

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 370

(Northumberland CC)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN

Sir Nicholas Morrison KCB

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mr J M Rankin QC

MEMBERS

Lady Bowden

Mr J T Brockbank

Mr R R Thornton CB DL

Mr D P Harrison

Professor G E Cherry

To the Rt Hon William Whitelaw, CH MC MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

1. The last Order under Section 51 of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to electoral arrangements for districts in the county of Northumberland was made on 16 May 1976. As required by Section 63 and Schedule 9 of the Act we have now reviewed the electoral arrangements for that county, using the procedures we had set out in our Report No 6.
2. We informed the Northumberland County Council in a consultation letter dated 25 June 1976 that we proposed to conduct the review, and sent copies of the letter to all local authorities and parish meetings in the county, to the MPs representing the constituencies concerned, to the headquarters of the main political parties and to the editors both of local papers circulating in the county and of the local government press. Notices in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from interested bodies.
3. On 16 December 1976 the County Council submitted to us a draft scheme in which they suggested 64 electoral divisions for the county, each returning one member in accordance with Section 6(2)(a) of the Act.
4. We considered this scheme together with the views expressed by local interests. On 9 November 1978 we issued draft proposals which we sent to all those who had received our consultation letter, or commented on the county council's draft scheme. Notices were inserted in the local press announcing that the draft proposals had been issued and could be inspected at the County Council's offices.
5. We based our draft proposals on the County Council's draft scheme, though we made certain modifications designed to improve the balance between divisions or districts. Several of these modifications were derived from local comments

made about the county scheme; one, from the District Council allotting an additional division to the Wansbeck District, had the effect of increasing the proposed size of the county council to 65 members.

6. The modifications we made were as follows:

(a) Alnwick District

We transferred the Alnwick Castle ward of the parish of Alnwick from the Alnwick division to the Lesbury division and Warkworth ward from the Lesbury division to the Shilbottle division.

(b) Berwick-upon-Tweed District

We replaced the 6 electoral divisions proposed by the County Council by 6 divisions proposed by a borough councillor who had commented on the County Council's draft scheme.

(c) Castle Morpeth District

We transferred the parish of Ulgham from the Longhirst division to the Widdrington division, removed Stannington parish from Morpeth No 3 division to the Netherwitton division, and replaced the County Council's proposed Ponteland East and Ponteland West divisions by two new divisions to be known as Ponteland Glebe and Ponteland Callerton.

(d) Wansbeck District

As already noted, we created an additional division in this district in the Ashington/North Seaton area, thus increasing the representation of Wansbeck district from 13 to 14 county councillors.

(e) We also agreed appropriate names for the 5 numbered divisions in the county council's draft scheme.

7. We received comments in response to our draft proposals from the County Council, four District Councils, sixteen parish councils, two town councils, six county or district councillors, one political association, one union organisation and one member of the public. A full list of those who responded to the invitation to comment on our draft proposals is given at Appendix 1 to this Report.

8. The Northumberland County Council submitted revised forecasts of electorate, based on more up-to-date information; they thought that to take account of these there should be an additional division in Castle Morpeth District and suggested how our draft proposals might be amended to achieve this. They contended that the provisions in their original scheme for the two divisions in the Ponteland parish of Castle Morpeth District and for six divisions in Berwick-upon-Tweed were preferable to those in our draft proposals in that they paid greater regard to local ties. They accepted our draft proposals for the Alnwick, Blyth Valley, Tynedale and Wansbeck Districts and expressed their conviction that, having regard to all the statutory requirements and their application to the circumstances prevailing in the county, our proposals would, with the modifications they suggested, provide the best arrangement of electoral divisions. Should we not be prepared to accept the resultant increase to 66 members in the size of the county council, they suggested an alternative arrangement of 63 divisions to take account of the revised electorate forecast. This would have reduced the number of divisions in Blyth Valley and Wansbeck by one each.

9. The other comments we received can be summarised as follows:-

(a) Alnwick District

The majority of comments on the draft proposals were concerned with this district, particularly the bringing together in one division of the Rothbury and Harbottle District wards; this meant the loss of one electoral division compared to the existing arrangements. The District Council, Glanton Parish Council, Longframlington Parish Council - supported by a petition bearing 337 signatures - and three district councillors also urged the transfer of Longframlington ward from the Shilbottle to the Rothbury division, while Acklington and Hauxley Parish Councils objected to the Warkworth ward being included in Shilbottle division. The Berwick-upon-Tweed Liberal Association regretted the reduction in the number of electoral divisions in Alnwick.

(b) Berwick-upon-Tweed District

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council objected to the draft proposals and suggested an alternative scheme increasing the number of divisions in the district from 6 to 7; Cornhill Parish Council supported this alternative scheme as it affected their parish. The Berwick-upon-Tweed Liberal Association supported the draft proposals, although they regretted the reduction they entailed in the number of electoral divisions.

(c) Blyth Valley District

Blyth Valley Borough Council stated they had no comments on the draft proposals but objected to the alternative arrangements suggested by the County Council providing for a reduction to 63 divisions.

(d) Castle Morpeth District

Castle Morpeth Borough Council accepted the draft proposals, with the exception of the arrangements for the 2 divisions in Ponteland, though they believed the county council's suggestion for an extra division offered the best solution. Stannington Parish Council objected to the inclusion of their parish in the Netherwitton division and suggested instead that it should be in the Morpeth Stobhill division; the member of the public who wrote to us advocated a different solution. Walton Parish Council supported the draft proposals for the district and objected to the alternatives put forward by the County Council.

(e) Tynedale and Wansbeck Districts

Tynedale and Wansbeck District Councils submitted no observations on our draft proposals. Acomb Parish Council in Tynedale District asked that the parish should remain in Humshaugh electoral division rather than be included in Corbridge.

10. When we came to reassess our draft proposals in the light of the additional information available and the comments made on them we had two things very much in mind. First, there were acute difficulties in seeking to reconcile some of the strongly held local views with the requirement imposed by the Act to devise electoral arrangements of single member divisions, each within a single district

and with as nearly as may be equal electorates. Second, it was necessary to take into account that the pattern of expected changes in the electorate was different from that on which our draft proposals had been based. The particular characteristics and exceptionally wide geographical spread of the County made a solution to some of the problems presented especially difficult, and the way in which we have dealt with them would not necessarily be appropriate in a county where different considerations applied. Against the background of the Commission's statutory duty to have regard to what is desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government, we have given priority to electoral balance where this has been possible. We were however obliged to accept some inequalities, where, for example, the alternative was to create an electoral division so exceptionally large in area that we did not consider it could be either effective or convenient for the local government of the area.

11. We were satisfied that before putting forward the two alternatives to our draft proposals referred to in paragraph 8 the County Council had made a careful and objective study of ways of meeting the problems associated with the review and their scheme for 66 divisions seemed to us the soundest approach. Whilst it retained some of the modifications we had proposed to their original draft scheme in the interests of a better balance of representation, it met some of the local objections to our draft proposals; it preserved local ties better in some instances than did our draft proposals, without any unacceptable disturbance of the numerical balance; and it took account of the alterations in the expected changes in electorate. The additional division in the Castle Morpeth district was justified by the revised forecast of the electorate. Although the scheme commanded a good measure of local acceptance, some objections made to our draft proposals still applied and additional ones had been raised to the alternative arrangements proposed by the county council. We looked particularly carefully at these outstanding objections which are dealt with in the following paragraphs.

12. Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council still considered their suggestions for

7 rather than 6 divisions, made in response to our draft proposals, were the most equitable for their area, but if there were to be only 6 divisions they preferred the county council's suggestions to our draft proposals. We decided to accept the county council's suggestions for 6 divisions on the grounds that the size of the electorate did not justify an extra division.

13. There were objections from the Stannington and Whalton parishes in Castle Morpeth district, and from Acomb Parish in Tynedale District to the arrangements as they affected those parishes; whilst we had sympathy with them we could see no practicable alternative to the arrangements in the county council's 66-member scheme that would meet these objections without unacceptable disadvantages.

14. In Alnwick District there were outstanding objections relating to the inclusion of the Long Framlington and Warkworth wards in the Shilbottle division. Both were included in this division in the county council's scheme for 66 divisions and again we saw no satisfactory way of amending their scheme to meet the objections.

15. But the greatest weight of opposition still concerned the Rothbury division in the Alnwick District. The inclusion of both the Rothbury and Harbottle wards in a single division was a feature of the County Council's original draft scheme (at which time it produced no objection); it was also included in our draft proposals and in the County Council's suggested 66 division scheme. Two alternatives had been put forward that would give separate representation for the two wards, one by the District Council which involved an additional (seventh) division in their area, the other by Councillor Mrs Bolam which provided for separate divisions for Rothbury and Harbottle wards by rearrangement of the six divisions proposed.

16. In putting forward their suggestion the Alnwick District Council asked for the opportunity to put their case before an Assistant Commissioner at a local meeting. We were satisfied however that we had sufficient information before us to reach final conclusions on arrangements for this area. On the basis of electorate size there was no case for an additional division to enable the two

wards in question to be separately represented, and rearrangement of the 6 divisions to achieve this could only be achieved at the expense of unsatisfactory standards of representation elsewhere in the district. We decided therefore after very carefully weighing the arguments that, given the constraints within which we have to work, there was no acceptable alternative to the arrangement we and the County Council had proposed.

17. As a result of this reassessment of the future electoral arrangements for the county, we came to the conclusion that the interests of effective and convenient local government would best be served by the adoption in its entirety of the 66 division scheme put forward by the County Council as an alternative to our draft proposals. We have formulated our final proposals accordingly.

18. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedules 1 and 2 to this report and on the attached map. Schedule 1 gives the names of the electoral divisions. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions, as defined on the map, is set out in Schedule 2.

PUBLICATION

19. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the map are being sent to Northumberland County Council and will be available for inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without map) are being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments.

L.S.

Signed:

NICHOLAS MORRISON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

PHYLLIS BOWDEN

TYRRELL BROCKBANK

G E CHERRY

D P HARRISON

R R THORNTON

LESLIE GRIMSHAW (Secretary)

6 December 1979

| | <u>DIVISION</u> |
|--|---|
| NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL | |
| <u>ALNWICK DISTRICT</u> | |
| Alnwick District Council | |
| Elsdon Parish Council | Rothbury |
| Harbottle Parish Council | " |
| Whittingham Parish Council | " |
| Rothbury Parish Council | " |
| Thropton Parish Council | " |
| Lesbury Parish Council | " |
| Amble Town Council | " |
| Warkworth Parish Council | " |
| Glanton Parish Council | " |
| Alnwick Town Council | " |
| Longhoughton Parish Council | " |
| Hauxley Parish Council | Amble/Shilbottle |
| Acklington Parish Council | Shilbottle |
| Longframlington Parish Council | Rothbury/Shilbottle |
| District Councillor S H Alexander | Rothbury |
| District Councillor V Boughton | " |
| County Councillor Mrs S Bolam | " |
| District Councillor A H Curry | Rothbury/Shilbottle |
| District Councillor Mary Keen | Rothbury |
| County Councillor I McArthur | " |
| National Farmers' Union | " |
| <u>BERWICK UPON TWEED DISTRICT</u> | |
| Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council | Berwick North |
| Berwick upon Tweed Liberal Association | Berwick/Alnwick |
| Cornhill Parish Council | Border |
| <u>BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT</u> | |
| Blyth Valley Borough Council | Blyth Valley |
| <u>CASTLE MORPETH DISTRICT</u> | |
| Castle Morpeth Borough Council | Ponteland Glebe/ Callerton Netherwitton |
| Stannington Parish Council | " |
| Mr J Graham | " |
| Whalton Parish Council | Belsay |
| <u>TYNEDALE DISTRICT</u> | |
| Acomb Parish Council | Hurshaugh/Corbridge |

COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

NAMES OF PROPOSED ELECTORAL DIVISIONS (EACH RETURNING ONE COUNCILLOR)

PROPOSED COUNTY ELECTORAL
DIVISIONS WITHIN DISTRICTS

DISTRICT OF ALNWICK

Alnwick

Amble

Embleton

Lesbury

Rothbury

Shilbottle

BOROUGH OF BERWICK UPON TWEED

Bamburgh

Crookham

Norham and Islandshire

Berwick North

Berwick South

Wooler

BOROUGH OF BLYTH VALLEY

Blyth Valley Central

Blyth Valley Cowpen

Blyth Valley Cramlington East

Blyth Valley Cramlington South East

Blyth Valley Cramlington West

Blyth Valley Croft

Blyth Valley Hartley

Blyth Valley Holywell

Blyth Valley Isabella

Blyth Valley Kitty Brewster

Blyth Valley Newsham

Blyth Valley Parkside

Blyth Valley Plessey

Blyth Valley Seaton Delaval

Blyth Valley Seghill

Blyth Valley Village

Blyth Valley Wensleydale

BOROUGH OF CASTLE MORPETH

Heddon on the Wall

Longhirst

Lynemouth

Morpeth North

Morpeth South

Morpeth Stobhill

Netherwitton

Ponteland East

Ponteland West

Stannington

Widdrington

DISTRICT OF TYNEDALE

Allendale

Bellingham

Bywell

Corbridge

Haltwhistle

Hexham East

Hexham West

Humshaugh

Plenmeller

Prudhoe East

Prudhoe West

Slaley

DISTRICT OF WANSBECK

Wansbeck Ashington Central

Wansbeck Bothal

Wansbeck Choppington

Wansbeck Haydon

Wansbeck Hirst

Wansbeck Newbiggin East

Wansbeck Newbiggin West

Wansbeck Park and College

Wansbeck Seaton

Wansbeck Stakeford

Wansbeck Sleekburn

Wansbeck Bedlington Central

Wansbeck Bedlington East

Wansbeck Bedlington West

The proposed electoral divisions are shown on a map which can be inspected at the council's offices. A description of the boundaries of the proposed electoral divisions shown on the map is attached at Schedule 2.

COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION
BOUNDARIES

- NOTE: 1. Where the boundary is described as following a road, railway, river, canal or similar feature, it should be deemed to follow the centre line of the feature unless otherwise stated.
2. Unless stated to be a Parish Ward all references to Wards are to Borough or District Wards.

DISTRICT OF ALNWICK

ALNWICK ED

Alnwick Clayport Ward.

Alnwick Hotspur Ward.

AMBLE ED

Amble East Ward.

Amble West Ward.

EMBLETON ED

Craster and Rennington Ward

Embleton Ward

Hedgeley Ward

Longhoughton Ward

LESBURY ED

Alnwick Castle Ward.

Lesbury Ward.

ROTHBURY ED

Elsdon Ward

Harbottle Ward

Rothbury Ward

Whittingham Ward

SHILBOTTLE ED

Longframlington Ward

Shilbottle Ward

Warkworth Ward

BOROUGH OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

BAMBURGH ED

Bamburgh Ward

Beadnell Ward

Belford Ward

North Sunderland Ward

BERWICK NORTH ED

Edward Ward

Elizabeth Ward

BERWICK SOUTH ED

Seton Ward

Spittal Ward

Tower Ward

CROOKHAM ED

Ford Ward

Milfield Ward

NORHAM AND ISLANDSHIRE ED

Islandshire Ward

Norhamshire Ward

WOOLER ED

Chatton Ward

Cheviot Ward

Wooler Ward

BOROUGH OF BLYTH VALLEY

BLYTH VALLEY CENTRAL ED

Central Ward

BLYTH VALLEY COWPEN ED

Cowpen Ward

BLYTH VALLEY CRAMLINGTON EAST ED

Cramlington East Ward

BLYTH VALLEY CRAMLINGTON SOUTH EAST ED

Cramlington South East Ward

BLYTH VALLEY CRAMLINGTON WEST ED

Hartford and West Cramlington Ward

BLYTH VALLEY CROFT ED

Croft Ward

BLYTH VALLEY HARTLEY ED

Hartley Ward

BLYTH VALLEY HOLYWELL ED

Holywell Ward

BLYTH VALLEY ISABELLA ED

Isabella Ward

BLYTH VALLEY KITTY BREWSTER ED

Kitty Brewster Ward

BLYTH VALLEY NEWSHAM ED

Newsham and New Delaval Ward

BLYTH VALLEY PARKSIDE ED

Parkside Ward

BLYTH VALLEY PLESSEY ED

Plessey Ward

BLYTH VALLEY SEATON DELAVAL ED

Seaton Delaval Ward

BLYTH VALLEY SEGHILL ED

Seghill Ward

BLYTH VALLEY VILLAGE ED

Village Ward

BLYTH VALLEY WENSLEYDALE ED

Wensleydale Ward

BOROUGH OF CASTLE MORPETH

HEDDON ON THE WALL ED

Heddon-on-the-Wall Ward

Stamfordham Ward

LONGHIRST ED

Pegswood Ward

LYNEMOUTH ED

Ellington Ward

Lynemouth Ward

MORPETH NORTH ED

Morpeth Central Ward

Morpeth North Ward

MORPETH SOUTH ED

Morpeth Kirkhill Ward

Morpeth South Ward

MORPETH STOBHILL ED

Morpeth Stobhill Ward

NETHERWITTON ED

Hebron Parish

Mitford Parish

Hartburn Ward

Longhorsley Ward

PONTELAND EAST ED

Ponteland East Ward

Ponteland South Ward

PONTELAND WEST ED

Ponteland North Ward

Ponteland West Ward

STANNINGTON ED

Stannington Ward

Whalton Ward

Hepscott Parish

WIDDRINGTON ED

Chevington Ward

Ulgham Ward

DISTRICT OF TYNE DALE

ALLENDALE ED

Hexhamshire Parish

Hexhamshire Low Quarter Parish

Allendale Ward

Haydon Ward

BELLINGHAM ED

Corsenside Parish

Bellingham Ward

Redesdale Ward

Upper North Tyne Ward

BYWELL ED

East Tynedale Ward

Ovingham Ward

Wylam Ward

CORBRIDGE ED

Acomb with Sandhoe Ward

Corbridge Ward

HALTWHISTLE ED

Haltwhistle Ward

HEXHAM EAST ED

Gilesgate Ward

Priestpottle Ward

HEXHAM WEST ED

Hencotes Ward

Leazes Ward

HUMSHAUGH ED

Bavington Parish

Kirkwhelpington Parish

HUMSHAUGH ED contd

Chesters Ward

Chollerton with Whittington Ward

Warden and Newbrough Ward

Wark Ward

PLENMELLER ED

Bardon Mill Ward

Tipalt Ward

West Tynedale Ward

PRUDHOE EAST ED

Prudhoe North Ward

Prudhoe South Ward

PRUDHOE WEST ED

Castle Ward

Mickley Ward

Prudhoe West Ward

SLALEY ED

Slaley Parish

Broomhaugh and Riding Ward

Broomley and Stocksfield Ward

South Tynedale Ward

DISTRICT OF WANSBECK

WANSBECK NEWBIGGIN EAST ED

Newbiggin East Ward

WANSBECK NEWBIGGIN WEST ED

Newbiggin West Ward

WANSBECK HIRST ED

Hirst Ward

and that part of Park Ward bounded by a line commencing at the point where the eastern boundary of Central Ward meets the northern boundary of Park Ward, thence northeastwards along said northern boundary and southeastwards along the eastern boundary of Park Ward to Third Avenue, thence southwestwards along said avenue to Hawthorn Road, thence northwestwards along said road to the point of commencement.

WANSBECK SEATON ED

Seaton Ward

WANSBECK HAYDON ED

Haydon Ward

and that part of College Ward bounded by a line commencing at the point where the northwestern boundary of Seaton Ward meets the eastern boundary of Haydon Ward, thence northwestwards along said eastern boundary to Sixth Avenue, thence

northeastwards along said avenue to Hawthorn Road, thence southeastwards along said road and College Road to the northwestern boundary of Seaton Ward, thence generally southeastwards and westwards along said boundary to the point of commencement.

WANSBECK ASHINGTON CENTRAL ED

Central Ward

and that part of Park Ward bounded by a line commencing at the point where the eastern boundary of Central Ward meets Third Avenue, thence northwestwards and northeastwards along said ward boundary to Hawthorn Road, thence southeastwards along said road to Third Avenue, thence southwestwards along said avenue to the point of commencement.

WANSBECK PARK AND COLLEGE ED

That part of College Ward not included in Wansbeck Haydon County Electoral Division, that part of Park Ward not included in Wansbeck Ashington Central County Electoral Division and that part of Park Ward not included in Wansbeck Hirst County Electoral Division.

WANSBECK BOTHAL ED

Bothal Ward.

WANSBECK CHOPPINGTON ED

Choppington Ward

and that part of Guide Post Ward bounded by a line commencing at the point where the eastern boundary of the said ward meets the road known as Ringway, thence generally northwestwards, southwestwards and southeastwards along said road to Ashington Drive, thence northeastwards along said drive to Wansbeck Avenue, thence southeastwards along said avenue to Stakeford Lane, thence eastwards and northeastwards along said lane to the eastern boundary of Guide Post Ward, thence generally southwards along said eastern boundary and generally westwards,

northwards, and eastwards along the southern, western and northern boundaries of said ward to the eastern boundary of said ward, thence southwestwards along said boundary to the point of commencement.

WANSBECK STAKEFORD ED

Stakeford Ward

and that part of Guide Post Ward not included in the Wansbeck Choppington County Electoral Division.

WANSBECK SLEEKBURN ED

Sleekburn Ward.

WANSBECK BEDLINGTON CENTRAL ED

Bedlington Central Ward.

WANSBECK BEDLINGTON EAST ED

Bedlington East Ward.

WANSBECK BEDLINGTON WEST ED

Bedlington West Ward.