b>	—	—	<b>72,723</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,708</b>	—	—	<b>1,865</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on North Kesteven 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, electors in Waddington East ward are relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while North Hykeham South ward is relatively under-represented by 78 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One, the Commission received a submission from North Kesteven District Council on electoral arrangements in the district. It also received 30 submissions from parish and town councils, local organisations and councillors. 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 North Kesteven in Lincolnshire*. The Commission proposed that North Kesteven should be served by 40 councillors, serving 29 wards. It also proposed that:

- (a) Sleaford town should have four district wards, represented by a single councillor - Castle, Mareham, Navigation and Quarrington - and one ward - North - represented by two councillors;
- (b) North Hykeham should in future have five district wards, each represented by a single councillor - Forum, Memorial, Mill, Moor and Witham;
- (c) the parishes of Heckington, Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale, Little Hale and Helpringham should form a new Heckington ward, returning two councillors. The parishes of Aswarby and Swarby, Aunsby and Dembleby, Culverthorpe and Kelby, Osbournby, Newton and Haceby, Walcot near Folkingham, Silk Willoughby, Wilsford, Threekingham, Swaton and Screddington should form a new Osbournby ward, returning one councillor;
- (d) the parishes of Canwick, Heighington and Washingborough should form a Washingborough and Heighington ward, returning three councillors, while Bracebridge Heath parish should combine with Waddington East parish ward to form a new Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East ward. There should also be a new Cliff Villages ward to be formed from the parishes of Leadenham, Welbourn, Wellingore, Boothby Graffoe, Coleby, Navenby and Harmston;
- (e) the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish should form part of an enlarged Eagle and North Scarle ward, to include the parishes of Eagle and Swinethorpe, North Scarle, Thorpe on the Hill and Doddington and Whisby, while the larger part of Skellingthorpe parish should become a district ward in its own right;

- (f) further changes were also recommended to the existing wards of Ashby de la Launde, Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe, Leasingham and Roxholm, Martin and Ruskington;
- (g) there should be no change to the existing arrangements for the wards of Billingham, Branston and Mere, Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Metheringham, North Kyme and Waddington West.

#### Draft Recommendation

North Kesteven District Council should comprise 40 councillors, serving 29 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

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

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



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the Commission's draft recommendations report, some 21 submissions were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission.

### **North Kesteven District Council**

18 The District Council welcomed the Commission's draft recommendations, which largely reflected its initial submission at Stage One. In particular, it reaffirmed its support for the recommended increase in council size from 39 to 40.

19 However, there were certain areas where it considered amendments could be made that, in its view, would better reflect community identities and create more clearly defined ward boundaries. The Council did not support the Commission's draft recommendation for the proposed two-member Sleaford North ward and it contended that a mixture of single and two-member wards in Sleaford town would be inconsistent and confusing to the electorate. It maintained that the northern part of Sleaford should be represented by two single-member wards and that its original proposal that used the Lincoln Road as a boundary should be reinstated. Similar reservations were also expressed concerning the warding of the Town Council, insofar as the creation of a mixture of one five-member ward and four three-member wards would likewise be confusing. The District Council noted that the Town Council had put forward a scheme that used an alternative ward boundary, and while it expressed a preference for its own warding arrangement, it commented that it was unlikely that the Council would have a strong view for either its proposed split or that of the Town Council.

20 The District Council proposed an alternative warding arrangement for the Skellingthorpe detached area. It confirmed its support for a two-member Skellingthorpe ward consisting of Skellingthorpe parish including the detached area. However, in view of possible future changes in legislation that would permit district councils to carry out parish boundary reviews, the Council offered an alternative arrangement for the area, which provided for the Skellingthorpe detached

area to become part of the Memorial ward of North Hykeham town. It noted that this proposed merger would result in electoral inequality in the modified Memorial ward with the number of electors per councillor 26 per cent above the district average. However, it argued that this electoral inequality could be resolved through a further re-warding of boundaries in North Hykeham.

21 The District Council welcomed the Commission's draft recommendations for Washingborough and Heighington and Heckington wards. While it recognised that concern had been expressed over these proposals, it contended that alternative warding arrangements would not better reflect the Commission's statutory criteria.

### **North Kesteven District Council Liberal Democrat Group**

22 The Liberal Democrat Group on North Kesteven District Council ("the Liberal Democrat Group") maintained that, where possible, single-member wards should be the norm throughout the district. It considered that this would increase the ability of candidates to canvass particular wards and facilitate councillors in gaining a rapport with their constituents. It opposed the Commission's draft recommendation to merge the existing Heckington and Helpringham wards, and argued that this merger would result in the much smaller communities of Helpringham, Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale and Little Hale becoming overwhelmed by the voting strength of the larger Heckington area, with which it argued there was little commonality. It proposed that Heckington village should become a single-member ward and that Heckington East parish ward should be combined with the parishes of Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale, Little Hale, Helpringham and Swaton in a revised single-member Heckington ward.

### **Lincolnshire County Council**

23 The County Council commented "on areas where the draft recommendations differ from the original District Council submission... based on the

premise that the County Council, in general terms and notwithstanding the issue of electoral equality, is minded to support the District Council where the Council considers that such arrangements can be justified on community identity/interest grounds”.

24 The County Council opposed the Commission’s draft recommendation to merge the detached part of Skellingthorpe parish with Eagle and Swinethorpe, North Scarle, Thorpe on the Hill and Doddington and Whisby parishes. It expressed its support for the District Council’s proposal for a two-member ward comprising Skellingthorpe parish including the detached area.

## **Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils**

25 The Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils commented on the reviews of the Lincolnshire districts as a whole. It argued that the views of parishes should be paramount in evaluating any proposal for changes to electoral arrangements, given that parishes formed the foundation of the electoral system. It expressed concern over the merger of large villages with one or more smaller villages within the same district council ward, as this would result in the concerns of the larger community inevitably dominating. It also suggested that equal regard should be given to road communications as well as to the number of electors per councillor in considering changes to ward boundaries.

## **Sleaford and North Hykeham Constituency Liberal Democrats**

26 The Sleaford and North Hykeham Liberal Democrats made a number of comments dealing with the Commission’s draft recommendations. It supported Sleaford Town Council’s proposal for six single-member district wards, with three members for each town ward. It maintained that a two-member ward for the northern part of the town would be too large, diverse and difficult to access from one end to the other. Accordingly, it proposed that the northern part of the town should be split into two new wards - Holdingham ward to the north of the Sleaford to Lincoln railway line and St Denys Avenue, and Westholme ward to the south of that area towards the centre of the town. It also proposed a number of minor boundary alterations to other wards in the town.

27 It opposed the Commission’s draft recommendation for a two-member Heckington ward, and argued that community interests would not be met by combining Heckington parish with the more rural parishes to the south. It maintained that, as a result of the area of Heckington East being distinctly different in nature from the area of Heckington village, the parish could be conveniently split between Heckington and Helpringham wards. It contended that the area of Heckington East was characterised by agriculture, fenland, isolated farms and hamlets whereas Heckington village had become rapidly suburbanised with commuter residences and rapid population growth. Accordingly, it proposed that Heckington village should comprise a single-member ward without Heckington East and that a single-member Helpringham ward should comprise the parishes of Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale, Little Hale, Helpringham and Swaton and Heckington East.

28 It opposed the draft recommendation for a new Washingborough and Heighington ward and contended that those two areas should remain as two separate wards. It considered that any merger between the two parishes would result in an “unwilling marriage”. It also proposed that Ashby de la Launde ward should be named Digby ward, and that Osbournby ward should be named either Silk Willoughby or Wilsford ward.

## **Lincoln Conservative Association**

29 The Lincoln Conservative Association opposed the Commission’s draft recommendation to transfer Canwick parish to the proposed Washingborough and Heighington ward. It argued that Bracebridge Heath and Canwick parishes, which were both within the Lincoln parliamentary constituency, should remain in the same district ward.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

30 Representations were received from nine parish and town councils during Stage Three. Sleaford Town Council supported the Commission’s draft recommendations for the proposed wards of Quarrington, Mareham, Castle and Navigation, although it suggested minor boundary modifications between Castle and Navigation wards. However, the Town Council opposed the Commission’s draft recommendation for a two-

member North ward. It maintained that the average number of electors there was already higher than the district average and that projected growth would exacerbate that problem. It further argued that the proposed ward would not properly reflect a single community of interest. Instead, it proposed that the northern part of Sleaford should be divided into two new wards: Westholme ward, comprising the older parts of the town, and Holdingham ward, comprising newer developments on the fringes. It contended that each ward should elect a single district councillor and three town councillors, which would secure consistency with the rest of Sleaford. This proposal would result in Sleaford being represented by six district councillors and 18 town councillors.

31 Helpringham, Little Hale and Great Hale parish councils opposed the Commission's draft recommendation to merge the existing Helpringham and Heckington wards. It was argued that the Helpringham ward was rural and contained a large sparsely populated area which would create problems for district councillors representing those areas. They suggested that if changes were necessary, the area should be divided into two new wards - a new ward comprising the area of Heckington parish to the north of the railway line and a new Heckington with Hales ward to include all the parishes in the existing Helpringham ward, together with Heckington parish to the south of the railway line. A similar representation, albeit using an alternative ward boundary, was submitted by Councillor Mrs Bourne on behalf of the parish councils and parish meetings in the existing Helpringham ward.

32 Washingborough and Heighington parish councils strongly opposed the Commission's draft recommendation to merge their two parishes, and contended that although joined together geographically, the two villages had separate identities and should continue to be separately represented on the District Council. Concern was expressed that the proposed merger would result in both villages losing local representation on the District Council and cause unnecessary expense. Both parish councils accepted that their proposals would provide a degree of electoral inequality but maintained that this would not prove to be problematic. Washingborough Parish Council supported the proposal for Canwick parish to be included with it for district warding, while Canwick Parish Council did not object to being aligned with Heighington and Washingborough, although it did not want to lose its name.

33 Coleby Parish Council opposed suggestions made by Waddington and Harmston parish councils that Coleby should join a new ward with the parishes of Bracebridge Heath and Harmston and Waddington East parish ward. It maintained that its natural allegiance was with villages to the south and supported the Commission's draft recommendation for Coleby to join Harmston, Boothby Graffoe, Navenby, Wellingore, Welbourn and Leadenham in a new Cliff Villages ward. Support for the proposed Cliff Villages ward was also expressed by Welbourn Parish Council.

## Other Representations

34 The Commission received a further five submissions at Stage Three in response to its draft recommendations. Councillor R J Kemmett contended that Heckington parish should remain as a ward in its own right. However, he acknowledged that it may be necessary to alter ward boundaries, and, in such an event, believed that the Commission's draft recommendation would be the most logical as it would allow the paired communities to "retain their own identities and work together with mutual respect". He expressed his opposition to any division of the existing parish as it would be "illogical and untidy". A further representation concerning the proposed Heckington ward was received from a local resident who objected to the merger of the Helpringham and Heckington wards.

35 Councillor Mrs Brighton expressed concern at the proposed merger of Washingborough and Heighington parishes, and maintained that those two areas did not share similar community identity. However, she expressed no objection to the merger of Canwick and Washingborough parishes, and argued that there was a natural affinity between those two communities.

36 Councillor Sutter supported the District Council's proposals for ward boundaries and number of councillors. In particular, he considered that the Council's suggested boundaries and ward names for Sleaford best reflected local communities within the town. He was concerned that Sleaford Town Council's alternative warding proposal for Sleaford would not reflect community identities as well as the District Council's proposal. A submission was also received from a resident in Sleaford who opposed the two-member ward proposal for Sleaford North and expressed his wish to see six separate single-member wards.



## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

37 As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for North Kesteven 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".

38 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 must have 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.

39 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 may be regarded as being "acceptable", but variations in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent were generally accepted only in very exceptional circumstances.

40 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.

41 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

42 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2001, projecting an increase in the electorate of 9 per cent over the five-year period from 66,604 to 72,723. 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.

43 Lincolnshire County Council expressed some reservations regarding the electorate projections submitted by North Kesteven District Council. The County Council's projections indicated that the adult population of the district would increase by only 5.5 per cent over the next five years, and it contended that the District Council had used six years of projected house building rather than five, had assumed no decline in the average number of electors per household and had not allowed for any of the new housing stock remaining vacant. However, the County Council considered that the electorate projections for Sleaford and North Hykeham, as a proportion of the total electorate growth for the district, were not unreasonable.

44 Further advice was received from the District Council on its electorate forecasts at Stage Three. This examined the dwelling completions that had occurred in the district since its initial electorate forecasts had been prepared. It advised that overall dwelling completions had not been significantly at variance with those originally submitted, and that, in particular, completions in Sleaford were broadly in line with its initial forecast and that completions in North Hykeham were marginally lower than those originally forecast.

45 The Commission accepts that projecting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council's projected electorates, it shares the caution expressed by the County Council over the growth rate. However, the Commission notes that the 1997 electoral register indicates an electorate growth of some 1.6 per cent over the last year in the district as a whole. In particular, the Commission notes that Navigation, Mareham and Quarrington wards in Sleaford were subject to significant electorate growth. Accordingly, on this basis and without reliable alternative information, the Commission is content to continue to use the District Council's projections.

## Council Size

46 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.

47 North Kesteven District Council is at present served by 39 councillors. The Council proposed an increase in council size to 40 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 40 members. During Stage Three, the Commission received support for this council size from the District Council and has not received any evidence to persuade it to move away from its view. It therefore confirms its draft recommendation that North Kesteven District Council should consist of 40 councillors.

## Electoral Arrangements

48 Having considered all representations received during both Stages One and Three of the review, the Commission has further considered its draft recommendations. The following areas are covered in turn:

- (a) Bassingham, Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe, Eagle and North Scarle and Skellingthorpe wards;
- (b) the three wards of North Hykeham;
- (c) Heckington, Helpringham and Osbournby wards;
- (d) Heighington and Washingborough wards;
- (e) Bracebridge Heath, Navenby, Waddington East, Waddington West and Wellingore wards;
- (f) Ashby de la Launde, Billingham, Branston and Mere, Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Leasingham and Roxholm, Martin, Metheringham, North Kyme and Ruskington wards;
- (g) the four wards of Sleaford.

### **Bassingham, Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe, Eagle and North Scarle and Skellingthorpe**

49 Bassingham, Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe and Eagle and North Scarle wards currently have electoral variances in excess of 10 per cent from the district average, while Skellingthorpe has an electoral variance of 7 per cent. Electoral inequality in these areas was not projected to improve significantly over the next five years. Therefore, at Stage One, in order to secure improved electoral representation, the District Council proposed a reconfiguration of the existing wards into four new wards. The number of electors per councillor in the revised Bassingham, Eagle and North Scarle and Swinderby wards would each be within 10 per cent of the district average number of electors per councillor, while the proposed Skellingthorpe ward would have 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, but was projected to equal the average by 2001.

50 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission endorsed the proposals for the existing Bassingham and Brant Broughton and



Stragglethorpe wards. However, the Commission had reservations over changes proposed to Skellingthorpe ward. Although the proposed Skellingthorpe ward would have been coterminous with Skellingthorpe parish, the Commission noted that, as a result of the expansion of Lincoln some years ago, Skellingthorpe parish does not form a contiguous whole, and the District Council's proposal would have resulted in a single ward comprising two detached areas. In the Commission's judgement, this proposal would have had significant drawbacks in terms of effective and convenient local government and would also have been questionable on community grounds. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish should be transferred to the neighbouring ward of Eagle and North Scarle, alongside the parishes of Eagle and Swinethorpe, North Scarle, Thorpe on the Hill and Doddington and Whisby and that the larger part of Skellingthorpe parish should become a district ward in its own right. While this would result in a higher electoral imbalances in both the modified Skellingthorpe and the Eagle and North Scarle wards, with electoral variances of 21 per cent below average and 19 per cent above average respectively, this electoral inequality was projected to improve over the next five years, to 8 per cent below average and 13 per cent above average respectively.

51 At Stage Three, the District Council and the County Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendation to include the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish in Eagle and North Scarle ward. They expressed a preference for Skellingthorpe to become a two-member ward based only on Skellingthorpe parish, including the detached part, as proposed by the District Council at Stage One. However, the District Council suggested a further possible alternative. It considered that "in view of likely changes in legislation to permit district councils to carry out parish boundary reviews, it may be appropriate to make provision to merge the Skellingthorpe detached area into North Hykeham". It noted that this would result in the number of electors per councillor in the North Hykeham Memorial ward being some 26 per cent above the district average, but argued that this high level of electoral inequality could be reduced through further boundary modifications in North Hykeham town.

52 Having considered the responses received at Stage Three, the Commission is content to confirm the major part of its draft recommendations and confirms its recommendations concerning the existing Bassingham and Brant Broughton and

Stragglethorpe wards. It notes that there have been no objections to its draft recommendations for the proposed Bassingham and Swinderby wards and that those wards would achieve a good level of electoral equality.

53 In the light of representations received concerning Skellingthorpe, the Commission has modified its draft recommendation. While the Commission noted at Stage One that the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish had a greater affinity with parts of North Hykeham than neighbouring parishes in the proposed Eagle and North Scarle ward, it considered that a merger between the detached part of Skellingthorpe and North Hykeham Memorial ward would have resulted in a high degree of electoral inequality, at 26 per cent from the district average. However, having given further consideration, the Commission is content that the level of electoral inequality could be reduced through recommending further boundary changes within North Hykeham. These are addressed in the section below dealing with North Hykeham. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that the larger part of Skellingthorpe parish should form a two-member ward, and that the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish should be merged with North Hykeham Memorial ward.

54 While the Commission recognises that this solution is not ideal, and would result in the proposed ward of Skellingthorpe having an electoral variance of 21 per cent below the district average, the Commission is restricted in its recommendations by its statutory remit. It is unable as part of the current review to revise parish and district boundaries, which may provide a more equitable solution. However, having regard to five-year electorates, the Commission notes that the level of electoral inequality in the proposed Skellingthorpe ward is forecast to improve to 8 per cent below the district average by 2001.

## **North Hykeham**

55 North Hykeham comprises the wards of North Hykeham Central, North Hykeham North and North Hykeham South. It is currently subject to a high degree of electoral inequality, with the number of electors per councillor in all three wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average, most significantly North Hykeham South ward with an electoral variance of 78 per cent. Taking account of projected electorates, the Commission notes that the level of electoral equality is projected to further deteriorate over the next five years in all three wards. In its draft

recommendations report, the Commission endorsed the District Council's proposal for the area. This involved maintaining the existing number of councillors for the town, and increasing the number of wards from three to five. It would result in only one of the proposed five wards having an electoral variance greater than 10 per cent, a level of electoral equality that was projected to remain over the next five years.

56 At Stage Three, the District Council accepted the Commission's draft recommendations. However, it also suggested that there may be merit in ward boundary changes in order to accommodate the merger of the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish with the proposed North Hykeham Memorial ward. The Commission has considered this possibility, and agrees that there is merit in modifying boundaries in North Hykeham to accommodate such a merger. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that part of the North Hykeham Town Council area to the north of Leyburn Road, Wetherby Crescent and Newark Road should be transferred from the proposed North Hykeham Memorial ward to the proposed North Hykeham Forum ward. While this would result in the North Hykeham Forum ward initially having some 18 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, the level of electoral equality is forecast to improve to 7 per cent above average by 2001.

57 In respect of North Hykeham Mill, North Hykeham Witham and North Hykeham Moor wards, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations for three single-member wards. The Commission's final recommendations are outlined in Maps A2 and A3 at Appendix A.

### **Heckington, Helpringham and Osbournby**

58 Currently, these wards are subject to high levels of electoral inequality, with the number of electors per councillor in Heckington ward some 17 per cent above the district average, while in Helpringham and Osbournby wards it is 16 per cent and 31 per cent below the district average respectively. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission endorsed the District Council's proposals that Heckington and Helpringham wards should be merged into a two-member ward and that Swaton parish should become part of the revised Osbournby ward. This would provide for improved electoral representation, resulting in the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Heckington ward being almost equal to that of the

district average, while Osbournby ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. While the Commission noted local opposition to such a proposal at Stage One, it considered that, given the rural nature of the landscape and the pattern of development in the area, it was unable to put forward an alternative warding arrangement that would better reflect its statutory criteria.

59 During Stage Three, the Commission's draft recommendations were opposed by the Liberal Democrat Group, the Sleaford and North Hykeham Liberal Democrats and Helpringham, Little Hale and Great Hale parish councils. Opposition was also expressed by Councillor Mrs Bourne (on behalf of the parish councils and parish meetings in the existing Helpringham ward) and a local resident. Similar arguments were put forward to those at Stage One in respect of concern over the loss of community identity in the smaller rural villages. It was suggested that the smaller communities within the existing Helpringham ward would lose their representation on the Council as a result of becoming dominated by the larger and more populated Heckington area. Two alternative warding arrangements were put forward which divided Heckington parish into two wards, and merged part of Heckington with the existing Helpringham ward. One proposed the transfer of the area of Heckington parish south of the railway line into Helpringham ward, while the other proposed the transfer of the area of Heckington East to Helpringham ward. A representation was also received from Councillor Kemmett, who expressed support for Heckington parish to remain as a ward in its own right. He considered that if change was necessary, the Commission's draft recommendations provided a better solution than proposals that sought to divide the existing Helpringham parish.

60 Having carefully considered its draft recommendations in the light of responses received, the Commission acknowledges that any proposals to change warding arrangements in the area are likely to prove contentious. Nevertheless, it remains of the view that the current level of electoral inequality in all three wards should be addressed. As indicated in its draft recommendations report, the Commission recognises the difficulty of reconciling the achievement of electoral equality with the need to reflect community identity and interests. The Commission has considered the alternative warding arrangements submitted at Stage Three, but has not been persuaded that any of those schemes would improve upon its draft

recommendations. While they have some merit in community terms, they would result in a high degree of electoral inequality and would be opposed by the District Council and Councillor Kemmett. Accordingly, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations that the parishes of Heckington, Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale, Little Hale and Helpringham should form a new Heckington ward, returning two councillors, and that Swaton parish should join a modified Osbournby ward.

## **Heighington and Washingborough**

61 Under current arrangements, Washingborough ward has 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while Heighington ward has 14 per cent more than the average. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed that the two existing wards should be merged with Canwick parish, currently in Bracebridge Heath ward, as proposed by the District Council. This proposed warding arrangement resulted in a far better level of electoral representation with the proposed Washingborough and Heighington ward having an electoral variance of 5 per cent from the district average, projected to improve to 1 per cent by the year 2001. Although local opposition was expressed to the proposed merger from both Washingborough and Heighington parish councils, the Commission considered that alternative warding arrangements - including the possibility of retaining Heighington parish as a ward in its own right and Canwick and Washingborough parishes combining to form a district ward - would not improve upon the District Council's scheme.

62 During Stage Three, Heighington and Washingborough parish councils, the Sleaford and North Hykeham Liberal Democrats, and Councillor Mrs Brighton, expressed opposition to the Commission's draft recommendations. Similar arguments to those made at Stage One were put forward in respect of the two villages having distinctive local identities which should be maintained. Concern continued to be expressed that the proposed merger would lead to a loss of community identity and disruptions to existing relationships. However, Washingborough Parish Council and Councillor Mrs Brighton supported the proposed merger of Canwick and Washingborough parishes, and contended that those two communities had a natural sense of affinity. Opposition to the Commission's draft recommendations was also received from the Lincoln Conservative Association, which argued

that Bracebridge Heath and Canwick were both part of the Lincoln Parliamentary Constituency and should therefore remain linked for district council purposes. The District Council confirmed its support for the merger while Canwick Parish Council did not object to the Commission's draft recommendation, although it expressed a wish to retain its name.

63 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, the Commission remains sympathetic to local opposition to the proposed merger. However, the Commission maintains that the level of electoral inequality should be addressed. While the Commission acknowledges that Heighington and Washingborough villages have distinct community identities, it has concluded that a merger at district ward level would not necessarily adversely affect those villages' separate identities. Under the Commission's draft recommendations, both communities would retain separate parish council status and would therefore be able to maintain their own identities and work together. Further, this merger would have the benefit of linking Canwick with Washingborough, as supported by Councillor Mrs Brighton and Washingborough and Canwick parish councils. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations as final. In its judgement, this proposal would appear to strike the best balance between securing equality of representation and the need to reflect community identities in the area.

## **Bracebridge Heath, Navenby, Waddington East, Waddington West and Wellingore**

64 The wards of Bracebridge Heath, Waddington East and Wellingore are currently significantly over-represented, with 22 per cent, 29 per cent and 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively. At Stage One, the Commission endorsed the warding arrangements proposed by the District Council that Bracebridge Heath parish and Waddington East parish ward should form a new ward, and that Canwick become part of a new Washingborough and Heighington ward. The Commission proposed a new Cliff Villages ward comprising the parishes of Harmston, Coleby, Boothby Graffoe, Navenby, Wellingore, Welbourn and Leadenham. This proposal would provide a better standard of representation, with the proposed Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East ward having 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district

average, while the Cliff Villages ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

65 During Stage Three, the District Council and Coleby Parish Council expressed its support for the Commission's draft recommendations while Canwick Parish Council did not object to the suggested change. A representation was also received from the Lincoln Conservative Association which, as previously indicated, argued that Bracebridge Heath and Canwick were both part of the Lincoln Parliamentary Constituency and should therefore remain linked for district council purposes.

66 The Commission has considered the responses received at Stage Three, but has not been persuaded that an alternative warding arrangement to its draft recommendations would better balance the need to secure electoral equality with the need to reflect community identities. While the Commission understands the concerns raised in respect of retaining areas that are contained in a parliamentary constituency within a single electoral ward, this does not form part of the statutory criteria that governs its work. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations.

### **Ashby de la Launde, Billingham, Branston and Mere, Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Leasingham and Roxholm, Martin, Metheringham, North Kyme and Ruskington**

67 Of the nine eastern wards, only the wards of Leasingham and Roxholm, Martin and Ruskington have electoral variances in excess of 10 per cent, at 23 per cent, 19 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. In order to achieve improved electoral representation, the Commission proposed a number of changes to existing wards, as put forward by the District Council at Stage One. These would involve a significant reconfiguration of the parishes comprising the wards of Ashby de la Launde, Leasingham and Roxholm, Martin and Ruskington, with no changes proposed for Billingham, Branston and Mere, Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Metheringham and North Kyme wards, except for a change of name for North Kyme ward to Kyme ward. These warding arrangements would provide a much improved standard of electoral equality, resulting in all of the proposed wards containing electoral variances within 10 per cent, both on current and projected electorates.

68 During Stage Three, the Commission received no further comments on its draft recommendations. Accordingly, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations as final.

### **Sleaford**

69 Sleaford currently comprises the wards of Sleaford East, Sleaford North, Sleaford South and Sleaford West. While the current Sleaford East and Sleaford West wards provide a good level of electoral equality, significant development in Sleaford North and Sleaford South wards has resulted in those wards having significantly more electors per councillor than the district average, at 51 per cent and 98 per cent above average respectively. On the basis of projected electorates for 2001, Sleaford North and Sleaford South wards are projected to vary by 45 per cent and 132 per cent from the district average respectively.

70 At Stage One, in order to resolve this level of electoral imbalance, the District Council proposed a radical re-warding of the town by increasing the number of single-member wards from four to six. A similar scheme was submitted by Sleaford Town Council, albeit on alternative ward boundaries, particularly in the north of the town. The Commission noted that the District Council's scheme would provide a much improved standard of electoral representation for the town, and result in only two of the proposed wards having an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent. However, while the Commission endorsed the large part of the District Council's electoral scheme for Sleaford town, subject to a number of minor boundary modifications, it considered that community identities would be better served by recommending five district wards rather than six, with the northern part of the town forming a new two-member ward.

71 During Stage Three, the majority of the Commission's draft recommendations drew support from the District Council, the Town Council, Councillor Switter and the Sleaford and North Hykeham Liberal Democrats. However, opposition was expressed to the proposal for a two-member Sleaford North ward on the grounds that a mixture of single- and two-member wards in Sleaford would be inconsistent and confusing to the electorate. It was also argued that the average number of electors in the proposed Sleaford North ward would be higher than in other Sleaford wards and that future development would exacerbate the problem.

72 While the Commission acknowledges the case for Sleaford town to be represented by six single-member wards, it notes that there are differing views on the most appropriate ward boundaries in the north of the town. In particular, while the District Council scheme proposed Lincoln Road as the ward boundary between its proposed Drove and Galley Hill wards, the Town Council's proposed wards straddled Lincoln Road. The Commission has concluded that, on balance, the Town Council's warding arrangements for the northern part of Sleaford would better reflect community identities and should form its final recommendations. Under this scheme, the more traditional development towards the centre of the town would be retained within the proposed Westholme ward, while the newer development on the outskirts of the town would be located in the proposed Holdingham ward. However, in order to provide a better level of electoral representation and clearer boundaries for the proposed Westholme ward, the Commission proposes that the area around West Banks should be transferred to the proposed Castle ward and that the area to the north of Eastgate and west of Ashfield should form part of Westholme ward. This would provide Westholme ward with 13 per cent more electors per councillor than average and Holdingham ward with 4 per cent more than average (7 per cent and 9 per cent more than the district average by the year 2001).

73 The Commission has considered the other proposed changes to ward boundaries in Sleaford, but has not been persuaded that they

would better balance the need to secure electoral equality with the need to reflect community identities. Accordingly, the Commission confirms its draft recommendations for the proposed Navigation, Mareham and Quarrington wards. The Commission's final recommendations are outlined in the map inserted in the back of the report.

## Electoral Cycle

74 In its draft recommendations report, the Commission proposed that the present system of whole-council elections should be retained. At Stage Three, no representations were received in respect of the electoral cycle. The Commission has therefore decided to confirm its draft recommendation as final.

## Conclusions

75 Having considered all the evidence and representations it has received on its draft recommendations, the Commission has concluded that there should be an increase in council size from 39 to 40; that there should continue to be 30 wards as at present; that elections should remain on a whole-council basis; and that the boundaries of 24 of the existing 30 wards should be modified. Figure 4 shows the impact of the Commission's final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, as based on 1996 electorate figures, and with projected electorates in the year 2001.

*Figure 4:  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Arrangements*

	1996 electorate		2001 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	39	40	39	40
Number of wards	30	30	30	30
Average number of electors per councillor	1,708	1,665	1,865	1,818
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	19	6	19	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	2	8	0

76 As Figure 4 shows, the Commission's recommendations would result in a significant improvement in the standard of electoral equality when compared to the existing electoral arrangements, with a reduction in the number of wards which vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 19 wards to six. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would fall slightly from 1,708 to 1,665. Having regard to the Council's projected electorates, only one ward would have an electoral variance greater than 10 per cent from the district average by 2001. Appendix A shows the proposed ward boundaries in North Hykeham and Heckington, while the map at the back of the report illustrates the proposed ward boundaries for Sleaford.

### Final Recommendation

North Kesteven District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 30 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 5, Map 2, Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report. The whole Council should continue to be elected every four years.

77 As indicated earlier, the Commission recommends a number of changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

78 In the Commission's draft recommendations report, it recommended that Skellingthorpe parish should comprise two wards - one that contained Skellingthorpe village and one that covered the detached part of Skellingthorpe parish. The Commission has considered representations received concerning the Skellingthorpe area and is content to confirm its draft recommendations as final. However, having given further consideration to ward names, the Commission proposes that the ward containing Skellingthorpe village should be named Village parish ward and the ward covering the detached part of Skellingthorpe parish should be named Station parish ward.

### Final Recommendation

Skellingthorpe Parish Council should continue to comprise 13 parish councillors. The warding arrangements should be modified to provide two parish wards, Village parish ward, returning 12 parish councillors and Station parish ward, returning one parish councillor.

79 In the Commission's draft recommendations report, it recommended that Sleaford Town Council should be covered by five town wards, which would be coterminous with the boundaries of the five proposed district wards. However, in the light of its reconsideration of district warding in Sleaford, the Commission now recommends that Sleaford should have six town wards, which should be coterminous with the proposed six district wards. These are named and illustrated in the map at the back of the report.

### Final Recommendation

Sleaford Town Council should comprise 18 town councillors. The warding arrangements should be modified to provide for six town wards, which should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed six District Council wards, as illustrated in the map at the back of the report. All wards should return three town councillors.

80 In the Commission's draft recommendations report, it proposed that North Hykeham Town Council should comprise 20 town councillors, rather than 19 as at present. It also recommended that the warding arrangements should be further altered to provide five town wards, which would be coterminous with the boundaries of the five proposed district wards. However, in the light of its reconsideration of district warding in North Hykeham, the Commission recommends that its draft recommendations for town warding in North Hykeham should be modified to remain coterminous with the modified District Council ward boundaries as illustrated in Maps A2 and A3 at Appendix A. All wards should return four town councillors.

### Final Recommendation

North Hykeham Town Council should comprise 20 town councillors. The warding arrangements should be modified to provide for five town wards, which should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed five District Council wards, with the exception of North Hykeham Memorial ward which should also include part of Skellingthorpe parish. Details of the proposed wards are illustrated in Maps A2 and A3 at Appendix A. All wards should return four town councillors.

81 During Stage One, the Commission recommended that Heckington Parish Council should be divided into two wards, Heckington East parish ward and Heckington West parish ward. While no objections were received at Stage Three to the proposed warding of Heckington parish, the Commission noted that an alternative split was put forward. Nevertheless, the Commission confirms its draft recommendation for Heckington parish to be divided into East and West Heckington.

### Final Recommendation

Heckington Parish Council should continue to comprise 11 parish councillors. The warding arrangements should be modified to provide two parish wards, East Heckington, to return one parish councillor and West Heckington to return ten parish councillors. Details of the proposed ward boundaries are illustrated in Map A4 at Appendix A.

82 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.

Map 2:  
*The Commission's Final Recommendations for North Kesteven*

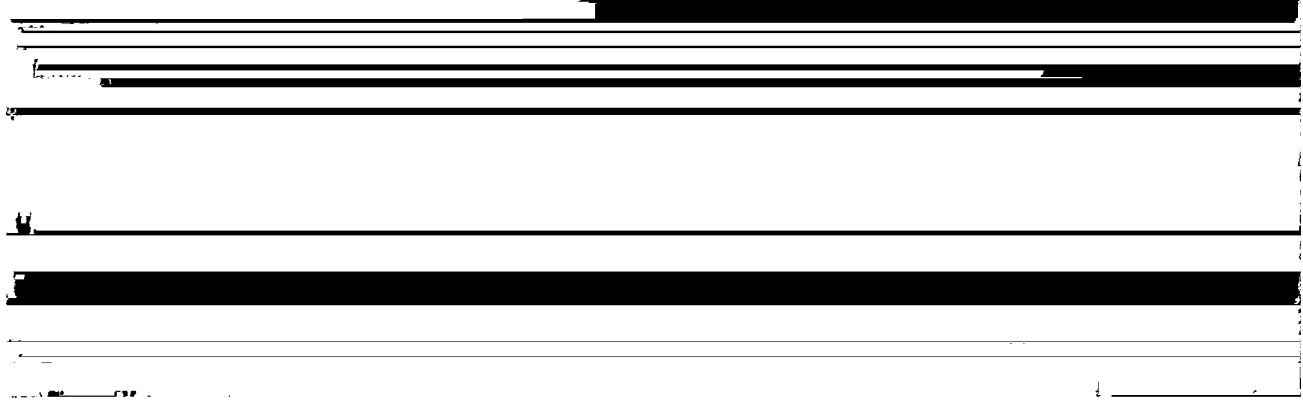
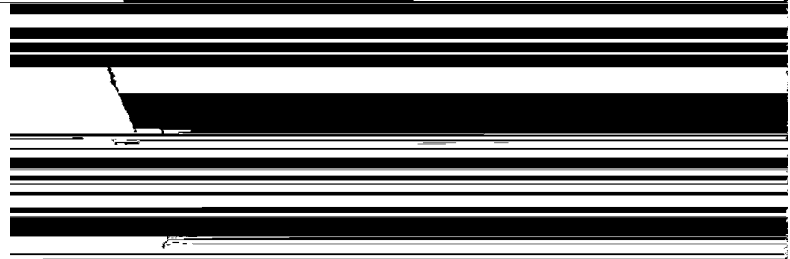
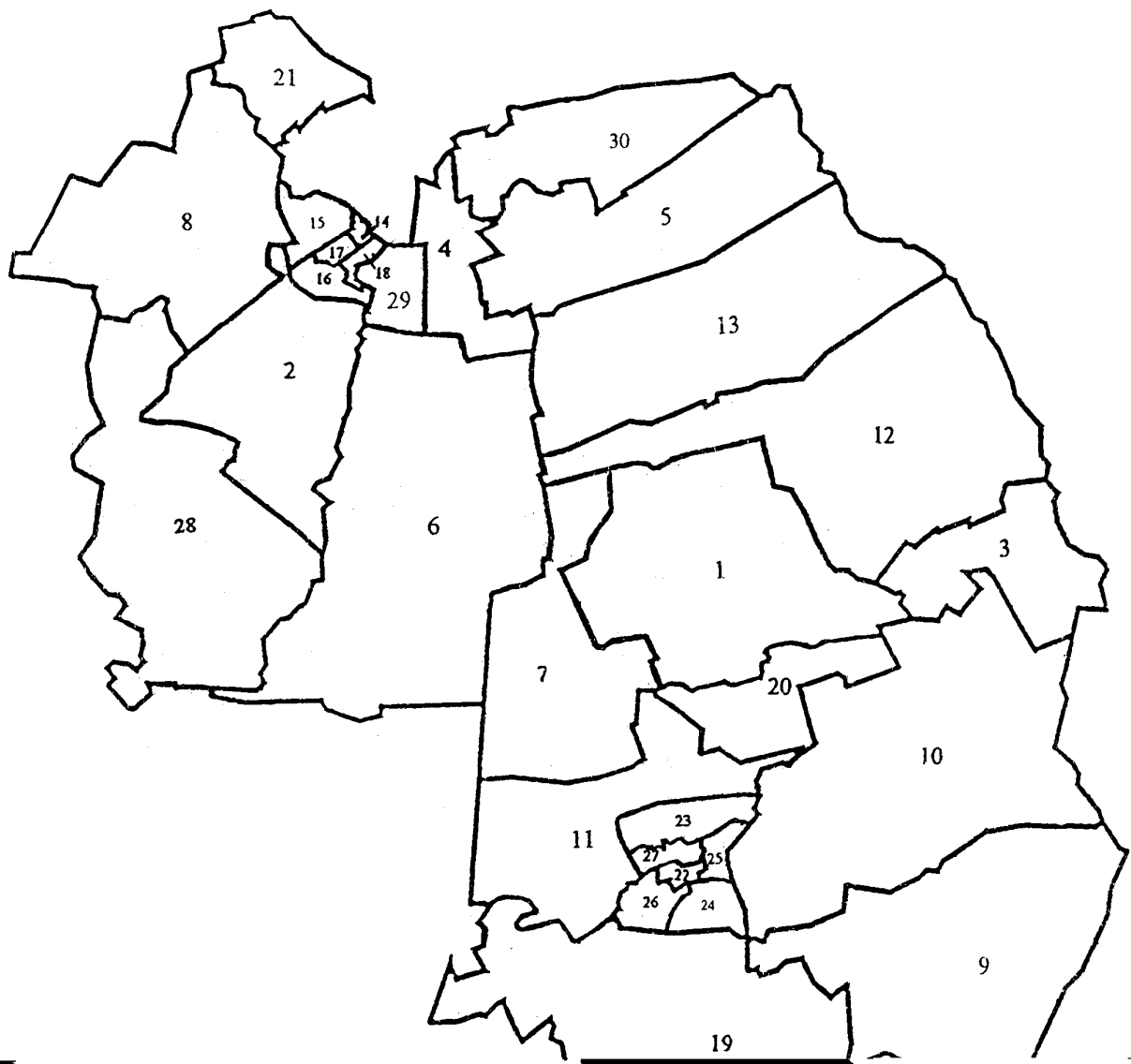




Figure 5:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for North Kesteven

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 Ashby de la Launde	1	1,682	1,682	1	1,808	1,808	-1
2 Basingham	1	1,601	1,601	-4	1,683	1,683	-7
3 Billingham	1	1,648	1,648	-1	1,723	1,723	-5
4 Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East	3	4,542	1,514	-9	5,045	1,682	-8
5 Branston and Mere	2	3,508	1,754	5	3,801	1,901	5
6 Cliff Villages	2	3,274	1,637	-2	3,484	1,742	-4
7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap	1	1,612	1,612	-3	1,642	1,642	-10
8 Eagle and North Scarle	1	1,694	1,694	2	1,801	1,801	-1
9 Heckington	2	3,293	1,647	-1	3,649	1,825	0
10 Kyme	1	1,685	1,685	1	1,794	1,794	-1
11 Leasingham and Roxholm	1	1,791	1,791	8	1,851	1,851	2
12 Martin	1	1,570	1,570	-6	1,771	1,771	-3
13 Metheringham	2	3,454	1,727	4	3,646	1,823	0
14 North Hykeham Forum	1	1,963	1,963	18	1,952	1,952	7
15 North Hykeham Memorial	1	1,820	1,820	9	2,041	2,041	12
16 North Hykeham Mill	1	1,677	1,677	1	1,998	1,998	10
17 North Hykeham Moor	1	1,831	1,831	10	1,928	1,928	6
18 North Hykeham Witham	1	1,862	1,862	12	1,863	1,863	2
19 Osbournby	1	1,619	1,619	-3	1,795	1,795	-1
20 Ruskington	2	3,517	1,759	6	3,780	1,890	4
21 Skellingthorpe	2	2,631	1,316	-21	3,332	1,666	-8

*continued overleaf*

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

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 %
22 Sleaford Castle	1	1,688	1,688	1	1,948	1,948	7
23 Sleaford Holdingham	1	1,737	1,737	4	1,986	1,986	9
24 Sleaford Mareham	1	1,376	1,376	-17	1,650	1,650	-9
25 Sleaford Navigation	1	1,499	1,499	-10	1,684	1,684	-7
26 Sleaford Quarrington	1	1,288	1,288	-23	1,742	1,742	-4
27 Sleaford Westholme	1	1,882	1,882	13	1,954	1,954	7
28 Swinderby	1	1,825	1,825	10	1,971	1,971	8
29 Waddington West	1	1,769	1,769	6	1,880	1,880	3
30 Washingborough and Heighington	3	5,266	1,755	5	5,521	1,840	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>66,604</b>	—	—	<b>72,723</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,665</b>	—	—	<b>1,818</b>	—

## 6. NEXT STEPS

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

84 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.

85 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 North Kesteven: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Sleaford and North Hykeham wards and Heckington parish. The proposed wards for the district as a whole are illustrated in Map 2 in Chapter 5.

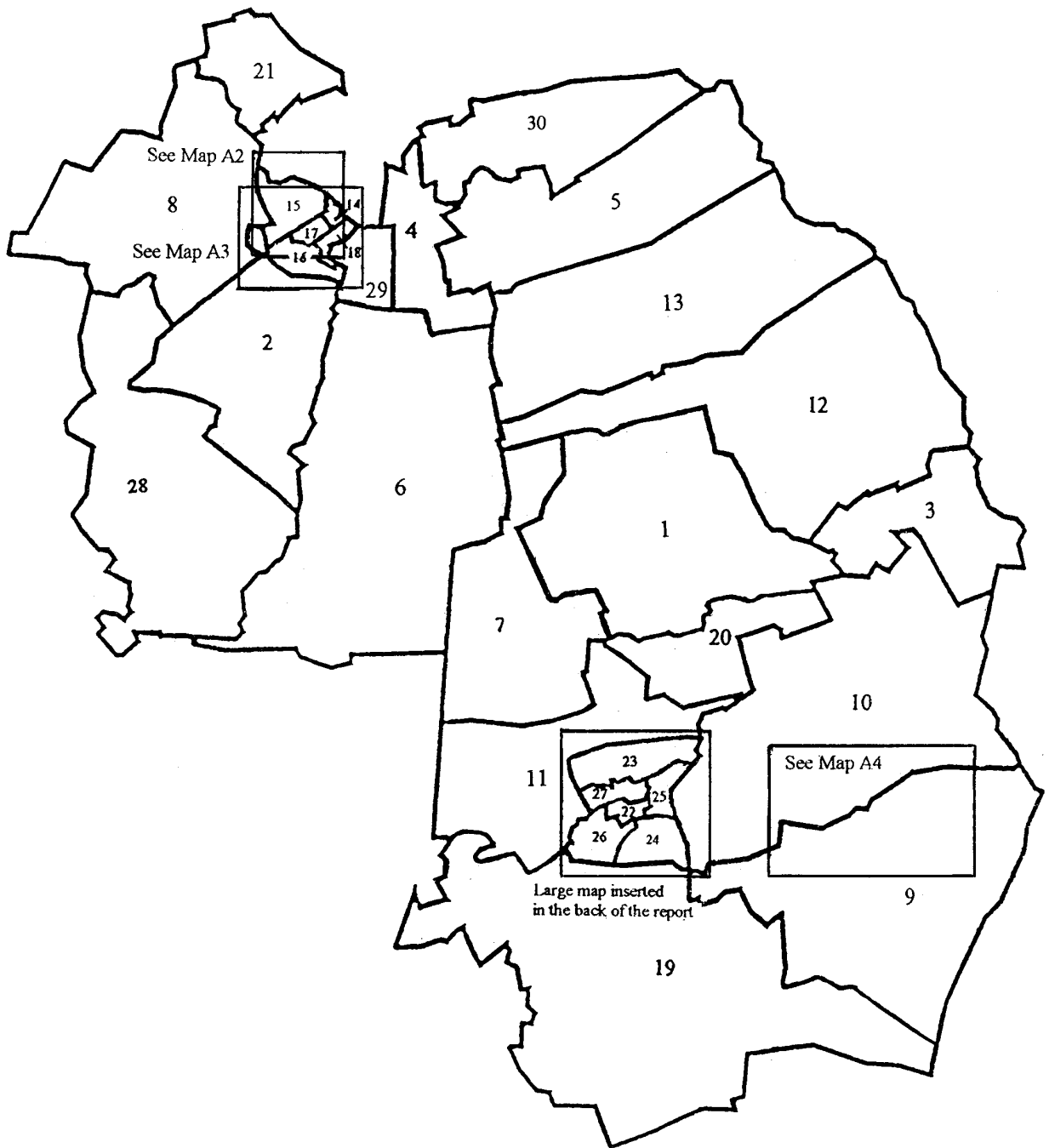
**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

**Maps A2 and A3** illustrate the Commission's proposed district and town ward boundaries for North Hykeham and the detached part of Skellingthorpe parish.

**Map A4** illustrates the Commission's proposed parish ward boundary for Heckington parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed district and town ward boundaries in Sleaford.

Map A1:  
*The Commission's Final Recommendations for North Kesteven: Key Map*



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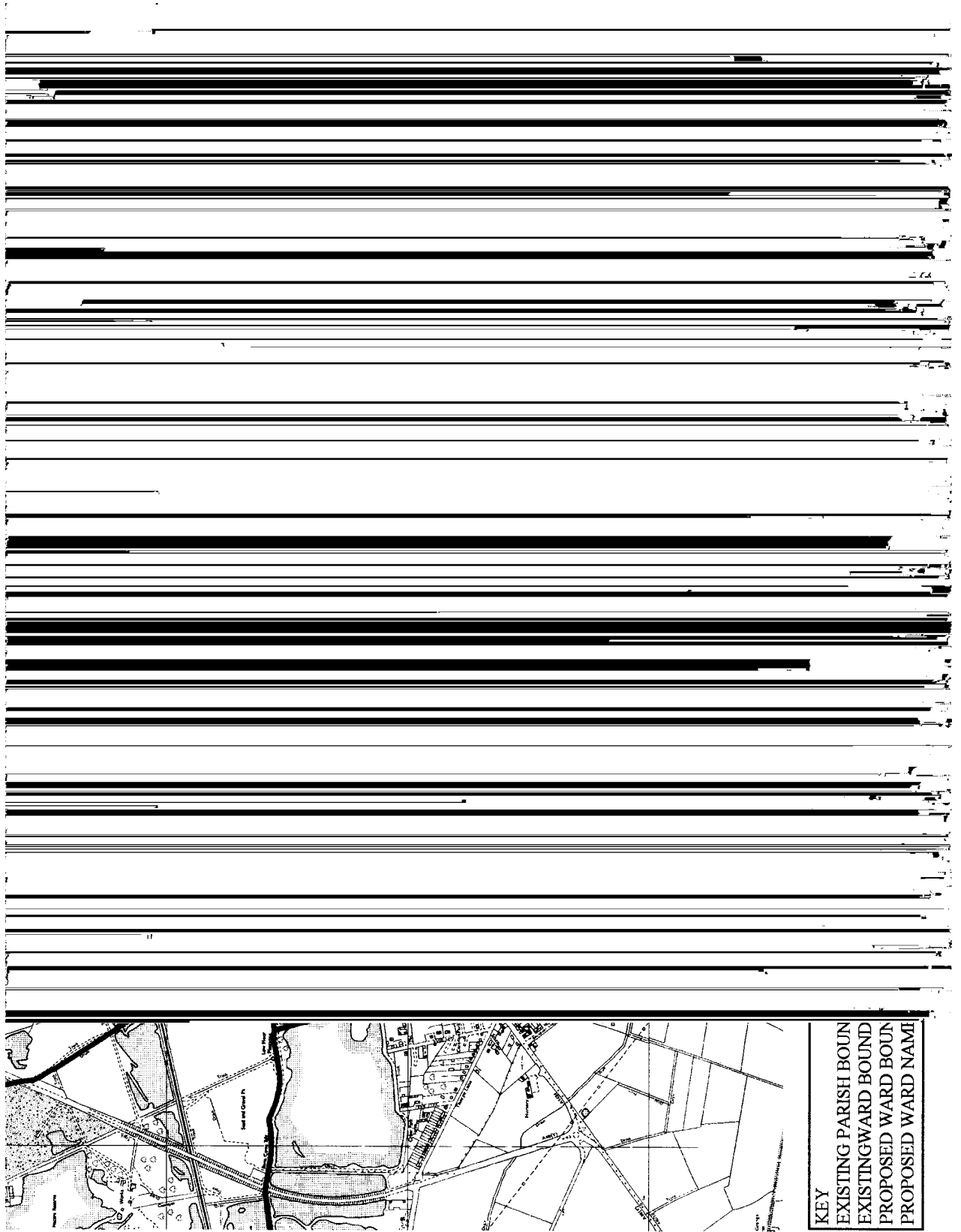
Key to Wards

- |   |                           |                                   |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Ashby de la Launde                    | 11 Leasingham and Roxholm | 21 Skellingthorpe                 |
| 2 Bassingham                            | 12 Martin                 | 22 Sleaford Castle                |
| 3 Billingham                            | 13 Metheringham           | 23 Sleaford Holdingham            |
| 4 Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East | 14 North Hykeham Forum    | 24 Sleaford Mareham               |
| 5 Branston and Mere                     | 15 North Hykeham Memorial | 25 Sleaford Navigation            |
| 6 Cliff Villages                        | 16 North Hykeham Mill     | 26 Sleaford Quarrington           |
| 7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap             | 17 North Hykeham Moor     | 27 Sleaford Westholme             |
| 8 Eagle and North Scarle                | 18 North Hykeham Witham   | 28 Swinderby                      |
| 9 Heckington                            | 19 Osbournby              | 29 Waddington West                |
| 10 Kyme                                 | 20 Ruskington             | 30 Washingborough and Heighington |

*Map A2:  
Proposed Ward Boundary Changes for North Hykeham*

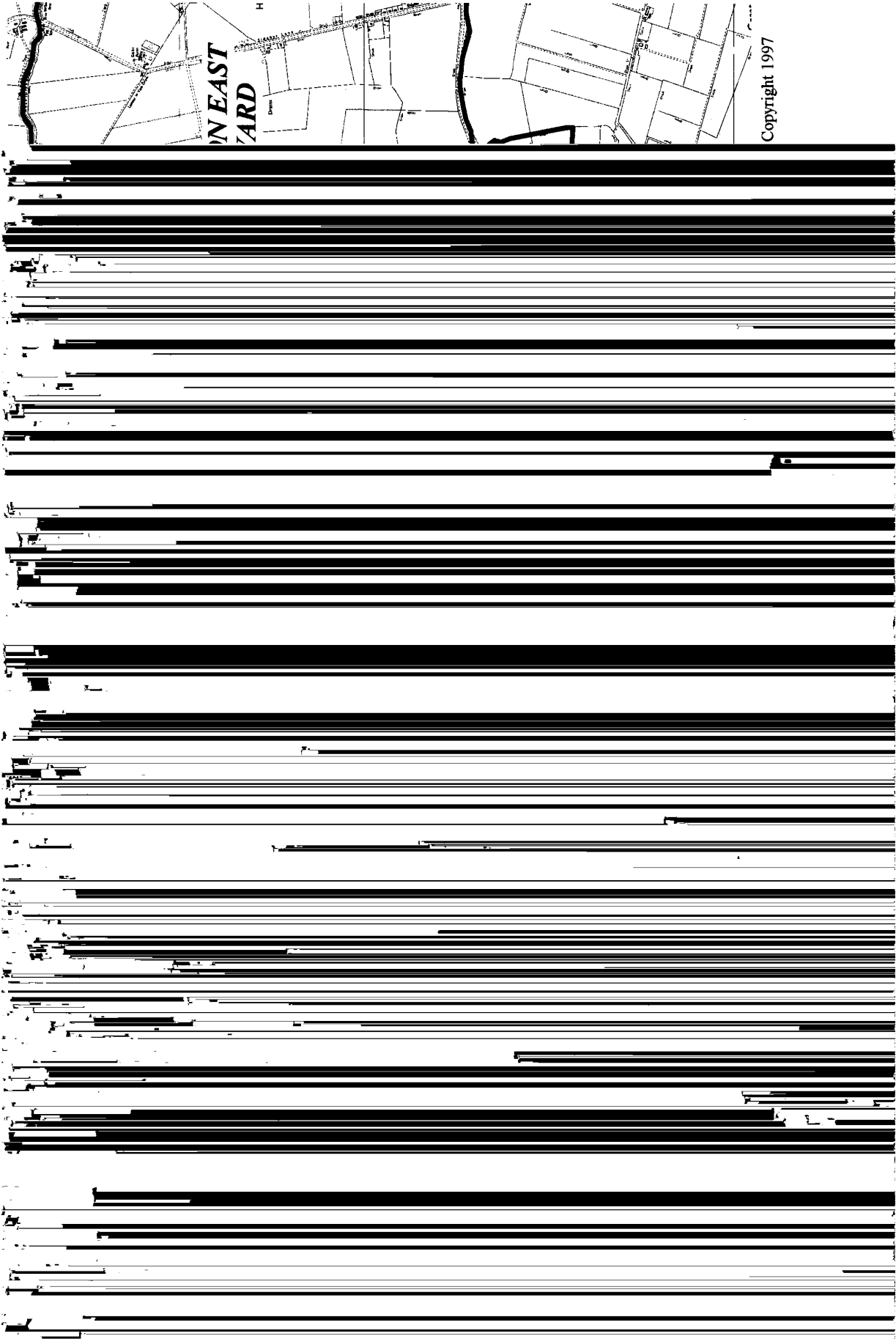


Map A3:  
*Proposed Ward Boundary Changes for North Hykeham*





Map A4:  
*Proposed Ward Boundary for Heckington Parish*





# APPENDIX B

## The Commission's Draft Recommendations for North Kesteven

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
1 Ashby de la Launde	Ashby de la Launde ward (part - the parishes of Ashby de la Launde and Bloxholm, Digby, Rowston and Scopwick); Ruskington ward (part - Dorrington parish)
2 Bassingham	Bassingham ward (part - the parishes of Aubourn, Haddington, South Hykeham and Bassingham); Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe ward (part - Thurlby parish)
3 Billingham	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Billingham and Dogdyke)
4 Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East	Waddington East ward (part - Waddington East parish ward); Bracebridge Heath ward (part - Bracebridge Heath parish)
5 Branston and Mere	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Branston and Mere and Potter Hanworth)
6 Cliff Villages	Wellingore ward (the parishes of Leadenham, Welbourn and Wellingore); Navenby ward (the parishes of Boothby Graffoe, Coleby and Navenby); Waddington East ward (part - Harmston parish)
7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Cranwell and Byard's Leap, Brauncewell and Temple Bruer with Temple High Grange)
8 Eagle and North Scarle	Eagle and North Scarle ward (part - the parishes of Eagle and Swinethorpe and North Scarle); Bassingham ward (part - Thorpe on the Hill parish); Skellingthorpe ward (part - Doddington and Whisby parish and the detached area of Skellingthorpe parish)
9 Heckington	Heckington ward (part - Heckington parish); Helpringham ward (part - the parishes of Helpringham, Burton Pedwardine, Great Hale and Little Hale)
10 Kyme	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Asgarby and Howell, Anwick, Ewerby and Evedon, Kirkby la Thorpe, North Kyme and South Kyme)
11 Leasingham and Roxholm	Leasingham and Roxholm ward (part - the parishes of Leasingham, Roxholm, North Rauceby and South Rauceby)

*continued overleaf*

Figure B1 (continued):

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
12 Martin	Martin ward (the parishes of Martin, Timberland and Walcott); Ashby de la Launde ward (part - Blankney parish)
13 Metheringham	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Metheringham, Dunston and Nocton)
14 North Hykeham Forum (North Hykeham Town)	North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part)
15 North Hykeham Memorial (North Hykeham Town)	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)
16 North Hykeham Mill (North Hykeham Town)	North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)
17 North Hykeham Moor (North Hykeham Town)	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)
18 North Hykeham Witham (North Hykeham Town)	North Hykeham Central parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham North parish and district ward (part); North Hykeham South parish and district ward (part)
19 Osbournby	Osbournby ward (part - the parishes of Aswarby and Swarby, Aunsby and Dembleby, Culverthorpe and Kelby, Osbournby, Newton and Hacey, Walcot near Folkingham, Silk Willoughby, Threekingham and Screddington); Leasingham and Roxholm ward (part - Wilsford parish); Helpringham ward (part - Swaton parish)
20 Ruskington	Ruskington ward (part - Ruskington parish)
21 Skellingthorpe	Skellingthorpe ward (part - Skellingthorpe parish ward of Skellingthorpe parish as proposed)
22 Sleaford Castle (Sleaford Town)	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford South parish and district ward (part); Sleaford West parish and district ward (part)
23 Sleaford Navigation (Sleaford Town)	Sleaford East parish and district ward (part); Sleaford North parish and district ward (part); Sleaford North parish and district ward (part)
24 Sleaford North (Sleaford Town)	Sleaford North parish and district ward (part); Sleaford East parish and district ward (part)
25 Sleaford Mareham (Sleaford Town)	Sleaford South parish and district ward (part)
26 Sleaford Quarrington (Sleaford Town)	Sleaford South parish and district ward (part)

Figure B1 (continued):

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
27 Swinderby	Eagle and North Scarle ward (part - Swinderby parish); Brant Broughton and Stagglethorpe ward (part - the parishes of Norton Disney, Carlton-le-Moorland, Stapleford, Beckingham and Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe)
28 Waddington West	<i>Unchanged</i> (Waddington West parish and district ward)
29 Washingborough and Heighington	Heighington ward (part - Heighington parish); Washingborough ward (Washingborough parish); Bracebridge Heath ward (part - Canwick parish)

Figure B2:  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for North Kesteven

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 Ashby de la Launde	1	1,682	1,682	1	1,808	1,808	-1
2 Bassingham	1	1,601	1,601	-4	1,683	1,683	-7
3 Billingham	1	1,648	1,648	-1	1,723	1,723	-5
4 Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East	3	4,542	1,514	-9	5,045	1,682	-8
5 Branston and Mere	2	3,508	1,754	5	3,801	1,901	5
6 Cliff Villages	2	3,274	1,637	-2	3,484	1,742	-4
7 Cranwell and Byard's Leap	1	1,612	1,612	-3	1,642	1,642	-10
8 Eagle and North Scarle	1	1,987	1,987	19	2,060	2,060	13
9 Heckington	2	3,293	1,647	-1	3,649	1,825	0
10 Kyme	1	1,685	1,685	1	1,794	1,794	-1
11 Leasingham and Roxholm	1	1,791	1,791	8	1,851	1,851	2
12 Martin	1	1,570	1,570	-6	1,771	1,771	-3
13 Metheringham	2	3,454	1,727	4	3,646	1,823	0
14 North Hykeham Forum	1	1,746	1,746	5	1,748	1,748	-4
15 North Hykeham Memorial	1	1,744	1,744	5	1,986	1,986	9
16 North Hykeham Mill	1	1,677	1,677	1	1,998	1,998	10
17 North Hykeham Moor	1	1,831	1,831	10	1,928	1,928	6
18 North Hykeham Witham	1	1,862	1,862	12	1,863	1,863	2
19 Osbournby	1	1,619	1,619	-3	1,795	1,795	-1
20 Ruskington	2	3,517	1,759	6	3,780	1,890	4
21 Skellingthorpe	2	2,631	1,316	-21	3,332	1,666	-8

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

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 Sleaford Castle	1	1,652	1,652	-1	1,912	1,912	5
23 Sleaford Navigation	1	1,543	1,543	-7	1,728	1,728	-5
24 Sleaford North	2	3,611	1,806	8	3,932	1,966	8
25 Sleaford Mareham	1	1,376	1,376	-17	1,650	1,650	-9
26 Sleaford Quarrington	1	1,288	1,288	-23	1,742	1,742	-4
27 Swinderby	1	1,825	1,825	10	1,971	1,971	8
28 Waddington West	1	1,769	1,769	6	1,880	1,880	3
29 Washingborough and Heighington	3	5,266	1,755	5	5,521	1,840	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>66,604</b>	—	—	<b>72,723</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,665</b>	—	—	<b>1,818</b>	—

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the councillor:elector ratio 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.

