

COMMITTEE REPORT

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

31ST JULY 2013

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

RICHARD LONG: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To consider a proposed response to the Boundary Commission's proposals.

BACKGROUND

2. In October 2011 the Local Government Boundary Commission (the Commission) informed the Council that it was to carry out an Electoral Review of Middlesbrough Council in order to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections.
3. During the preliminary stage of the review the Commission accepted the view of the Council that the Council size should reduce from 48 elected Members plus the elected Mayor to 46 elected Members plus the elected Mayor, and that this Council size would best ensure effective governance and decision making arrangements in the future.
4. In November 2012 the Commission wrote to the Chief Executive informing her that the next stage of the Electoral Review was commencing, and this stage was to consider the new pattern of ward arrangements for the town, based on a Council size of 46 Councillors. The Council submitted proposals to the Commission in February this year.
5. In May this year the Commission issued proposals for a new pattern of ward arrangements for the town. Consultation on these proposals ends on 5 August 2013. The Commission's proposals can be found here <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/reviews/middlesbrough-fer/middlesbrough-draft-recommendations.pdf>.
6. This reports comments on a number of issues arising from the Commission's proposals and suggests responses to them.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Electorate projections for 2018

7. Officers have double checked the Commissions calculations and there are no material differences in the elector projections and, as a result, the average variance figures.
8. However the Commission have quoted throughout their report that they have used projected elector figures based on the 2012 elector numbers. The figures used by the Commission are in fact projections based on 2011 elector numbers. It is proposed that this is highlighted in the Council's response to the Commission.
9. Officers have taken the Commissions proposed boundaries and run them using projections based on 2012 elector numbers. Whilst there are some changes to the variation on the target elector numbers, all proposed wards remain within +/-10% electoral equality target.
10. To be clear, the use of both 2011 and 2012 based elector projections provide results that meet the Commission's electoral equality requirements.

Officer review and discussion.

11. The proposals have been shared with officers in Development Control and in Community Development. From the planning perspective there are no issues of specific concern to highlight.
12. From the Community Regeneration Team there were some comments and suggestions relating to ward boundaries in East Middlesbrough. The team's view is that from a communities' perspective the logical boundaries are the main roads (Cargo Fleet Lane, Ormesby Road, Longlands Road) and Ormesby Beck. Whilst this may make sense in terms of the geography of east Middlesbrough, unfortunately this approach does not meet requirements for electoral equality.
13. In the north west of the borough the group of houses to the west of the TA centre on Stockton Road are included in the proposed Ayresome ward. This is due to the Commission adopting the A19 as the proposed eastern boundary. This group of electors appear isolated from the remainder of the Ayresome ward and would have to travel through the proposed Newport Ward to get to it. It is also likely that they would have a significant journey to vote.
14. From all of the above it is recommended that the Council response to the Commission should propose that the northern boundary of the Ayresome ward is the A66, thus bringing Stockton Road and the Maze Park Nature Reserve into the proposed Newport Ward. There are currently 36 electors in the area and, as a result, this proposal has no material impact on electoral equality for either of the two proposed wards. A map showing the Commission's proposals and the proposed change is attached as **Appendix A**.

Linthorpe conservation area

15. The Deputy Mayor has suggested reviewing the warding in relation to the Linthorpe Conservation Area. In the Commission's proposals this straddles two wards (Linthorpe and Park). It has been suggested that having the conservation area in a single ward would be helpful for good governance. Officers have looked at the options and it is possible to adjust the proposed boundaries to accommodate this suggestion. The impact is summarised in the table below and the boundaries are shown in **Appendices B and C**.

Commision's proposals (shown in Appendix B)

	Number of councillors	Electorate	Electors per Councillor	Variance from average
Linthorpe	2	4,644	2,322	5%
Park	3	7,026	2,342	6%

Alternative proposal (shown in Appendix C)

	Number of councillors	Electorate	Electors per Councillor	Variance from average
Linthorpe	3	6,948	2,316	5%
Park	2	4,687	2,344	6%

16. Direction is needed from the Committee on whether the alternative proposal should be included in the Council's response to the Commission.

Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

17. Under the current ward arrangement, Parliamentary Constituency boundaries between Middlesbrough and Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are coterminous with ward boundaries. Under the Commission's proposal this would not be the case with ward and constituency boundaries separating in the proposed Ladgate and Kader Wards and the Berwick Hill and Pallister and Park End and Beckfield Wards.
18. Coterminous ward and parliamentary boundaries is not a factor that the Commission takes into account when determining ward boundaries. However the position could cause confusion for electors and potentially have a detrimental impact on turnout, as well as not being the most efficient. Therefore it is proposed that the issue is highlighted to the Commission.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

19. There are no financial considerations relating to the recommendations of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. It is recommended that:

- i) That the Committee agrees to the inclusion of the following in the Council's response to the Commission:
 - highlight the error in labelling the 2012 based projections;
 - the proposed changes to Ayresome and Newport ward boundaries as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14; and
 - the comments relating to the mismatch of ward and parliamentary constituency boundaries as set out in paragraphs 17 and 18.
- ii) The Committee gives direction on whether the proposed changes to Linthorpe and Park ward boundaries, leading to Linthorpe Conservation Area being part of Linthorpe Ward as set out in paragraph 15, should be included in the response to the Commission.
- iii) The Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to write to the Commission setting out the Council's response to the Commission's draft proposals, based on the above points and any other issues agreed by the Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Boundary Commission – Electoral Review 2013, Middlesbrough Council, 20 February 2013.

(<http://democracy.middlesbrough.gov.uk/aksmiddlesbrough/users/public/admin/kab12.pl?cmte=COU&meet=1007&arc=71>)

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Middlesbrough Council, Local Government Boundary Commission for England, May 2013.

(<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/reviews/middlesbrough-fer/middlesbrough-draft-recommendations.pdf>)

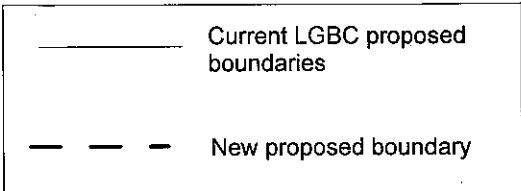
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APPENDIX A
Proposed changes to Ayresome and Newport Ward boundaries

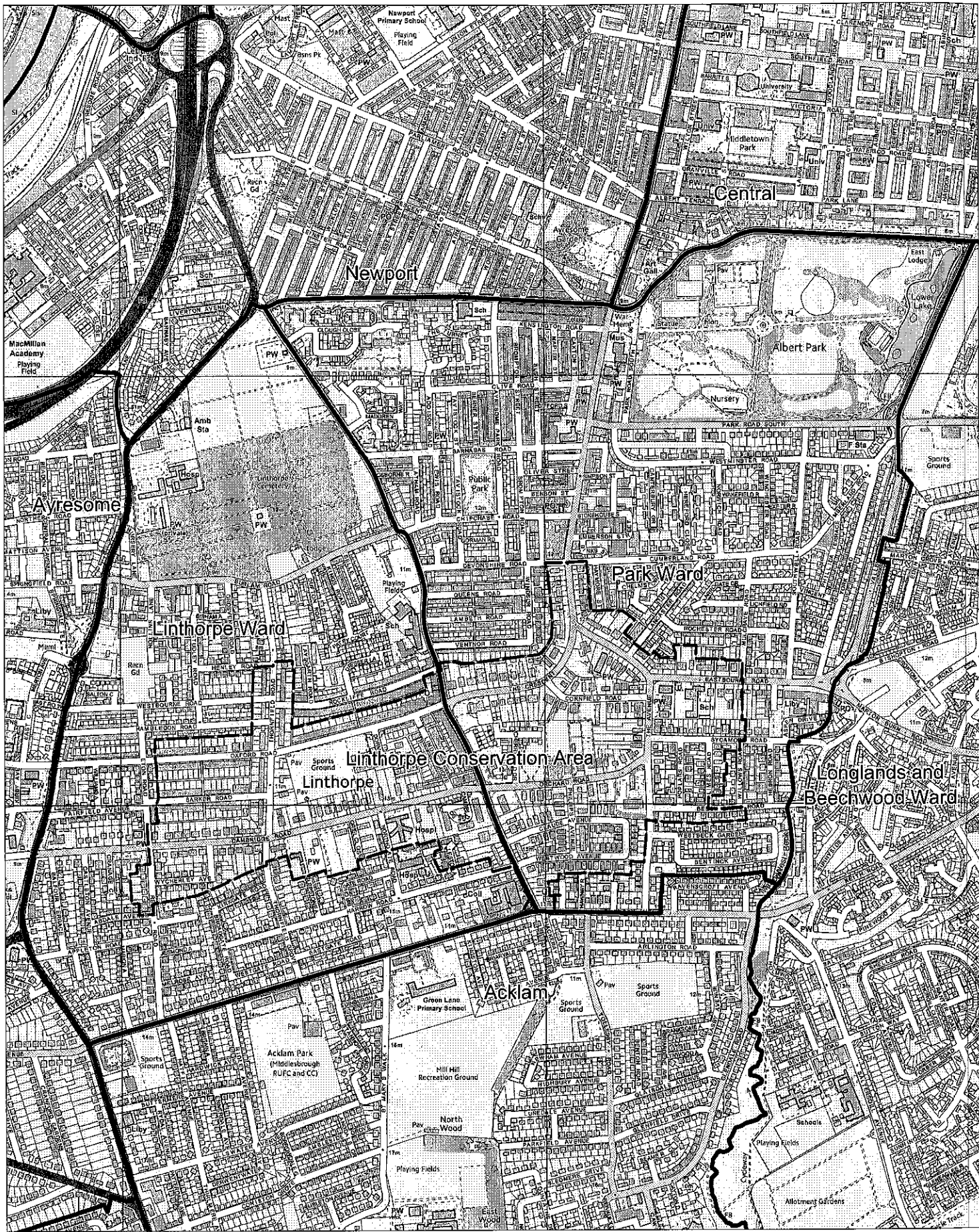


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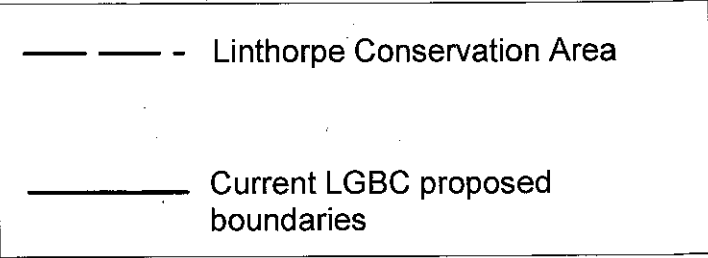


APPENDIX B

Boundary Commission proposals for Linthorpe and Park wards, with the boundary of the Linthorpe Conservation area.

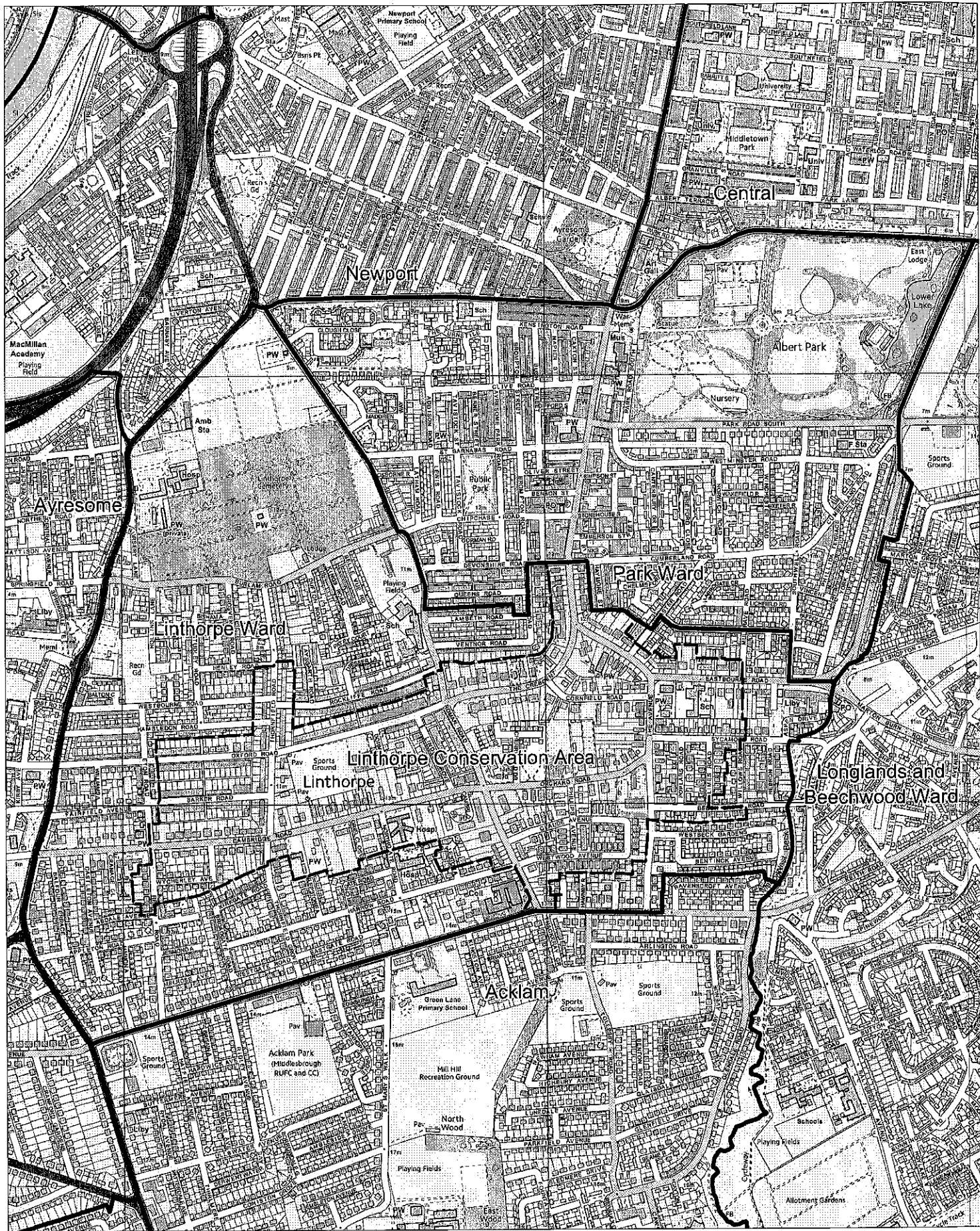


Boundary Commission proposals
for Linthorpe and Park Ward
and Linthorpe Conservation Area



APPENDIX C

Proposed alterations to Linthorpe and Park Ward boundaries to accommodate Linthorpe Conservation area in one ward



Proposed alterations to Linthorpe and Park Ward boundaries and Linthorpe Conservation Area

