

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Middlesbrough

*May 2002*

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Middlesbrough is inserted inside the back cover of this report.



## WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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



## SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of the electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough on 16 October 2001. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us to complete the work of the LGCE.

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

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

- **In 13 of the 25 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **By 2006 this situation is expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in seven wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 61-62) are that:

- **Middlesbrough Borough Council should have 48 councillors, five fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 23 wards, instead of 25 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries.**

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

- **In four of the proposed 23 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in none of the wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 14 May 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which is responsible for implementing changes to local authority electoral arrangements.**

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

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 8 July 2002:

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

*Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary*

|    | <b>Ward name</b>              | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1  | Acklam                        | 2                            | Acklam ward; part of Kirby ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 2  | Ayresome                      | 2                            | Ayresome ward; part of Kader ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 3  | Beckfield                     | 2                            | Beckfield ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 4  | Beechwood                     | 2                            | part of Beechwood ward; part of Grove Hill ward; part of Easterside ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 5  | Berwick Hills & Pallister     | 2                            | part of Pallister ward; part of Berwick Hills ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 6  | Brookfield                    | 2                            | part of Brookfield ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 7  | Coulby Newham                 | 3                            | part of Newham ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 8  | Easterside & Marton Manor     | 2                            | part of Easterside ward; part of Newham ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 9  | Gresham & Newport             | 3                            | part of Gresham ward; part of St Hilda's ward; part of Southfield ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 10 | Grove Hill                    | 2                            | part of Grove Hill ward; part of Beechwood; part of Kirby ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 11 | Hemlington                    | 2                            | part of Hemlington ward; part of Stainton & Thornton ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 12 | Kader                         | 2                            | part of Kader ward; part of Brookfield ward; part of Easterside ward; part of Hemlington ward; part of Newham ward | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 13 | Linthorpe                     | 3                            | part of Linthorpe ward; part of Kirby ward; part of Park ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 14 | Marton                        | 2                            | Marton ward; part of Newham ward; part of Easterside ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 15 | Marton West                   | 2                            | part of Newham ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 16 | North Ormesby & Brambles Farm | 2                            | part of North Ormesby ward; part of Thorntree ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 17 | Nunthorpe                     | 2                            | parish of Nunthorpe  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 18 | Park                          | 2                            | part of Linthorpe ward; part of Grove Hill ward; part of Kirby ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 19 | Park End                      | 2                            | Park End ward; part of Berwick Hills ward  | Map 2 and Large Map  |

|    | <b>Ward name</b>    | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 20 | Riverside           | 2                            | part of St Hilda's ward; part of North Ormesby; part of Westbourne ward; part of Southfield ward | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 21 | Stainton & Thornton | 1                            | parish of Stainton & Thornton; part of Hemlington ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 22 | Thorntree           | 2                            | part of Thorntree ward; part of Pallister ward   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 23 | University          | 2                            | part of Westbourne ward; part of Southfield ward; part of Gresham ward                           | Map 2 and Large Map  |

*Notes: 1 Stainton & Thornton and Nunthorpe are the only parished areas in the borough, and comprise the two wards indicated above.*

*2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2.*

*3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Middlesbrough

|    | Ward name                     | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Acklam                        | 2                     | 4,636             | 2,318                             | 7                       | 4,593             | 2,297                             | 5                       |
| 2  | Ayresome                      | 2                     | 4,872             | 2,436                             | 13                      | 4,547             | 2,274                             | 4                       |
| 3  | Beckfield                     | 2                     | 4,098             | 2,049                             | -5                      | 4,100             | 2,050                             | -6                      |
| 4  | Beechwood                     | 2                     | 4,016             | 2,008                             | -7                      | 4,096             | 2,048                             | -6                      |
| 5  | Berwick Hills & Pallister     | 2                     | 4,455             | 2,228                             | 3                       | 4,413             | 2,207                             | 1                       |
| 6  | Brookfield                    | 2                     | 4,503             | 2,252                             | 4                       | 4,461             | 2,231                             | 2                       |
| 7  | Coulby Newham                 | 3                     | 6,536             | 2,179                             | 1                       | 6,758             | 2,253                             | 3                       |
| 8  | Easterside & Marton Manor     | 2                     | 4,564             | 2,282                             | 6                       | 4,522             | 2,261                             | 4                       |
| 9  | Gresham & Newport             | 3                     | 6,336             | 2,112                             | -2                      | 6,307             | 2,102                             | -4                      |
| 10 | Grove Hill                    | 2                     | 4,186             | 2,093                             | -3                      | 4,317             | 2,159                             | -1                      |
| 11 | Hemlington                    | 2                     | 4,663             | 2,332                             | 8                       | 4,624             | 2,312                             | 6                       |
| 12 | Kader                         | 2                     | 4,652             | 2,326                             | 8                       | 4,641             | 2,321                             | 6                       |
| 13 | Linthorpe                     | 3                     | 6,329             | 2,110                             | -2                      | 6,623             | 2,208                             | 1                       |
| 14 | Marton                        | 2                     | 3,908             | 1,954                             | -9                      | 3,982             | 1,991                             | -9                      |
| 15 | Marton West                   | 2                     | 4,155             | 2,078                             | -4                      | 4,401             | 2,201                             | 1                       |
| 16 | North Ormesby & Brambles Farm | 2                     | 4,919             | 2,460                             | 14                      | 4,545             | 2,273                             | 4                       |
| 17 | Nunthorpe                     | 2                     | 3,870             | 1,935                             | -10                     | 4,004             | 2,002                             | -8                      |
| 18 | Park                          | 2                     | 4,257             | 2,129                             | -1                      | 4,218             | 2,109                             | -3                      |
| 19 | Park End                      | 2                     | 4,628             | 2,314                             | 7                       | 4,585             | 2,293                             | 5                       |
| 20 | Riverside                     | 2                     | 3,311             | 1,656                             | -23                     | 4,140             | 2,070                             | -5                      |
| 21 | Stainton & Thornton           | 1                     | 2,345             | 2,345                             | 9                       | 2,337             | 2,337                             | 7                       |
| 22 | Thorntree                     | 2                     | 4,235             | 2,118                             | -2                      | 4,248             | 2,124                             | -3                      |
| 23 | University                    | 2                     | 4,116             | 2,058                             | -5                      | 4,206             | 2,103                             | -4                      |
|    | <b>Totals</b>                 | <b>48</b>             | <b>103,509</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                | <b>104,668</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                |
|    | <b>Averages</b>               | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,158</b>                      | <b>-</b>                | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,181</b>                      | <b>-</b>                |

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

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Middlesbrough, on which we are now consulting. The four boroughs in the Tees Valley are being reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 Middlesbrough's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report no. 87). Since that review, Middlesbrough became a unitary authority on 1 April 1996.

3 In making final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Middlesbrough was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition published in October 2001). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

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

*Table 3: Stages of the Review*

| Stage | Description   |
|-------|---|
| One   | Submission of proposals to us                                 |
| Two   | Our analysis and deliberation                                 |
| Three | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| Four  | Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission     |

9 Stage One began on 16 October 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Middlesbrough Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Cleveland Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Cleveland Local Councils Association, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the North East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Middlesbrough Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 7 January 2002.

10 At Stage Two the LGCE considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

11 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 14 May 2002 and will end on 8 July 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of Middlesbrough is the sub-regional centre of the Tees Valley. The borough is situated on the River Tees and on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. It developed during the industrial revolution and was sustained by the iron, steel and petrochemical industries. However, Middlesbrough's economy is now dominated by the service sector. It comprises an area of approximately 5,394 hectares and has a population of some 146,000. The borough contains two parishes. Middlesbrough has experienced a decline in population (6 per cent since 1976) and a migration to the south of the borough. Middlesbrough Borough Council became a unitary authority in 1996.

14 The electorate of the borough is 103,590 (February 2001). The Council presently has 53 members who are elected from 25 wards. Twenty-two of the wards are each represented by two councillors and three are each represented by three councillors. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,955 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,975 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 25 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, in six wards by more than 20 per cent and in two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Newham ward where each of the three councillors represents 120 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Middlesbrough*

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

|    | Ward name     | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Acklam        | 2                     | 3,947             | 1,974                             | 1                       | 3,911             | 1,956                             | -1                      |
| 2  | Ayresome      | 3                     | 4,269             | 1,423                             | -27                     | 3,951             | 1,317                             | -33                     |
| 3  | Beckfield     | 2                     | 4,025             | 2,013                             | 3                       | 4,028             | 2,014                             | 2                       |
| 4  | Beechwood     | 2                     | 3,221             | 1,611                             | -18                     | 3,191             | 1,596                             | -19                     |
| 5  | Berwick Hills | 2                     | 3,257             | 1,629                             | -17                     | 3,227             | 1,614                             | -18                     |
| 6  | Brookfield    | 2                     | 4,910             | 2,455                             | 26                      | 4,865             | 2,433                             | 23                      |
| 7  | Easterside    | 2                     | 3,183             | 1,592                             | -19                     | 3,154             | 1,577                             | -20                     |
| 8  | Gresham       | 2                     | 3,361             | 1,681                             | -14                     | 3,330             | 1,665                             | -16                     |
| 9  | Grove Hill    | 2                     | 3,890             | 1,945                             | 0                       | 4,113             | 2,057                             | 4                       |
| 10 | Hemlington    | 2                     | 3,774             | 1,887                             | -3                      | 3,771             | 1,886                             | -5                      |
| 11 | Kader         | 2                     | 4,712             | 2,356                             | 21                      | 4,669             | 2,335                             | 18                      |
| 12 | Kirby         | 2                     | 4,146             | 2,073                             | 6                       | 4,108             | 2,054                             | 4                       |
| 13 | Linthorpe     | 2                     | 3,957             | 1,979                             | 1                       | 4,299             | 2,150                             | 9                       |
| 14 | Marton        | 2                     | 3,797             | 1,899                             | -3                      | 3,766             | 1,883                             | -5                      |
| 15 | Newham        | 3                     | 12,874            | 4,291                             | 120                     | 13,425            | 4,475                             | 127                     |
| 16 | North Ormesby | 2                     | 3,423             | 1,712                             | -12                     | 3,463             | 1,732                             | -12                     |
| 17 | Nunthorpe     | 2                     | 3,870             | 1,935                             | -1                      | 4,004             | 2,002                             | 1                       |
| 18 | Pallister     | 2                     | 2,988             | 1,494                             | -24                     | 2,961             | 1,481                             | -25                     |
| 19 | Park          | 2                     | 3,602             | 1,801                             | -8                      | 3,569             | 1,785                             | -10                     |
| 20 | Park End      | 2                     | 3,808             | 1,904                             | -3                      | 3,773             | 1,887                             | -4                      |
| 21 | Southfield    | 2                     | 3,202             | 1,601                             | -18                     | 3,436             | 1,718                             | -13                     |
| 22 | St Hilda's    | 2                     | 3,005             | 1,503                             | -23                     | 3,202             | 1,601                             | -19                     |

| Ward name              | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 23 Stainton & Thornton | 2                     | 3,340             | 1,670                             | -15                     | 3,327             | 1,664                             | -16                     |
| 24 Thorntree           | 3                     | 5,287             | 1,762                             | -10                     | 5,290             | 1,763                             | -11                     |
| 25 Westbourne          | 2                     | 3,742             | 1,871                             | -4                      | 3,835             | 1,918                             | -3                      |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>53</b>             | <b>103,590</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                | <b>104,668</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                |
| <b>Averages</b>        | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>          | <b>1,955</b>                      | <b>-</b>                | <b>-</b>          | <b>1,975</b>                      | <b>-</b>                |

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in St Hilda's ward were relatively over-represented by 23 per cent, while electors in Newham ward were significantly under-represented by 120 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

17 At the start of the review the LGCE invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to it giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Borough Council and its constituent parish councils.

18 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. Five representations were received during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

#### **Middlesbrough Borough Council**

19 The Borough Council proposed a reduction in council size of five councillors, from 53 to 48, serving 23 wards, a reduction of two. The proposed reduction in council size reflects the Borough Council's new political management structure based on the mayor and cabinet model. The Borough Council considered "that it would be more appropriate to assign names to wards once the review had progressed further". Working ward names were suggested, but the Council stated that these should not be considered as "firm recommendations". The Council proposed no change to the existing pattern of electing the whole Council every four years.

20 The Borough Council proposed that 24 of the existing wards be modified to provide improved levels of electoral equality and more identifiable boundaries, and to better reflect community identities. Under its proposals no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent by 2006.

#### **Councillor Smith**

21 Councillor Smith opposed the Borough Council's proposed boundary between the proposed borough wards of Brookfield and Kader. He argued that it would divide the community of Brookfield.

#### **Parish Council**

22 We received a representation from Stainton & Thornton Parish Council proposing to "supplement the electorate of Stainton & Thornton parish with a part of Hemlington closer to Stainton Village to form a new borough ward".

#### **Other Representations**

23 We received a further two representations, from Acklam Community Council and a local resident. Acklam Community Council submitted that it supported the Borough Council's proposed Acklam ward. A local resident proposed an amendment to the existing southern boundary of Brookfield ward to follow the A174 rather than Low Lane.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

25 As described earlier, our prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – which stipulates the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

27 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

29 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 1 per cent from 103,590 to 104,668 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the Middlehaven complex within the current St Hilda's ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Newlyn ward. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

### **Council Size**

31 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

32 Middlesbrough Borough Council presently has 53 members. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a council of 48 members. The Council has adopted the Government's modernisation agenda and already introduced a mayor and cabinet model of political management with the mayoral election held in May. The Borough Council stated that the reduction "will enhance member's representational role, and it is envisaged that all members of the council will potentially have a role on either the Cabinet, the Scrutiny Process or one of the regulatory committees". The Council argued that under its new constitution "no backbench member will be expected to sit in more than two of the scrutiny Panels, Board, or the other Committees". The Council concluded that a Council of 48 members would ensure the most equitable distribution of responsibilities between councillors and therefore ensure that the Council discharges its functions effectively.

33 We have considered the evidence received and are of the opinion that the Council has given the necessary consideration to internal political management, the role of councillors and the implications both for the Council and for residents in the proposed new structure. We are minded to agree with the Council that the new structure will enhance members' representational role and have noted the substantial amount of public consultation undertaken by the Borough Council in respect of its proposed restructuring. In the light of this we have concluded that the achievement of the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

### **Electoral Arrangements**

34 We have considered all the submissions received during Stage One. In the light of the consultation the Borough Council undertook and the cross-party support its scheme received, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. We are content to use the working ward names as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would particularly welcome comments concerning ward names at Stage Three.

35 We note Acklam Community Council's support for the proposed Acklam ward and that the Borough Council's proposed Stainton & Thornton ward reflects Stainton & Thornton Parish Council's submission. We have not been persuaded by Councillor Smith's proposal that the current Brookfield ward should be maintained, due to the high levels of electoral inequality which would result.

36 However, to further improve electoral equality and bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are proposing amendments to the Council's scheme in three areas: the proposed Linthorpe ward and Grove Hill ward; the proposed Berwick Hills & Pallister and Thorntree wards; and the proposed Acklam ward. We are also proposing minor boundary amendments in a further six areas to improve electoral equality, while reflecting community identities and the need to secure convenient and effective local government. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Nunthorpe, Marton, Easterside and Newham wards;
- (b) Stainton & Thornton, Hemlington, Brookfield, Kader and Ayresome wards;
- (c) Acklam, Beechwood, Linthorpe, Park, Grove Hill and Kirby wards;
- (d) Gresham, Southfield, Westbourne and St Hilda's wards;
- (e) Park End, Beckfield, Thorntree, Berwick Hills, Pallister and North Ormesby wards.

37 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

## **Nunthorpe, Marton, Easterside and Newham wards**

38 These four wards are situated in the south of the borough. Nunthorpe ward comprises the parish of Nunthorpe. Nunthorpe, Marton and Easterside are represented by two members, while Newham is represented by three members. The number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent below the borough average in Nunthorpe ward (1 per cent above by 2006), 3 per cent below the average in Marton ward (5 per cent below by 2006), 19 per cent below the average in Easterside ward (20 per cent below by 2006) and 120 per cent above the average in Newham ward (127 per cent above by 2006).

39 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a two-member ward comprising the parish of Nunthorpe, suggesting a working ward name of Nunthorpe. The proposed ward would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (8 per cent fewer by 2006). It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Marton, comprising the existing Marton ward, the area to the west of Stokesley Road, and the areas of Stewart Park and the Prissick Sports Centre and School Base. The Borough Council stated that the proposed Marton ward would contain a defined community and areas of similar socio-economic composition. The proposed ward would have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (9 per cent fewer by 2006). It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Easterside & Marton Manor, comprising part of the existing Easterside ward by uniting the Easterside estate together with those parts of Newham ward north of the A174 and east of the Marton West Beck. The proposed ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (4 per cent more by 2006).

40 The Borough Council proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Marton West, comprising those parts of the existing Newham ward south of the A174 and east of the Marton West Beck. The proposed ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (1 per cent more by 2006). It proposed a three-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Coulby Newham, comprising the part of the existing Newham ward south of the A174 and west of the Marton West Beck. The proposed ward would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent more by 2006). The Borough Council stated that the proposed Marton West ward and Coulby Newham ward would each comprise a "relatively homogeneous community".

41 After careful consideration we have decided to adopt the Borough Council's scheme for this area. We are also adopting the suggested ward names, and we would particularly welcome comments on proposed ward names for this area at Stage Three. We note that the Borough Council's proposed wards would provide a good balance between the statutory criteria, and consider that they are based on strong boundaries that reflect community identities. We have noted the electoral variance of 8 per cent for the proposed Nunthorpe ward and of 9 per cent for the proposed Marton ward by 2006. However, after visiting the area we note that both wards would be based on identifiable boundaries and consider that an alternative warding arrangement would not provide an equally good balance between the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations the proposed Nunthorpe, Marton, Easterside & Marton Manor, Marton West and Coulby Newham wards would have 10 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (8 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more, 1 per cent more and 3 per cent more in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Stainton & Thornton, Hemlington, Brookfield, Kader and Ayresome wards**

42 These four wards are situated in the south and west of the borough. Stainton & Thornton ward comprises the parish of Stainton & Thornton and part of the Hemlington estate and is represented by two councillors. Hemlington, Brookfield and Kader wards are represented by two councillors, while Ayresome ward is represented by three councillors. Stainton & Thornton,

Hemlington, Brookfield, Kader and Ayresome wards currently have 15 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 26 per cent more, 21 per cent more and 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (16 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 23 per cent more, 18 per cent more and 33 per cent fewer by 2006).

43 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed to modify the current arrangements for Stainton & Thornton ward and Hemlington ward. It proposed a single-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Stainton & Thornton, comprising the parish of Stainton & Thornton and an area in Hemlington adjacent to the village of Stainton and east of Stainton Way. The Council noted this would unite an area of the Hemlington estate and the parish of Stainton & Thornton, which it argued are similar in socio-economic composition. It further argued that this part of the Hemlington estate "looks to Stainton Village for most of its services". The proposed ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (7 per cent more by 2006). It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Hemlington, to include part of the existing Hemlington ward and part of the estate that is currently in Stainton & Thornton ward. The proposed ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (6 per cent more by 2006).

44 The Borough Council proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Brookfield, comprising the existing Brookfield ward but excluding the area which is broadly south of Ledbury Drive, east of the Oval and Lincombe drive to the Blue Bell Beck (transferring some 370 electors). The Borough Council noted that to retain the existing Brookfield ward under the proposed council scheme would result in high levels of electoral inequality. The proposed ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent more by 2006). The Borough Council proposed to transfer the excluded area from the proposed Brookfield ward into a proposed two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Kader. The area was selected for its access and proximity to Low Lane, which links the two proposed wards. The proposed Kader ward comprises part of the existing Brookfield ward, part of the existing ward of Kader, without the area north of Mandale road, but including the areas north of the A174 within the existing wards of Hemlington and Newham and the area surrounded by Newham Beck and Marton West Beck. The Council argued that the Municipal Golf Course and the Police Headquarters should be included in the proposed Kader ward as the area looks to Acklam Road for its community services. The Borough Council proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Ayresome, comprising the existing ward of Ayresome and including the area north of Mandale Road in the existing Kader ward. The proposed ward would have 13 per cent more electors per councillor than borough average currently (4 per cent more by 2006).

45 We have carefully considered all the representations received for this area and note that the Borough Council's proposed Stainton & Thornton ward reflects Stainton & Thornton Parish Council's proposal for a new borough ward. We note the local resident's proposed boundary amendment for the existing Brookfield ward and recognise that the Borough Council's proposals utilise the A174 as a boundary, transferring the area south of Low Lane from the existing Hemlington ward. We also note Councillor Smith's opposition to the proposed Brookfield ward for its division of Brookfield's community. He proposed to retain the existing boundaries. However, under the proposed council size of 48 the existing Brookfield ward would have 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (12 per cent more by 2006). Therefore we judge that the Council's proposed Brookfield ward provides the best balance between the statutory criteria.

46 We note that the Borough Council's proposed wards of Stainton & Thornton and Hemlington are generally based on the existing arrangements, utilise the strong boundaries of the A174 in the north and the B1365 in the east, reflect community identities and Stainton & Thornton Parish Council's proposal. Therefore we are content to adopt the Borough Council's proposed wards, and its suggested ward names, as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that the Borough Council's proposed Brookfield ward provides the best balance between the statutory

criteria. While we note Councillor Smith's opposition, we consider that his proposal would result in too high a level of electoral variance. However, we propose a minor boundary amendment to run behind the houses of Lincombe Drive and Low Lane (affecting 31 electors) so the whole of these roads are contained in the proposed Kader ward. With this amendment we are content to adopt the proposed ward, and its suggested working ward name, as part of our draft recommendations. We note that the Borough Council's proposed Kader and Ayresome wards are broadly based on the existing arrangements. We consider that they utilise strong boundaries and provide the best balance between the statutory criteria. We therefore propose basing our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals. We are also adopting the suggested ward names and we would particularly welcome comments on our proposed ward names for this area at Stage Three. However, we propose to maintain the current boundary between the proposed wards of Kader and Acklam where it follows the northern edge of the cemetery and the eastern edge of the to provide for a more identifiable boundary. We also propose a minor amendment to the north-eastern boundary of the proposed Ayresome ward to tie it to ground detail. Neither of these boundary amendments would affect any electors.

47 Under our draft recommendations the proposed wards of Stainton & Thornton, Hemlington, Brookfield, Kader and Ayresome would have 9 per cent more, 8 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 8 per cent more and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (7 per cent more, 6 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 6 per cent more and 4 per cent more by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Acklam, Beechwood, Linthorpe, Park, Grove Hill and Kirby wards**

48 These six wards make up the west central part of the borough. Acklam ward, Beechwood ward, Linthorpe ward, Park ward, Grove Hill ward and Kirby ward are represented by two councillors each and have 1 per cent more, 18 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, equal to, and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (1 per cent fewer, 19 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 4 per cent more by 2006).

49 The Borough Council proposed broadly retaining the existing Acklam ward with an amendment to its northern boundary to include the area south of Green Lane. It suggested a working ward name of Acklam ward. The Council stated that the proposed ward would contain a "community with a strong identity". The proposed Acklam ward would have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (10 per cent more by 2006). The Council proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Park ward, to comprise part of the existing Park ward and to include the area east of Ayresome Park Road, south of Devonshire Road, north of Orchard Road and west of The Avenue. It proposed a three-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Linthorpe ward, to comprise part of the existing Linthorpe ward and to include the area west of Ayresome Park Road and north of Devonshire Road, and the area north of Green Lane and Emerson Road and south of Orchard Road and Eastbourne Road that is currently in Kirby ward. The Council proposed to use Aspen Drive, Sycamore Road, Hebron Road, Beech Grove Road and the Marton West Beck as the eastern boundary. The Borough Council argued that the proposed wards are "bounded by major roads, becks or other natural boundaries" and "preserve as far as possible a sense of Linthorpe Village". The proposed Park ward and Linthorpe ward would have 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more by 2006).

50 The Borough Council proposed two two-member wards based broadly on the existing wards of Grove Hill and Beechwood. It suggested a working ward name of Grove Hill and proposed that it comprise part of the existing Grove Hill. It suggested a working name of Beechwood and proposed that it comprise part of the existing Beechwood ward, including the area west of the railway line containing St Luke's Hospital and South Cleveland Hospital and the area of Beechwood estate within the existing Easterside ward. The Council proposed to divide the two

proposed wards along Keith Road, Lambton Road, Coppice Road and Farndale Road and behind Belle View Grove. The proposed wards of Grove Hill and Beechwood would both have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (9 per cent fewer by 2006).

51 We have carefully considered the Borough Council's scheme for this area. We note the electoral variances of 9 per cent in both of the proposed Grove Hill and Beechwood wards and 10 per cent in the proposed Acklam ward. We consider that the proposals do not secure the levels of electoral equality normally expected in an urban area. Therefore we have examined options to improve electoral equality by transferring electors between the proposed wards of Acklam and Beechwood. However, from visiting the area we are persuaded that in this part of the borough the Marton West Beck represents a divide between the constituent communities of two urban areas. We note that there is a substantial distance between the houses either side of the beck representing the edges of the communities. We also noted that there are only limited crossing points by foot and none by road between the proposed wards. Therefore we are not minded to transfer electors between the proposed wards of Acklam and Beechwood. However, we note that the northern boundary of the proposed Acklam ward runs along Green Lane, placing residents on either side of the road, who are currently within the existing Kirby ward, in two different wards. To address this we propose to run the boundary behind the back of the houses on the south side (affecting some 190 electors). We note that the proposed Beechwood ward boundary places cul-de-sacs and crescents in a separate ward from their access roads. Therefore we propose to divert the proposed boundary to follow behind Howard Court, Barnard Court, Moray Close, Farndale Court and Farndale Crescent (affecting some 140 electors). We also considered options to improve the electoral equality in the proposed Grove Hill ward. We propose to modify the boundary between the proposed wards of Grove Hill and Linthorpe to transfer the areas south of Eastbourne Road, east of The Avenue and north of Beech Grove Road (affecting some 450 electors). After visiting the area we consider that the communication links and proximity of the houses indicate that the Marton West Beck does not divide the communities either side of it. We consider that this amendment would provide for improved levels of electoral equality and the best balance between the statutory criteria.

52 With these three boundary amendments we are content to adopt the Borough Council's scheme for this area. We are also adopting the suggested ward names. Under our draft recommendations the proposed wards of Linthorpe, Park, Grove Hill, Beechwood and Acklam would have 2 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (1 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Gresham, Southfield, Westbourne and St Hilda's wards**

53 These four wards lie in the north and west of the borough and are all represented by two councillors. The wards of Gresham, Southfield, Westbourne and St Hilda's currently contain 14 per cent fewer, 18 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 23 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (16 per cent fewer, 13 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 19 per cent fewer by 2006).

54 The Borough Council proposed a reconfiguration of these four wards resulting in a reduction of one ward. It proposed two two-member wards, suggesting working ward names of Riverside and University, and a three-member ward, suggesting a working name of Gresham & Newport. The proposed University ward would comprise the existing Westbourne ward, except for the area east of Abingdon Road and west of Marton Road, including the areas south of Southfield Road and east of Lindthorpe Road currently within the existing Southfield ward and Gresham ward. The proposed Gresham & Newport ward would comprise part of the existing Gresham ward including the areas to the south of the A66 and railway, west of Hartington Road and Diamond Road, south of Princess Street and the areas south of Borough Road and west of

Linthorpe Road currently within the existing Southfield ward. The Borough Council stated that the proposed ward would contain "the traditional Gresham and Newport communities". The proposed Riverside ward would comprise the remaining part of the existing St Hilda's ward, the part of the existing Southfield ward and Westbourne ward north of Southfield Road and the area north of the A66 that currently lies in the existing North Ormesby ward. The proposed Riverside ward would constitute the "main commercial and retail centre of Middlesbrough". The proposed ward of Riverside would have 23 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent fewer by 2006).

55 We have considered the Borough Council's proposals for this area. We were initially concerned at the high level of electoral variance within the proposed Riverside ward. However, as the adjoining wards are also over-represented any boundary amendments would have a detrimental effect on their levels of electoral equality. We note the Borough Council's argument that "the area bordering the river is a major regeneration site" which will improve the level of electoral equality in the proposed Riverside ward over the next five years. Therefore we are content to endorse the proposed Riverside ward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that the proposed wards of University and Gresham & Newport will facilitate a good balance between the statutory criteria. However, we are proposing a minor boundary amendment to the proposed Gresham & Newport ward, which would not affect any electors, to provide for a more identifiable boundary. We propose that the boundary remain on the southern edge of the A66 rather than adopting the Council's proposal to use the railway as part of the ward boundary. With this boundary amendment, we propose to adopt the Borough Council's proposals for these two wards. We are also adopting the suggested ward names. Riverside ward, Gresham & Newport ward and University ward would have 23 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Park End, Beckfield, Thorntree, Berwick Hills, Pallister and North Ormesby wards**

56 These six wards make up the east of the borough. The wards of Park End, Beckfield, Berwick Hills, Pallister and North Ormesby are each represented by two councillors, while Thorntree is represented by three councillors. Park End, Beckfield, Thorntree, Berwick Hills, Pallister and North Ormesby currently have 3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer, 17 per cent fewer, 24 per cent fewer and 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more, 11 per cent fewer, 18 per cent fewer, 25 per cent fewer and 12 per cent fewer by 2006).

57 The Borough Council proposed a reconfiguration of warding arrangements in East Middlesbrough resulting in the reduction of one ward. It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of North Ormesby & Brambles Farm, to comprise part of the existing North Ormesby ward south of the A66 and South Bank Road and to include the area north of College Road in the existing Thorntree ward, known as the Brambles Farm Estate. This ward would contain the "traditional community of North Ormesby, the Boyds Estate and the Brambles Farm area". The Council noted that these communities are self-contained, but argued that there are strong links between the communities of North Ormesby and the Boyds Estate, that all three areas are in close proximity and share "many of the same shopping and social facilities". The proposed North Ormesby & Brambles Farm ward would have 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (4 per cent more by 2006). It proposed a two-member ward and suggested a working ward name of Thorntree, to comprise the remaining part of the existing Thorntree ward and to include the area west of the Middle Beck currently within the existing Pallister ward. The proposed Thorntree ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average both now and by 2006. It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Berwick Hills & Pallister, to comprise the remaining part of the existing Pallister ward and to include part of the existing Berwick Hills ward north of Coledale Road, Roundton Green, Ampleforth Road and Brigham Road. The

proposed Berwick Hills & Pallister ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (7 per cent more by 2006). The Council proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Park End, to comprise the existing Park End ward and include the area excluded from the proposed Berwick Hills & Pallister ward, as described above. The proposed Park End ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent more by 2006). It proposed a two-member ward, suggesting a working ward name of Beckfield, to comprise the existing Beckfield ward. The proposed Beckfield ward would have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average both now and by 2006.

58 We have carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals for this area. We noted that the scheme would not secure the levels of electoral equality normally expected in an urban area. While we note the high electoral variance of the proposed North Ormesby & Brambles Farm ward in 2001, we also note that the planned depopulation of the area will have a positive effect on its electoral equality. After visiting the area we note that College Road provides a strong boundary and agree with the Borough Council that it would represent the "dividing line between the Brambles Farm and Thorntree neighbourhoods". Therefore we are content to adopt the proposed ward, and suggested working ward name, as part of our draft recommendations. We note the high levels of electoral variance in the proposed wards of Thorntree and Berwick Hills & Pallister and considered alternative options to improve electoral equality. We propose a boundary modification to the proposed Thorntree and Berwick Hills & Pallister wards in order to secure better electoral equality. We propose to amend the boundary to follow Homerton Road from the Middle Beck, the eastern boundary of Pallister Park Primary School, to the rear of properties of Fransham Road and to follow Kimberly Drive and Premier Road (affecting 235 electors). After visiting the area we noted that the Middle Beck does not represent a substantial divide between the communities. We consider that the open space is a communal area due to its provision of social facilities and the close proximity of the properties, while Homerton Road and Premier Road provide good links between them. We consider that this amendment would improve electoral equality and have regard for community identities, providing the best balance between the statutory criteria. Subject to this amendment we are content to endorse the Borough Council's proposed Thorntree and Berwick Hills & Pallister wards, and their suggested working ward names, as part of our draft recommendations. We were concerned that the proposed boundary between the Council's proposed wards of Berwick Hills & Pallister and Park End would divide a road and a cul-de-sac between borough wards. Therefore we propose a minor boundary modification to include the whole of Brigham Road in the proposed Berwick Hills & Pallister ward (affecting 5 electors) and to include Roundton Green in the proposed Park End ward (affecting 31 electors). We also propose that the boundary follow Ormesby Beck to provide for a more identifiable boundary. With this minor boundary amendment we propose to adopt the Council's proposed Park End ward, and its suggested working ward name, as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that the proposed Beckfield ward provides the best balance between the statutory criteria and propose to adopt it, and its suggested working ward name, as part of our draft recommendations.

59 Under our draft recommendations North Ormesby & Brambles Farm, Thorntree, Berwick Hills & Pallister, Park End and Beckfield wards would have 14 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 7 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (4 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 5 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

60 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning the electoral cycle.

## Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 53 to 48;
- there should be 23 wards;
- the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two wards, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries;

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

- we propose modifying the boundary of the proposed Linthorpe ward by transferring some 450 electors to the proposed Grove Hill ward;
- we propose modifying the boundary of the proposed ward of Berwick Hills & Pallister by transferring 235 electors to the proposed Thorntree ward;
- the boundary between the proposed wards of Acklam and Linthorpe shall run behind the houses on the south side of Green Lane and Emerson Avenue;
- we are also proposing a number of minor boundary modifications to the boundaries between the proposed wards of: Riverside and Gresham & Newport; Riverside and Ayresome; Grove Hill and Beechwood; Berwick Hills & Pallister and Park End; Brookfield and Kader; and Acklam and Kader, to provide for more identifiable boundaries;
- we also propose minor boundary amendments in several areas in order to address undefined or defaced boundaries which the Borough Council proposed retaining.

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

*Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

|   | 2001 electorate      |                       | 2006 forecast electorate |                       |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|   | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations | Current arrangements     | Draft recommendations |
| Number of councillors   | 53                   | 48                    | 53                       | 48                    |
| Number of wards   | 25                   | 23                    | 25                       | 23                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                                 | 1,955                | 2,158                 | 1,975                    | 2,181                 |
| Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average | 13                   | 3                     | 14                       | 0                     |
| Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average | 8                    | 1                     | 7                        | 0                     |

64 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Middlesbrough Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 13 to three. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

**Draft Recommendation**

Middlesbrough Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 23 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover.

**Parish Council Electoral Arrangements**

65 Our proposed borough warding arrangements would retain the parishes of Nunthorpe and Stainton & Thornton wholly in the proposed wards of Nunthorpe and Stainton & Thornton respectively. Therefore we are not proposing any consequential changes to the parish councils' electoral arrangements. However, we note the anomalies in the Nunthorpe Parish Council's boundary and encourage Middlesbrough Borough Council to conduct a parish review in order to fix a more identifiable boundary.

*Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Middlesbrough*



## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

66 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 8 July 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

67 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Team Leader  
Middlesbrough Review  
Boundary Committee  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW

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



# APPENDIX A

## Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

*Table A1: The Boundary Committee for England's Compliance with Code Criteria*

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