

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council

Electoral review

February 2019

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Andrew Scallan CBE
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Hartlepool?

7 We are conducting a review of Hartlepool Borough Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Hartlepool. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Hartlepool are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Hartlepool

9 Hartlepool should be represented by 36 councillors, three more than there are now.

10 Hartlepool should have 12 wards, one more than there is now.

11 The boundaries of all wards, apart from one, will change.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Hartlepool.

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Hartlepool. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
22 May 2018	Number of councillors decided
29 May 2018	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
12 August 2018	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
2 October 2018	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 December 2018	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
5 February 2019	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

18 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

19 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2018	2024
Electorate of Hartlepool	70,456	74,481
Number of councillors	36	36
Average number of electors per councillor	1,957	2,069

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having ‘good electoral equality’. All of our proposed wards for Hartlepool will have good electoral equality by 2024.

Submissions received

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2024, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2019. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 6% by 2024.

23 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

24 Hartlepool Borough Council currently has 33 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that increasing this number by three will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

25 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 36 councillors. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council will have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

26 We received 44 submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. Respondents opposed the increase in councillors for the borough, while some argued for a reduction. Furthermore, during consultation on our draft recommendations, 14 respondents argued for a reduction in council size. We carefully considered all of the submissions received. We recognise that our proposed council size has met with some opposition locally. However, we have not been persuaded that sufficiently detailed evidence has been received to justify why we should move away from a 36-councillor scheme. In particular, we are of the view that insufficient evidence has been provided to show how the Council's internal decision-making structures would operate under an alternative council size. We have therefore decided to confirm a council size of 36 councillors as final.

Ward boundaries consultation

27 We received 109 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included four detailed borough-wide proposals from the Council, Hartlepool Labour Party, Hartlepool Independent Group and Putting Hartlepool First. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for particular areas of the borough.

28 The four borough-wide schemes we received during this consultation provided for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Hartlepool, all providing for good levels of electoral equality. However, the Council's and the Independent Group's schemes varied significantly from those put forward by the Labour Group and Putting Hartlepool First. We found it very difficult to put together a coherent warding pattern across the borough using parts of each proposal.

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

29 Consequently, we decided to base our draft recommendations on the Labour Group and Putting Hartlepool First schemes, which were broadly similar. This was because we considered that these two schemes did not visibly split communities anywhere in Hartlepool, whereas the Council's and Independent Group's proposals had, in our view, done so in respect of the Fens community. We consider it preferable to put somewhat dissimilar communities together in the same ward to effectively balance our statutory criteria, rather than split them between wards.

30 Our draft recommendations also took into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

31 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Hartlepool helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

32 Our draft recommendations were for 12 three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

33 We received 70 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included comments from the Council, two borough councillors, five local organisations and 62 local residents. The majority of the submissions focused on specific areas – particularly our proposals for the Fens community. Localised submissions were also made in relation to our Headland & Harbour and Throston wards.

34 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with no further changes proposed.

Final recommendations

35 Our final recommendations are for 12 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

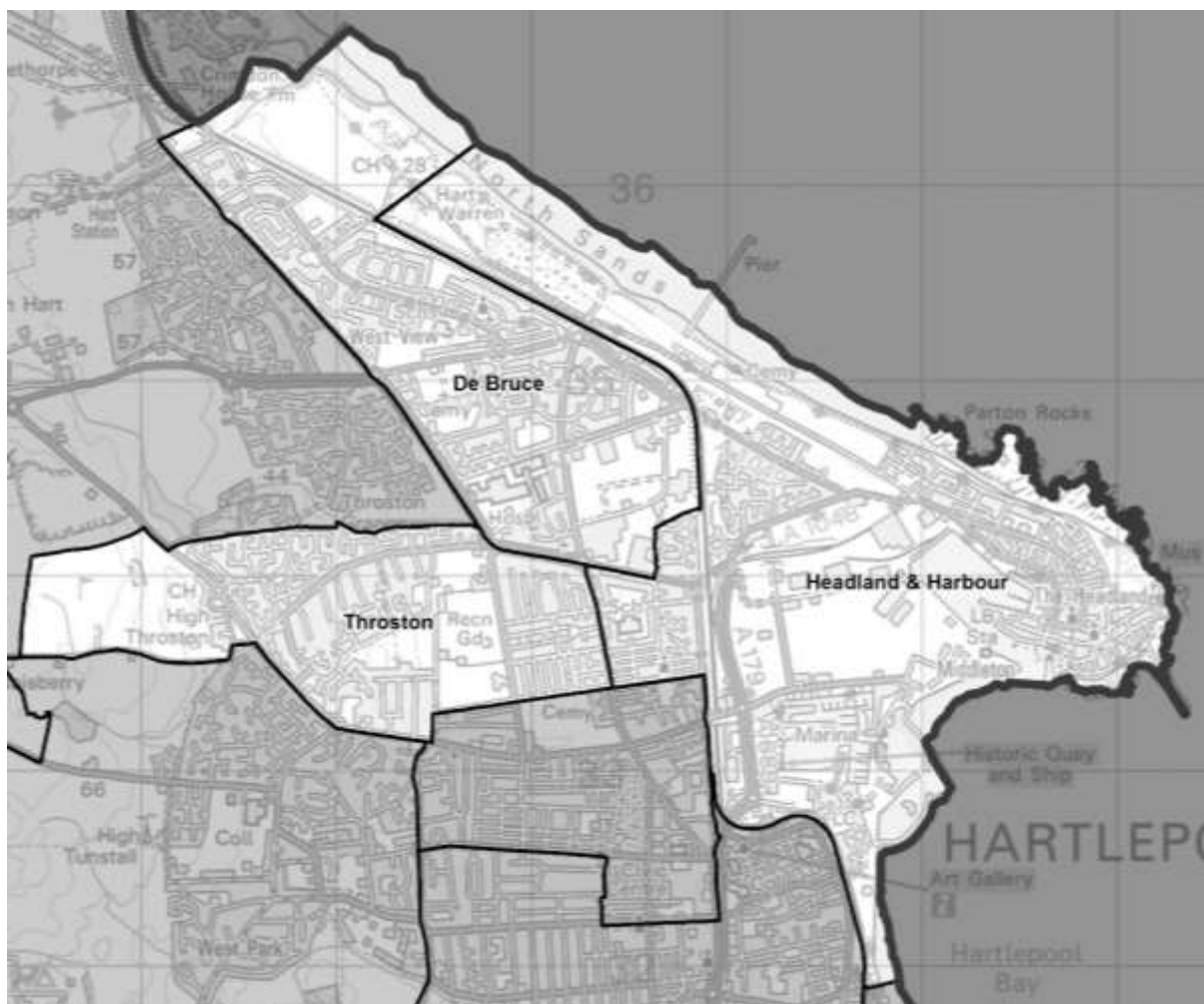
36 The tables and maps on pages 9–16 detail our final recommendations for each area of Hartlepool. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 23 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Northern Hartlepool



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2024
De Bruce	3	-3%
Headland & Harbour	3	9%
Throston	3	1%

De Bruce

38 We received no submissions that related directly to this ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for De Bruce ward as final.

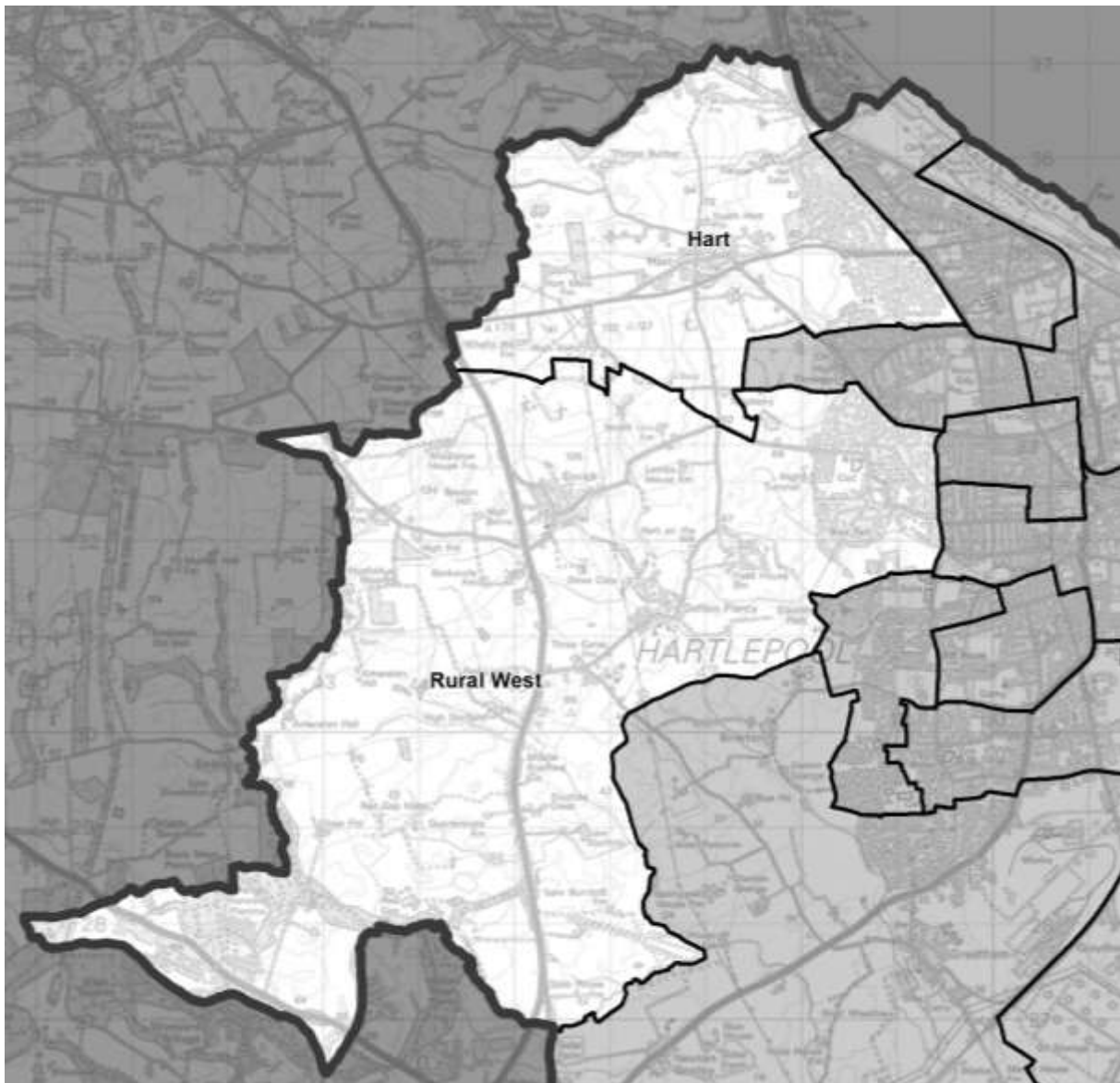
Headland & Harbour and Throston

39 The Council, two borough councillors, St Oswald's Church and a local resident expressed concern with our proposal to include the Dyke House area within Headland & Harbour ward and exclude the area from Throston ward. The submissions argued that Dyke House is distinct from the Headland area, with different issues and characteristics, and is somewhat cut off from the Headland and Harbour areas by the A179 and the railway line.

40 We examined placing the Dyke House area within our proposed Throston ward, which would be similar to the existing arrangements, where Dyke House currently sits within the existing Jesmond ward. However, this proposal would result in an electoral variance of 25% for Throston ward. We consequently looked at placing electors who live on Merlin Way and its connected roads into Hart ward, as proposed by Councillor Tennant, to try and improve electoral equality in Throston ward. While this reduced the variance of Throston ward to 5%, this proposal would result in a variance of 27% for Hart ward.

41 Consequently, while we note concerns with regard to including Dyke House in Headland & Harbour ward, we have an obligation to ensure that electors in Hartlepool have a vote of broadly equal weight. We consider that the alternative proposals put forward would result in unacceptably high electoral variances for these wards and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Headland & Harbour and Throston wards as final.

Western Hartlepool



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2024
Hart	3	7%
Rural West	3	-1%

Hart

42 We received no submissions that related directly to this ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Hart ward as final.

Rural West

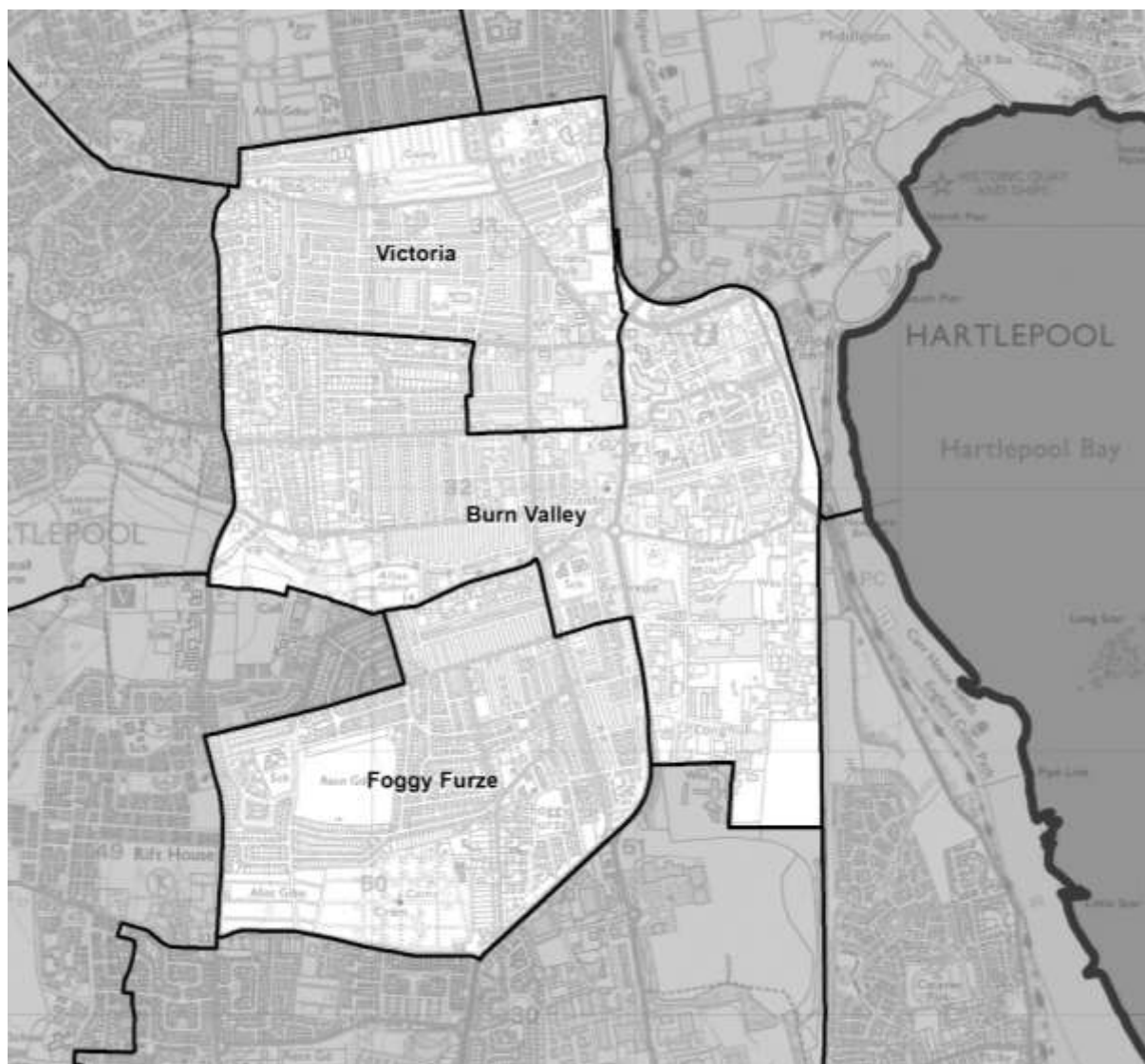
43 We received three submissions that related to this ward. All three focused on the Wynyard estate which sits within the south-western part of the ward.

44 Wynyard Residents' Association primarily objected to our proposal to place Wynyard in Rural West ward, stating that as an urban, modern development, it is distinct and different to the rural parishes that make up the rest of the ward. Wynyard Residents' Association argued that Wynyard should possess its own ward with a dedicated councillor, in order to achieve better representation for Wynyard residents and to support community development in the area.

45 While we note the concerns expressed by the residents' association, we have decided not to change our recommendations here. Given that Hartlepool elects a third of its councillors each year, there is a presumption in law that it will have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We consider that it is therefore necessary to place Wynyard in a ward alongside adjoining rural communities in order to achieve good electoral equality and maintain a three-member warding pattern. If we were to create a single-member ward focused on Wynyard, the electoral variance would be - 57% which, in our view, would be unacceptably high. Furthermore, given the location of the estate in the corner of the borough, we were unable to identify alternative arrangements for this area.

46 Two submissions from local residents suggested that the borough boundary which runs through the Wynyard estate be amended so that the whole estate is contained in one local authority, with one resident suggesting the borough boundary run along the A689. This, however, falls outside the scope of this current electoral review.

Central Hartlepool



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2024
Burn Valley	3	-2%
Foggy Furze	3	4%
Victoria	3	-6%

Burn Valley

47 We received four submissions that related directly to our proposed Burn Valley ward. The Council, Councillor Moore and a local resident opposed our decision to place the Burbank area into Burn Valley ward. The Council argued that since the previous electoral review, the Burbank area has established strong links with the Marina and Headland areas and considers itself part of the coastal community. Councillor Moore emphasised that, while the Burbank area is distinct from the Headland, there are strong social and historical links between the two areas and that local residents have a stronger affiliation with the Headland and other coastal areas.

This view was mirrored by a local resident, who argued that the A689 represents a divide between the Burbank and larger Burn Valley areas.

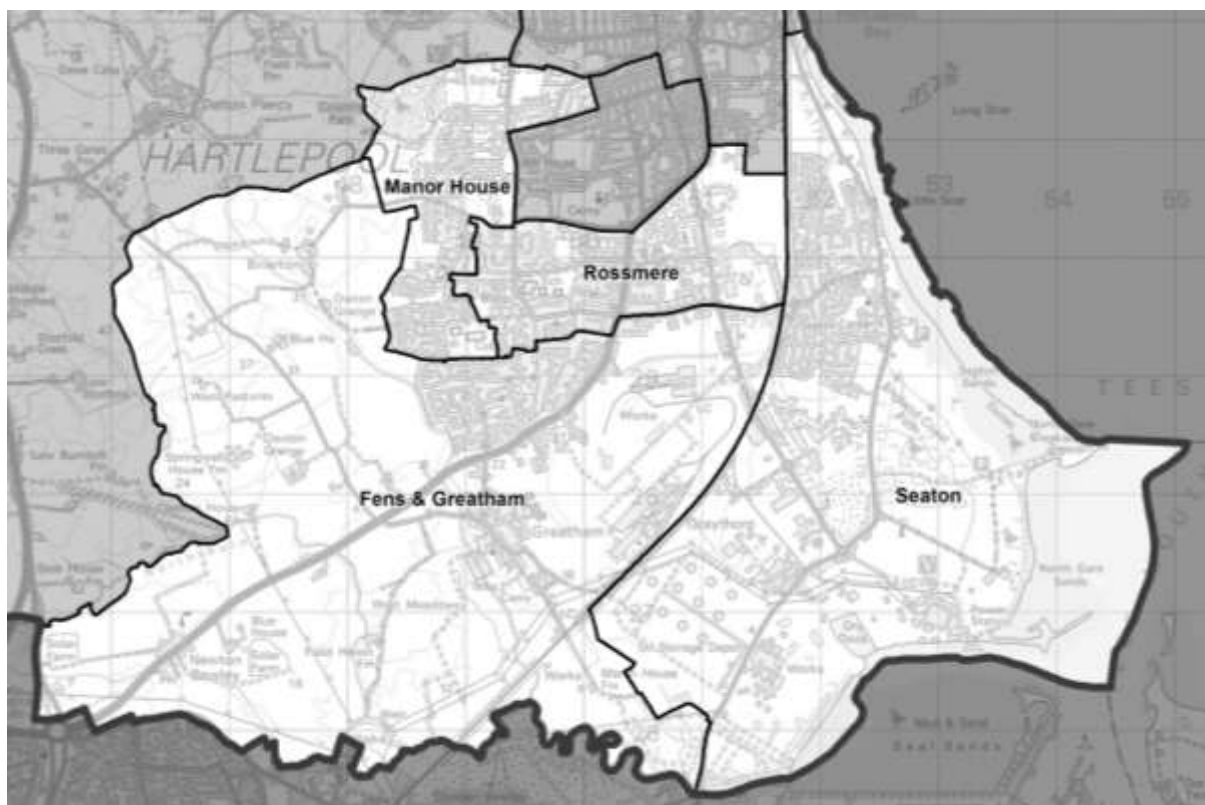
48 One submission argued that Mainsforth Terrace should not become part of Headland & Harbour ward. However, our draft recommendations placed this area into Burn Valley ward.

49 While we note the requests made for the Burbank area to remain in a Headland & Harbour ward, doing so would cause an electoral variance of -17% for Burn Valley ward. In this case, we do not consider the evidence received is sufficient to justify an electoral variance above 10% here, especially considering the support we received for this change during the first round of consultation. Furthermore, creating a warding pattern that would ensure good electoral equality for this ward and the neighbouring wards would result in significant, consequential effects for other wards across the borough of Hartlepool – wards that have received support during this consultation. In light of this, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Burn Valley ward as final.

Foggy Furze and Victoria

50 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Foggy Furze and Victoria wards as final.

Southern Hartlepool



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2024
Fens & Greatham	3	-2%
Manor House	3	6%
Rossmere	3	-7%
Seaton	3	-6%

Fens & Greatham

51 We received 37 submissions that related directly to Fens & Greatham ward, with 35 of these submissions supportive of our decision to place the Fens area in a ward with the parish of Greatham. Several of these submissions, including the Fens Residents' Association, stated that the proposed ward would keep together the strong, identifiable community of the Fens, while also maintaining good electoral equality. A number of submissions also stressed the strong community links between the Fens and Greatham area, with the two areas sharing good transport links and community facilities. We also received support for placing the rural parishes of Brierton, Claxton and Newton Bewley within this ward.

52 We received two submissions which opposed this ward, but neither provided for an alternative warding pattern that would better reflect our statutory criteria. Consequently, given the overwhelming evidence in support for our proposed Fens &

Greatham ward, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

Rossmere

53 We received three submissions directly in relation to our Rossmere ward. Both the Friends of Rossmere and Friends of Hartlepool's Wild Green Spaces community groups were supportive of the proposed Rossmere ward. In addition, one local resident believed our draft recommendations, which placed the Fens and Rossmere estates into separate wards, was a more appropriate warding pattern than the existing arrangements. Given the support received for this ward during consultation, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Rossmere ward as final.

Manor House and Seaton

54 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Manor House and Seaton wards as final.

Conclusions

55 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Hartlepool, referencing the 2018 and 2024 electorate figures. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2018	2024
Number of councillors	36	36
Number of electoral wards	12	12
Average number of electors per councillor	1,957	2,069
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

Hartlepool Borough Council should be made up of 36 councillors serving 12 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for the Hartlepool Borough Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Hartlepool on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

56 We have now completed our review of Hartlepool Borough Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2020.

Equalities

57 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Hartlepool Borough Council

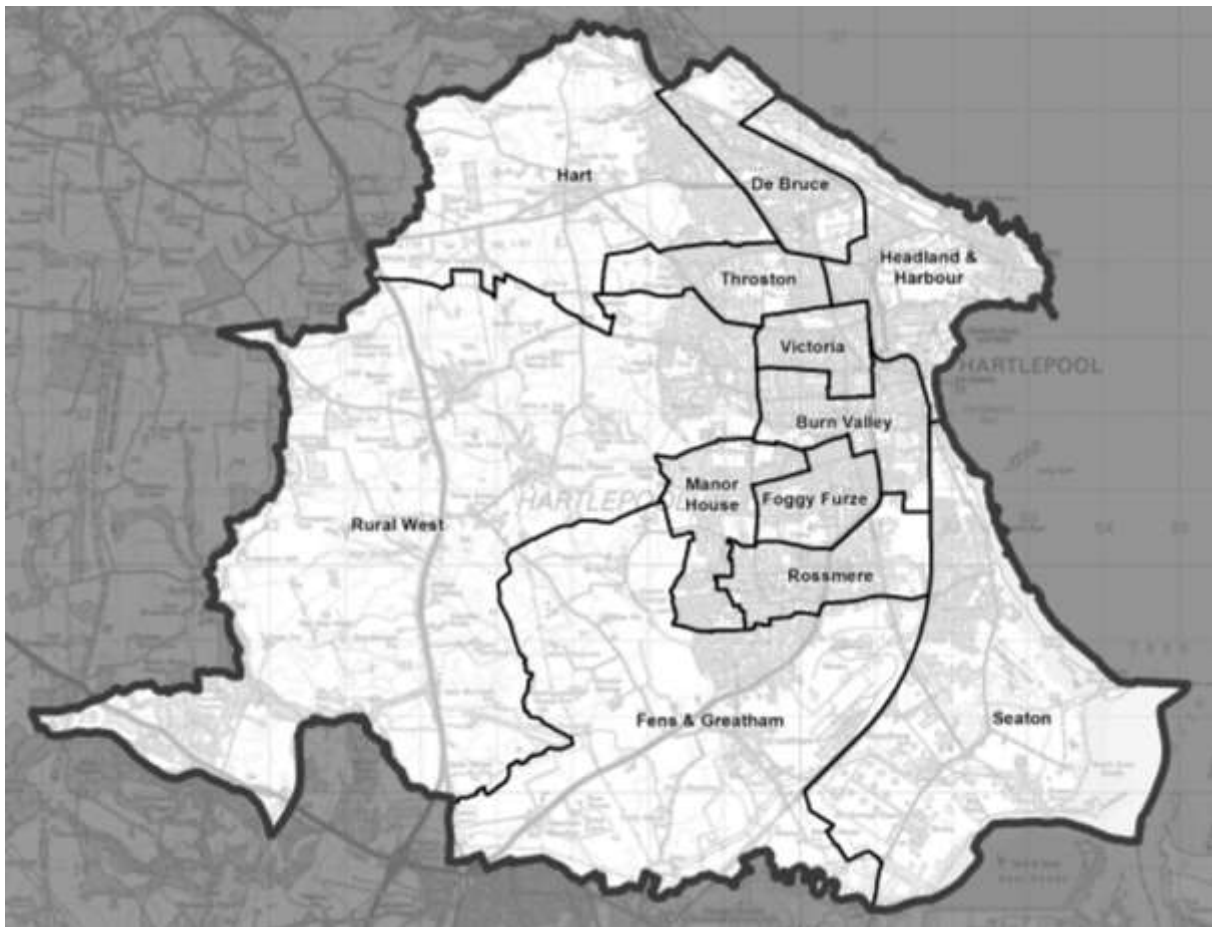
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Burn Valley	3	6,040	2,013	3%	6,067	2,022	-2%
2	De Bruce	3	5,898	1,966	0%	6,031	2,010	-3%
3	Fens & Greatham	3	5,512	1,837	-6%	6,059	2,020	-2%
4	Foggy Furze	3	6,375	2,125	9%	6,463	2,154	4%
5	Hart	3	5,936	1,979	1%	6,626	2,209	7%
6	Headland & Harbour	3	6,219	2,073	6%	6,775	2,258	9%
7	Manor House	3	6,388	2,129	9%	6,597	2,199	6%
8	Rossmere	3	5,699	1,900	-3%	5,763	1,921	-7%
9	Rural West	3	4,975	1,658	-15%	6,172	2,057	-1%
10	Seaton	3	5,512	1,837	-6%	5,850	1,950	-6%
11	Throston	3	6,229	2,076	6%	6,275	2,092	1%
12	Victoria	3	5,673	1,891	-3%	5,804	1,935	-6%
	Totals	36	70,456	-	-	74,481	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,957	-	-	2,069	-

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

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

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-east/hartlepool/hartlepool>

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-east/hartlepool/hartlepool>

Local Authority

- Hartlepool Borough Council

Councillors

- Councillor S. Moore (Hartlepool Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Tennant (Hartlepool Borough Council)

Local Organisations

- Fens Residents' Association
- Friends of Hartlepool's Wild Green Spaces
- Friends of Rossmere
- St Oswald's Church
- Wynyard Residents' Association

Local Residents

- 62 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on 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 fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	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
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
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