

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
RYEDALE IN NORTH  
YORKSHIRE

*Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions*

*November 1999*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Ryedale in North Yorkshire.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Kru Desai

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray

Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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# CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>25</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Ryedale: Detailed Mapping	<i>27</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Ryedale (May 1999)	<i>33</i>

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Pickering is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

30 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 3 November 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Ryedale under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 102) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Ryedale.

We recommend that Ryedale District Council should be served by 30 councillors representing 20 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

We note that you have now set out in the *White Paper Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Ryedale on 3 November 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 May 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and offers our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Ryedale:

- **in nine of the 17 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and by more than 20 per cent from the average in five wards;**
- **by 2003, electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in eight wards, and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 102-103) are that:

- **Ryedale District Council should have 30 councillors, seven more than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 17 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections for the whole council should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 18 of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to remain constant.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for the town councils of Norton-on-Derwent and Pickering and the parish councils of Eberston & Yedingham, Heslerton and Welburn (York);**
- **an increase in the number of councillors for Kirkbymoorside Town Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 11 January 2000:

**The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment,  
Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1 Amotherby	1	Amotherby ward (part – the parishes of Amotherby, Appleton-le-Street with Easthorpe, Broughton and Swinton); Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Habton and Kirby Misperton)	Map 2
2 Ampleforth	1	Ampleforth ward (part – the parishes of Ampleforth, Byland with Wass and Oldstead); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Cawton, Coulton, Gilling East, Grimstone and Scackleton)	Map 2
3 Cropton	1	Dales ward (part – Cropton parish); Ebberston ward (part – Newton-upon-Rawcliffe parish); Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Aislaby, Marton, Middleton, Normanby and Wrelton); Pickering ward (part – Stape ward of Pickering parish as proposed)	Map 2
4 Dales	1	Dales ward (part – the parishes of Appleton-le-Moors, Bransdale, Fadmoor, Farndale East, Farndale West, Gillamoore, Hartoft, Hutton-le-Hole, Lasingham, Rosedale East Side, Rosedale West Side and Spaunton)	Map 2
5 Derwent	2	Amotherby ward (part – the parishes of Bulmer, Coneysthorpe, Henderskelfe, Huttons Ambo and Welburn (York)); Birdsall ward (part – the parishes of Acklam, Birdsall, Burythorpe, Langton, Leavening, Scrayingham and Westow); Rillington ward (part – the parishes of Scagglethorpe and Settrington); Sheriff Hutton ward (part – Howsham parish)	Map 2
6 Helmsley	2	Ampleforth ward (part – the parishes of Cold Kirby, Hawnby, Old Byland & Scawton and Sproxton); Helmsley ward (part – the parishes of Helmsley, Pockley and Rievaulx); Kirkbymoorside ward (part – the parishes of Beadlam and Nawton)	Map 2
7 Hovingham	1	Amotherby ward (part – Barton-le-Street parish); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Fryton, Hovingham, Slingsby and Terrington)	Map 2

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)	Map reference
8 Kirkbymoorside	2	Kirkbymoorside ward (part – the parishes of Kirkbymoorside, Welburn (Kirkbymoorside) and Wombleton)	Map 2
9 Malton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Malton parish)	Map 2
10 Norton East	2	Norton East ward of Norton-on-Derwent parish as proposed	Maps 2 and A4
11 Norton West	2	Norton West ward of Norton-on-Derwent parish as proposed	Maps 2 and A4
12 Pickering East	2	Pickering East ward of Pickering parish as proposed	Large map proposed
13 Pickering West	2	Pickering West ward of Pickering parish as proposed	Large map proposed
14 Rillington	1	Rillington ward (part – the parishes of Rillington Scampston and Thorpe Bassett, and Heslerton West ward of Heslerton parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A3
15 Ryedale South West	1	Stockton & Bossall ward (the parishes of Buttercrambe with Bossall, Claxton, Gate Helmsley, Sand Hutton, Upper Helmsley and Warthill); Sheriff Hutton ward (part – the parishes of Barton-le-Willows, Crambe, Foston, Harton and Whitwell-on-the-Hill)	Map 2
16 Sherburn	1	Sherburn ward (part – the parishes of Ganton, Sherburn and Willerby); Rillington ward (part – Heslerton East ward of Heslerton parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A3
17 Sheriff Hutton	1	Sheriff Hutton ward (part – the parishes of Flaxton, Lillings Ambo, Sheriff Hutton and Thornton-le-Clay)	Map 2
18 Sinnington	1	Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Barugh (Great & Little), Brawby, Salton and Sinnington); Kirkbymoorside ward (part – Edstone parish); Helmsley ward (part – Harome parish); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Nunnington, Oswaldkirk, South Holme and Stonegrave)	Map 2

*continued overleaf*

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
19 Thornton Dale	2	Thornton Dale ward (the parishes of Marishes and Thornton-le-Dale); Ebberston ward (part – the parishes of Allerston, Ebberston & Yedingham, Levisham, Lockton and Wilton)	Maps 2 and A2
20 Wolds	1	Birdsall ward (part – the parishes of Kirby Grindalythe, Thixendale and Wharram); Rillington ward (part – Wintringham parish); Sherburn ward (part – the parishes of Foxholes, Luttons and Weaverthorpe)	Map 2

*Note: Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map at the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Ryedale

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Amotherby	1	1,287	1,287	-3	1,285	1,285	-5
2 Ampleforth	1	1,276	1,276	-4	1,385	1,385	2
3 Cropton	1	1,169	1,169	-12	1,166	1,166	-14
4 Dales	1	1,154	1,154	-13	1,165	1,165	-14
5 Derwent	2	2,661	1,331	1	2,655	1,328	-2
6 Helmsley	2	2,563	1,282	-3	2,647	1,324	-2
7 Hovingham	1	1,347	1,347	2	1,405	1,405	4
8 Kirkbymoorside	2	2,636	1,318	0	2,710	1,355	0
9 Malton	3	3,974	1,325	0	4,100	1,367	1
10 Norton East	2	2,717	1,359	3	2,800	1,400	4
11 Norton West	2	2,657	1,329	0	2,700	1,350	0
12 Pickering East	2	2,690	1,345	2	2,750	1,375	2
13 Pickering West	2	2,730	1,365	3	2,788	1,394	3
14 Rillington	1	1,384	1,384	5	1,388	1,388	3
15 Ryedale South West	1	1,313	1,313	-1	1,340	1,340	-1
16 Sherburn	1	1,411	1,411	7	1,408	1,408	4
17 Sheriff Hutton	1	1,390	1,390	5	1,440	1,440	6
18 Sinnington	1	1,319	1,319	0	1,360	1,360	1
19 Thornton Dale	2	2,764	1,382	4	2,820	1,410	4
20 Wolds	1	1,254	1,254	-5	1,265	1,265	-6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39,696</b>	—	—	<b>40,577</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,323</b>	—	—	<b>1,353</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ryedale District 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 district. 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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Ryedale in North Yorkshire. We have now reviewed seven districts in North Yorkshire (excluding York) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004. (We expect to undertake a PER of York unitary authority in 2000/01).

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Ryedale. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1979 (Report No. 320). The electoral arrangements of North Yorkshire County Council were last reviewed in August 1984 (Report No. 477). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in due course.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (updated in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and

effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 Second, the broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. For example, we will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification

8 Third, we are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. 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 a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no

intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the North Yorkshire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 3 November 1998, when we wrote to Ryedale District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, North Yorkshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Member of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 February 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 25 May 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Ryedale in North Yorkshire*, and ended on 19 July 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

<sup>13</sup> The district of Ryedale, which is geographically the largest district in North Yorkshire, is predominantly rural and contains 117 parishes. It comprises a rich agricultural area, and includes parts of the Vale of York, the Hambleton Hills, the Vale of Pickering, the North York Moors National Park and the northern part of the Yorkshire Wolds. There are four market towns, the twin towns of Malton and Norton-on-Derwent, Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley.

<sup>14</sup> 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 district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

<sup>15</sup> The electorate of the district is 39,696 (February 1998). The Council presently has 23 members who are elected from 17 wards, four of which are urban, the remainder being predominantly rural. Thirteen of the wards are single-member wards, two wards are each represented by two councillors and the two wards are three-member wards. The Council holds whole-council elections every four years.

<sup>16</sup> Since the last electoral review there has been a decrease in the electorate in Ryedale district, with around 42 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago as a result of the transfer of parishes in the south-west of the district to the city of York. There have also been a number of new housing developments over the last two decades, particularly in the urban areas of Malton, Norton-on-Derwent and Pickering, which each have approximately 1,000 more electors than 20 years ago.

<sup>17</sup> At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,726 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,763 by the year 2003 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 nine of the 17 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, and in five wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Stockton & Bossall ward, where the councillor represents 48 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Ryedale

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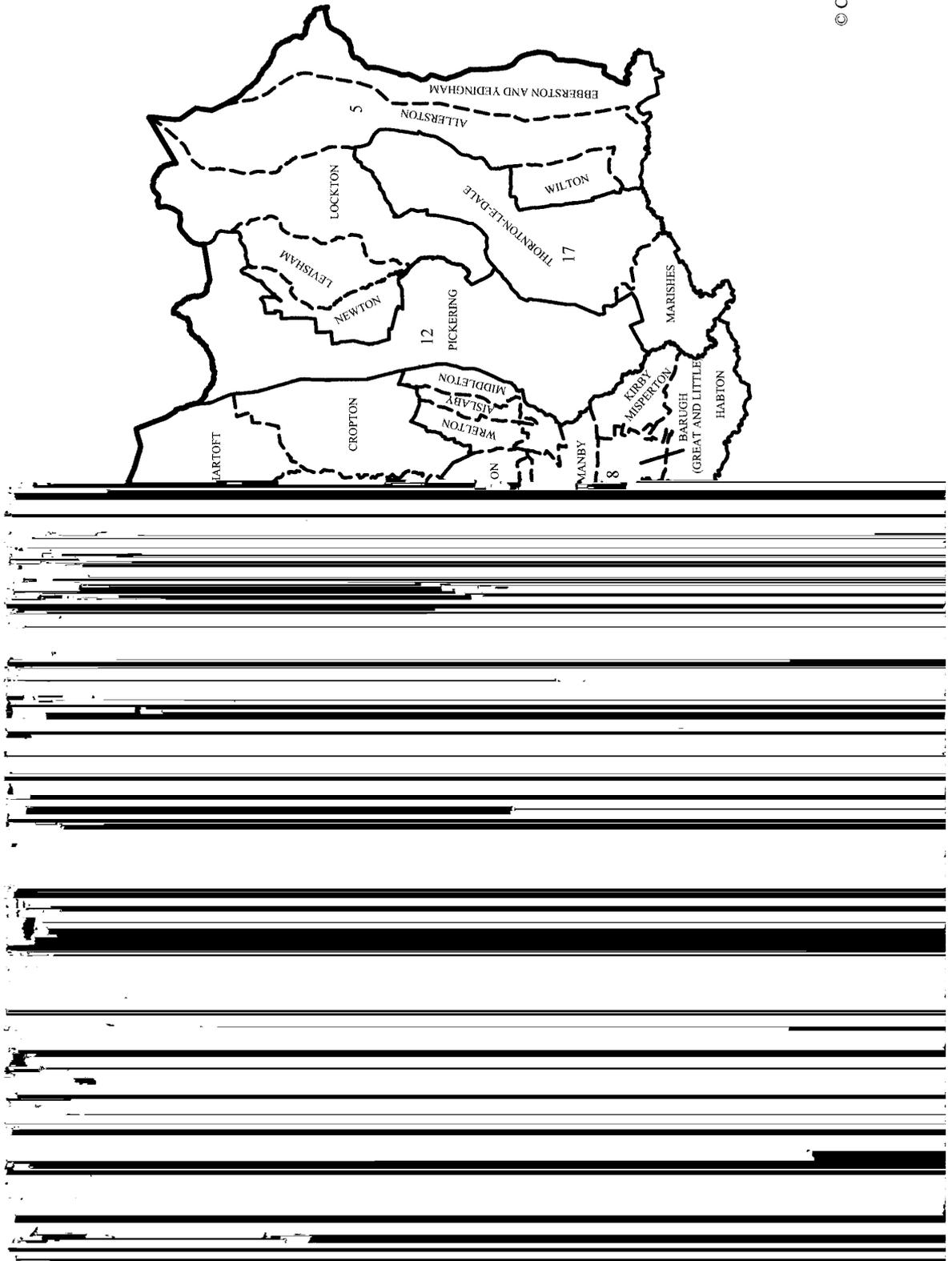




Figure 3:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Amotherby	1	1,913	1,913	11	1,940	1,940	10
2 Ampleforth	1	1,369	1,369	-21	1,377	1,377	-22
3 Birdsall	1	1,631	1,631	-5	1,645	1,645	-7
4 Dales	1	1,356	1,356	-21	1,365	1,365	-23
5 Ebberston	1	1,215	1,215	-30	1,240	1,240	-30
6 Helmsley	1	1,707	1,707	-1	1,765	1,765	0
7 Hovingham	1	2,026	2,026	17	2,100	2,100	19
8 Kirby Misperton	1	1,768	1,768	2	1,795	1,795	2
9 Kirkbymoorside	2	3,330	1,665	-4	3,440	1,720	-2
10 Malton	2	3,974	1,987	15	4,100	2,050	16
11 Norton	3	5,374	1,791	4	5,500	1,833	4
12 Pickering	3	5,501	1,834	6	5,620	1,873	6
13 Rillington	1	2,108	2,108	22	2,125	2,125	21
14 Sherburn	1	1,966	1,966	14	1,975	1,975	12
15 Sheriff Hutton	1	1,890	1,890	10	1,945	1,945	10
16 Stockton & Bossall	1	892	892	-48	920	920	-48
17 Thornton Dale	1	1,676	1,676	-3	1,705	1,705	-3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39,696</b>	—	—	<b>40,557</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,726</b>	—	—	<b>1,763</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ryedale District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Ebberston ward were relatively over-represented by 30 per cent, while electors in Malton ward were relatively under-represented by 15 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 12 representations, including a district-wide scheme from Ryedale District Council. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Ryedale in North Yorkshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were substantially based on the District Council's proposals, which achieved improved electoral equality, and provided 13 single-member wards for the rural areas, two-member wards for relatively urban areas and a three-member ward for Malton. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting seven wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Ryedale District Council should be served by 30 councillors, compared with the current 23, representing 21 wards, four more than at present;
- (b) the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, while Malton ward should retain its existing boundary;
- (c) there should be new electoral arrangements for the town councils of Norton-on-Derwent and Pickering and the parish councils of Eberston & Yedingham, Heselton, Kirkbymoorside and Welburn (York).

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Ryedale District Council should comprise 30 councillors, serving 21 wards. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 20 of the

21 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to remain constant over the next five years.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 33 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Ryedale District Council and the Commission.

### **Ryedale District Council**

22 The District Council broadly welcomed the draft recommendations, including the increase in the number of councillors to 30, seven more than at present. However, the District Council asked us to have regard to concerns expressed by residents from the parishes of Foston, Levisham, Scampston, Thorpe Bassett and Westow. In addition, they put forward alternative ward names for Stockton & Bossall ward and the proposed Pickering North parish ward.

### **North Yorkshire County Council**

23 The County Council objected to our draft recommendations on the grounds that “the review of electoral arrangements in each district has been carried out as a self-contained exercise, without regard for its implications for the electoral arrangements for the County Council”.

24 It reiterated its view that “significant benefits” will flow to local electors from wards and divisions having shared boundaries, wherever practicable, as it believed that a high degree of coterminosity is a prerequisite for securing effective and convenient local government and to properly reflect the identities and interests of local communities. It argued that more enduring electoral arrangements would have been achieved if the implications for county electoral divisions had been recognised earlier in the review process, allowing district and county reviews to be carried out concurrently.

### **The Conservative Group on the District Council**

25 The Conservative Group on the District Council (‘the Conservatives’) supported retaining

the existing number of councillors in Ryedale and argued that our draft recommendations divided communities. They stated that they had considered alternative warding arrangements, based on a council size of 23, but had been unable to develop a scheme that achieved a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

### **Members of Parliament**

26 John Greenway MP opposed our proposed increase in council size.

### **Parish Councils**

27 We received 21 representations from parish and town councils, five of which opposed increasing the council size by seven members, to 30. Gilling East, Cawton, Coulton & Grimston Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations, and argued that modifications to the existing electoral arrangements were unnecessary. Foston & Thornton-le-Clay, Gate Helmsley & Upper Helmsley and Sheriff Hutton parish councils opposed our draft recommendation to include Foston parish in Stockton & Bossall ward. Gate Helmsley & Upper Helmsley Parish Council also proposed alternative ward names for Stockton & Bossall ward.

28 Claxton & Sand Hutton and Whitwell with Crambe parish councils proposed including the parishes of Crambe, Foston and Whitwell in Sheriff Hutton ward. Harome Parish Council argued that Harome should be retained in Helmsley ward, while Nawton Parish Council proposed that the parishes of Nawton and Beadlam should be included in Kirkbymoorside ward.

29 Levisham and Lockton parish councils opposed our draft recommendation to include Levisham parish in the new Cropton ward, arguing that both parishes have strong links with Thornton Dale ward. Newton-upon-Rawcliffe Parish Council also opposed our draft recommendations for this area, but proposed that Levisham and Lockton parishes should form part of the new Cropton ward. Norton-on-Derwent Town Council supported our

draft recommendations to ward Norton into two district wards, but opposed warding the parish for town council purposes.

<sup>30</sup> Pickering Town Council supported our draft recommendation to form a new Pickering North parish ward, represented by one town councillor, and supported our proposal to include this parish ward in the new Cropton ward. It also supported the proposed increase in the number of district councillors representing the town from three to four, but opposed warding the southern part of the parish. It supported the District Council's proposal that the proposed Pickering North parish ward should be named Stape.

<sup>31</sup> Westow Parish Council argued that Westow and Langton parishes should be represented in a single district ward, and supported the District Council's proposals to combine the proposed Birdsall and Kirkham wards to form a new two-member ward. Thorpe Bassett Parish Meeting opposed our draft recommendation to include Thorpe Bassett in the new Wolds ward.

<sup>32</sup> Ebberston with Yedingham Parish Council supported the proposed warding of the parish, but put forward a minor boundary modification to Yedingham parish ward. Heselton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to include the new Heselton East and Heselton West parish wards in separate district wards. Welburn Parish Council (York) supported our proposed Crambeck parish ward, although it put forward a minor boundary modification.

<sup>34</sup> A councillor supported our proposals to combine Heselton East parish ward with Sherburn ward and to include Scagglethorpe and Settrington in the new Wolds ward. However, he argued that the parishes of Thorpe Bassett and Wintringham should continue to be represented with Rillington ward. Another district councillor proposed Foston parish should be included in Sheriff Hutton ward, and suggested consequential boundary modifications to improve electoral equality in Stockton & Bossall ward. In addition, he proposed an alternative ward name for Stockton & Bossall ward.

## Other Representations

<sup>33</sup> A further eight representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. Of these, five councillors opposed our draft recommendations to increase the council size by seven members. A county councillor argued that rural areas should be represented by single-member wards. He opposed our draft recommendation to divide Heselton between two district wards, and proposed that Levisham parish should be represented with Lockton parish in Thornton Dale ward. He also described the proposed Wolds ward as "sensible". A district councillor also argued that the parishes of Levisham and Lockton should both be included in Thornton Dale ward. One councillor and a local resident proposed combining Birdsall and Kirkham wards to form a new two-member ward, to enable the parishes of Langton and Westow to be represented in a single ward.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

35 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Ryedale is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities 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”.

36 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

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

38 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and

over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

### Electorate Forecasts

39 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 2 per cent from 39,696 to 40,577 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

40 We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

### Council Size

41 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government.

42 Ryedale District Council is at present served by 23 members. At Stage One, the District Council proposed an increase in council size to 30. It said that it had lost 19 councillors to the City of York as a result of local government reorganisation in 1996, and that it did not consider 23 members was a sufficient number to draw on. In particular, it said that it had subsequently experienced significant difficulty in finding sufficient councillors to fulfil the role of representing the council on outside community groups. It judged that 30 members represented the best possible balance between the number of members required to effectively operate local government in Ryedale, secure equality of representation throughout the district and to

satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of distinct local communities covering very substantial areas.

43 While we are cautious about proposing increases in council size, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded in our draft recommendations report that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria, particularly in respect of securing effective and convenient local government, would best be met by a council of 30 members. Nevertheless, we stated that we would welcome further evidence on council size during Stage Three.

44 During Stage Three, the District Council supported the proposed increase in the number of councillors from 23 to 30. However, the Conservatives, John Greenway MP, five parish councils, two county councillors and three district councillors opposed our draft recommendation to increase the council size. The Conservatives argued that the current council size achieves effective and convenient local government, that adjoining local authorities had not received similar numbers of additional councillors and that parties may find difficulties in contesting a greater number of wards. However, they also stated that they had considered alternative warding arrangements based on 23 members, but had been unable to develop a scheme that achieved a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

45 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, and note that a number of respondents objected to the proposed increase in council size, although no alternative warding arrangements for the retention of the existing number of councillors were put forward at either Stage One or Stage Three. While we recognise that an additional seven councillors constitutes a significant increase in council size, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendation on council size in the light of Stage Three responses. We do not accept the argument that, in determining council size for a given area, the number of councillors we may recommend for adjoining authorities is a relevant consideration. Nor do we believe that we should base our recommendations on the extent to which they may be convenient to local political parties.

46 Accordingly, we remain persuaded that the balance of evidence supports increasing the number

of councillors in Ryedale to 30, which we consider would achieve the best balance between the number of members required to facilitate effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for a council size of 30 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

47 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide scheme from the District Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

48 The Council's proposals were for an increase in council size from 23 to 30, with a predominance of single-member wards in the rural area, two-member wards for relatively urban areas and a three-member ward for Malton. The proposals resulted in improvement to electoral equality, with the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average being reduced from nine to one. This level of electoral equality would marginally deteriorate by 2003, with the number of electors per councillor varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in two wards. In view of this improved level of electoral equality, and the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, we decided that we should base our recommendations on the District Council's scheme. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. On balance, we decided to move away from the District Council's proposals in five areas.

49 As stated earlier, North Yorkshire County Council objected to our draft recommendations. It argued that the Commission's approach was likely to lead to "significant reductions" in the existing level of coterminosity, and urged us to change the review process so that district and county council reviews could be carried out concurrently during the Stage One consultation period.

50 The approach we have adopted in our PERs of two-tier county areas is the same as that taken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission. That is to first review the electoral arrangements of each of the district council areas in

the county and then, once the necessary electoral change orders have been made for the districts, to review those of the County Council. This ensures that, as required by Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, our recommendations for electoral division boundaries have regard to district ward boundaries, and that these are fixed and not subject to change.

51 This is an issue which has arisen in a number of review areas. It is indicative of the tensions which can arise between the achievement of electoral equality within the individual districts of a county, each of whose electoral arrangements can vary significantly in terms of councillor:elector ratios and ward sizes, and across county council electoral divisions, while also seeking some measure of coterminosity between the two. These tensions are not readily reconciled.

52 In certain cases, it has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe that ward patterns and sizes that would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be an approach the Commission should take. As a Commission, we rely heavily on local authorities and others to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved. We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria, and achieve a high level of electoral equality.

53 Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and district wards is capable of being conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of county council electoral arrangements.

54 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Dales, Ebberston, Pickering and Thornton Dale wards;
- (b) Ampleforth, Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside wards;
- (c) Amotherby, Hovingham and Kirby Misperton wards;

- (d) Malton and Norton wards;
- (e) Rillington and Sherburn wards;
- (f) Birdsall, Sheriff Hutton and Stockton & Bossall wards.

55 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, at Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Dales, Ebberston, Pickering and Thornton Dale wards**

56 Dales and Ebberston wards comprise sparsely populated rural areas, while Pickering and Thornton Dale wards combine relatively urban areas with surrounding rural settlements. Pickering is represented by three members, while Dales, Ebberston and Thornton Dale are all single-member wards. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Dales, Ebberston, Pickering and Thornton Dale wards varies from the district average by 21 per cent, 30 per cent, 6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively under a council size of 23. This level of electoral inequality is expected to continue over the next five years.

57 At Stage One the District Council and Pickering Town Council both proposed dividing the town into three district and parish wards, with the area to the north of Bradley Road forming part of a new Cropton ward, and with Pickering Beck forming the boundary between Pickering East and Pickering West wards. The District Council also proposed retaining the majority of the existing Dales ward, although it proposed that Cropton parish, currently in Dales ward, should be combined with adjoining parishes to form a new Cropton ward. It proposed combining Lockton parish and parishes to its west, currently in Ebberston ward, with Cropton ward, with the remaining parishes in Ebberston ward being in Thornton Dale ward. The Liberal Democrats supported combining Hartoft parish with Dales ward.

58 In our draft recommendations report, we substantially endorsed the District Council's proposals. However, in order to improve electoral equality, we proposed including the parishes of Marton and Normanby in the new Cropton ward. We also proposed that Lockton parish should be represented in Thornton Dale ward, to improve electoral equality in Cropton and Thornton Dale

wards. We also considered alternative electoral arrangements for the proposed Dales ward as it would retain a high level of electoral imbalance, with 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. However, we concluded that this was unavoidable, given that Dales ward is a sparsely populated ward covering a large area, with no obvious links with adjoining areas, and we did not consider that alternative warding arrangements would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

59 At Stage Three the District Council broadly supported our draft recommendations in this area, although it expressed concern that the parishes of Levisham and Lockton would not be represented in a single ward. Levisham and Lockton parish councils, a county councillor and a district councillor proposed that both parishes should be represented with Thornton Dale ward, while Newton-upon-Rawcliffe Parish Council proposed combining the parishes of Levisham and Lockton in the new Cropton ward. A county councillor also expressed concern that Thornton Dale ward would be represented by two-members, arguing that the ward is predominantly rural and that rural areas should be represented by single-member wards.

60 In addition, Pickering Town Council supported our proposals to create a new Pickering North parish ward and to include it in Cropton ward. It also supported our proposal to increase the number of district councillors representing Pickering town by one, to four. However, it opposed our proposal to ward the urban part of the parish, arguing that a four-member ward would better reflect the interests of the town.

61 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our draft recommendation for Dales ward has achieved a degree of local support. We consider that this proposal achieves an optimal balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and are content to endorse our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

62 However, our proposal to include Levisham parish in the new Cropton ward has not achieved a high degree of local support and, in the light of further evidence received, we have been persuaded that Levisham parish should be represented in Thornton Dale ward. While this boundary modification will result in a relatively high degree of electoral imbalance, we consider that Levisham

and Lockton parishes share strong community ties, while there are poor communication links between Levisham parish and the proposed Cropton ward, given that Newton Dale forms an effective barrier between them.

63 We have considered Newton-upon-Rawcliffe Parish Council's proposal to include Lockton parish in the new Cropton ward, but consider that Levisham and Lockton parishes should be united in Thornton Dale ward, as discussed earlier. We have also considered the concerns expressed by a county councillor regarding Thornton Dale ward being represented by two members, but are not persuaded that a two-member ward would adversely impact on the interests of electors in Thornton Dale ward, and consider that our proposal for Thornton Dale ward, subject to the modification detailed above, enjoys a measure of local support.

64 While we note that Pickering Town Council has opposed our draft recommendations to ward the urban part of the parish, we consider that this is unavoidable given its entitlement to four councillors, under a council size of 30. As indicated in our *Guidance*, we consider that "the number of electors per councillor 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 been persuaded that this case has been made in respect of Pickering. We are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendations for Pickering as final.

65 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Pickering East, Pickering West and Thornton Dale wards would not vary by more than 4 per cent from the district average, while the number of electors per councillor in Cropton and Dales wards would vary by 12 per cent and 13 per cent from the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

### **Ampleforth, Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside wards**

66 Ampleforth, Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside wards are situated in the north-west of the district, at the edge of the North York Moors National Park. Under the current arrangements, Ampleforth and

Helmsley wards are both single-member wards and Kirkbymoorside returns two members. The number of electors per councillor varies in Ampleforth, Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside wards by 21 per cent, 1 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average respectively.

67 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the majority of Helmsley ward with the majority of the existing Ampleforth ward and the parishes of Beadlam and Nawton, currently in Kirkbymoorside ward, to form a revised Helmsley ward. While it noted that the proposed Helmsley ward would combine rural and urban areas, it argued that the “rural areas naturally identify with the urban areas” in this part of the district. It also proposed that the parishes of Kirkbymoorside, Welburn (Kirkbymoorside) and Wombledon should continue to form Kirkbymoorside ward. Each ward would return two councillors.

68 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the majority of the District Council’s proposals for this area. However, we proposed modifying three proposed ward boundaries to further improve electoral equality. We proposed transferring the parishes of Oswaldkirk and Stonegrave from the proposed Ampleforth ward to the proposed Sinnington ward, and the parishes of Byland with Wass and Oldstead from the proposed Helmsley ward to the proposed Ampleforth ward.

69 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. Harome Parish Council argued that Harome should be represented in Helmsley ward, while Nawton Parish Council argued that the parishes of Beadlam and Nawton should be included in Kirkbymoorside ward.

70 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside wards as, in our judgement, they achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and enjoy a degree of local support. We have considered the proposals put forward by Harome and Nawton parish councils, but note that both proposed boundary modifications would result in high levels of electoral inequality.

71 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Helmsley ward would vary by 3 per cent from the district average, while

the number of electors per councillor in Kirkbymoorside ward would be equal to the average.

### **Amotherby, Hovingham and Kirby Misperton wards**

72 Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Amotherby, Hovingham and Kirby Misperton wards vary by 11 per cent, 17 per cent and 2 per cent from the district average respectively, based on a council size of 23. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to improve over the next five years.

73 At Stage One the District Council proposed joining the majority of Helmsley ward with the majority of the existing Ampleforth ward and the parishes of Beadlam and Nawton, currently in Kirkbymoorside ward, to form a revised Helmsley ward. While it noted that the proposed Helmsley ward would combine rural and urban areas, it argued that the “rural areas naturally identify with the urban areas” in this part of the district. It also proposed that the parishes of Kirkbymoorside, Welburn and Wombledon should continue to form Kirkbymoorside ward. Each ward would return two councillors.

74 In our draft recommendations report we substantially endorsed the District Council’s proposals for this area, subject to a number of modifications. We proposed transferring the parishes of Marton and Normanby from the proposed Sinnington ward to the proposed Cropton ward, as indicated earlier and, as a consequence, we proposed transferring the parishes of Oswaldkirk and Stonegrave from the proposed Ampleforth ward to the proposed Sinnington ward. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Amotherby, Ampleforth, Hovingham and Kirkham wards would vary from the district average by 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent respectively, and be equal to the average in Sinnington ward.

75 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Amotherby, Ampleforth, Hovingham and Sinnington wards. However, it proposed that Kirkham ward should be combined with Birdsall ward to form a new two-member ward, on the grounds that this would better reflect the interests and identities of electors in the parishes of Langton and Westow, which under our draft recommendations would be

represented in separate wards. This proposal was supported by Westow Parish Council and a local resident. A councillor also proposed that the parishes of Langton and Westow should be represented in a single ward. The District Council proposed that this ward should be named either Derwent or Westow with Henderskelfe. Newton-upon-Rawcliffe Parish Council argued that the parishes of Marton and Normanby should be included in Sinnington ward, as proposed by the District Council at Stage One.

76 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and note that the proposed Amotherby, Ampleforth, Hovingham and Sinnington wards have achieved a measure of local support. We remain persuaded that our proposals for these wards would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and endorse our draft recommendations as final.

77 We have examined the proposals put forward by the District Council, Westow Parish Council and a local resident to combine the proposed Birdsall and Kirkham wards to form a two-member ward, and are persuaded that this proposal has merit. We note that this proposal also reflects a councillor's proposal to include the parishes of Langton and Westow in the same ward. We have considered the alternative ward names put forward by the District Council, and consider that Derwent better reflects the identities of communities that comprise the ward than Westow with Henderskelfe. We are therefore content to endorse this proposal as final.

78 We have considered the concerns expressed by Newton-upon-Rawcliffe Parish Council. However, we are not persuaded that the parishes of Marton and Normanby should be included in Sinnington ward, as the number of electors per councillor in Sinnington ward would be 17 per cent more than the average, while the number of electors per councillor in Cropton ward would be 29 per cent less than the average. We are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendations for Sinnington ward as final.

79 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Amotherby, Ampleforth, and Hovingham wards would vary by 3 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively from the district average, and be equal to the average in Sinnington ward.

## **Malton and Norton wards**

80 The towns of Malton and Norton have undergone significant growth over the last 20 years. Under current arrangements, while Norton ward enjoys reasonable electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average by 4 per cent, the number of electors per councillor in Malton ward varies by 15 per cent from the average. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to improve over the next five years, under a council size of 23.

81 In our draft recommendations for a council size of 30, we endorsed the District Council's proposal to retain Malton's existing ward boundaries, with the number of councillors being increased by one, to three. We also proposed that Norton-on-Derwent should be warded for town council purposes, with the two new parish wards forming two district wards, to be named Norton East and Norton West.

82 At Stage Three, the District Council generally endorsed our draft recommendations for Malton and Norton towns. Norton-on-Derwent Town Council supported our proposals to ward the town for district warding purposes.

83 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our draft recommendations in this area have been supported, and we are content to endorse our draft recommendations for Malton, Norton East and Norton West wards as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Norton East ward would vary by 3 per cent from the district average, while the number of electors in Malton and Norton West wards would equal the average.

## **Rillington and Sherburn wards**

84 Rillington and Sherburn wards are situated in the south-east of the district. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Rillington and Sherburn varies by 22 per cent and 14 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to improve significantly over the next five years.

85 At Stage One, the District Council proposed warding Heselton parish, as illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A, with the proposed Heselton West

parish ward being combined with the parishes of Rillington and Scampston to form a revised Rillington ward, and the proposed Heslerton East parish ward being combined with the parishes of Sherburn, Ganton and Willerby to form a revised Sherburn ward. It also proposed that the remaining parishes currently contained in the existing Rillington and Sherburn wards should form a new Wolds ward. The Liberal Democrats expressed concern about the proposed Wolds ward, arguing that the ward that would be 15 miles in length and this would be “too long a stretch for a councillor to cover”.

86 In our draft recommendations report, we were content to endorse the District Council’s proposals for Rillington and Sherburn wards. However, we shared the Liberal Democrats’ concern that the proposed Wolds ward would not provide a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Accordingly, we proposed transferring the parishes of Scagglethorpe and Settrington from the proposed Wolds ward to Birdsall ward, with the parishes of Kirby Grindalythe, Thixendale and Wharram being transferred from Birdsall ward to Wolds ward. We considered that this proposal would secure marginally better electoral equality, and that it would appear to represent a better grouping of parishes than that proposed by the District Council.

87 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Rillington, Sherburn and Wolds wards would vary by 1 per cent, 7 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average respectively.

88 At Stage Three, the District Council broadly supported our proposals for Rillington, Sherburn and Wolds wards, although it requested that we take account of the concerns of electors from the parishes of Scampston and Thorpe Bassett. Thorpe Bassett Parish Meeting argued that it has strong links with Rillington ward, while there are no such links with parishes in the proposed Wolds ward. A district councillor proposed that the parishes of Thorpe Bassett and Wintringham should be retained in Rillington ward, and that Heslerton should be wholly represented in Sherburn ward. Heslerton Parish Council and a county councillor opposed our draft recommendations to ward Heslerton parish, with the Parish Council proposing that the parish should be wholly represented in either Rillington or Sherburn wards.

89 Having carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, we note that the District Council, Thorpe Bassett Parish Meeting and a district councillor propose that Thorpe Bassett parish should be retained in Rillington ward. We note that the parish has strong communication links with Rillington ward and this boundary modification would not result in a significantly poorer level of electoral equality and, on balance, are persuaded that this proposal has merit.

90 However, we have not been persuaded to include Wintringham parish in Rillington ward, as proposed by a district councillor. We consider that Wintringham has good communication links with Wolds ward and note that, under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Rillington and Wolds wards would vary by 15 per cent and 16 per cent from the district average respectively. We have also considered the proposal to represent Heslerton parish in a single ward, as proposed by Heslerton Parish Council and a county councillor, but note that uniting Heslerton would result in high levels of electoral inequality. In addition, we consider that the proposed ward boundary between East Heslerton and West Heslerton parish wards is strong and easily identifiable. We are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to the modification detailed earlier.

91 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Rillington, Sherburn and Wolds wards would vary by 5 per cent, 7 per cent and 5 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to marginally improve over the next five years.

### **Birdsall, Sheriff Hutton and Stockton & Bossall wards**

92 The wards of Birdsall, Sheriff Hutton and Stockton & Bossall are situated in the south of the district, and are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Birdsall, Sheriff Hutton and Stockton & Bossall vary by 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 48 per cent from the district average, under a council size of 23.

93 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining Birdsall’s northern ward boundaries with Sherburn, Rillington and Norton, while transferring

Westow parish, currently in Birdsall ward, to the proposed Kirkham ward. It also proposed transferring parishes in the east of Sheriff Hutton ward to a revised Stockton & Bossall ward, with Howsham parish, currently in Sheriff Hutton ward, being transferred to the proposed Kirkham ward. In our draft recommendations report we endorsed the District Council's proposals without modification. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Birdsall, Kirkham, Sheriff Hutton and Stockton & Bossall would vary by 6 per cent, 5 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average.

94 At Stage Three the District Council also requested that we take the views of residents of Foston parish into account. Foston & Thornton-le-Clay, Gate Helmsley & Upper Helmsley and Sheriff Hutton parish councils and a district councillor opposed our draft recommendation to include Foston parish in Stockton & Bossall ward, arguing that the parish has strong links with Thornton-le-Clay parish in Sheriff Hutton ward. As a consequence, the district councillor proposed combining either Howsham or Scrayingham parishes with Stockton & Bossall ward to offer improved electoral equality.

95 Claxton & Sand Hutton and Whitwell with Crambe parish councils proposed that the parishes of Crambe, Foston and Whitwell should be included in Sheriff Hutton ward. In addition, the District Council and a district councillor proposed that Stockton & Bossall ward be renamed South Ryedale, while Gate Helmsley & Upper Helmsley Parish Council proposed the ward be named Ryedale South West or Sand Hutton. As already indicated in paragraph 75, the District Council, Westow Parish Council and a local resident proposed combining Birdsall and Kirkham wards in a new two-member ward. In addition, a councillor expressed concern that the parishes of Langton and Westow would not be contained in a single ward.

96 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, and note that a number of alternative boundary modifications have been put forward. As indicated in paragraph 77, we have been persuaded that there is merit in combining Birdsall and Kirkham wards to form a new two-member Derwent ward.

97 We note that the District Council, Gate Helmsley & Upper Helmsley Parish Council and a district councillor put forward alternative ward

names for the proposed Stockton & Bossall ward. We consider that there is merit in these proposals, as the current ward name would not appear to

## Conclusions

102 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Levensham parish should be represented in Thornton Dale ward, as proposed by Levensham and Lockton parish councils, a county councillor and a district councillor, which also reflects concerns expressed by the District Council;
- (b) Thorpe Bassett parish should be included in Rillington ward, as proposed by Thorpe Bassett Parish Meeting and a district councillor, which also reflects concerns expressed by the District Council;
- (c) the proposed Birdsall and Kirkham wards should be combined to form a revised two-member Derwent ward, as proposed by the District Council, Westow Parish Council and a local resident;
- (d) the proposed Stockton & Bossall ward should be renamed Ryedale South West.

103 We conclude that, in Ryedale:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 23 to 30;
- (b) there should be 20 wards, three more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

104 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

105 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from nine to two, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would remain constant over the next five years. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

*Figure 4 :  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	23	30	23	30
Number of wards	17	20	17	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,726	1,323	1,763	1,353
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	9	2	8	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	5	0

### **Final Recommendation**

Ryedale District Council should comprise 30 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and at Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

## **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

106 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Heslerton, Norton-on-Derwent and Pickering to reflect the proposed district wards.

107 In addition, we put forward alternative parish warding arrangements for Ebberston & Yedingham, Kirkbymoorside and Welburn (York) in the light of representations received at Stage One. Our proposed district warding arrangements would not result in change to these areas and we were content to put forward the town and parish councils' proposals for consultation.

108 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Heslerton Parish Council should in future comprise seven parish councillors serving two new parish wards. The parish wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundary between Rillington and Sherburn wards. At Stage Three, Heslerton Parish Council opposed our proposal to create new Heslerton East and Heslerton West parish wards, arguing that warding the parish would lead to difficulties in "keeping the two communities together". We have carefully considered the Parish Council's concerns, but propose endorsing our draft recommendations to ward Heslerton parish in order to facilitate our district warding arrangements, as discussed in paragraph 90, as we have not been persuaded that our proposals will adversely impact on the interests and identities of communities to a significant degree.

### **Final Recommendation**

Heslerton Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Heslerton East (returning three councillors) and Heslerton West (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A3 at Appendix A.

109 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Norton-on-Derwent Town Council should comprise 12 town councillors, as at present, serving two new parish wards. These wards would be coterminous with the two proposed district wards for the town. At Stage Three, Norton-on-Derwent Town Council supported our proposals to ward the town for district purposes, but objected to the wards being effected at town council level. However, as indicated previously, Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards. Accordingly, we endorse our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Norton-on-Derwent Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Norton East and Norton West (each returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A4 at Appendix A.

110 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Pickering Town Council should in future comprise 13 town councillors representing three new parish wards, and that the parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries between Cropton, Pickering East and Pickering West. At Stage Three, Pickering Town Council supported our proposals to create a new Pickering North parish ward, but opposed warding the part of Pickering town south of Bradley Road, arguing that the urban area forms a cohesive community. In addition, the District Council and Pickering Town Council proposed that Pickering North parish ward should be renamed Stape.

111 While we note that Pickering Town Council has opposed warding the urban part of the parish, we consider that this is unavoidable given its entitlement to four councillors under a council size of 30, as indicated in paragraph 60. However, we endorse the proposal that the proposed Pickering North parish ward should be renamed Stape, as we consider that it better reflects the interests and identities of electors from the northern part of the parish.

### **Final Recommendation**

Pickering Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Pickering East (returning six councillors), Pickering West (returning six councillors) and Stape (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

112 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Kirkbymoorside Town Council should in future comprise nine councillors to reflect the views of the Town Council. At Stage Three, no representations were received regarding electoral arrangements for Kirkbymoorside town, and we are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Kirkbymoorside Town Council should comprise nine councillors, two more than at present. We are not recommending that the town should be warded.

113 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Welburn parish (York) should be divided into two wards and that the council size should be increased by one councillor. At Stage Three, Welburn Parish Council supported our proposals to create a new Crambeck parish ward, but suggested that Station Road would form a better parish ward boundary. We are content to endorse this minor boundary modification, but otherwise confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Welburn Parish Council (York) should comprise six councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards: Welburn ward (returning five councillors) and Crambeck ward (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries are as illustrated and named on Map A5.

114 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Ebberston & Yedingham parish be divided into three parish wards. We also proposed that the council should continue to comprise seven councillors. At Stage Three, Ebberston with Yedingham Parish Council supported our draft recommendation to ward the parish, but stated that Abbey Farm has strong links with Yedingham parish ward, and argued that the proposed parish ward boundary should be modified accordingly. We are content to endorse these proposals as our final recommendations, as illustrated on Map A2 at Appendix A.

### **Final Recommendation**

Ebberston & Yedingham Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Bickley (returning one councillor), Ebberston (returning five councillors) and Yedingham (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries are as illustrated and named on Map A2.

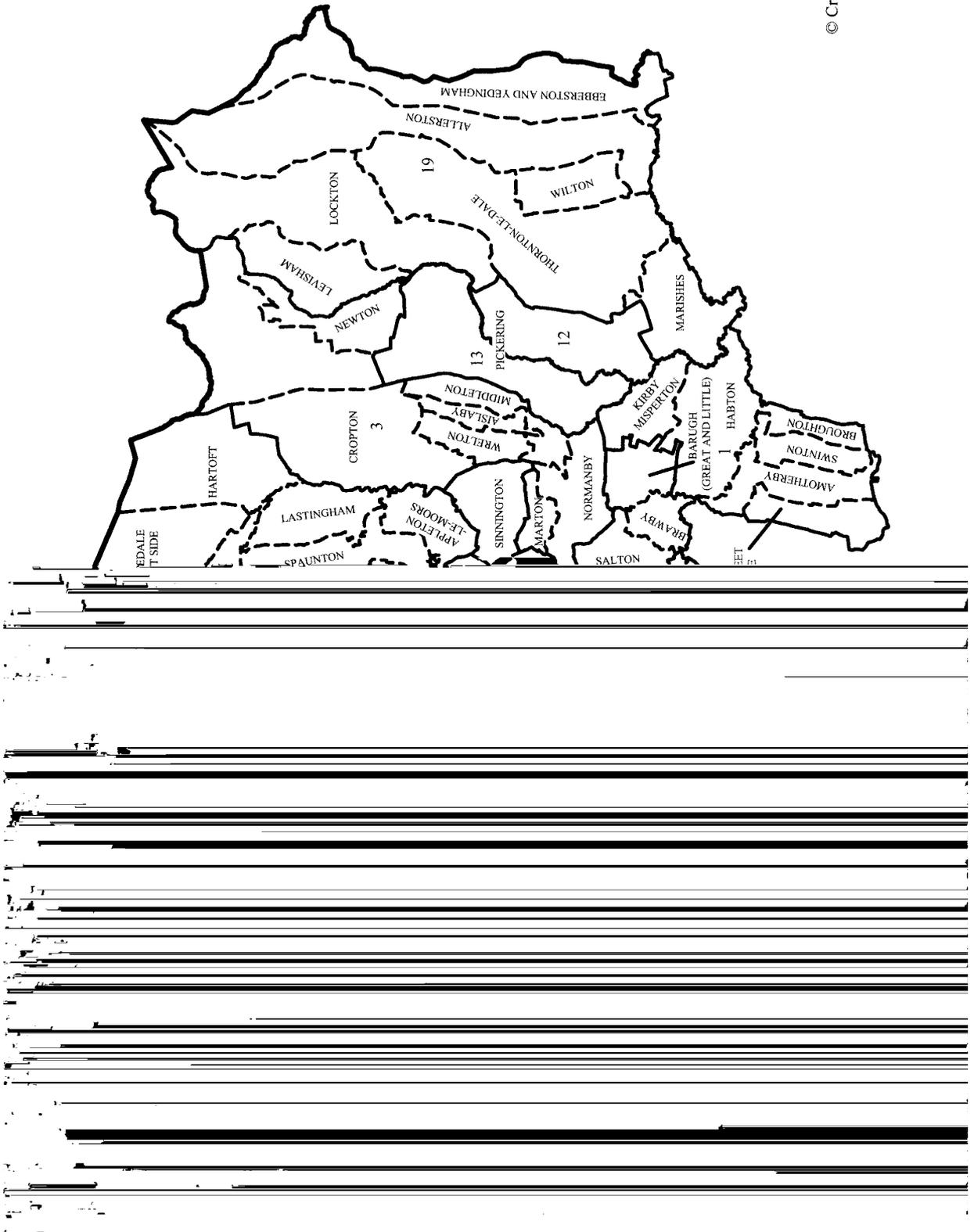
115 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

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

Map 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Ryedale

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## 6. NEXT STEPS

116 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Ryedale and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

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

118 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport  
and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



# APPENDIX A

## Final Recommendations for Ryedale: Detailed Mapping

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

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4 and A5 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Ebberston & Yedingham parish.

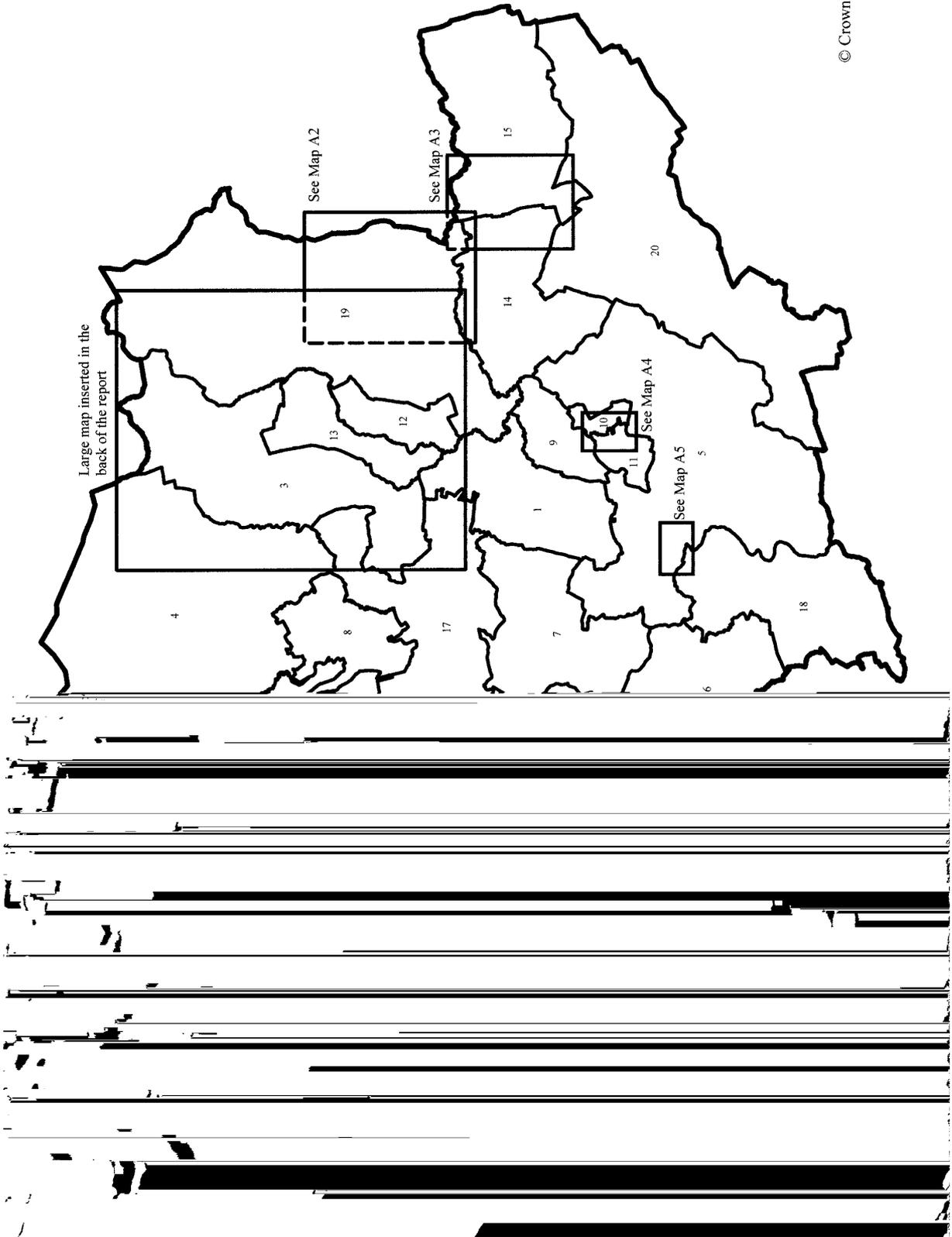
**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Heslerton parish.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed warding of Norton-on-Derwent town.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed warding of Welburn parish (York).

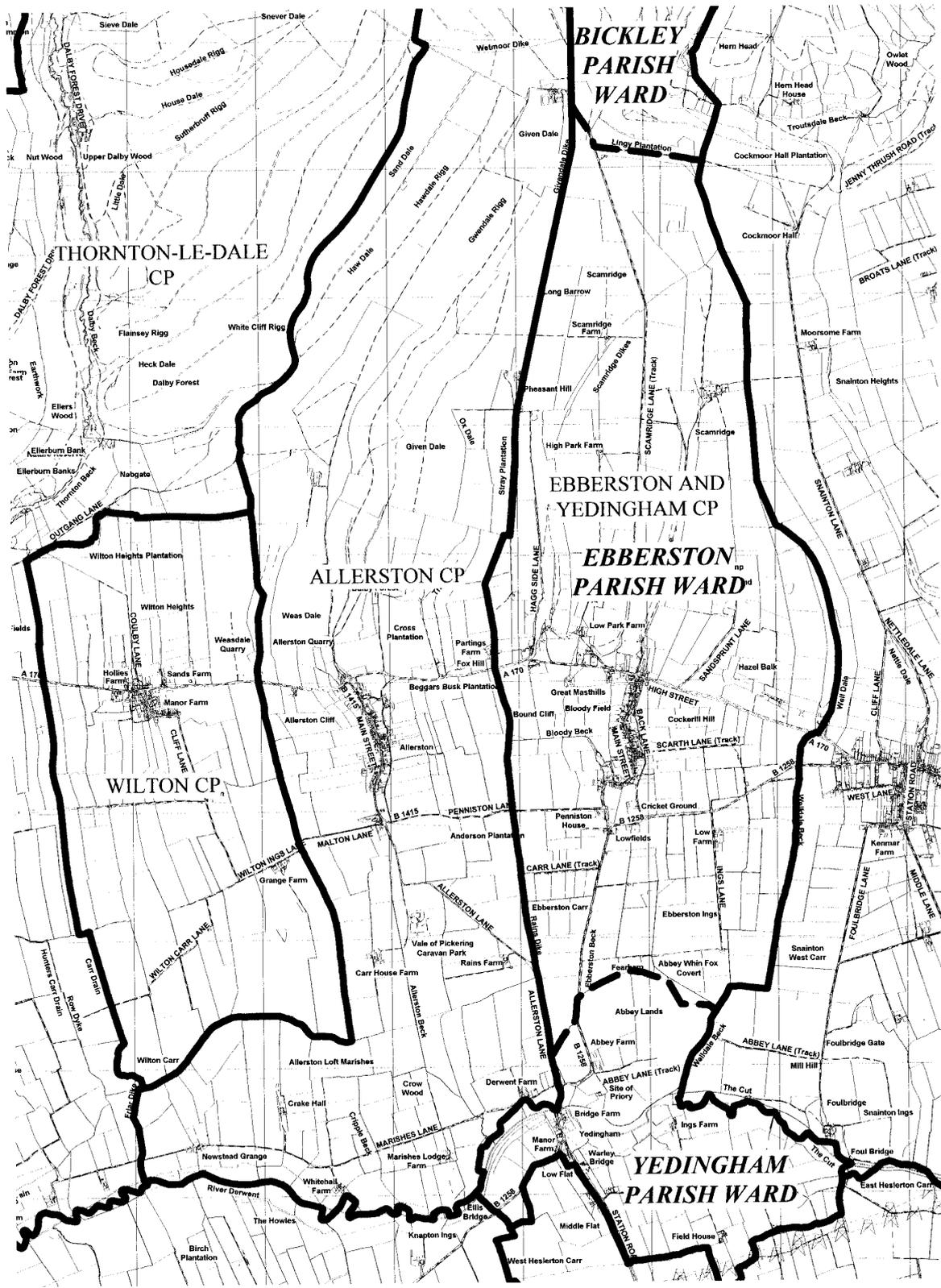
The **large map** inserted at the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Pickering town.

Map A1:  
Final Recommendations for Ryedale: Key Map



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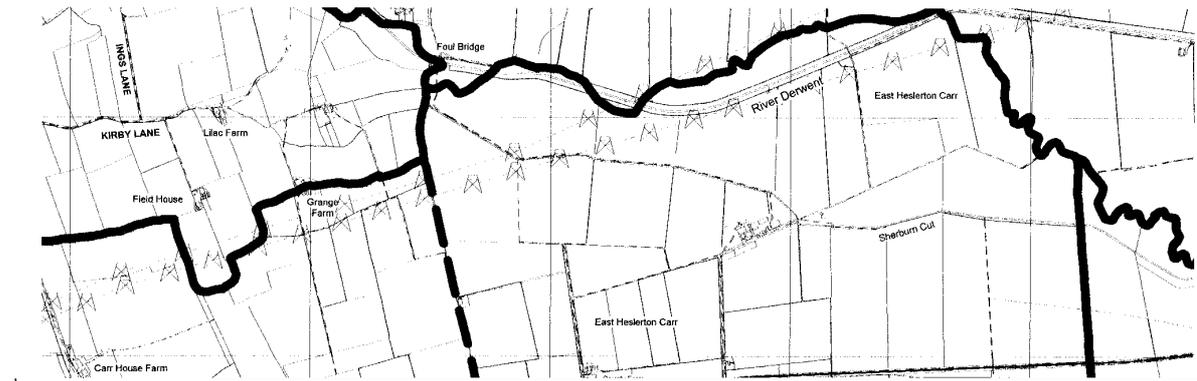
Map A2:  
Proposed Warding of Eberston & Yedingham Parish



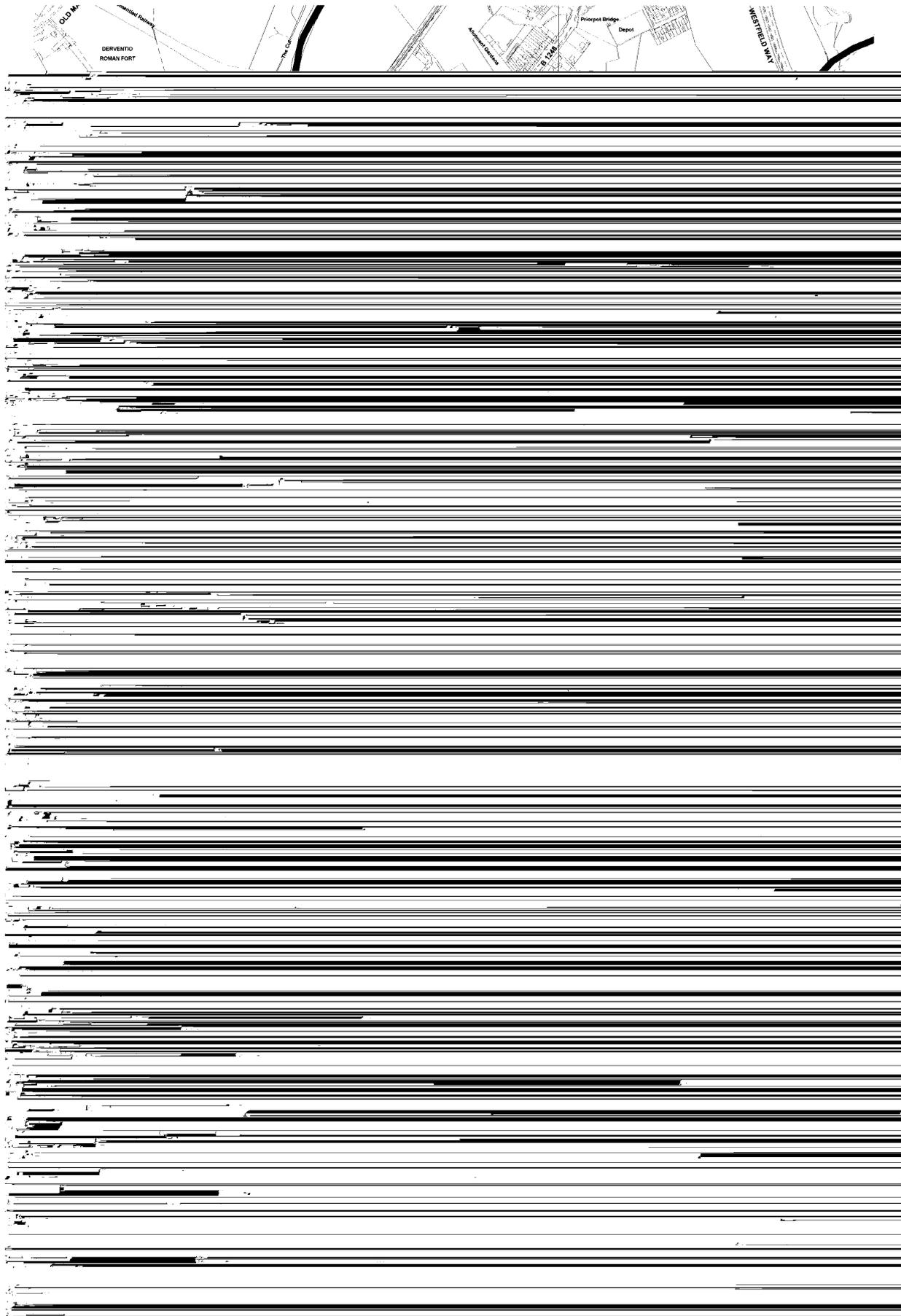
KEY	
EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY	—————
PROPOSED PARISH WARD BOUNDARY	—————
PROPOSED PARISH WARD NAME	—————
	<b>BICKLEY PARISH WARD</b>

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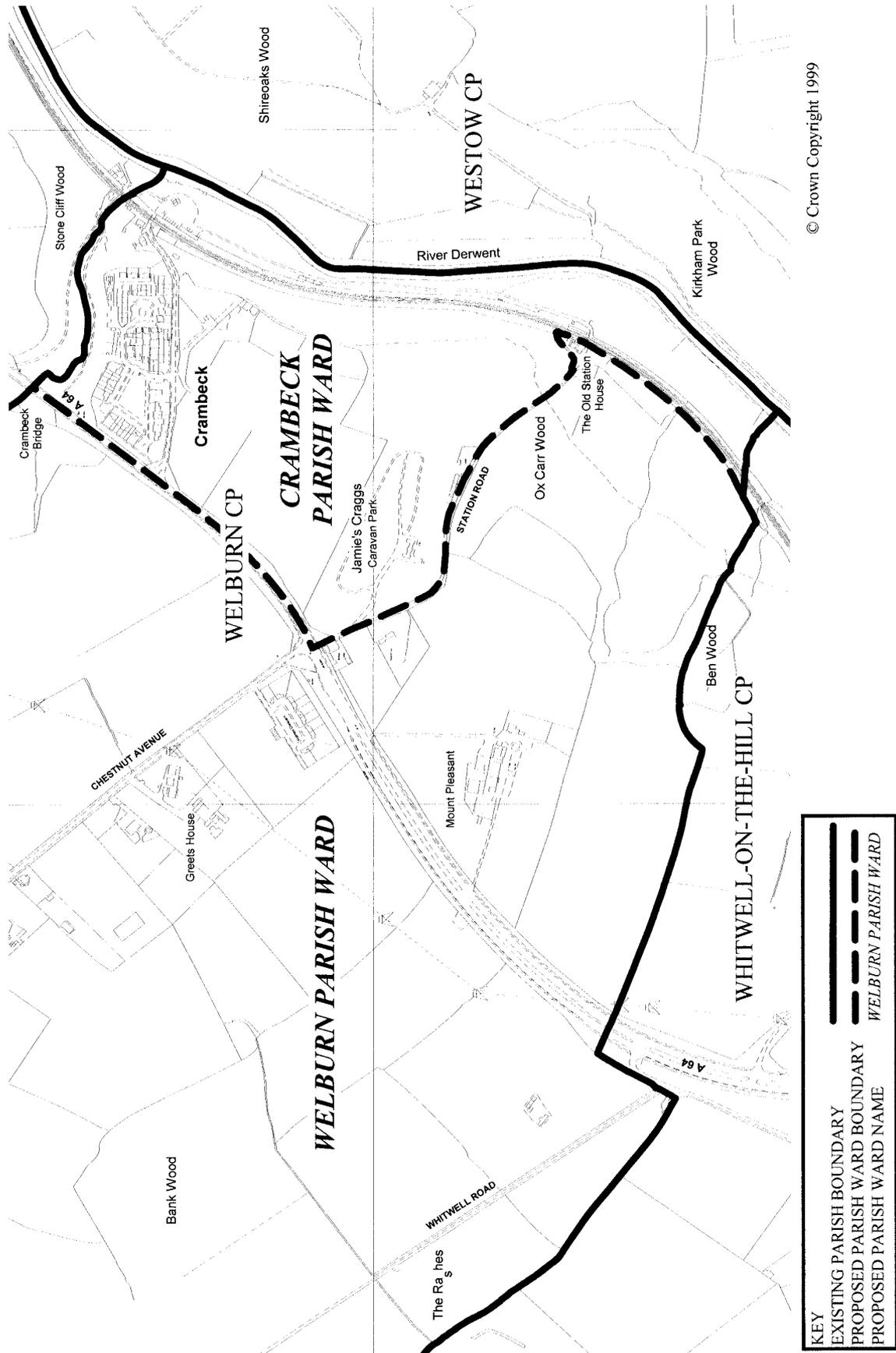
Map A3:  
Proposed Warding of Heselerton Parish



*Map A4:  
Proposed Warding of Norton-on-Derwent Town*



Map A5:  
Proposed Warding of Welburn Parish (York)



# APPENDIX B

## Draft Recommendations for Ryedale

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only four wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other changes from draft to final recommendations, which are not included in Figures B1 and B2, are that we propose to rename Stockton & Bossall ward as Ryedale South West, Pickering North parish ward as Stape and combine the proposed Birdsall and Kirkham wards to form a revised two-member Derwent ward.

*Figure B1:*

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Amotherby	1	Amotherby ward (part – the parishes of Amotherby, Appleton-le-Street with Easthorpe, Broughton and Swinton); Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Habton and Kirby Misperton)	Map 2
2	Ampleforth	1	Ampleforth ward (part – the parishes of Ampleforth, Byland with Wass and Oldstead); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Cawton, Coulton, Gilling East, Grimstone and Scackleton)	Map 2
3	Birdsall	1	Birdsall ward (part – the parishes of Acklam, Birdsall, Burythorpe, Langton, Leavening and Scrayingham parishes); Rillington ward (part – the parishes of Scagglethorpe and Settrington)	Map 2
4	Cropton	1	Dales ward (part – Cropton parish); Ebberston ward (part – the parishes of Levisham and Newton-upon-Rawcliffe); Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Aislaby, Marton, Middleton, Normanby and Wrelton); Pickering ward (part – Pickering North ward of Pickering parish as proposed)	Map 2

*continued overleaf*

Figure B1 (continued):  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)	Map reference
5 Dales	1	Dales ward (part – the parishes of Appleton-le-Moors, Bransdale, Fadmoor, Farndale East, Farndale West, Gillamoore, Hartoft, Hutton-le-Hole, Lastingham, Rosedale East Side, Rosedale West Side and Spaunton)	Map 2
6 Helmsley	2	Ampleforth ward (part – the parishes of Cold Kirby, Hawnbly, Old Byland & Scawton and Sproxton); Helmsley ward (part – the parishes of Helmsley, Pockley and Rievaulx); Kirkbymoorside ward (part – the parishes of Beadlam and Nawton)	Map 2
7 Hovingham	1	Amotherby ward (part – Barton-le-Street parish); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Fryton, Hovingham, Slingsby and Terrington)	Map 2
8 Kirkbymoorside	2	Kirkbymoorside ward (part – the parishes of Kirkbymoorside, Welburn (Kirkbymoorside) and Wombleton)	Map 2
9 Kirkham	1	Amotherby ward (the parishes of Bulmer, Coneysthorpe, Henderskelfe, Huttons Ambo and Welburn (York)); Birdsall ward (part – Westow parish); Sheriff Hutton ward (part – Howsham parish)	Map 2
10 Malton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Malton parish)	Map 2
11 Norton East	2	Norton East ward of Norton-on-Derwent parish as proposed	Maps 2 and A4
12 Norton West	2	Norton West ward of Norton-on-Derwent parish as proposed	Maps 2 and A4
13 Pickering East	2	Pickering East ward of Pickering parish as proposed	Large map proposed
14 Pickering West	2	Pickering West ward of Pickering parish as proposed	Large map proposed
15 Rillington	1	Rillington ward (part – the parishes of Rillington and Scampston, and Heselton West ward of Heselton parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A3
16 Sherburn	1	Sherburn ward (part – the parishes of Ganton, Sherburn and Willerby); Rillington ward (part – Heselton East ward of Heselton parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A3

Figure B1 (continued):

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
17 Sheriff Hutton	1	Sheriff Hutton ward (part – the parishes of Flaxton, Lillings Ambo, Sheriff Hutton and Thornton-le-Clay)	Map 2
18 Sinnington	1	Kirby Misperton ward (part – the parishes of Barugh (Great & Little), Brawby, Salton and Sinnington); Kirkbymoorside ward (part – Edstone parish); Helmsley ward (part – Harome parish); Hovingham ward (part – the parishes of Nunnington, Oswaldkirk, South Holme and Stonegrave)	Map 2
19 Stockton & Bossall	1	Stockton & Bossall ward (the parishes of Buttercrambe with Bossall, Claxton, Gate Helmsley, Sand Hutton, Upper Helmsley and Warthill); Sheriff Hutton ward (part – the parishes of Barton-le-Willows, Crambe, Foston, Harton and Whitwell-on-the-Hill)	Map 2
20 Thornton Dale	2	Thornton Dale ward (the parishes of Marishes and Thornton-le-Dale); Ebberston ward (part – the parishes of Allerston, Ebberston & Yedingham, Lockton and Wilton)	Maps 2 and A2
21 Wolds	1	Birdsall ward (part – the parishes of Kirby Grindalythe, Thixendale and Wharram); Rillington ward (part – the parishes of Thorpe Bassett and Wintringham); Sherburn ward (part – the parishes of Foxholes, Luttons and Weaverthorpe)	Map 2

Figure B2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Ryedale

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Amotherby	1	1,287	1,287	-3	1,285	1,285	-5
2 Ampleforth	1	1,276	1,276	-4	1,385	1,385	2
3 Birdsall	1	1,403	1,403	6	1,365	1,365	1
4 Cropton	1	1,238	1,238	-6	1,226	1,226	-9
5 Dales	1	1,154	1,154	-13	1,165	1,165	-14
6 Helmsley	2	2,563	1,282	-3	2,647	1,324	-2
7 Hovingham	1	1,347	1,347	2	1,405	1,405	4
8 Kirkbymoorside	2	2,636	1,318	0	2,710	1,355	0
9 Kirkham	1	1,258	1,258	-5	1,290	1,290	-5
10 Malton	3	3,974	1,325	0	4,100	1,367	1
11 Norton East	2	2,717	1,359	3	2,800	1,400	4
12 Norton West	2	2,657	1,329	0	2,700	1,350	0
13 Pickering East	2	2,690	1,345	2	2,750	1,375	2
14 Pickering West	2	2,730	1,365	3	2,788	1,394	3
15 Rillington	1	1,307	1,307	-1	1,313	1,313	-3
16 Sherburn	1	1,411	1,411	7	1,408	1,408	4
17 Sheriff Hutton	1	1,390	1,390	5	1,440	1,440	6
18 Sinnington	1	1,319	1,319	0	1,360	1,360	1
19 Stockton & Bossall	1	1,313	1,313	-1	1,340	1,340	-1
20 Thornton Dale	2	2,695	1,348	2	2,760	1,380	2
21 Wolds	1	1,331	1,331	1	1,340	1,340	-1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39,696</b>	—	—	<b>40,577</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,323</b>	—	—	<b>1,353</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ryedale District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.