

# New electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council Further Draft Recommendations

January 2025

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## Analysis and further draft recommendations in the east, south-east and south-west of Middlesbrough

1 Following the consultation on our draft recommendations for Middlesbrough Council, the Commission has decided to hold a period of consultation on further draft recommendations for the east, south-east and south-west of Middlesbrough, prior to publication of its final recommendations. The Commission believes it has received sufficient evidence relating to the rest of the borough to finalise its recommendations there.

2 During consultation on the draft recommendations, which were published on 9 July 2024, we received 244 representations, 182 of which commented on the areas addressed in this report. Almost all these submissions expressed opposition, particularly to our proposed North Ormesby & Brambles, Marton East and Stainton & Stainsby Hall Farm wards.

3 Accordingly, we have been persuaded to amend our proposals and publish further draft recommendations for 11 wards. Although these amendments have been made in response to local evidence, many of them are significant or have not been consulted on previously which we consider necessitates a further round of consultation.

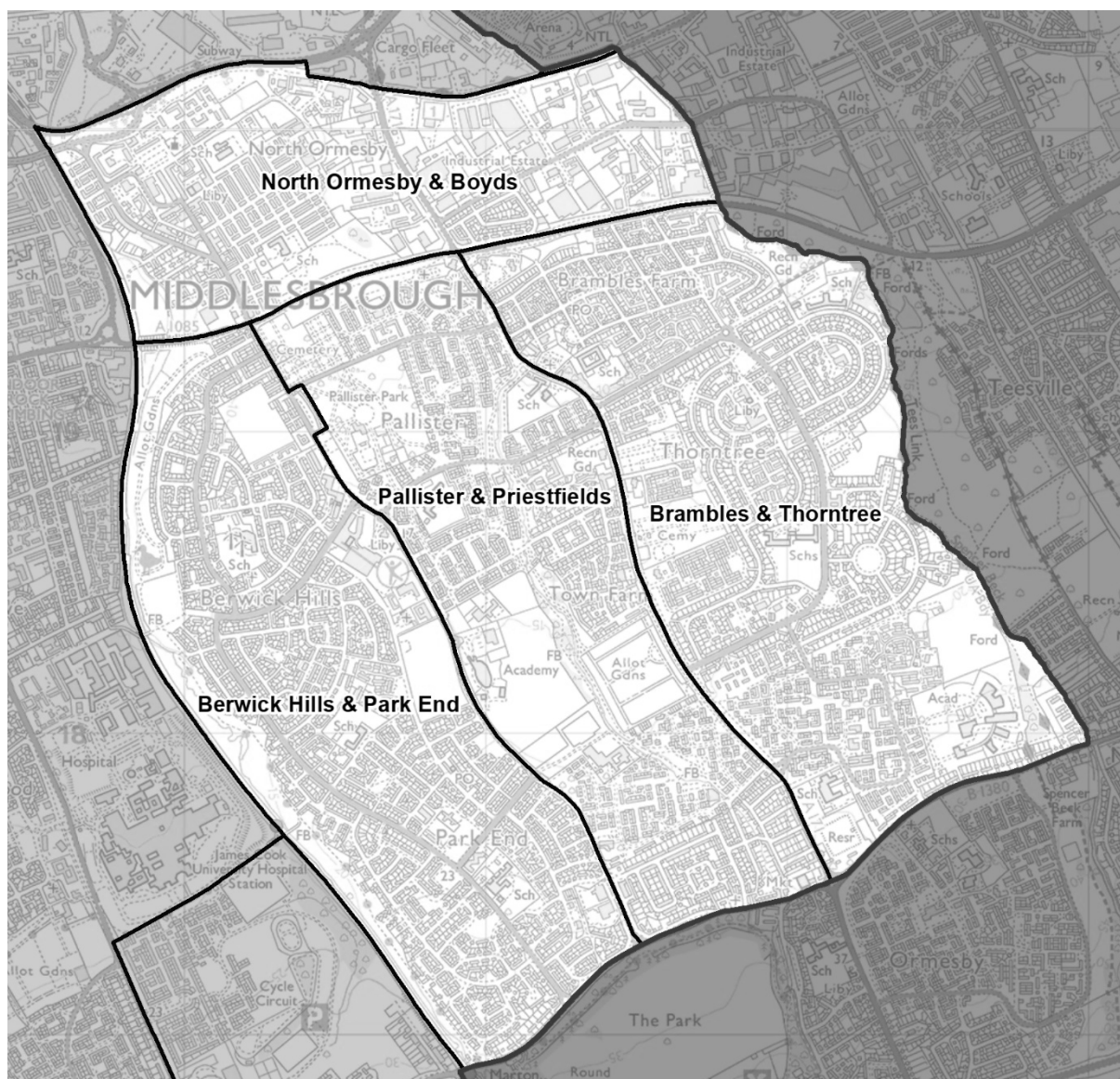
4 We welcome all comments on these proposals, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries and the names of our proposed wards. This stage of consultation begins on 14 January 2025 and closes on 24 February 2025. Please see page 13 for more information on how to send us your response.

5 The tables and maps on pages 2–11 detail our further recommendations for the east, south-east and south-west of Middlesbrough. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory criteria of:

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



## East Middlesbrough



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Berwick Hills & Park End	3	-10%
Brambles & Thorntree	3	-4%
North Ormesby & Boyds	1	-4%
Pallister & Priestfields	2	0%

### *Berwick Hills & Park End, Brambles & Thorntree, North Ormesby & Boyds and Pallister & Priestfields*

6 We received 11 submissions in response to our draft recommendations for North Ormesby & Brambles and Thorntree & Town Farm wards. Several of these submissions were critical of North Ormesby and Brambles being grouped in a single ward. Three residents cited high levels of social deprivation in North Ormesby as generating large amounts of councillor casework which, in their estimation, required

a dedicated councillor, as at present. The Labour Group made the opposite case, however, arguing that areas with high levels of deprivation should not form single-councillor wards due to the burden this places upon said councillor.

7 Two residents argued for an extra councillor but, as the existing ward already has an electoral variance of 15%, this would only increase electoral inequality. Brambles & Thorntree councillor Graham Wilson spoke out against the proposals on the basis that residents know him and dislike change, but these do not relate to our statutory criteria, and we cannot therefore take them into consideration.

8 Brambles & Thorntree Community Council argued that the two communities which form the existing ward have a shared identity, although it did not provide further evidence of this, and that pairing Brambles in a ward with North Ormesby would disrupt this. Other reasons given were the potential loss of ongoing community projects and increased housing development putting pressure on infrastructure, though we did not consider that the submission satisfactorily explained how this related to ward boundary changes.

9 We were mindful that the Council's initial submission made a similar case while providing detailed evidence to support its proposals. For example, the submission evidenced the community cohesion of North Ormesby with its high street, market, two primary schools, several places of worship, health centre, Community Hub and residents' association. The submission also pointed out that Brambles and Thorntree are neighbouring estates with no physical boundaries between them, unlike Cargo Fleet Lane separating them from Pallister to the west and Longlands Road separating them from Boyds to the north.

10 However, at the time of drawing up our draft recommendations, we had favoured the Labour Group's amendments to the Council scheme in East Middlesbrough, owing to the high levels of electoral inequality in the Council's proposals. These included variances of 34% for Berwick Hills & Park End, -39% for Pallister, -28% for Netherfields & Priestfields and 11% for Brambles & Thorntree. North Ormesby & Boyds, however, had a variance of -4%. Although two of the Labour Group's proposed wards also had electoral inequality, these were brought within 10% of the borough average through some relatively minor boundary changes.

11 With the above in mind, we revisited the Council's initial proposals to explore whether the variances could be improved while also respecting the separate community identities of North Ormesby and of Brambles and Thorntree. In doing so we maintained the Council's and the Labour Group's proposals for nine councillors in the area and redistributed them where necessary. For example, the Council's proposed Berwick Hills & Park End ward displays strong and clearly identifiable boundaries along the railway line, Longlands Road, Ormesby Road and the borough

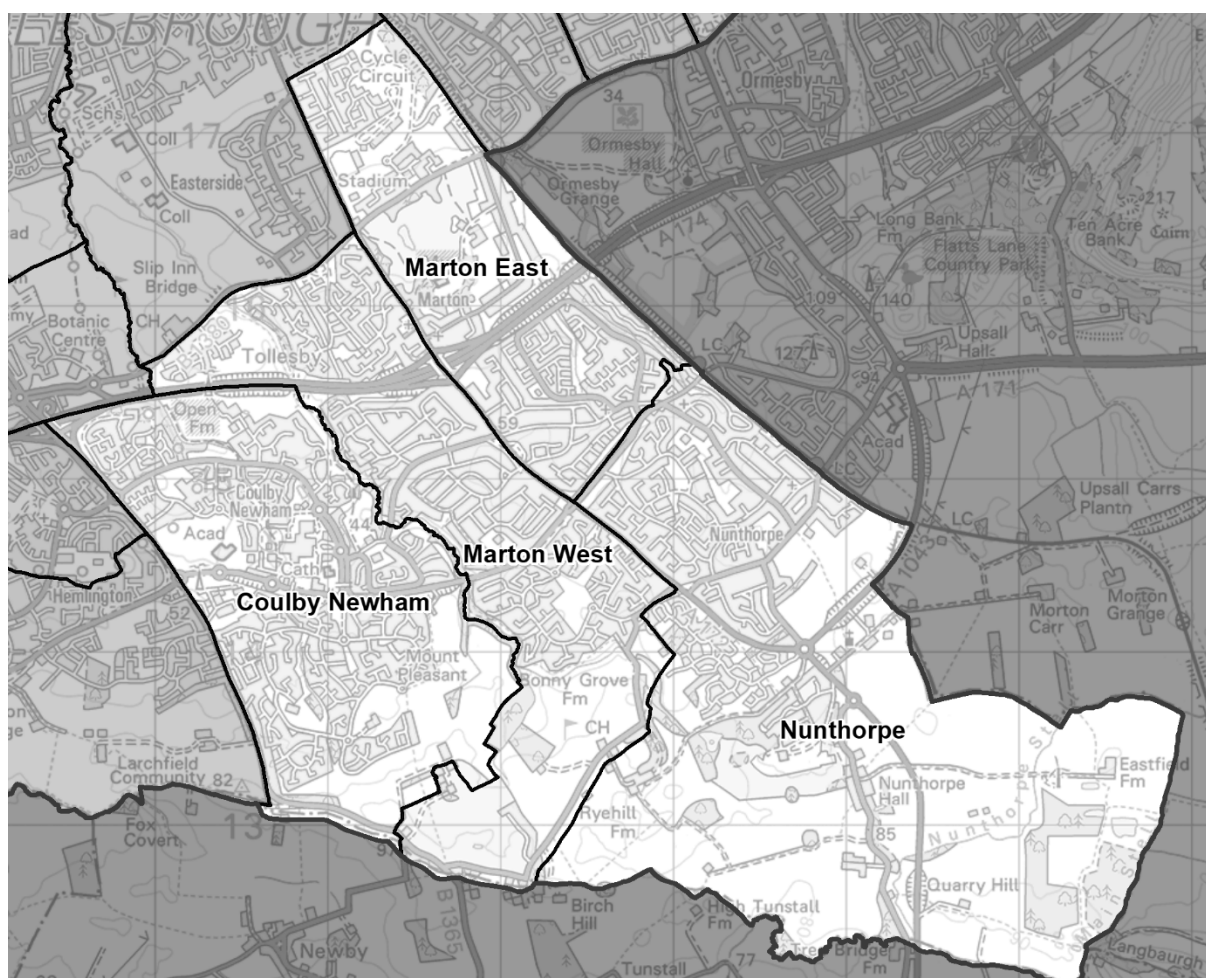
boundary, while entirely containing the Berwick Hills and Park End estates. As detailed in the Council's submission, the ward contains three schools, several shopping facilities, a library, medical and fitness facilities, and one of the Council's community hubs. However, the ward would have an electoral variance of 34% under the two councillors proposed by the Council which is significantly beyond what we would consider to be acceptable.

12 This variance can be significantly lowered, however, by allocating an additional councillor to the ward. With three councillors the ward would have 11% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2029. This can also be brought down to -10% with the addition of Dorrien Crescent to the ward, which we consider to better reflect community identities and effective and convenient local government, as it is accessed from Ormesby Road.

13 To correct the -39% electoral variance in the Council's proposed Pallister ward we have followed the principle, established in Berwick Hills & Park End, of using the main roads in the area as ward boundaries and extended the ward southwards to the borough boundary to include the Priestfields estate. This results in a 0% electoral variance for this two-councillor Pallister & Priestfields ward, being only 18 electors short of the borough average. While we note that Pallister and the Priestfields estate are not directly linked, being divided by Unity City Academy and Town Farm Allotments, both are accessible to each other along Cargo Fleet Lane and Ormesby Road. We note from the Council's submission that there are "no major community facilities" in their proposed Netherfields & Priestfields ward, but that Pallister contains several, including the community centre in Pallister Park, the East Middlesbrough Events Centre, and one of the Council's community hubs. We would be especially interested to hear from residents of Priestfields about whether they make use of these amenities.

14 The addition of Priestfields to the Council's proposed Pallister ward renders Netherfields unviable as a ward of its own as, even as a single-councillor ward, it would still have 36% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2029. Adding it to the Council's proposed Brambles & Thorntree ward, however, improves the variance of this ward from 11% under two councillors to -4% under three. Furthermore, we note that the estate is well connected with Thorntree via both Kenmore Road and Cargo Fleet Lane. We have chosen to maintain the existing ward name of Brambles & Thorntree but we would be interested to hear from residents and interested parties as to whether 'Brambles, Thorntree & Netherfields' would better reflect local community identity.

## South-East Middlesbrough



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Coulby Newham	3	-6%
Marton East	2	8%
Marton West	3	4%
Nunthorpe	2	9%

### *Couldby Newham, Marton East and Marton West*

15 We received 32 submissions in response to our draft recommendations for Marton, many of which were critical of our placement of Marton Manor in Marton East ward and the Brass Castle Lane area in Nunthorpe ward. The Labour Group, for example, argued that Marton Manor was better linked with Marton West, with Stokesley Road serving as an effective boundary with Marton East ward. The group further argued that the new Ladgate Woods housing estate (also known as Orchid Gardens) should be included in Marton West ward with Marton Manor, as it falls within the catchment area of Marton Manor Primary School and a cycle track connects the two estates.



16 Marton West Community Council also supported including Marton Manor in Marton West ward. It noted that the existing Marton West ward lacks a local church or other community facility, which has hitherto led to Marton West Community Council meetings being held in Marton Methodist Church in Marton East ward which it stated was 'the community centre in Marton Manor'. This was supported by Councillor David Jackson, who is also vice-chair of the Community Council, and several residents who pointed out that the shops, pubs, and sports facilities in Marton Manor would be a welcome addition to the ward. Two residents put forward that the A174 is a significant barrier between Marton Manor and Marton West, though we note this could also be said of Marton East ward either side of this dual carriageway.

17 We have been persuaded, on the basis of the evidence presented, that the inclusion of Marton Manor and Ladgate Woods/Orchid Gardens in Marton West ward would best serve the community identity of the area. We have therefore adopted these proposals as part of our further draft recommendations.

### *Nunthorpe*

18 We received 69 submissions in response to our draft recommendations for Nunthorpe. These were from Grey Towers Residents' Association, Marton West Community Council, Nunthorpe Parish Council, councillors David Jackson and Morgan McClintock of Middlesbrough Borough Council and Jon Rathmell of Nunthorpe Parish Council, and 63 residents. Almost all wrote in support of Borrowby Rise and Plantation View being added to Nunthorpe ward, as in our draft recommendations, and thus including the entire Grey Towers Village housing development within the same ward.

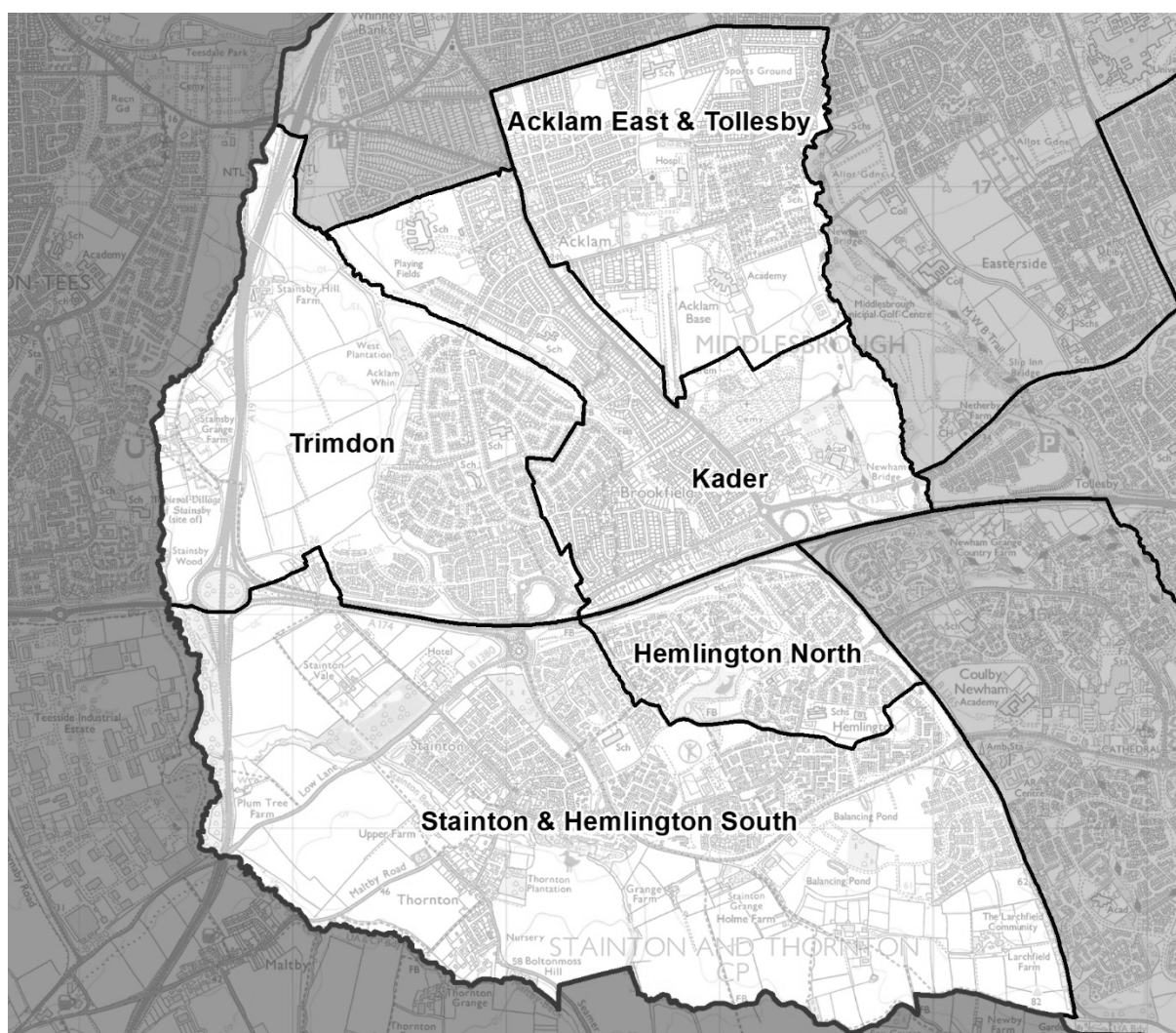
19 A large proportion of the submissions also opposed the inclusion of Brass Castle Lane, Bridle Woods, De Brus Park, Middlesbrough Golf Club and Newham Hall Farm in Nunthorpe ward, as in our draft recommendations. At the time we observed the area to be significantly removed from the rest of Marton West ward and sharing a more rural nature with Nunthorpe. However, we also observed that access from Nunthorpe ward was mainly via farm tracks, so requested further evidence to substantiate or refute this proposal. A number of residents pointed out that, other than 'informal pathways', access to the area was only possible via Brass Castle Lane. This would necessitate leaving Nunthorpe ward from Dixons Bank onto Brass Castle Lane in Marton West ward, only to then re-enter Nunthorpe ward further along Brass Castle Lane.

20 Councillor Morgan McClintock of Middlesbrough Borough Council wrote to say his discussions with residents led him to believe that 'this would reduce, rather than enhance, our sense of community identity', as there was a consensus that Nunthorpe extended no further than Plantation View. A resident of De Brus Park also described Marton West as 'a very well organised neighbourhood community which I

want to remain a part of.’ On the basis of the evidence we have received throughout the review, we have concluded that the interests of community identity and effective and convenient local government would be best served by the Brass Castle Lane area remaining in Marton West ward. This also reduces the electoral variance of Nunthorpe from 10% in our draft recommendations to 9%.

21 Councillor Jon Rathmell of Nunthorpe Parish Council wrote to propose that Low Gill View be added to Nunthorpe ward from Marton East ward, in which it is presently included, because it is accessible only from Gypsy Lane in Nunthorpe. We note that this is a recent housing development which has been built since the completion of the last review in 2013 which added Yew Tree Grove and what is now Milan Grove for similar reasons. We gave this proposal careful consideration but decided against including it in our further draft recommendations. This is because, while this may raise issues with effective and convenient local government, adding Low Gill View and Beau Gardens to Nunthorpe ward increases the electoral variance to 11%. We consider that further evidence is required to justify this variance, particularly in respect of the community identity of residents in the area. We would therefore especially welcome submissions from residents of Low Gill View and Beau Gardens about where they access local amenities such as shops, schools, places of worship and community centres, and the community with which they most identify.

## South-West Middlesbrough



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Acklam East & Tollesby	2	6%
Hemlington North	1	-3%
Kader	2	0%
Stainton & Hemlington South	3	-9%
Trimdon	2	1%

*Acklam East & Tollesby, Hemlington North, Kader, Stainton & Hemlington South and Trimdon*

22 About half of the 244 submissions we received in response to our draft recommendations concerned south-west Middlesbrough. Almost half of these concerned the green spaces between Blue Bell Beck/Saphwood Beck and the boundaries of our proposed Acklam West & Whinney Banks, Brookfield & Trimdon and Kader wards. These areas were included in our proposed Stainton & Stainsby

Hall Farm ward to follow the boundaries of a proposed housing development in the area.

23 However, we heard from a great many residents that these green spaces are much-used by residents of Acklam and Trimdon, who had also worked to give Acklam Meadow and Mandale Meadow registered village green status. One resident, speaking about Acklam Meadow off Newfield Crescent, described it as being 'in constant use by local schools, sports groups, and all locals'. They added that village green status was granted in 2018 after a concerted community effort to prevent development taking place on the land, and that Stotford Walk Beck was granted 'green wedge' status in 2014 for similar reasons. We recognise the importance of these green spaces to local communities on the east bank of the becks and have drawn the ward boundaries of our further draft recommendations accordingly.

24 A number of submissions also argued against our grouping of communities either side of the A174 dual carriageway in our proposed Stainton & Stainsby Hall Farm ward, noting that this was an effective barrier between Stainton to the south and Stainsby to the north. One resident noted that there exists a farm road linking either side of the A174 but that 'no one's actually sure if we're officially allowed to use it.' The road does appear to be publicly accessible from Low Lane in Stainton but ends abruptly on the other side at the entrance to the farm, at which point a sign informs travellers there is 'no public right of way'. This leaves one lane of the A1040, through which our draft recommendations boundary follows, as the only access point between the two communities.

25 A number of submissions were critical of both the geographical size of our proposed Stainton & Stainsby Hall Farm ward and its capacity to accommodate future planned growth. For example, Councillor David Coupe, who represents the existing Stainton & Thornton ward said he expected the electorate of the ward to exceed even that of a two-councillor ward in the next decade due to further development in Stainton, Thornton and Hemlington Grange. Our legal requirement is to have regard to the forecast electorate five years after the completion of our review, and we note that our proposed ward is forecast to have a variance of 9% by 2029, which is at the upper end of what we would consider to be good electoral equality. Councillor Coupe proposed moving Hemlington Grange from the ward into a Coulby Newham South ward, as in the Council's scheme. However, we rejected this proposal in our draft recommendations because the proposed two-councillor Coulby Newham South and Coulby Newham North wards had electoral variances of 11% and -33% respectively, and because we had received submissions from residents of Hemlington Grange citing their connections to amenities in Stainton.

26 Stainton & Thornton Parish Council expressed similar concerns about development and proposed maintaining the existing boundaries of the ward with two



councillors, which would have an electoral variance of -10% by 2029 according to the current forecast. However, including Stainsby Hall Farm in Brookfield & Trimdon would result in a 32% variance.

27 A further criticism of our draft recommendations was directed at our grouping of Brookfield with Trimdon and its consequent separation from Kader ward. The existing ward's councillors, Jim Platt and Sharon Platt, argued that Brookfield should continue to be a part of Kader ward due to it being 'the heart of our community' in the sense that the majority of the amenities used by residents of the ward were in Brookfield, including all its churches and community centres and most of its shops. We received only one submission, from a resident, specifically in favour of joining Brookfield and Trimdon. However, the reason given was because the resident believed they would 'inherit' Councillor Dennis McCabe, which is not a factor to which we can give consideration.

28 Having considered all the evidence received, we have decided to depart from our draft recommendations in an effort to secure a better balance of our three statutory criteria. Our further draft recommendations propose a two-councillor Trimdon ward similar to the existing ward and that proposed by the Council, save for the transfer to Kader ward of Cotherstone Drive, Gatenby Drive, Grisedale Close, Runswick Avenue, Sedgefield Road, Topcliffe Drive, and the section of Earlsdon Avenue which runs parallel to them. This brings the variance of Trimdon ward down from 12% to 1%. We have also excluded the farm mentioned in paragraph 24, as this is accessed from the other side of the A174.

29 Our proposed Kader ward is likewise similar to the existing ward and that proposed by the Council, save for the exclusion of Adcott Road, Bewley Grove and Cowley Road, which are instead added to Acklam East & Tollesby. A resident wrote to say that this area identified strongly with Acklam and that Acklam Road was considered a natural boundary between the two communities. This also means the ward boundary would no longer be drawn down the middle of Hall Drive, as at present, thus improving effective and convenient local government. Nonetheless we would particularly welcome further evidence from residents about whether they identify more with Acklam or Kader.

30 South of the A174 we are proposing a three-councillor Stainton & Hemlington South ward and a single-councillor Hemlington North ward. We very carefully considered the alternatives proposed to us but, for the reasons given above, we did not consider these to be viable options. Furthermore, although we considered the unification of Hemlington in our draft recommendations to be particularly conducive to local community identity, we consider that our further draft recommendations offer the best balance of all three statutory criteria. In drawing the boundary between the two wards we sought to follow geographic features which already divide the various clusters of housing in Hemlington, such as the edge of Hemlington Lake and green

spaces. Only Cass House Road, Dalwood Court and Hemlington Hall Road are divided between wards, and only in areas where there are breaks in housing. Both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2029.



## Have your say

31 The Commission has an open mind about its recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

32 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Middlesbrough, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

33 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say: [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

34 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

35 Submissions can also be made by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or by writing to:

**Review Officer (Middlesbrough)**  
**LGBCE**  
**7th Floor**  
**3 Bunhill Row**  
**London EC1Y 8YZ**

36 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Middlesbrough Borough Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

37 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.



38 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Middlesbrough?

39 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

40 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

41 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 Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at [www.lqbce.org.uk](http://www.lqbce.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

42 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

43 In the light of representations received, we will review our 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 the recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

44 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Middlesbrough Borough Council in 2027.



## Equalities

45 The Commission is satisfied that it complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act and that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.





# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Further draft recommendations for Middlesbrough Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Acklam East & Tollesby	2	4,640	2,380	8%	4,830	2,415	6%
2	Berwick Hills & Park End	3	6,135	2,045	-5%	6,135	2,045	-10%
3	Brambles & Thorntree	3	5,908	1,969	-9%	6,509	2,170	-4%
4	Hemlington North	1	2,194	2,194	2%	2,194	2,194	-3%
5	Kader	2	4,547	2,274	6%	4,547	2,273	0%
6	Marton East	2	4,649	2,325	8%	4,924	2,462	8%
7	Marton West	3	6,318	2,106	-2%	7,088	2,363	4%
8	North Ormesby & Boyds	1	2,190	2,190	2%	2,190	2,190	-4%
9	Nunthorpe	2	4,391	2,196	2%	4,952	2,476	9%
10	Pallister & Priestfields	2	4,548	2,274	6%	4,561	2,280	0%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Stainton & Hemlington South	3	5,412	1,804	-16%	6,192	2,064	-9%
12	Trimdon	2	4,203	2,102	-2%	4,596	2,298	1%

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor 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

### Submissions received during the previous round of consultation

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

[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/middlesbrough](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/middlesbrough)

#### *Political Groups*

- Middlesbrough Labour Group

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor D. Coupe (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor T. Grainge (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor L. Hurst (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Jackson (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor D. McCabe (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor M. McClintock (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor J. McConnell (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Middleton (Dalton Piercy Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Platt (Middlesbrough Borough Council)\*
- Councillor S. Platt (Middlesbrough Borough Council)\*
- Councillor J. Rathmell (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Thompson (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor G. Wilson (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Young (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

\* Included in a single submission

#### *Members of Parliament*

- Luke Myer MP (Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland)

#### *Local organisations*

- Brambles & Thorntree Community Council
- Friends of Blue Bell Beck
- Grey Towers Residents' Association
- Marton West Community Council
- Thirteen Housing Group

#### *Parish and Town Councils*



- Nunthorpe Parish Council
- Stainton & Thornton Parish Council

*Local residents*

- 220 local residents

*Petitions*

- Two petitions

## Appendix C

### Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Changes 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 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. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
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 can 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 <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
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

The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England

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Local Government Boundary Commission for  
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