



New electoral arrangements for Durham County Council

September 2009

Draft recommendations

Translations and other formats

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Summary

The Boundary Committee for England is an independent statutory body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of County Durham to ensure that the new unitary authority has appropriate electoral arrangements that reflect its functions and political management structure.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission, which is the body responsible for implementing our recommendations, directed us to undertake this review.

This review is being conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	17 February 2009	Submission of proposals to us
Two	8 June 2009	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	15 September 2009	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	7 December 2009	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

We received 33 representations during our initial consultation on council size. During Stage One we received 58 representations on division arrangements including a county-wide scheme from Durham County Council (henceforth referred to as the Council). The Council provided its proposals in two parts: those areas where the proposed divisions had all-party support and those areas where either Liberal Democrat or Conservative councillors did not agree with the Labour majority. We received area specific schemes from the Liberal Democrat group and the Conservative group which highlighted these areas. We received localised evidence relating to community identity from parish and town councils in the area. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral roll which is the basis for this review. The electorate forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 1.7% over this period. Although growth is expected in urban areas and in particular in Consett, the electorate in rural areas is expected to decrease.

We received a specific comment about the electorate figures in the Shildon area. This has been discussed with the Council, but is not expected to affect the electorate figures in a significant way. The Council recognise that projections for the Durham

City area are particularly difficult to estimate due to the large student population and potential fluctuations in registration. However, on the basis of the information provided we are content to accept the Council's electorate projections as the best estimate that can be made at this time and these form the basis of the draft recommendations.

Council size

We received proposals for council size ranging from 85 to 189 members. The former County Council proposed a council size of 126 members. Although this council size was supported by parish councils, local Labour groups and Kevan Jones MP (North Durham), we considered that further evidence was required in support of the Council's proposals. Subsequently, the Council provided further information justifying its proposed council size in the context of its new political management structure and the manner in which it intended to engage with local communities. On balance, the Committee were minded to adopt the Council's proposals. Therefore, during Stage One we invited representations on division arrangements based on a council of 126.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, and taking account of the level of consensus between different groups, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on those of the Council. Where we have moved away from the Council's proposals, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Durham County Council contained in the report. **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.** We will take into account all submissions received by **7 December 2009**. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Review Officer
County Durham Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk**

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

1 Introduction

1 The Electoral Commission has directed the Boundary Committee to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for the new unitary authority in County Durham. The review commenced on 15 July 2008. We wrote to the principal local authorities in County Durham (the former county and district councils) together with other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals to us on the most appropriate council size for the new council. Following our decision on council size, we invited the submission of proposals to us on the division arrangements for the new council. The submissions we received during these stages of the review have informed the draft recommendations in this report. We are now conducting a full public consultation on those recommendations.

What is an electoral review?

2 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure ‘electoral equality’, which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

3 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations.¹

4 Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Why are we conducting a review in County Durham?

5 In December 2007, the Government approved a bid from Durham County Council for a unitary authority to take over the responsibility for all local government services in those areas in County Durham formerly provided by the County Council and the six district councils. A Statutory Instrument was subsequently approved by Parliament on 25 February 2008, establishing a new County Durham unitary authority from 1 April 2009. The Electoral Commission is obliged, by law, to consider whether an electoral review is needed, following such a change in local government. Its view was that an electoral review of County Durham should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

¹ Section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Chapter 2, Section 56.

How will our recommendations affect you?

6 Our recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which electoral division you vote in, which other communities are in that division and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your electoral division name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

7 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on our draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with our draft recommendations or not. Our recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 7 December 2009. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in spring 2010. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 31 and more information can be found on our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

What is the Boundary Committee for England?

8 The Boundary Committee for England is a statutory committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Jane Earl
Joan Jones CBE
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Professor Colin Mellors

Director:

Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

9 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the unitary authority of Durham County Council we invite views on our initial thoughts, expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from anyone, relating to the number of councillors to be elected to the new authority, proposed division boundaries, division names, and parish or town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

10 Our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for County Durham is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Government Act 1992, with the need to:²

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- provide for equality of representation

11 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the divisions we put forward at the end of the review.

12 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that, in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. We aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the county of County Durham or the external boundaries or names of parish or town councils, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

14 Prior to and during the initial stages of the review, members and officers of the Committee visited County Durham and met with officers, members and parish and town councils. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 33 submissions during our initial consultation on council size for the new

² Section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Chapter 2, Section 56.

authority, and 58 representations during Stage One, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the County Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Electorate figures

15 As part of this review Durham County Council, supported by the former district councils in the county, submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2013, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1.7% over the five-year period from 2008 to 2013. Although growth is expected in urban areas and in particular in Consett, the electorate in rural areas is expected to decrease.

16 During Stage One, we received a specific comment about projected electorate figures in the Shildon area. A concern was raised that over 600 proposed dwellings had not been included in the 2013 electorate. Having sought further clarification from the Council, we are content that development is unlikely to start on these 600 proposed dwellings prior to 2013. Furthermore, we note that both increases and decreases are predicted in different parts of the Shildon area over the next five years.

17 The Council recognise that projections for the Durham City area are particularly difficult to estimate due to the large student population and potential fluctuations in registration. Although the number of electors is predicted to decrease slightly in the next five years, the Council suggests that this may result from a combination of recent data-cleansing of the electoral register and the high number of Durham University students living in these areas. In respect of the Durham City area, we recognise that areas with a large student population can sometimes vary in electorate from year to year.

18 Overall, on the basis of the information provided we are content to accept the Council's electorate projections as the best estimate that can reasonably be made at this time. We have therefore used them as the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

19 The County Durham (Structural Change) Order ('the Order') provided electoral arrangements for the new unitary council. The new unitary authority is currently operating with a council size (the term we use to describe the total number of councillors elected to any authority) of 126 members.

20 As the unitary authority is a new council, which combines responsibilities of the former county and district councils, it is necessary to consider the number of members required for the new authority to provide for effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, it is important to consider this without being bound by the former number of county and district councillors for County Durham, and to consider how the new authority is managed and how it intends to engage with and empower its local communities.

21 At the beginning of the electoral review, we consulted locally on the most appropriate council size for the authority and received 33 submissions. Overall, there was a lack of consensus in the proposals received during this stage and we received proposals for six different council sizes. These ranged from 85 to 189 elected

members, and several respondents proposed a council size of 126, (as provided by the Order).

22 The Council proposed a council size of 126. This council size was supported by eight parish councils, the Peterlee Labour Party, the Durham Constituency Labour Party and by Kevan Jones MP (North Durham). In general, however, the submissions provided little evidence to support any of the proposed council sizes. While the Council had conducted a consultation on aspects of the new unitary authority including Action Area Partnerships, we were unable to gauge the scale or the nature of this exercise. Although it outlined the proposed roles and responsibilities of members, we were not persuaded that sufficient consideration had been given to how this council size would work within the Council's proposed governance structure.

23 Although the issue of councillor workload was raised in a number of submissions in addition to that from the Council, this was not explored in the submissions or examined in conjunction with a political management structure. Instead, many respondents based their proposals on achieving a councillor:elector ratio of approximately 1:3,000 or addressing issues of rural sparsity in the west of the County.

24 Following a meeting between Committee members and councillors and officers at the authority in December 2008, the County Council made an additional submission in February 2009. In this submission the Council provided further evidence in support of its proposal for a council size of 126 elected members. The Council's reasons for proposing 126 councillors were based predominantly on the workload and varied roles of councillors. The Council considered that the workload resulting from a council size of 90 or 110 members would place an unreasonable burden on councillors. It asserted that a council size of 126 councillors was necessary to ensure community representation and the effectiveness of the council in discharging its responsibilities.

25 The Council's proposal set out a governance structure of a cabinet of 10 councillors, including a Leader and Deputy Leader. The cabinet will be supported by eight additional councillors. The Council also emphasised the importance of the full council in decision making. The full council would meet 10 times each year, with the cabinet holding an additional 10 meetings each year.

26 Based on the information provided by the Council we are minded to recommend a council size of 126 elected members for the new County Durham unitary authority. Subsequently, during Stage One we invited representations on division arrangements based on a council size of 126. We are of the view that a council size of around 126 members would provide for effective and convenient local government in the context of the new Council's internal political management structure and will facilitate the representational role of unitary councillors.

Electoral fairness

27 As discussed in the introduction to this report, the prime aim of an electoral review is to achieve electoral fairness within a local authority.

28 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

29 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The county average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county (394,940 in December 2008 and 401,525 by December 2013) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 126 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 3,134 in 2008 and 3,187 by 2013.

30 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in six of the 65 divisions will vary by more than 10% from the average across the county by 2013. The divisions that vary by more than 10% are discussed in further detail below. However, overall, we are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our draft recommendations for County Durham.

General analysis

31 During Stage One, we received 58 submissions, including a county-wide scheme from the Council. The Council provided its proposals in two parts: those areas where the proposed divisions had all-party support and those areas where either Liberal Democrat or Conservative councillors did not agree with the majority group.

32 We received area specific schemes from the Liberal Democrat group and the Conservative group which highlighted the areas where they did not agree with the Council. We also received submissions from the City of Durham Constituency Labour Party and the North West Durham Constituency Labour Party in support of the Council's proposals. A number of unitary councillors also submitted their views on particular areas. The Council secured consensus among its councillors for approximately two-thirds of the divisions. Those divisions where there was disagreement were mainly centred around Durham City, although there were also alternative proposals put forward for West Auckland and Chester-le-Street.

33 The Council's proposals were primarily focused on achieving good electoral equality and were not, in general, supported by substantive evidence of community identity and interests. Although the Council recommended a small number of single-member divisions and one three-member division, they based their proposals on retaining two-member divisions for a majority of the county.

34 The majority of submissions received focused on specific areas and a number of parish councils and local residents proposed divisions with good electoral equality. A number of submissions also provided evidence of community identities and interests to support the assertions made. Where we have moved away from the Council's all-party consensus, it has often been in order to provide divisions which are more geographically manageable and therefore to provide for more effective and convenient local government (as is the case in Barnard Castle, Crook and Tow Law). Another reason is to account for urban overspill not explicitly mentioned in the Council's scheme. We note that the Council's proposed scheme has a broad

measure of support across most of County Durham. We also note that the Council's proposals provide for good electoral equality.

35 We have also sought to take account of evidence from parish councils and local residents in seeking to provide a better reflection of community identities and interests. For example, our draft recommendations for the area around Durham City incorporate parts of the Liberal Democrat group proposals and various parish council proposals. Similarly, we consider that our draft recommendations in Ferryhill, Brandon, Shincliffe and Spennymoor provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the Council's proposals. Our recommendations in these areas will have a consequential effect on warding arrangements for the centre of Durham City. In the absence of clear evidence of community identities for Durham City, we have sought to unite areas of common interest.

36 Our proposals are for a pattern of 14 single-member divisions, 41 two-member divisions and 10 three-member divisions. We believe our proposals provide good electoral equality while seeking to reflect community identities and interests where we have received such evidence. We have also sought to reflect communication links and, where possible, use parishes as the 'building blocks' of the proposed divisions.

37 During Stage Three we welcome comments on our draft recommendations, particularly in relation to those areas where we did not receive representations at Stage One beyond the Council's county-wide scheme.

38 We are also particularly keen to receive comments in relation to the Tow Law, Crook, Esh and Esh Winning area, the Barnard Castle area, and in the centre of Durham City, where we faced some difficulties recommending schemes that would, in our view, reflect community identities and secure good levels of electoral equality.

Electoral arrangements

39 This section of the report details the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of County Durham. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Chester-le-Street and the surrounding area (page 10)
- North West County Durham (page 11)
- West County Durham (page 13)
- Crook and Bishop Auckland (page 15)
- Durham City and the surrounding villages (page 17)
- South of Durham City (page 20)
- East and South East County Durham (page 22)

40 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 39–43, and illustrated on a number of large maps we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our draft recommendations for the whole county. It also shows a number of key boxes for which we have produced more detailed maps. These maps are available to be viewed on our website, and have been distributed to the respective council offices and libraries, according to area. If you require a copy of any large-scale detailed map from our website, please contact us using the details found in Chapter 3 (page 29) of this report.

Chester-le-Street and the surrounding area

Chester-le-Street

41 The Council recommended the transfer of around 500 electors in a small area close to the hospital from Chester-le-Street North & East division to Chester-le-Street West Central division. Although the Council argued that this area had a 'stronger association with the Chester-le-Street West Central Division', they provided no evidence to support this. Furthermore, our draft recommendations to the north of Chester-le-Street mean that this transfer is no longer necessary to achieve good electoral equality in Chester-le-Street North & East division.

42 In order to achieve good electoral equality in the Chester-le-Street area, approximately 500 electors need to be transferred from Chester-le-Street South division into Chester-le-Street West Central division. Without this transfer, Chester-le-Street West Central would contain 18% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. Therefore we recommend that the area broadly to the west of the railway line, up to and including Cleveland Avenue, is transferred from the proposed Chester-le-Street South division to Chester-le-Street West Central division. This would result in an electoral variance of 7% fewer electors than the county average in Chester-le-Street South and 10% fewer electors than the county average in Chester-le-Street West Central in 2013. (See Map 3 for the relevant mapping for this area.)

43 We consider that the area to be moved has easily identifiable boundaries. However, we would welcome comments during consultation on our draft recommendations.

44 The political groups on the Council did not reach a consensus in respect of the area directly to the north of Chester-le-Street town. As a consequence two proposals were submitted: one from the Council and one from the Conservative group. The Conservative group recommended that the Pelton and North Lodge areas be united in a division. The Council recommended that Pelton be united with South Pelaw in the north of Chester-le-Street town, while North Lodge be united with the remainder of Chester-le-Street North & East division. Both proposals would result in two-member divisions.

45 We are not persuaded that the Council's proposal unites communities with common identities and interests and note there is a large area of open land between Pelton and South Pelaw. However, there is also an industrial estate separating Pelton from North Lodge. Furthermore, we note that North Lodge appears to have good transport links into Chester-le-Street. We received a submission from North Lodge Parish Council requesting that the name of the division be changed from 'Pelton' to 'North Lodge and Pelton'. However, the parish council did not mention what links, if any, they had with Pelton.

46 On balance, we consider that Pelton appears to have stronger geographical links to the parishes of Ouston and Urpeth to the north. We therefore propose that Pelton parish be included in a three-member division with Ouston and Urpeth parishes. This three-member Pelton division would have an electoral variance of 3% more electors than the county average by 2013. We also propose that North Lodge parish is included in a three-member division of Chester-le-Street North & East. This division would have an electoral variance of 7% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

Lumley

47 We propose adopting the Council's proposal for a two-member Lumley division, as it is a clearly defined area encompassing Great Lumley, Little Lumley and Bournmoor parishes. Our proposed Lumley division would have an electoral variance of 12% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. Although this is a relatively high electoral imbalance, we consider it is justified by the strong boundary created by the river in this area. Furthermore, our scope for considering alternative division arrangements in this area is limited by its proximity to the county boundary.

Sacrison

48 We propose adopting the Council's proposal that the parish of Witton Gilbert be united with the parishes of Sacrison and Kimblesworth & Plawsworth in a two-member Sacrison division. The Council suggested that Witton Gilbert and Sacrison have 'long established and close links'. Witton Gilbert Parish Council made a representation stating that they were content with their current division. However, given our wider recommendations for electoral arrangements in this area of the county it would not be possible to retain the former division arrangements in this area. The division of Sacrison would have an electoral variance of 10% from the average for the county by 2013.

49 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in Chester-le-Street and the surrounding area. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 3. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

North West County Durham

Stanley

50 We recommend adopting the proposals of the Council for the Stanley area. No other submissions were received in relation to this area. The Council suggested that the former county council divisions of Annfield Plain, Craghead & South Moor, Burnopfield & Dipton, Stanley, and Tanfield be retained. It argued that each division represents an identifiable community. All divisions would return two members, and the electoral variances by 2013 would be 3% more electors than the county average in Annfield Plain, 0% in Craghead & South Moor, 3% fewer in Burnopfield & Dipton, 3% more in Stanley and 7% more in Tanfield.

Lanchester

51 We recommend adopting the proposals of the Council for Lanchester. We received only one other submission, from Lanchester Parish Council, in support of the Council's proposals. The Council proposed that the previous county council division be retained, suggesting that the communities in this area had good, long-standing community links. We therefore recommend a two-member Lanchester division which would have an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

North of Consett

52 The Council proposed joining three areas previously linked with Leadgate & Medomsley division with the urban Benfieldside area in the north of Consett. The three areas are known as Shotley Park, East Law and St Mary's Hill. The Council argued that in addition to achieving an improvement to electoral equality, the majority

of this area was overspill from Consett and so was readily identifiable as having links to the Benfieldside community. Under the Council's proposals Benfieldside division would have an electoral variance of 2% more and Leadgate & Medomsley a variance of 10% more electors than the county average by 2013. Both divisions would return two members.

53 In addition to the Council's submission, we received two other representations. Hamsterley Mill Residents Association (in the north of Leadgate & Medomsley) stated they were content with the current division arrangements. Councillor Alan Shield (Leadgate & Medomsley) opposed the transfer of East Law, arguing that the residents looked to neighbouring villages to the north of Consett rather than the town.

54 While we agree that Shotley Park and St Mary's Hill should be included in the Benfieldside division, we consider, on the basis of the evidence received, that East Law appears to have greater community links with the Leadgate and Medomsley areas. Furthermore, East Law is a separate village and is not part of the Consett overspill. We therefore recommend that the village of East Law should remain in Leadgate & Medomsley division. Although this will result in an electoral variance of 12% more electors than the county average by 2013, we consider that our proposed division provides a better reflection of community identities and interests than the alternative proposals submitted during Stage One.

Consett and south of Consett

55 The Council proposed that the area to the south of Consett, which borders Lanchester division, should become a single-member division called Consett South. It would have an electoral variance of 8% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. The Council also proposed that the area to the south west of Consett become a two-member division called Delves Lane, with a variance of 10% from the average for the county by 2013. The remainder of the urban area would become a two-member division called Consett North, which would have an electoral variance of 1%.

56 The Council used polling district boundaries to create their divisions in the Consett area. We consider that its proposal does not fully reflect community identities. In a number of cases, streets are divided and it would appear that the polling districts have not been altered to take account of recent development. As a consequence, we recommend a number of minor changes to the boundary between Benfieldside and Consett North. In the absence of evidence of community identities, we have sought to provide a strong boundary which is easily identifiable, and to avoid dividing streets and residential estates between divisions.

57 Similar issues arise in respect of the boundary between Consett South and Consett North, where a small estate and part of a residential street which we consider more properly associated with Consett North are included in Consett South. It is not possible to create a single-member Consett South division without including around 500 electors from either Consett North or from Delves Lane. We therefore recommend that Consett North and Consett South are combined to form a three-member division. This division would be named Consett.

58 Under our recommendations Benfieldside, Consett and Delves Lane divisions would have electoral variances of 4% more, 1% fewer and 6% more than the average for the county by 2013.

Weardale

59 The Council proposed a two-member Weardale division comprising the parishes of Stanhope, Hunstanworth, Edmondbyers, Wolsingham and Witton-le-Wear. The eastern part of Wolsingham parish and the whole of Witton-le-Wear parish were previously located in Crook North county division. The Council's proposed Weardale division would produce an electoral variance of 10% more than the average for the county by 2013.

60 However, as a consequence of our proposed division patterns in the Crook area (paragraphs 74–83) we have decided against adopting the Council's proposal. We recommend a two-member Weardale division with the same boundaries as the former county council division, including the parishes of Stanhope, Hunstanworth, Edmondbyers and the western part of Wolsingham. This would have an electoral variance of 3% fewer than the average for the county by 2013.

61 Although this is a very large division geographically, we do not consider that it could sensibly be divided into two single-member divisions. Our ability to consider alternative division patterns in this area is limited by the considerable geographical size of Stanhope parish itself. Due to the scattered location and size of the villages in this area, it would not be possible to create two single-member divisions without dividing the town of Stanhope. We note in particular that Stanhope Parish Council have requested that the parish not be divided, citing community identity and links between the very rural villages in that area. On balance, we consider that our recommendations for this area will provide for more effective and convenient local government and ensure that community identities and interests are respected.

62 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in North West County Durham. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 2 and 3. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

West County Durham

Barnard Castle and Teesdale

63 The Council proposed two Barnard Castle divisions, similar to the existing county council divisions. Both divisions would be represented by two-members, with electoral variances of 9% more electors than the county average in Barnard Castle East and 8% more in Barnard Castle West by 2013.

64 We received two submissions from local residents, both arguing that the area south of the River Tees should become a single-member division. Both representations cited local road links and community interests, and mentioned that the area had historically been part of North Yorkshire.

65 Given the extremely rural nature of the Teesdale area, we consider that single-member divisions may be more appropriate in order to secure effective and convenient local government for this area. However, we recognise that our draft recommendations differ from the Council's proposal, and that, with the exception of the area to the south of the River Tees, we have received no evidence of community identities or interests.

66 We recommend a single-member division of South Tees, based on a proposal from two local residents, with the River Tees forming its northern boundary. This division would have an electoral variance of 6% more than the average for the county by 2013. We consider that local residents provided evidence of shared community interests and historic connections between villages, despite the large geographical area covered. We also consider that our recommendations have regard to the orientation of transportation links in this area.

67 We also recommend a single-member division of Staindrop comprising parishes in the east of this area. This division would have an electoral variance of 9% more than the average for the county by 2013. We recommend that the centre and riverside area of Barnard Castle should become a single-member division called Barnard Castle South. This division would have an electoral variance of 10% more than the average for the county by 2013. The rural area to the north of the River Tees would be joined with the remainder of Barnard Castle in a single-member division called Barnard Castle North. This division would also have an electoral variance of 10% from the average for the county by 2013. The boundary is shown on Map 10.

68 Because of the sparse nature of this region and the number of electors living in Barnard Castle, part of the urban area will have to be joined with a number of rural parishes. Due to the large electoral variance that would result, we could not consider Barnard Castle parish as a single-member division: a division which encompassed the entire Barnard Castle area would have an electoral variance of 42% more than the average by 2013, leaving a neighbouring rural single-member division with a variance of 23% fewer electors.

69 Although we recommend single-member divisions, we recognise that these divisions differ considerably from the Council's proposal. We also recognise that the Council's proposal had secured consensus within the Council for this area. Accordingly, we would therefore particularly welcome views on our draft recommendations for the Barnard Castle area. A number of alterations could be made to our draft recommendations if substantive evidence of community identities and interests were provided. Apart from returning to the Council's original proposal for two-member divisions, we could also consider a pattern of a single-member division for the area south of the River Tees, a single-member division in Staindrop and the surrounding parishes, and a two-member division encompassing the whole of Barnard Castle and the parishes to the north. However, we do request that representations consider community identity and links between settlements in this area.

Evenwood, West Auckland and Woodhouse Close

70 The Council proposed three two-member divisions which were broadly similar to the former county electoral divisions. Similar electoral arrangements were proposed by the Conservative group. Electoral equality is much the same for both schemes and we have not received substantive evidence of community identities and interests in support of either proposal.

71 However, we consider that the Conservative group proposal provides for more easily identifiable boundaries which are coterminous with parish boundaries in this area. The Council proposal would necessitate creating small parish wards, which is unlikely to facilitate effective and convenient local government. We have therefore decided to adopt the Conservative group's proposals as our draft recommendations. The electoral variances for our proposed Evenwood, West Auckland and Woodhouse

Close divisions would be 8% more, 6% more and 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

72 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in West County Durham. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 11a and 11b. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Crook and Bishop Auckland

Bishop Auckland Town

73 We have decided to adopt the Council's proposal for Bishop Auckland. We received no other submissions. The Council argued that this area has clear geographical boundaries and strong community identity. The division would return two members and contain 8% more electors than the county average by 2013.

Crook, Willington and Tow Law

74 The Council proposed three two-member divisions for Willington, Crook South and Crook North loosely based on the former county council electoral divisions. The electoral equality would be 5% more in Crook North, 11% more in Crook South and 10% more electors than the county average in Willington. The Council's scheme presented two difficulties: one involving the parish of Witton-le-Wear, and the other involving the parish of Tow Law.

75 The Council proposed that the parish of Witton-le-Wear should be included in the Weardale division (as referred to in paragraphs 59–61). We consider that the parish of Witton-le-Wear is geographically closer and has better transport links with the unparished area to its east, rather than the parishes in Weardale. Furthermore, to include Witton-le-Wear in Weardale would require either a larger part or the whole of Wolsingham parish being included in this division. As the parish of Tow Law is surrounded on three sides by Wolsingham parish, such a division pattern would also have a consequential effect on adjoining divisions.

76 The Council's proposal included Tow Law parish in a division with the unparished villages to the east, from which it is separated by a section of Wolsingham parish. This would necessitate creating a very small parish ward in Wolsingham. We do not consider that this would be a viable parish ward, as it would contain fewer than 50 electors and would not reflect effective and convenient local government.

77 We have therefore decided against adopting the Council's proposals in the Crook area. In order to provide good electoral equality, we have considered the division pattern in Willington as well as Crook. We recommend that the villages to the south of Crook, which appear to be similar in size and to have good road links, form a single-member Hunwick division. This division would have an electoral variance of 10% more than the average for the county by 2013.

78 We recommend that the west of Crook become a single-member division, to be called Crook West, with an electoral variance of 8% more than the average for the county by 2013. We also recommend that the northern section of Crook become a two-member division with the unparished villages of Billy Row, Stanley Crook and

Sunniside. This division would be call Crook North and have an electoral variance of 5% more than the average for the county by 2013.

79 We recommend that Tow Law is linked with the parishes to its north, and is included in a division with Esh and Esh Winning. This is further discussed in paragraphs 84–90. The current Thornley parish ward of Wolsingham parish would also become part of this division.

80 During our consultation on council size, we received letters from Tow Law Parish Council and from the Hilltop Villages Partnership regarding parishing of the area to the north of Crook. The letters suggested that the villages in this area may wish to become part of Tow Law parish, but did not provide any evidence of community interests. We also received information from the former Wear Valley District Council that residents of Crook were considering parishing the town, and that the proposals for Crook parish may include the unparished villages to the north. While it is clear that a number of different community connections, interests and links exist in this area, we have not received particular evidence of the nature or strength of these connections.

81 We recognise that our draft recommendations in this area are notably different to those put forward by the Council. We also note that we have not received any relevant representations for this area except for the Council's proposal. In the absence of evidence of strong community identities and links, we have sought to recommend a pattern of divisions which provide good electoral equality.

82 An alternative division pattern may be possible in Tow Law and Crook. We considered the implications of adopting a single-member division comprising of Tow Law and the unparished area to the north of Crook, and a three-member division comprising of Crook. However, this alternative pattern would produce high electoral variances in the neighbouring areas of Esh, Esh Winning, Ushaw and Bearpark. For this reason we have not included this alternative division pattern in our draft recommendations.

83 We would require considerable evidence of clear community identities and interests between Crook, Tow Law and the unparished villages in order to consider moving away from our draft recommendations in this area. An alternative division pattern would only be possible if we moved away from our draft recommendations in Esh, Esh Winning and Ushaw Moor (explained in paragraphs 89–90). We welcome any representation regarding this area, either in support of our draft recommendations or providing evidence for an alternative division pattern.

Esh, Esh Winning and Ushaw Moor

84 The Council proposed a two-member division comprising Esh, Bearpark and parishes to the west including Satley and Cornsay. It further proposed a two-member division comprising Ushaw Moor and Esh Winning parishes. The Durham City Liberal Democrat group proposed a single-member division of Ushaw Moor and three-member division of Esh, Esh Winning & Bearpark.

85 We received a representation from Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council which stated that the north of the parish (including Esh Winning and Ushaw Moor) looks towards the parishes to the west and towards Bearpark. Cornsay parish asked that their parish not be divided between divisions.

86 We consider that Ushaw Moor and Bearpark have good transport links and are geographically close. A two-member division comprising these two communities would provide an electoral variance of 6% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

87 We also consider that the parishes to the west did not all have good communication links to Esh or Esh Winning. In particular the parish of Satley appears to have better road links to Tow Law. Furthermore, electoral equality is improved when Esh and Esh Winning are combined with Tow Law. We therefore recommend a three-member division called Esh, Esh Winning & Tow Law, which would have an electoral variance of 2% more than the average for the county by 2013.

88 We recognise that the area surrounding Tow Law, which is part of the parish of Wolsingham, does not contain a direct road link. However, this area is very rural and there is a road which runs along the boundary. We consider that this rural area is best served by being in a three-member division with Tow Law rather than the geographically larger two-member division of Weardale.

89 We recognise that our draft recommendations for Esh, Esh Winning & Tow Law differ significantly from the proposals of the Council or the Durham City Liberal Democrat group. Adopting a division pattern in Esh, Esh Winning & Bearpark similar to the Durham City Liberal Democrat proposal would require us to move away from our draft recommendations in Tow Law and Crook (outlined in paragraph 82). Equally, alternative division patterns in Tow Law and the north of Crook would have a consequential effect in Esh, Esh Winning & Bearpark.

90 We have not received any evidence of community identity or parish links in the parishes to the west, and are concerned that there are few road links between Satley and Bearpark. If we were to move away from our draft recommendations and adopt an alternative division pattern, we would require considerable persuasive evidence of connections between these communities.

91 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in Crook and Bishop Auckland. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 5, 6, 9 and 10. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Durham City and the surrounding villages

North of Durham City

92 The Council proposed a two-member Belmont division (including Pitlington parish), a two-member Framwellgate Moor division (including West Rainton) and a two-member Newton Hall division. The Durham City Liberal Democrat group proposed a two-member Belmont division (including West Rainton), a single-member Framwellgate Moor division and a two-member Newton Hall division.

93 We consider that Belmont has better road links to West Rainton parish than to Pitlington parish, and that West Rainton is separated from Framwellgate Moor by the motorway. We also note that Sherburn Parish Council (to the south) made a representation citing community links between Sherburn and Pitlington. For these reasons we have decided to adopt the Durham City Liberal Democrat proposal for

Belmont, which would be a two-member division with a variance of 7% more than the average for the county by 2013.

94 The Durham City Liberal Democrat proposals for Framwellgate Moor and Newton Hall would result in a single-member Framwellgate Moor division with an electoral variance of 11% from the average for the county by 2013 and a two-member Newton Hall with an electoral variance of 3% more electors than the average for the county by 2013. We note that while Framwellgate Moor is predominantly rural, a significant part of the electorate is based in what could be described as overspill from Newton Hall. We therefore recommend that these two divisions become one three-member division, called Framwellgate Moor & Newton Hall, with an electoral variance of 6% more than the average for the county by 2013.

West of Durham City

95 The Council proposed a division comprising Brandon, Langley Moor, Bracepeth, and the rural area in the north of Brandon and Byshtottles parish. Meadowfield, an area very close to Brandon and Langley Moor, would be part of a Durham South division and not part of the Brandon division. The Durham City Liberal Democrat group proposed a similar division, but suggested that Langley Moor and Meadowfield should both be part of a Durham South division.

96 The Brandon and Meadowfield Royal British Legion Club opposed both proposals, arguing that Meadowfield was part of Brandon. A local resident also strongly opposed Meadowfield being separated from Brandon.

97 Due to the respective sizes of Brandon, Meadowfield and Langley Moor, creating one division encompassing all three areas would be difficult. We accept the argument that Meadowfield has no links to the south, and are very reluctant to create a division with no transport links or apparent community identity. However, Langley Moor has good transport links into the Neville's Cross area of Durham City. On balance, we therefore recommend a two-member division comprising Brandon, Meadowfield and Bracepeth, which would be called Brandon and have an electoral variance of 2% more than the average for the county by 2013. We also recommend that Langley Moor be included in a two-member division with Neville's Cross which is discussed below.

98 The Council also proposed a division called Deerness Valley. Under our draft recommendations this area has largely been included in the Esh and Tow Law division (paragraphs 84–90).

South of Durham City

99 The Council proposed a two-member Durham South division, which would include Croxdale and Hett, Meadowfield, and Shincliffe. The Durham City Liberal Democrats proposed a Durham South division which included Langley Moor but not Shincliffe. The Durham City Liberal Democrats instead proposed combining Shincliffe with Sherburn, which is to the east of Durham City.

100 Shincliffe Parish Council argued that Shincliffe looked towards Durham City for facilities and services and had few community links with the other parishes in the proposed Durham South division. The parish council also argued that they did not share a community identity with the Bowburn or Sherburn areas. Councillor Mac Williams (Durham South) indicated that Shincliffe should be part of a division with Bowburn, rather than Meadowfield and Langley Moor.

101 On balance, we consider that Shincliffe parish should be joined with the southern part of Durham City, which we consider would provide the best reflection of community identities. Under our draft recommendations Croxdale and Hett would be part of the Tudhoe division (paragraph 114), Meadowfield and Brandon would become a two-member Brandon division (paragraph 95–97), and Langley Moor would become part of a two-member Neville’s Cross division (paragraph 105).

Centre of Durham City

102 Our draft recommendations to the west and south of Durham City result in the areas of Langley Moor and Shincliffe being included in our proposals for central Durham City.

103 In the south of Durham City, the Council proposed a two-member division called Elvet. This would contain 10% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. However, with the inclusion of Shincliffe, this division becomes too large. We therefore recommend that the most southerly section of Durham City, which is predominantly farmland and University buildings, is joined with Shincliffe to become a new Durham South division. This would be a single-member division with an electoral variance of 4% more than the average for the county by 2013.

104 The Council proposed a Neville’s Cross division very similar to the former county electoral division. It would be a two-member division and have an electoral variance of -16% by 2013. In order to improve electoral equality in the neighbouring divisions of Elves and Durham South, the Council proposed that two of the University colleges (St Aidan’s and Van Mildert) should be transferred into its proposed Neville’s Cross division.

105 We consider that the inclusion of the Langley Moor area in our proposed divisions for the city would improve the electoral equality across the pattern of divisions, and note that there are good transportation links between Langley Moor and Neville’s Cross. However, the addition of Langley Moor makes Neville’s Cross too large for a two-member division. To achieve good electoral equality in both Neville’s Cross and the neighbouring division of Elvet it is necessary to transfer either a number of University buildings (St Mary’s, Trevelyan, St Aidan’s and Van Mildert colleges) or a number of streets between the station and the river from Neville’s Cross into Elvet division.

106 To transfer the University colleges would result in electoral variances of 7% fewer electors than the county average in Neville’s Cross division and 6% more electors in the Elvet division by 2013. To transfer the area between the station and the river would result in electoral variances of 1% fewer electors than the county average in Neville’s Cross and perfect electoral equality in Elvet by 2013.

107 We consider that the area between the station and the river, which contains shopping streets, is more closely linked with the Durham peninsula than is the case with the University buildings. We therefore propose that the University buildings remain in Neville’s Cross division, while the roads between the station and the river become part of the Elvet division. This results in a two-member Neville’s Cross division with an electoral variance of 1% fewer electors than the average by 2013.

108 The northern section of the Council’s proposed Elvet division is too large to be a single-member division, with an electoral variance of over 20% more electors than

the county average by 2013. It is also too small to be a two-member division. We also note that the Council's proposed two-member Gilesgate division would have an electoral variance of 13% fewer than the average for the county by 2013.

109 We therefore propose a single-member Gilesgate division and a two-member Elvet division. The Gilesgate division would have an electoral variance of -4% by 2013 and the Elvet division would have an electoral variance of 0% by 2013. We further consider that the name 'Elvet' is no longer suitable for a division which includes so many other areas, and therefore suggest that the division should be renamed 'Cathedral'. We have therefore included these divisions as part of our draft recommendations.

110 We recognise that our division pattern in the centre of Durham City differs from the Council's proposal. Including Langley Moor and Shincliffe in the Durham City divisions has had a consequential knock-on effect on the division pattern in this area. We would therefore particularly welcome representations during the next stage of consultation.

111 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in Durham City. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 7. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

South of Durham City

Spennymoor, Coundon and Tudhoe

112 The Council proposed a two-member Spennymoor division with an electoral variance of 5% more electors, a two-member Tudhoe division with a variance of 1% more electors and a two-member Coundon division with a variance of 6% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. The Spennymoor Liberal Democrat group proposed a different Spennymoor division, arguing that the area of Middlestone Moor should not be separated from Spennymoor. Both the Council and the Spennymoor Liberal Democrat group proposed a minor change to the boundary between Spennymoor and Tudhoe.

113 Spennymoor town council opposed the transfer of Middlestone Moor to Coundon. We consider that Middlestone Moor is part of Spennymoor, and does not appear to have strong community links to Coundon. The town council also suggests that the village of Kirk Merrington should be part of a Spennymoor division. However, three local residents argued that Kirk Merrington also has a strong community link to Ferryhill. We consider that Kirk Merrington has good transport links to both Spennymoor and Ferryhill. In order to secure good electoral equality across the pattern of divisions in this area we recommend Kirk Merrington should be included in a Ferryhill division. This is discussed further in paragraphs 118–120.

114 We consider that the boundary between Spennymoor and Tudhoe is easily identifiable, and note that it has the support of Spennymoor town council. We also note that the villages in Croxdale and Hett parish are geographically closer to Tudhoe than any other settlements.

115 In the absence of substantive evidence of community identities and interests and having regard to the proposed division pattern to the west and south of Durham

City, we consider that the villages of Croxdale and Hett should be included in a division with Tudhoe.

116 We therefore recommend a three-member Spennymoor & Middlestone division which would have an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors the average for the county by 2013. We also recommend a single-member Coundon division and a two-member Tudhoe division with electoral variances of 1% more and 3% more electors by 2013.

Ferryhill and Chilton

117 The Council proposed a two-member Ferryhill division with 9% more electors and a two-member Chilton division with 4% more electors than the county average by 2013. The Ferryhill division would be similar to the former county council electoral division, and would include the central and northern parts of Ferryhill. The Chilton division would include Chilton, Cornforth, Ferryhill Station and Chilton Lane.

118 Ferryhill Town Council suggested that the parish of Ferryhill and the village of Kirk Merrington be represented by three members. A local resident proposed a three-member division which would include the nearby village of Kirk Merrington and have an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

119 We received three submissions from local residents who suggested that Kirk Merrington should be placed in a division with either Ferryhill or Spennymoor. In addition, Ferryhill Community Partnership, Dene Bank Residents Association and Ferryhill Station and Chilton Lane Residents Association suggested that the division of Ferryhill should comprise the whole parish of Ferryhill and Kirk Merrington.

120 The above all argued that Ferryhill Station and Chilton Lane were part of the Ferryhill community and looked to Ferryhill rather than to Chilton for services and facilities. A three-member division would comprise the whole of Ferryhill parish and the Kirk Merrington area of Spennymoor parish. We have decided to adopt the proposal from the local resident for a three-member division with an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors than the average by 2013. With the removal of Ferryhill Station, Chilton Lane and Cornforth, the Chilton division would become a single-member division with a variance of 3% from the average for the county by 2013.

121 Cornforth Parish Council made a representation requesting that it remain with Ferryhill and Chilton, and not to be joined with Coxhoe. However, the boundaries of the parishes mean that Cornforth cannot remain in a division with Chilton unless the community of Ferryhill is divided. This is discussed further in paragraph 124.

Coxhoe

122 The Council proposed a Coxhoe division including part of the parish of Shadforth, Coxhoe and other smaller villages in Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish. This would be a two-member division with an electoral variance of 10% fewer electors than the average for the county by 2013. Councillor Carol Woods opposed the inclusion of part of the parish of Shadforth in a Coxhoe division. She argued this would divide the parish between three electoral divisions and cited community links between Shadforth and Sherburn.

123 Due to our recommendations for division patterns in Durham South and Ferryhill, we recommend a Coxhoe division which includes Bowburn and Cornforth. Although on the opposite side of the motorway to Coxhoe, the three communities are

geographically close with good road links. Bowburn is also part of the Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish. We therefore recommend a three-member Coxhoe division which would have an electoral variance of 7% more electors than the county average by 2013. The division would include the whole of Cassop-cum-Quarrington parish and Cornforth parish, but not include Shadforth parish.

124 We note that Cornforth Parish Council made two representations. The first representation was based upon the boundaries of the Action Area Partnership (AAP), which includes the villages of Ferryhill, Chilton, Windlestone and Bishop Middleham. This representation provided no evidence of shared community facilities or links apart from the existence of the AAP. The second representation opposed the inclusion of Cornforth in a Coxhoe division, as 'Cornforth Parish has never shared administrative arrangements with Coxhoe and does not do so now'.

125 While we recognise that Cornforth has few community links with Coxhoe, we also consider that a three-member division is in the best interests of the Ferryhill area. Cornforth parish does not share a border with Chilton or Widdlesham, and so could not be included in a Chilton division without dividing Ferryhill. Including Cornforth in a division with Bishop Middleton would have a significant knock-on effect in Sedgfield, as we propose that Bishop Middleton is included in the Sedgfield division.

126 We therefore consider that in the interests of ensuring the best balance between our statutory criteria, Cornforth should be included in a three-member Coxhoe division.

127 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in South of Durham City. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 10. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

East and South East County Durham

Sherburn, Shotton, Trimdon and Thornley

128 The Council proposed a single-member Sherburn division with an electoral variance of 0%, a two-member Shotton division containing 10% more electors, a two-member Trimdon division containing 8% fewer electors and two-member Thornley division containing 3% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

129 Both Trimdon and Trimdon Foundry Parish Councils submitted requests for the Trimdon Colliery part of Trimdon parish to be included in Thornley division. The boundary proposed by the Council was coterminous with the former district council boundary. We consider that this boundary clearly divides the community. We therefore recommend that approximately 500 electors from Trimdon parish be included in Thornley division. This would produce an electoral variance of 15% fewer electors than the county average by 2013 in Trimdon division, which is the greatest deviation from the average in our recommendations. However, we consider that there is compelling evidence of community links between the houses in Trimdon Colliery and those in the parish of Trimdon Foundry. This provides a strong justification for the electoral imbalance in this area. Our draft recommendations provide the best reflection of community identities and interests.

130 The Durham City Liberal Democrat group submitted two options for Sherburn. Each option proposed a two-member Sherburn division which included Shincliffe, and argued that many of the smaller surrounding villages look to Sherburn. Councillor Carol Woods cited community links between Shadforth and Sherburn, proposing that Shadforth should be included in a Sherburn division.

131 We recommend a three-member division for Sherburn, Pittington, Haswell and Shadforth. This division includes communities of similar sizes and with good road links, and would have an electoral variance of 3% fewer electors by 2013. This would leave Shotton as a single-member division with a variance of 6%. The removal of part of Shadforth parish from Thornley and the addition of electors from Trimdon would mean that Thornley division would return two members and have a variance of 10% fewer electors than the average for the county by 2013.

Peterlee

132 The Council put forward two options for the Peterlee area. The first option made minimal changes to the county electoral divisions, and would result in an electoral variance of 15% more electors in Passfield, 1% more electors in Peterlee West and 8% fewer electors than the county average in Peterlee East. The second option, which moved a small number of streets centred around Tweed Close, would result in a variance of 10% more electors in Passfield, 3% more electors in Peterlee West and 8% fewer electors than the county average in Peterlee East. We received a submission from Peterlee Town Council with identical proposals.

133 We considered that the second option, while not providing as strong a boundary as the first option, continued to reflect community identity. We noted in particular that Tweed Close and the roads leading from it are accessed from Passfield Way to the west, rather than from neighbouring residential roads to the south. We consider that this road access provides a link between the residents of Tweed Close and the roads to the west of Passfield Way.

134 We therefore recommend a two-member Peterlee East division with an electoral variance of 8% fewer electors, two-member Peterlee West division with a variance of 3% more electors and a single-member Passfield division with a variance of 10% more electors than the average for the county by 2013.

Blackhalls, Horden and Wingate

135 The Council proposed a two-member Blackhalls division with a variance of 5%, a two-member Horden division with a variance of 2% more electors and a single-member Wingate division with perfect electoral equality. The Horden division was unchanged from the county council division, and we received a submission from Horden Parish Council in support of this division.

136 We recognise that the Wingate division includes a rural area to the south which does not have a direct road link to the northern urban area. However, this division comprises a single parish and has excellent electoral equality. We have decided to adopt the Council's proposals for the divisions of Blackhalls, Horden and Wingate.

Dawdon, Deneside, Easington, Murton, and Seaham

137 The Council proposed five two-member divisions in this area. In 2013 the electoral variances are projected as 2% fewer electors in Dawdon, 12% fewer electors in Deneside, 1% fewer electors in Easington, 7% fewer electors in Murton and 2% fewer electors in Seaham than the county average in 2013. These divisions

were largely unaltered from the county council divisions. Little evidence on the basis of community identity was provided by the Council, except that the current boundaries were locally recognised and reflected communities, and that adjustments were made to provide for better electoral equality. We have decided to adopt the Council's proposals for these divisions as part of our draft recommendations.

Aycliffe, Sedgefield and Shildon

138 We recommend adopting the Council's proposals for this area. The Council stated that there was 'a clear desire to encompass all of the Aycliffe Town in one discreet grouping of electoral divisions'. The Council's proposal was supported by Great Aycliffe Town Council. A Great Aycliffe town councillor suggested that the area should have single-member divisions but did not propose a pattern of divisions.

139 We consider that these divisions have good electoral equality and easily identifiable boundaries. Aycliffe North, the Dales & Middridge would be a two-member division with an electoral variance of 7% fewer electors than the county average by 2013. Aycliffe Central would be a three-member division with a variance of 8% fewer electors and Aycliffe East would be a two-member division with a variance of 3% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

140 We propose adopting the Council's proposal for the Sedgefield area. The Council argued that this area has clear geographical boundaries and strong community identity. The division would return two members with an electoral variance of 6% fewer electors than the county average by 2013.

141 We have decided to adopt the Council's proposals for Shildon. The Council proposals arose from a desire to 'encompass all of the Shildon area and associated communities together'. The county council electoral divisions combined areas of Shildon with areas of Great Aycliffe.

142 The two-member Shildon division would have an electoral variance of 12% more electors, while the single-member Dene Valley division would have an electoral variance of 11% more electors than the county average by 2013. The Council argued that these two divisions have clear, identifiable boundaries and strong community identity. Although the electoral imbalances are relatively high, there are few options for alternative electoral arrangements, particularly given the proximity to the county boundary.

143 Table C1 (on pages 39–43) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for divisions in East and South East County Durham. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 4, 8a, 8b, 11b and 12. These are available at our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Conclusions

144 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2008 and 2013 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2008	2013
Number of councillors	126	126
Number of electoral divisions	65	65
Average number of electors per councillor	3,134	3,187
Number of electoral divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	9	6
Number of electoral divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendation

Durham County Council should comprise 126 councillors serving 65 divisions, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

145 As part of an electoral review, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972). Schedule 11, LGA 1972, provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

146 During Stage One, some parishes requested changes to parish electoral arrangements, specifically to parish warding and the number of parish councillors. The LGA 1972 sets out that as part of an electoral review, we can change parish electoral arrangements where there is no impact on the principal authority's electoral arrangements. However, we note that the County Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements. We therefore propose recommending changes to parish council electoral arrangements only as a direct consequence of our recommendations for the County Council's electoral arrangements. We consider that any other proposals for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements would be more appropriately addressed as part of a community governance review.

147 To meet our obligations under the LGA 1972, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Barnard Castle, Great Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Shildon, Spennymoor, Trimdon, and Wolsingham. We would particularly welcome comments on these proposals from the parish councils concerned and local residents during this consultation stage.

148 The parish of Barnard Castle is currently divided into three parish wards: East parish ward (returning four parish councillors), North parish ward (returning three parish councillors), and West parish ward (returning five parish councillors).

149 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Barnard Castle parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Barnard Castle Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: East parish ward (returning four parish councillors), North parish ward (returning three parish councillors), and West parish ward (returning five parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 11a.

150 The parish of Great Aycliffe is currently divided into seven parish wards: Woodham parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Great Aycliffe West parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Simpasture parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Neville parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Aycliffe Village parish ward (returning one parish councillor), and Shafto St Marys parish ward (returning three parish councillors).

151 Great Aycliffe Town Council requested that a number of consequential changes to the parish wards. While such changes have often been carried out by the Boundary Committee in previous electoral reviews, we consider that the legislation referred to in paragraph 146 means that these changes should be addressed as part of a community governance review.

152 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Great Aycliffe parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Great Aycliffe Parish Council should comprise 27 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Woodham parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Byerley Park, Horndale & Cobblers Hall parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Aycliffe Central West parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Aycliffe Central East parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Neville parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Aycliffe Village parish ward (returning one parish councillor), and Shafto St Marys parish ward (returning four parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 12.

153 The parish of Peterlee is currently divided into five parish wards: Acre Rigg parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Dene House parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Eden Hill parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Howletch parish ward (returning four parish councillors), and Passfield parish ward (returning six parish councillors).

154 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11 LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Peterlee parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Peterlee Parish Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Acre Rigg parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Dene House parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Eden Hill parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Howletch parish ward (returning four parish councillors), and Passfield parish ward (returning five parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 8a.

155 The parish of Seaham is currently divided into six parish wards: Dawdon parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Deneside parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Seaham Harbour North parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Seaham Harbour South parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Seaham North parish ward (returning three parish councillors), and Westlea parish ward (returning two parish councillors).

156 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Seaham parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Seaham Parish Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing six parish wards: Dawdon parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Deneside parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Seaham Harbour North parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Seaham Harbour South parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Seaham North parish ward (returning three parish councillors), and Westlea parish ward (returning two parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 4.

157 The parish of Shildon is currently divided into three parish wards: Byerly parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Sunnydale parish ward (returning six parish councillors), and Thickley parish ward (returning six parish councillors).

158 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Shildon parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Shildon Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Byerly parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Sunnydale parish ward (returning five parish councillors), and Thickley parish ward (returning six parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 11b.

159 The parish of Spennymoor is currently divided into six parish wards: Byers Green parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe parish ward (returning six parish councillors), Merrington parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Middlestone parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Spennymoor parish ward (returning six parish councillors), and Tudhoe parish ward (returning four parish councillors).

160 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Spennymoor parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Spennymoor Parish Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Byers Green parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Merrington parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Middlestone parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Spennymoor parish ward (returning eight parish councillors), and Tudhoe parish ward (returning four parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 10.

161 The parish of Trimdon is currently divided into two parish wards: New Trimdon & Trimdon Grange parish ward (returning 13 parish councillors), and Old Trimdon parish ward (returning eight parish councillors).

162 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Trimdon to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Trimdon Parish Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Trimdon Colliery parish ward (returning five parish councillors), Trimdon Grange parish ward (returning eight parish councillors), and Old Trimdon parish ward (returning eight parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 8b.

163 The parish of Wolsingham is currently divided into two parish wards: Thornley parish ward (returning one parish councillor), and Wolsingham parish ward (returning 10 parish councillors).

164 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the rules set out in Schedule 11, LGA 1972, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wolsingham parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Draft recommendations

Wolsingham Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Thornley parish ward (returning one parish councillor), and Wolsingham parish ward (returning 10 parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Maps 5 and 9.

3 What happens next?

165 There will now be a consultation period of twelve weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Durham County Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 7 December 2009. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

166 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for County Durham and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed division boundaries, number of councillors, division names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

167 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Officer
County Durham Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk or by emailing reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk.

168 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Committee takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Durham County Council, at our offices in Trevelyan House (London), the Electoral Commission's North of England Office in York, and on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

169 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and 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. Under current arrangements, after the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot give effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

4 Mapping

Draft recommendations for County Durham

170 The following maps illustrate our proposed electoral division boundaries for Durham County Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed divisions for Durham County Council.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed divisions in Consett.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed divisions in Chester-le-Street.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed divisions in Seaham.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed divisions in Tow Law and Crook.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed divisions in Bearpark and Ushaw Moor.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7** illustrates the proposed divisions in the City of Durham.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Peterlee.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Trimdon.
- **Sheet 9, Map 9** illustrates the proposed divisions in Crook.
- **Sheet 10, Map 10** illustrates the proposed divisions in Spennymoor.
- **Sheet 11, Map 11a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Barnard Castle.
- **Sheet 11, Map 11b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Shildon.
- **Sheet 12, Map 12** illustrates the proposed divisions in Great Aycliffe.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town Council'

Parish (or Town) Council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town Council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council
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Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (November 2000) (http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/_consultation.pdf) 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: The 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 at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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.

Appendix C

Table C1: Draft recommendations for Durham County Council

	Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Annfield Plain	2	6,421	3,211	2%	6,567	3,284	3%
2	Aycliffe North, the Dales & Middridge	3	8,566	2,855	-9%	8,871	2,957	-7%
3	Aycliffe Central	2	5,799	2,900	-7%	5,877	2,939	-8%
4	Aycliffe East	2	6,328	3,164	1%	6,191	3,096	-3%
5	Barnard Castle North	1	3,328	3,328	6%	3,494	3,494	10%
6	Barnard Castle South	1	3,381	3,381	8%	3,493	3,493	10%
7	Belmont	2	6,860	3,430	9%	6,838	3,419	7%
8	Benfieldside	2	6,757	3,379	8%	6,625	3,313	4%
9	Bishop Auckland Town	2	6,431	3,216	3%	6,901	3,451	8%
10	Blackhalls	2	6,521	3,261	4%	6,668	3,334	5%
11	Brandon	2	6,454	3,227	3%	6,505	3,253	2%
12	Burnopfield & Dipton	2	6,225	3,113	-1%	6,167	3,084	-3%

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %		Variance from average %	
				Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor		
13 Cathedral	2	6,948	3,474	11%	6,360	3,180	0%
14 Chester-le-Street North & East	3	9,051	3,017	-4%	8,856	2,952	-7%
15 Chester-le-Street South	2	5,996	2,998	-4%	5,942	2,971	-7%
16 Chester-le-Street West Central	2	6,000	3,000	-4%	5,706	2,853	-10%
17 Chilton	1	3,213	3,213	3%	3,284	3,284	3%
18 Consett	3	8,691	2,897	-8%	9,463	3,154	-1%
19 Coundon	1	3,210	3,210	2%	3,217	3,217	1%
20 Coxhoe	3	10,048	3,349	7%	10,218	3,406	7%
21 Craghead & South Moor	2	6,079	3,040	-3%	6,361	3,181	0%
22 Crook North	2	6,318	3,159	1%	6,677	3,339	5%
23 Crook West	1	2,991	2,991	-5%	3,441	3,441	8%
24 Dawdon	2	6,109	3,055	-3%	6,219	3,110	-2%
25 Delves Lane	2	5,777	2,889	-8%	6,737	3,369	6%
26 Dene Valley	1	3,546	3,546	13%	3,522	3,522	11%
27 Deneside	2	5,696	2,848	-9%	5,630	2,815	-12%

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %		Variance from average %
				Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	
28 Durham South	1	3,357	3,357	3,313	7%	4%
29 Easington	2	6,082	3,041	6,327	-3%	-1%
30 Esh, Esh Winning & Tow Law	3	9,849	3,283	9,766	5%	2%
31 Evenwood	2	6,766	3,383	6,885	8%	8%
32 Ferryhill	3	8,959	2,986	9,112	-5%	-5%
33 Framwellgate Moor & Newton Hall	3	10,078	3,359	10,129	7%	6%
34 Gilesgate	1	3,304	3,304	3,065	5%	-4%
35 Horden	2	6,466	3,233	6,475	3%	2%
36 Hunwick	1	3,057	3,057	3,506	-2%	10%
37 Lanchester	2	6,088	3,044	6,068	-3%	-5%
38 Leadgate & Medomsley	2	7,182	3,591	7,124	15%	12%
39 Lumley	2	5,818	2,909	5,582	-7%	-12%
40 Murton	2	5,775	2,888	5,919	-8%	-7%
41 Neville's Cross	2	6,861	3,431	6,306	9%	-1%
42 Passfield	1	3,648	3,648	3,503	16%	10%

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %		Variance from average %
				Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	
43 Pelton	3	10,037	3,346	7%	9,869	3%
44 Peterlee East	2	5,724	2,862	-9%	5,849	-8%
45 Peterlee West	2	6,526	3,263	4%	6,593	3%
46 Sacriston	2	6,999	3,500	12%	6,992	10%
47 Seaham	2	5,486	2,743	-12%	6,255	-2%
48 Sedgefield	2	5,531	2,766	-12%	6,017	-6%
49 Sherburn	3	8,849	2,950	-6%	9,264	-3%
50 Shildon	2	6,989	3,495	11%	7,110	12%
51 Shotton	1	3,291	3,291	5%	3,386	6%
52 South Tees	1	3,244	3,244	3%	3,375	6%
53 Spennymoor	3	8,847	2,949	-6%	9,057	-5%
54 Staindrop	1	3,360	3,360	7%	3,481	9%
55 Stanley	2	6,700	3,350	7%	6,545	3%
56 Tanfield	2	6,749	3,375	8%	6,848	7%
57 Thornley	2	5,752	2,876	-8%	5,748	-10%
58 Trimdon	2	5,332	2,666	-15%	5,412	-15%

Electoral division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
59 Tudhoe	2	6,525	3,263	4%	6,559	3,280	3%
60 Ushaw Moor & Bearpark	2	5,650	2,825	-10%	5,964	2,982	-6%
61 Weardale	2	5,987	2,994	-4%	6,184	3,092	-3%
62 West Auckland	2	6,333	3,167	1%	6,770	3,385	6%
63 Willington	2	5,779	2,890	-8%	6,081	3,041	-5%
64 Wingate	1	3,021	3,021	-4%	3,179	3,179	0%
65 Woodhouse Close	2	6,195	3,098	-1%	6,077	3,039	-5%
Totals	126	394,940	-	-	401,525	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,134	-	-	3,187	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Durham County Council.

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

Appendix D

Additional legislation we have considered

Equal opportunities

In preparing this report we have had regard to the general duty set out in Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

We have also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by Section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

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The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. The Committee's main role is to conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England with the aim of ensuring the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Other duties include reviewing local authority boundaries and advising the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.