

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
South Tyneside

February 2003

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
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

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for South Tyneside on 14 May 2002.

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

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

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

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 78-79) are that:

- **South Tyneside Borough Council should have 54 councillors, six fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, instead of 20 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two.**

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 17 of the proposed 18 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 9% from the average for the borough by 2006.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 25 February 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 22 April 2003:

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

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Large map reference |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Beacon & Bents | 3 | Part of Beacon & Bents ward; part of Rekendyke ward | Map 2 |
| 2 | Bede | 3 | Part of Bede ward; part of Biddick Hall ward; part of Fellgate & Hedworth ward; part of Tynedock & Simonside ward | Map 1 |
| 3 | Boldon Colliery | 3 | Part of Boldon Colliery ward; part Cleadon & East Boldon ward | Maps 1 and 2 |
| 4 | Brockley & Biddick | 3 | Part of All Saints ward; part of Biddick Hall ward | Maps 1 and 2 |
| 5 | Cleadon & East Boldon | 3 | Part of Boldon Colliery ward; part of Cleadon & East Boldon ward; part of Cleadon Park ward | Maps 1 and 2 |
| 6 | Cleadon Park | 3 | Part of Cleadon Park ward; part of West Park ward; part of Whiteleas ward | Map 2 |
| 7 | Fellgate & Hedworth | 3 | Part of Fellgate & Hedworth ward | Map 1 |
| 8 | Harton | 3 | Part of Harton ward; part of West Park ward | Map 2 |
| 9 | Hebburn North | 3 | Part of Hebburn Quay ward; part of Monkton ward ward | Map 1 |
| 10 | Hebburn South | 3 | Part of Hebburn Quay ward; part of Hebburn South ward | Map 1 |
| 11 | Horsley Hill | 3 | Part of Beacon & Bents ward; part of Horsley Hill ward; part of Westoe ward | Map 2 |
| 12 | Monkton | 3 | Part of Hebburn South ward; part of Monkton ward; part of Primrose ward | Map 1 |
| 13 | Primrose | 3 | Part of Bede ward; part of Hebburn Quay ward; part of Primrose ward | Map 1 |
| 14 | Simonside | 3 | Part of Rekendyke ward; part of Tyne Dock & Simonside ward | Maps 1 and 2 |
| 15 | West Park | 3 | Part of All Saints ward; part of Rekendyke ward; part of Westoe ward; part of West Park ward | Map 2 |
| 16 | Westoe | 3 | Part of Horsley Hill ward; part of Rekendyke ward; part of Westoe ward; part of West Park ward | Map 2 |
| 17 | Whitburn & Marsden | 3 | Part of Cleadon & East Boldon ward; part of Cleadon Park ward; part of Horsley Hill ward; part of Whitburn & Marsden ward | Map 2 |
| 18 | Whiteleas | 3 | Part of All Saints ward; part of Whiteleas ward | Map 2 |

Notes:

- 1) *The borough is unparished.*
- 2) *The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*
- 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 South Tyneside

| | 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 | Beacon & Bents | 3 | 7,094 | 2,365 | 9 | 6,930 | 2,310 | 6 |
| 2 | Bede | 3 | 6,147 | 2,049 | -5 | 6,157 | 2,052 | -6 |
| 3 | Boldon Colliery | 3 | 7,169 | 2,390 | 10 | 7,099 | 2,366 | 9 |
| 4 | Brockley & Biddick | 3 | 6,535 | 2,178 | 0 | 6,640 | 2,213 | 2 |
| 5 | Cleadon & East Boldon | 3 | 7,060 | 2,353 | 9 | 6,983 | 2,328 | 7 |
| 6 | Cleadon Park | 3 | 6,044 | 2,015 | -7 | 6,127 | 2,042 | -6 |
| 7 | Fellgate & Hedworth | 3 | 6,153 | 2,051 | -5 | 6,316 | 2,105 | -3 |
| 8 | Harton | 3 | 6,836 | 2,279 | 5 | 6,779 | 2,260 | 4 |
| 9 | Hebburn North | 3 | 6,261 | 2,087 | -4 | 6,281 | 2,094 | -4 |
| 10 | Hebburn South | 3 | 6,316 | 2,105 | -3 | 6,259 | 2,086 | -4 |
| 11 | Horsley Hill | 3 | 5,811 | 1,937 | -11 | 6,513 | 2,171 | 0 |
| 12 | Monkton | 3 | 6,585 | 2,195 | 1 | 6,584 | 2,195 | 1 |
| 13 | Primrose | 3 | 6,468 | 2,156 | -1 | 6,468 | 2,156 | -1 |
| 14 | Simonside | 3 | 6,375 | 2,125 | -2 | 6,278 | 2,093 | -4 |
| 15 | West Park | 3 | 6,605 | 2,202 | 2 | 6,511 | 2,170 | 0 |
| 16 | Westoe | 3 | 6,721 | 2,240 | 3 | 6,664 | 2,221 | 2 |
| 17 | Whitburn & Marsden | 3 | 6,303 | 2,101 | -3 | 6,226 | 2,075 | -5 |
| 18 | Whiteleas | 3 | 6,591 | 2,197 | 1 | 6,534 | 2,178 | 0 |
| | Totals | 54 | 117,074 | - | - | 117,349 | - | - |
| | Averages | - | - | 2,168 | - | - | 2,173 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on South Tyneside 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 South Tyneside, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five metropolitan boroughs in Tyne & Wear as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of South Tyneside. South Tyneside's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1979 (Report no. 355).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3: Stages of the review

| 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 |

10 Stage One began on 14 May 2002, when we wrote to South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Northumbria Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Tyneside Local Councils Association, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the North East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited South Tyneside Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 September 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 25 February 2003 and will end on 22 April 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

2 Current electoral arrangements

14 The metropolitan borough of South Tyneside is situated to the south of the River Tyne and bounded by the North Sea to its east, and to the west and south by the boroughs of Gateshead and Sunderland. The borough incorporates the towns of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn but also a number of small villages and an attractive coastline, which includes a two mile stretch managed by the National Trust. The borough is unparished.

15 The electorate of the borough is 117,074 (December 2001). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 20 wards. All wards are three-member wards.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,951 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,956 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. Due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in six of the 20 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average and two wards by more than 20%. The worst imbalances are in Cleadon & East Boldon and Tyne Dock & Simonside wards where each of the three councillors represents 25% more and 25% fewer electors than the borough average respectively.

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

Map 1: Existing wards in South Tyneside

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 | All Saints | 3 | 5,576 | 1,859 | -5 | 5,534 | 1,845 | -5 |
| 2 | Beacon & Bents | 3 | 5,779 | 1,926 | -1 | 6,646 | 2,215 | 14 |
| 3 | Bede | 3 | 5,323 | 1,774 | -9 | 5,283 | 1,761 | -10 |
| 4 | Biddick Hall | 3 | 5,103 | 1,701 | -13 | 5,065 | 1,688 | -13 |
| 5 | Boldon Colliery | 3 | 6,926 | 2,309 | 18 | 6,874 | 2,291 | 17 |
| 6 | Cleadon & East Boldon | 3 | 7,301 | 2,434 | 25 | 7,247 | 2,416 | 24 |
| 7 | Cleadon Park | 3 | 5,762 | 1,921 | -2 | 5,719 | 1,906 | -2 |
| 8 | Fellgate & Hedworth | 3 | 6,662 | 2,221 | 14 | 6,647 | 2,216 | 14 |
| 9 | Harton | 3 | 5,478 | 1,826 | -6 | 5,437 | 1,812 | -7 |
| 10 | Hebburn Quay | 3 | 6,103 | 2,034 | 4 | 6,057 | 2,019 | 3 |
| 11 | Hebburn South | 3 | 4,832 | 1,611 | -17 | 4,796 | 1,599 | -18 |
| 12 | Horsley Hill | 3 | 6,072 | 2,024 | 4 | 6,027 | 2,009 | 3 |
| 13 | Monkton | 3 | 6,453 | 2,151 | 10 | 6,405 | 2,135 | 9 |
| 14 | Primrose | 3 | 6,455 | 2,152 | 10 | 6,612 | 2,204 | 13 |
| 15 | Rekendyke | 3 | 5,589 | 1,863 | -5 | 5,547 | 1,849 | -5 |
| 16 | Tyne Dock & Simonside | 3 | 4,370 | 1,457 | -25 | 4,337 | 1,446 | -26 |
| 17 | Westoe | 3 | 6,436 | 2,145 | 10 | 6,388 | 2,129 | 9 |
| 18 | West Park | 3 | 5,711 | 1,904 | -2 | 5,668 | 1,889 | -3 |
| 19 | Whiteleas | 3 | 5,754 | 1,918 | -2 | 5,711 | 1,904 | -2 |
| 20 | Whitburn & Marsden | 3 | 5,389 | 1,796 | -8 | 5,349 | 1,783 | -9 |
| | Totals | 60 | 117,074 | - | - | 117,349 | - | - |
| | Averages | - | - | 1,951 | - | - | 1,956 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Tyneside 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 Tyne Dock & Simonside ward were relatively over-represented by 25%, while electors in Cleadon & East Boldon ward were relatively under-represented by 25%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Submissions received

18 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for South Tyneside Borough Council.

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

South Tyneside Borough Council

20 The Borough Council proposed a council of 54 members, six fewer than at present, serving 18 wards, compared to the existing 20. Under the Borough Council's proposals electoral equality would improve across the borough with no ward varying by more than 10% from the borough average by 2006.

South Tyneside Liberal Democrats

21 South Tyneside Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') proposed a council of 54 members, six fewer than at present, serving 18 wards, compared to the existing 20. Under the Liberal Democrat's proposals electoral equality would improve across the borough with only one ward varying by more than 10% from the borough average by 2006.

South Shields Progressive Association

22 The South Shields Progressive Association proposed a council of 48 members, 12 fewer than at present, serving 16 wards. Under South Shields Progressive Association's proposals electoral equality would improve across the borough with no wards varying by more than 8% from the borough average by 2006.

Other representations

23 A further three representations were received from a local political party, a residents association and a local resident. South Shields Conservative Association commented on local government in the area and forwarded their comments to two consultation schemes X and Y. Residents Reviving Rekendyke objected to the Borough Council's proposals. A local resident proposed that Jarrow and Hebburn be combined.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

24 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for South Tyneside 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, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for South Tyneside is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'.

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 identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate forecasts

29 Since 1975 there has been a 9% decrease in the electorate of South Tyneside borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 0.25% from 117,074 to 117,349 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Beacon & Bents 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.

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 South Tyneside Borough Council presently has 60 members. Both the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed a council of 54 members, which constitutes a reduction of six members. The South Shields Progressive Association proposed a council of 48 members, 12

fewer than at present, serving 16 wards. The Borough Council stated that although there had been a general reduction in the number of council meetings since the introduction of the new management structure a significant amount of councillors time is taken up by informal meetings and briefings. It argued that under the new executive arrangements all councillors carry out an important representational role and that the role of councillors had changed significantly since the last electoral review in 1980. It stated that 50.2% of those that responded to its consultation exercise had specifically supported an 18 ward option and that only 55% of those that favoured neither of its consultation proposals had supported a solution involving less than 18 wards. It argued that although councillors had lost their traditional committee roles non-executive members continued to have a significant role in the formulation of policies and strategies. It stated that it was also likely that the number of members on the three main Regulatory/Appeals Committees would be reduced from 17 to 15 as part of the modernisation process and that the experience of the pilot arrangements had shown that smaller committees were required to improve efficiency.

32 South Shields Progressive Association stated that comparisons with the traditional committee system indicate a reduction in the role of councillors in decision making and that there has been a 39% reduction in the number of committees with the removal of delegated responsibilities. It also outlined the results of its own consultation exercise which showed 63% of those responding in support of a 16 ward option.

33 We have carefully considered the evidence submitted as to the most appropriate council size for South Tyneside. We have noted the proposals of the South Shields Progressive Association for a reduction in council size of 12 members but in the light of alternative options have not found the level of argumentation sufficiently compelling to propose such a large reduction. We have also noted that a reduction in council size to 54 members has the support of the majority of the council in the form of the Council and Liberal Democrat submissions and has secured a degree of support during the Council's consultation exercise.

34 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members.

Electoral arrangements

35 As already explained, both the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed a council of 54 members, which constitutes a reduction of six members. While the schemes were different, they both sought to keep the 'distinct' areas of Hebburn, Jarrow, South Shields and the Villages separate. However, we note that both schemes gave these areas the incorrect allocation of councillors. Under the Council's proposals, Hebburn was allocated nine members, but is only entitled to eight, Jarrow was allocated nine members, but is only entitled to eight, South Shields was allocated 27, but is entitled to 28. Only the Villages are given their correct allocation, of nine members. The Liberal Democrats did not provide the correct allocation in any of the areas. Under its proposals Hebburn was allocated nine members, but is only entitled to eight, Jarrow was allocated nine members, but is only entitled to eight, South Shields was allocated 27, but is entitled to 28, and the Villages were allocated nine members, but are entitled to 10. We noted that the proposals of the Borough Council were set out in response to the results of its public consultation, the Liberal Democrats proposals were set out in response to the support in the Borough Council's consultation exercise for an 18 ward structure and the South Shields Progressive Party consulted on a 16 ward option. We could not consider the warding arrangements of the South Shields Progressive Party having accepted the argument for a council size of 54 members, as their proposals were based on a different council size to the two other full submissions.

36 We noted that under both schemes, in addition to the misallocation of councillors, high levels of electoral inequality remained. Therefore, we have found it necessary to look at the boundaries of these 'distinct' areas. We calculated that we would need to transfer approximately 2,000 electors from the South Shields area to the Hebburn and Jarrow areas and redistribute them accordingly. This has also meant the consequential redistribution of electors in the South Shields area in order to achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality.

37 When considering the appropriate warding pattern for South Tyneside we were mindful that any transfer of electors from the South Shields area to the Hebburn and Jarrow areas would have to reflect the statutory criteria and would have an effect on proposed warding patterns across the borough. Having looked at possible areas we concluded that the area of the current Biddick Hall ward to the south of John Reid Road and north of the railway line and the area of the current Tyne Dock & Simonside ward west of Drummond Crescent and Dame Flora Robson Avenue would best facilitate this transfer. We therefore carefully considered the respective merits of the schemes submitted to us by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals would better facilitate a borough-wide warding pattern than those of the Liberal Democrats.

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

- a) Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth, Hebburn Quay, Hebburn South, Monkton and Primrose wards;
- b) All Saints, Beacon & Bents, Biddick Hall, Cleadon Park, Harton, Horsley Hill, Rekendyke, Tyne Dock & Simonside, Westoe, West Park and Whiteleas wards;
- c) Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards.

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

Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth, Hebburn Quay, Hebburn South, Monkton and Primrose wards

40 These six wards are located in the west and south-west of the borough. Hebburn Quay, Hebburn South and Monkton wards form the Hebburn area and currently have 4% more, 17% fewer and 10% more electors per councillor than the borough average (3% more, 18% fewer and 9% more in 2006).

41 Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth and Primrose wards form the Jarrow area and currently have 9% fewer, 14% more and 10% more electors per councillor than the borough average (10% fewer, 14% more and 13% more in 2006).

42 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a six ward configuration for the area. Its proposed Hebburn North and Hebburn South wards would be based on the existing wards. It proposed that the area of the current Hebburn South ward to the south of Victoria Road West and North Farm Road be transferred to its proposed Hebburn South ward. Its western boundary would run south from this point along the railway line. The Borough Council proposed that the eastern boundary be amended slightly to run to the west of Marine Drive south of Monkton Lane. Its also proposed transferring the area of the current Monkton ward north of Victoria Road East, west of Black Road, Ralph Street and Railway Street to its proposed Hebburn North ward. It proposed that the boundary then run east along the railway line and north on High Lane Row and on to the River Tyne. Its proposed Monkton ward would comprise that part of the current ward to the south of Victoria Street East, south of and including St Oswalds Junior and Infant School, west of Beech Street and south of the railway line. It would also comprise the area to the south of Albert Road, west of Bede Burn Road and the area west of Featherstone Grove

and Durham Grove in the current Primrose ward and that part of the current Hebburn South ward previously mentioned.

43 The Borough Council's proposed Fellgate & Hedworth ward would comprise the current ward less the area to the north of Hedworth Lane which it proposed be transferred to its proposed Bede ward. Its proposed Primrose ward would comprise the current Primrose ward less the areas to be transferred to the proposed Monkton ward and an area to the east of the river, Springwell Road and Monkton Terrace which it proposed be transferred to its proposed Bede ward. It also proposed that the area to the west of Staple Road in the current Bede ward, to the east of High Lane Road in the current Hebburn Quay ward and to the north of Hedgeley Road, to the east of West Street and to the west of Hazel Street in the current Monkton ward be transferred to its proposed Primrose ward. Its proposed Bede ward would comprise the areas previously mentioned plus an area of the current Tyne Dock & Simonside ward to the north of Jarrow Road.

44 Under the Borough Council's proposals the proposed Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth and Hebburn North wards would initially have 10% fewer, 5% fewer and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (10% fewer, 3% fewer and 10% fewer in 2006).

45 Its proposed Hebburn South, Monkton and Primrose wards would have 6% fewer, 9% fewer and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (7% fewer, 9% fewer and 9% fewer in 2006)

46 The Liberal Democrats proposed a similar configuration of six wards for this area. Its proposed Bede ward would comprise the existing Bede ward, but additionally including an area of the existing Fellgate & Hedworth ward to the north east of the River Don. Its proposed Fellgate & Hedworth ward would comprise the existing Fellgate & Hedworth ward, less the area to the north east of the River Don. Its proposed Hebburn North ward would comprise the majority of the existing Hebburn Quay ward, less the area to the south of Victoria Road East, Tharsis Road, North Drive and the railway, and including an area of the existing Monkton ward to the north and west of Black Road, Hedgeley Road, Byron Avenue and Victoria Road East. Its proposed Hebburn South ward would comprise the existing Hebburn south ward, and include an area of the existing Hebburn Quay ward to the south of Victoria Road East, Tharsis Road, North Drive and the railway.

47 Its proposed Monkton ward would comprise the existing Monkton ward, less the area to the north and west of Black Road, Hedgeley Road, Byron Avenue, Victoria Road East and an area to the east of Park Road, Albert Road, Maple Street and Hawthorn Street. It would also include an area of the existing Primrose ward to the south of Lukes Lane County Infants School and Monkton Stadium and west of Monkton Burn. Its proposed Primrose ward would comprise the existing ward, less an area to the east of Monkton Burn, but including an area of the existing Monkton ward to the west of Park Road, Albert Road, Maple Street and Hawthorn Street.

48 Its proposed Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth and Hebburn North wards would initially have 10% fewer, 5% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (10% fewer, 3% fewer and 9% fewer in 2006).

49 Hebburn South, Monkton and Primrose wards would initially have 7% fewer, 10% fewer and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9% fewer, 9% fewer and 9% fewer in 2006).

50 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. As mentioned previously we noted that both full schemes for the area did not provide for the correct allocation of councillors for the Hebburn and Jarrow areas. We therefore concluded that in order to secure the correct allocation for the area and to improve upon the poor levels of electoral equality in the area we would be required to transfer approximately 2,000 electors from either the South

Shields area or the Villages area. Having considered the options we concluded that the transfer of electors from the South Shields area would consequentially secure the correct allocation of councillors in the Hebburn and Jarrow areas and South Shields area. We propose basing our draft recommendations for the area on the proposals of the Borough Council as we are of the view that they would better facilitate the proposals for the borough as a whole. We were also of the view that the Council's proposals would better facilitate the transfer of electors from the South Shields area. However, we propose a number of boundary amendments to redistribute the extra 2,000 electors in the area in order to secure good levels of electoral equality and better reflect community identity in the area.

51 In order to secure the correct allocation for the Hebburn and Jarrow areas we propose to transfer the area of the Borough Council's proposed Brockley & Biddick ward to the west of the railway line and the area of the Council's proposed Simonside ward to the west of Drummond Crescent and Avrey Avenue to the proposed Bede ward. While our proposal to transfer electors from the proposed Simonside ward is not ideal we consider that it is the least damaging option available to us in order to secure the correct allocation in the borough. We also propose that the western boundary of the proposed Bede ward be amended to run north along the River Don, Leam Lane, the A19 and Priory Road as we consider that this would maintain the properties to the west of Priory Road within the same ward and would not isolate the properties south of Cemetery Road from the remainder of the proposed Bede ward linking them to a geographically closer area. Both of these areas would therefore be transferred to the proposed Primrose ward.

52 We propose amending the proposed Primrose ward further in order to secure an improved level of electoral equality and to better reflect communities in the area. We propose that the properties to the west of Kitchener Terrace and Monkton Burn and the properties between the A185 and the railway be transferred from the proposed Primrose ward to the proposed Monkton ward and the properties to the south of the railway line to the east of Lumley Court and Coppergate Court be transferred to the proposed Hebburn North ward in order to better reflect the statutory criteria. We also propose transferring the area to the north of Victoria Road East which the Council proposed placing in its proposed Monkton ward in the proposed Hebburn North ward in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality and to provide for a more identifiable boundary in the area. We also propose a boundary amendment between the Council's proposed Hebburn North and Hebburn South wards in order to secure an improved level of electoral equality in the area. We propose that the boundary be amended to run to the north of Alfred Street and St Rollox Street and then south to Victoria Road West.

53 Under our draft proposals the proposed Bede, Fellgate & Hedworth and Hebburn North wards would have 5% fewer, 5% fewer and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (6% fewer, 3% fewer and 4% fewer in 2006).

54 The proposed Hebburn South, Monkton and Primrose wards would have 3% fewer, 1% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4% fewer, 1% more and 1% fewer in 2006).

All Saints, Beacon & Bents, Biddick Hall, Cleadon Park, Harton, Horsley Hill, Rekendyke, Tyne Dock & Simonside, Westoe, West Park and Whiteleas wards

55 These eleven wards are located in the east of the borough and form the South Shields area. All Saints, Beacon & Bents and Biddick Hall wards currently have 5% fewer, 1% fewer and 13% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (5% fewer, 14% more and 13% fewer in 2006).

56 Cleadon Park, Harton, Horsley Hill and Rekendyke wards currently have 2% fewer, 6% fewer, 4% more and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (2% fewer, 7% fewer, 3% more and 5% fewer in 2006).

57 Tyne Dock & Simonside, Westoe, West Park and Whiteleas wards currently have 25% fewer, 10% more, 2% fewer and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (26% fewer, 9% more, 3% fewer and 2% fewer in 2006).

58 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a nine ward configuration for this area. Its proposed Brockley & Biddick ward would comprise the majority of the current Biddick Hall ward less the area to the east of Benton Road and Boldon Lane which it proposed be transferred to its proposed Whiteleas ward. Its proposed Simonside ward would comprise the majority of the current Tyne Dock & Simonside less the area it proposed transferring to its Bede ward. Additionally the proposed Simonside ward would also include that area of the current Rekendyke ward to the west of Dean Road and to the south of Tudor Road and St Mark's Way. It proposed that the area to the north of Tudor Road, St Mark's Way and Chichester Road in the current Rekendyke ward be transferred to its proposed Beacon & Bents ward which would additionally comprise the majority of the current ward less the area to the south of Erskine Road east of the cemetery which it proposed transferring to its Horsley Hill ward. It proposed that the area to the south of Chichester Road be transferred to its proposed Westoe ward which would also comprise the majority of the current ward less the area to the west of Marlborough Street north of Hepscott Terrace which it proposed transferring to its proposed West Park ward. It proposed that the area to the east of King George Road, north of Harton Grove in the current West Park ward and area to the west of Highfield Road in the current Horsley Hill ward be transferred to its proposed West Park ward.

59 The Council's proposed West Park would comprise the areas previously mentioned in addition to the area of the current Rekendyke ward to the east of Dean Road, that part of the current All Saints ward to the north of Harton Lane and east of Boldon Lane and that part of the current West Park ward to the north of Harton Lane, Ambleside Avenue and Stanton Avenue. Its proposed Whiteleas ward would comprise that part of the current Biddick Hall ward mentioned previously, that part of the current All Saints ward to the south of Harton Lane and east of Boldon Lane and that part of the current Whiteleas ward to the south of Nevinson Avenue, west of and including Whistler Gardens. Its proposed Cleadon Park ward would comprise the area of the current Whiteleas ward to the east of Whistler Gardens. It would also comprise the area to the east of McAnany Avenue, south of Harton Lane and west of Temple Park Road in the current West Park ward and the current Cleadon Park ward less the area to the east of Watson Avenue, north of Quarty Lane. Its proposed Harton ward would comprise the current Harton ward and that part of the current West Park ward to the east of Temple Park Road, south of Ambleside Avenue, Stanton Avenue and Harton Grove. Its proposed Horsley Hill ward would comprise the majority of the current ward less the area to be transferred to the proposed Westoe ward and additionally to include part of the current Beacon & Bents ward mentioned previously.

60 Under the Borough Council's proposals its proposed Beacon & Bents, Brockley & Biddick, Cleadon Park, Harton and Horsley Hill wards would have 9% more, 2% fewer, 7% fewer, 9%

more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (6% more, 1% fewer, 6% fewer, 8% more and 5% more in 2006).

61 Its proposed Simonside, West Park, Westoe and Whiteleas wards would have 9% more, 9% more, 10% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average (7% more, 7% more, 9% more and 6% more in 2006).

62 The Liberal Democrats proposed a similar configuration of nine wards for this area. Its proposed All Saints ward would comprise the existing All Saints ward. It would also include an area of the existing West Park ward to the south of Harton Lane and west of Temple Park Road and an area of the existing Tyne Dock & Simonside ward to the south of the railway and east of Wenlock Road. Its proposed Beacon & Bents ward would comprise the existing West Park ward, less the area to the south of Harton Lane and west of Temple Park Road. It would also include an area of the existing Westoe ward to the south west of Sunderland Road, College Drive, St Georges Avenue and Cemetery Approach. Its proposed Brockley, Biddick & Simonside ward would comprise the existing Biddick Hall ward, less the area to the east of Benton Road. It would also include an area of the existing Tyne Dock & Simonside ward to the south and west of Wenlock Road and the railway. Its proposed Cleadon Park ward would comprise the existing Cleadon Park ward, but additionally include an area of the existing Harton ward, to the south of Grosvenor Gardens, The High Road, Lisle Road, Centenary Avenue and to the rear of the properties on East Avenue.

63 Its proposed Harton ward would comprise the existing Harton ward, less the area to the south of Grosvenor Gardens, The High Road, Lisle Road, Centenary Avenue and to the rear of the properties on East Avenue. It would also include an area of the existing Westoe ward to the south of Cemetery Approach and the rear of the properties on Readhead Road and an area of the existing Horsley Hill ward to the south of Highfield Road, Cheviot Road and Norham Avenue South. Its proposed Rekendyke & Tynedock ward would comprise the existing Rekendyke ward, less the area to the south of East Stevenson Street and east of Imeary Street. It would also include the existing Tyne Dock & Simonside ward, less the area to the south of the railway. Its proposed Westoe ward would comprise the existing Beacon & Bents ward, less the properties on the north side of Mowbray Road. Its proposed West Park ward would comprise the existing Horsley Hill ward, less the area to the south of Highfield Road, Cheviot Road, Frenchman's Way, Amble Avenue, the north side of Druridge Crescent, Craster Avenue and Bamburgh Grove. It would also include an area of the existing Westoe ward to the north of Readhead Road and east of St Georges Avenue, Sunderland Road and Westoe Road. It would also include a small area of the existing Rekendyke ward to the south of East Stevenson Street and east of Imeary Street and the properties on the north side of Mowbray Road, currently in the existing Beacon & Bents ward. Its proposed Whiteleas ward would comprise the existing Whiteleas ward, but additionally including an area of the existing Biddick Hall ward to the east of Benton Road.

64 The Liberal Democrats proposed All Saints, Beacon & Bents, Brockley, Biddick & Simonside, Cleadon Park, Harton, Rekendyke & Tynedock, Westoe, West Park and Whiteleas wards would currently have 9% more, 10% fewer, 4% more, 8% more, 1% fewer, 8% more, 7% more, 3% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (7% more, 3% more, 3% more, 9% more, 2% fewer, 7% more, 6% more, 3% more and 8% fewer in 2006).

65 Residents Reviving Rekendyke objected to the Borough Council's proposals arguing that they damaged a number of recognised communities and could weaken the Association. South Shields Conservative Association commented on the Borough Council's 19 ward consultation proposal in the area and objected to the Council's 18 ward consultation proposals.

66 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. Given the proposals to transfer approximately 2,000 electors from this area to the Hebburn and Jarrow areas in order to secure the correct allocation across the borough it has proven necessary to make a number

of boundary amendments in this area in order to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality. We propose basing our draft recommendations on the proposals of the Borough Council as we consider that they would provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria in the area. We noted that the Council's proposed Simonside ward, less the area to be transferred to the proposed Bede ward, would secure an improved level of electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting a modified Simonside ward in the area. However, we also noted that the Council's proposed Brockley & Biddick ward, less the area to be transferred to the proposed Bede ward, would not now secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. Therefore we propose the transfer of those electors to the west of Egerton Road in the Borough Council's proposed West Park ward to the proposed Brockley & Biddick ward. We also propose that Heaton Gardens be transferred to the proposed Brockley & Biddick ward from the City Council's proposed Whiteleas ward.

67 We propose the transfer of those electors to the west of Hartington Terrace in the Council's proposed Westoe ward and north of Harton Lane, west of the A1018 in the proposed Harton ward to the proposed West Park ward in order to improve electoral equality. We also propose the transfer of those electors to the south of Westmorland Road and Norfolk Road in the Council's proposed Horsley Hill ward to its proposed Whitburn & Marsden ward in order to secure improved levels of electoral equality in both wards. We carefully considered the proposals of Residents Reviving Rekendyke but are of the view that we cannot consider any area in isolation and have looked to balance the statutory criteria in the area as a whole.

68 Under our draft proposals the proposed Beacon & Bents, Brockley & Biddick, Cleadon Park, Harton and Horsley Hill wards would have 9% more, equal to, 7% fewer, 5% more and 11% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (6% more, 2% more, 6% fewer, 4% more and equal to in 2006).

69 The proposed Simonside, West Park, Westoe and Whiteleas wards would have 2% fewer, 2% more, 3% more and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average (4% fewer, equal to, 2% more and equal to in 2006).

Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards

70 These three wards are situated in the south and south-east of the borough. Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards currently have 18% more, 25% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (17% more, 24% more and 9% fewer in 2006).

71 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a revised warding pattern for the three wards in the area. Its proposed Boldon Colliery ward would comprise much of the existing ward less the area to the south of Dipe Lane and additionally including the area of the current Cleadon & East Boldon ward west of Ravensbourne Avenue and Kendal Drive and north of Langdale Way. Its proposed Cleadon & East Boldon ward would comprise the majority of the current ward less the area to be transferred to the proposed Boldon Colliery ward and an area to the south of Moor Lane, east of Shields Road to be transferred to the proposed Whitburn & Marsden ward. It would additionally include the area to be transferred from the current Boldon Colliery and an area to the south of Quarty Lane in the current Cleadon Park ward. Its proposed Whitburn & Marsden ward would comprise the current ward and the areas previously mentioned.

72 Under the Borough Council's proposals the proposed Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards would have 10% more, 9% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9% more, 8% more and 9% fewer in 2006).

73 The Liberal Democrats proposed a similar configuration of three wards for this area. Its proposed Cleadon & East Boldon ward would comprise the existing Cleadon & East Boldon ward, less the area to the south of Moor Lane and east of Sunderland Road, an area to the

north of the properties on Lilburn Close, Rydal Close and Borrowdale Close and west of the properties on Ravensbourne Avenue. Its proposed West Boldon & Boldon Colliery ward would comprise the existing Boldon Colliery ward and an area of the existing Cleadon & East Boldon ward to the north of the properties on Lilburn Close, Rydal Close and Borrowdale Close and west of the properties on Ravensbourne Avenue. Its proposed Whitburn & Marsden ward would comprise the existing Whitburn & Marsden ward, but additionally include an area of the existing Horsley Hill ward, to the south of Highfield Road, Cheviot Road, Frenchman's Way, Amble Avenue, the north side of Druridge Crescent, Craster Avenue and Bamburgh Grove.

74 The Liberal Democrats Cleadon & East Boldon, West Boldon & Boldon Colliery and Whitburn & Marsden wards would currently have 13% more, 6% more and 8% more electors per councillor than the borough average (11% more, 5% more and 7% more in 2006).

75 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We have noted that the Borough Council's proposals for the area secure the correct allocation of councillors and generally reflect community identity. We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would also generally reflect community identity in the area but that they had over-allocated the number of councillors their area merited. Therefore we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposed Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards subject to two boundary amendments to improve electoral equality in the proposed Whitburn & Marsden ward and to better reflect community identity between the proposed Boldon Colliery and Cleadon & East Boldon wards. We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Whitburn & Marsden and Horsley Hill wards (mentioned previously) and also propose that all the properties on Dipe Lane be included within the proposed Boldon Colliery ward.

76 Under our draft proposals the proposed Boldon Colliery, Cleadon & East Boldon and Whitburn & Marsden wards would have 10% more, 9% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9% more, 7% more and 5% fewer in 2006).

Electoral cycle

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

Conclusions

78 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 60 to 54;
- there should be 18 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two wards.

79 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 a number of boundary amendments in the Hebburn, Jarrow and South Shields areas and a minor boundary amendment between the proposed Boldon Colliery and Cleadon & East Boldon wards.

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

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

| | 2001 Electorate | | 2006 Electorate | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations |
| Number of councillors | 60 | 54 | 60 | 54 |
| Number of wards | 20 | 18 | 20 | 18 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 1,951 | 2,168 | 1,956 | 2,173 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 6 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

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

Map 2: Draft recommendations for South Tyneside

5 What happens next?

82 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for South Tyneside contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April 2003. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

83 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

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

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for South Tyneside: Detailed mapping

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

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

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

Map A1: Draft recommendations for South Tyneside: Key map

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

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

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

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

| Criteria | Compliance/departure |
|---|---|
| Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage. | We comply with this requirement. |
| It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose. | We comply with this requirement. |
| A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain. | We comply with this requirement. |
| Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals. | We comply with this requirement. |
| Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation. | We consult 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. |