

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.553

Review of Non-Metropolitan Counties

THE COUNTY OF
NORTHUMBERLAND
BOUNDARY WITH
DURHAM

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 553

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN

Mr G J Ellerton CMG MBE

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mr J G Powell CBE FRICS FSVA

Members

Professor G E Cherry BA FRTPI FRICS

Mr K F J Ennals CB

Mr G R Prentice

Mrs H R V Sarkany

Mr B Scholes OBE

THE RT HON NICHOLAS RIDLEY MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
REVIEW OF NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES
THE COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND AND ITS BOUNDARY WITH DURHAM

COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT AND PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

1. On 2 September 1986 we wrote to Northumberland County Council announcing our intention to undertake a review of the county under section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Copies of the letter were sent to the principal local authorities and to the parishes in Northumberland and in the surrounding counties of Cumbria and Durham. Copies were also sent to the Members of Parliament with constituency interests, the headquarters of the main political parties, and to government departments which might have an interest, as well as to the Northern Regional Health Authority, British Telecom, the North Eastern Electricity Board, British Gas, the Northumbrian Water Authority, the English Tourist Board, Port Authorities in the counties, the local government press and local television and radio stations serving the area, and the National and County Associations of Local Councils

2. The County Councils were requested, in co-operation as necessary with other local authorities concerned, to assist us in publicising the start of the review by inserting a notice for two successive weeks in local newspapers so as to give a wide coverage in the areas involved. The County Council was also asked to ensure that the issue of the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of those concerned with services such as the administration of justice and police, in respect of which it has a statutory function.

3. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the surrounding counties, and any person or

body interested in the review, to submit to us their views in detail on whether changes to the county boundary were desirable and, if so, what those changes should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government, the criterion laid down in the Act.

THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US

4. In response to our letter we received representations from the County Councils of Northumberland and Durham; Castle Morpeth Borough Council; the parish councils of Allendale, Belsay, Hauxley, Shotley Low Quarter, Whalton, and other interested bodies and individuals.

5. Suggestions for change to Northumberland's boundary with Cumbria have also been put to us and are being considered under the review of that county which is still in progress. Northumberland's boundary with Tyne and Wear will be considered separately as part of the review of the metropolitan county.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE COUNTIES OF NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM

(a) the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent

6. Durham County Council suggested that the boundary between Northumberland and Durham should be re-aligned to follow the altered course of the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent from the area of Red Braes to the area of Ebchester. This would transfer some 40 small areas of land, consisting mainly of farmland and fields, between the two counties.

7. Northumberland County Council and Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council opposed this suggestion and pointed out that the existing boundary was adequately marked by ancient boundary stones some of which had been "listed" by your

Department. They wanted the existing boundary to be maintained because of its ancient origins and the local opposition to any change. They maintained that no useful purpose could be served by the change because no communities would be directly affected. Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council expressed similar opposition, but added that changes to the boundary would cause practical difficulties to local landowners because it coincided, in part, with farm boundaries. One private individual also opposed Durham County Council's suggestion. He stated that the proposed boundary would transfer over 32 acres of his land from Northumberland to Durham and feared (erroneously) that this would necessitate changes to his property deeds.

8. Comments were also received from Castle Morpeth Borough Council, the parish councils of Allendale, Belsay, Hauxley and Whalton, the Northumberland Family Practitioner Committee and British Gas. They all either stated that they were satisfied with the existing boundary and wished to see no change, or offered no comment.

(b) Derwent Reservoir

9. In addition to suggesting some minor technical adjustments, affecting the burn and the river, Ordnance Survey also pointed out to us that the existing boundary followed a defaced course through the centre of Derwent Reservoir. It suggested that it might be beneficial to place the whole of the reservoir within one county, which could be achieved by re-aligning the boundary to follow the south side of the reservoir; thus placing it in Northumberland.

OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

(a) the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent.

10. We considered Durham County Council's suggestion for this stretch of boundary together with the representations made to us. We noted that the course of the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent had changed, causing approximately

40 small areas of land to become isolated from their respective counties on opposite sides of the water course, and that the boundary along those lengths had, as a consequence, become defaced. We considered that the present course of the burn and the river would provide a more readily identifiable and natural boundary. We decided, therefore, to issue a draft proposal accordingly, incorporating some minor technical adjustments put forward by Ordnance Survey.

(b) Derwent Reservoir

11. Although the unification of Derwent Reservoir in one county had not been raised by either of the County Councils affected we considered it was desirable to re-align that part of the boundary so as to relate it to an identifiable feature. We understood that Northumberland County Council was the statutory enforcing authority for the reservoir and concluded that it would be logical to place it wholly in Northumberland to reflect that county's responsibility. We decided, therefore, to issue a draft proposal to that effect.

12. The letter announcing our draft proposals was published on 6 November 1987. Copies were sent to the local authorities concerned, and to those who had made representations to us. Northumberland and Durham County Councils were asked to publish a notice giving details of our draft proposals and to post copies of it at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our draft proposals letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 15 January 1988.

RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

13. We received representations from twelve sources in response to our draft proposals letter. They included comments from the County Councils of Northumberland and Durham, the District Councils of Derwentside, Tynedale and Wear Valley, Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council, Mr Alan Amos MP, the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company and other interested bodies and individuals.

14. Half the representations received opposed our draft proposal affecting the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent whilst two expressed support. Two also supported our draft proposal affecting Derwent Reservoir whilst five were opposed. The remainder either wished to see no change at all or offered no comment.

(a) the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent

15. Durham County Council and Derwentside District Council supported our draft proposal to re-align the boundary to follow the course of the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent, but it was opposed by Northumberland County Council, Tynedale District Council, Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council and Mr Alan Amos MP. The Parish Council reiterated its earlier arguments for no change: that tradition and heritage were being sacrificed; that the course of the river could change whereas the boundary stones are permanent; that there would be administrative difficulties for those whose land would be divided between two local authorities; and that any proposals to develop that land would require two planning applications. Mr Alan Amos MP supported those arguments and added that the present arrangements worked smoothly and to everyone's satisfaction.

(b) Derwent Reservoir

16. Northumberland County Council and Tynedale District Council supported our draft proposal to place Derwent Reservoir wholly in Northumberland. It was opposed however by Durham County Council and the District Councils of Derwentside and Wear Valley. They considered that Northumberland County Council's enforcement responsibility should not be regarded as a reason to alter the boundary; the position of the boundary did not present any problems nor had it been a significant factor in deciding where the enforcement responsibility should lie. Durham County Council also pointed out that although the reservoir was planned for multiple use, it had played the major role in developing the recreational and leisure facilities. It added that the reservoir did not serve consumers in Northumberland but only provided water to those south of the Tyne. The County Council concluded therefore that it would be more logical to place the reservoir entirely in Durham.

17. The Sunderland and South Shields Water Company, which owns the reservoir, said it had no objection to our proposed change but pointed out that the position of the proposed boundary along the south side of the reservoir corresponded with the top water line and would be difficult to identify when the water level fell below that line. It suggested that the fence lines, bounding the land it owned south of the reservoir, might provide a more suitable boundary, although the reservoir works beyond Edmundbyers, further south in Durham, would then become detached from the reservoir in Northumberland.

18. The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering Committee, and one resident of Northumberland, both objected to our draft proposals, mainly on historical grounds. The Northern Regional Health Authority and British Gas confirmed they had no comment to make.

OUR FINAL DECISIONS

19. As required by section 60(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, we have carefully considered the representations made to us.

(a) the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent

20. We took account of the representations against our draft proposal for the Beldon Burn and the River Derwent but we considered that no new arguments had been brought to light. We remained of the opinion that it was desirable to re-align the boundary to follow a readily identifiable feature. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

(b) Derwent Reservoir

21. We took account of Durham County Council's involvement in the development of the leisure and recreational facilities for the reservoir. We also took account of the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company's comments concerning the separation of the reservoir-works, in one county, from the reservoir in another and the difficulty in locating the precise position of the proposed boundary. We felt it would be wrong to separate the works from the reservoir. We also felt, however, that it would be unreasonable to extend the re-alignment as far as, or beyond, the village of Edmundbyers. We also considered Durham

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

COUNTY BOUNDARY REVIEW

NORTHUMBERLAND

AFFECTING DURHAM

FINAL PROPOSALS

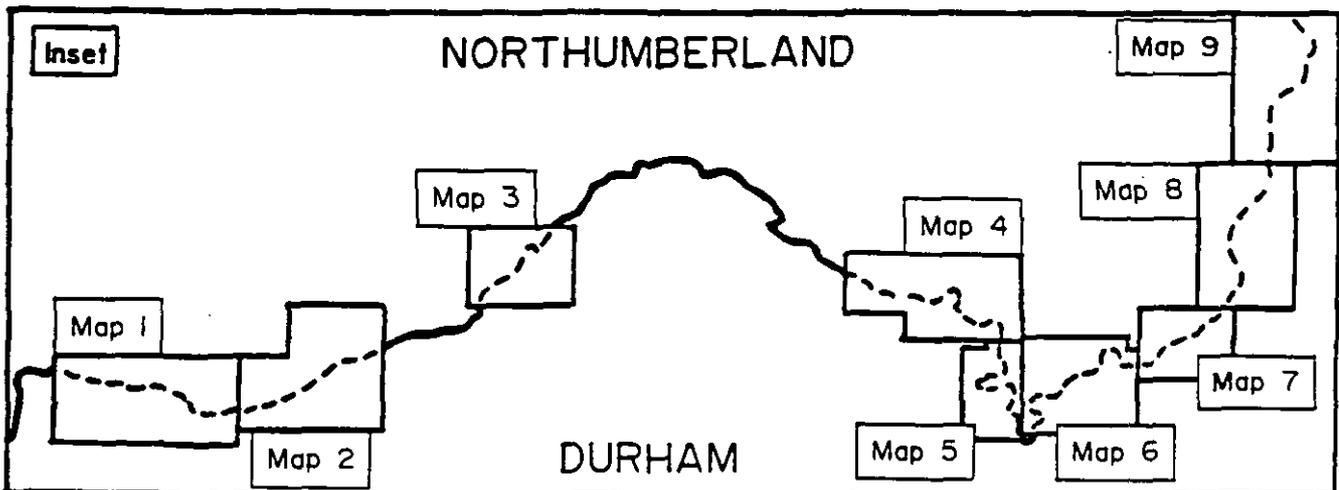
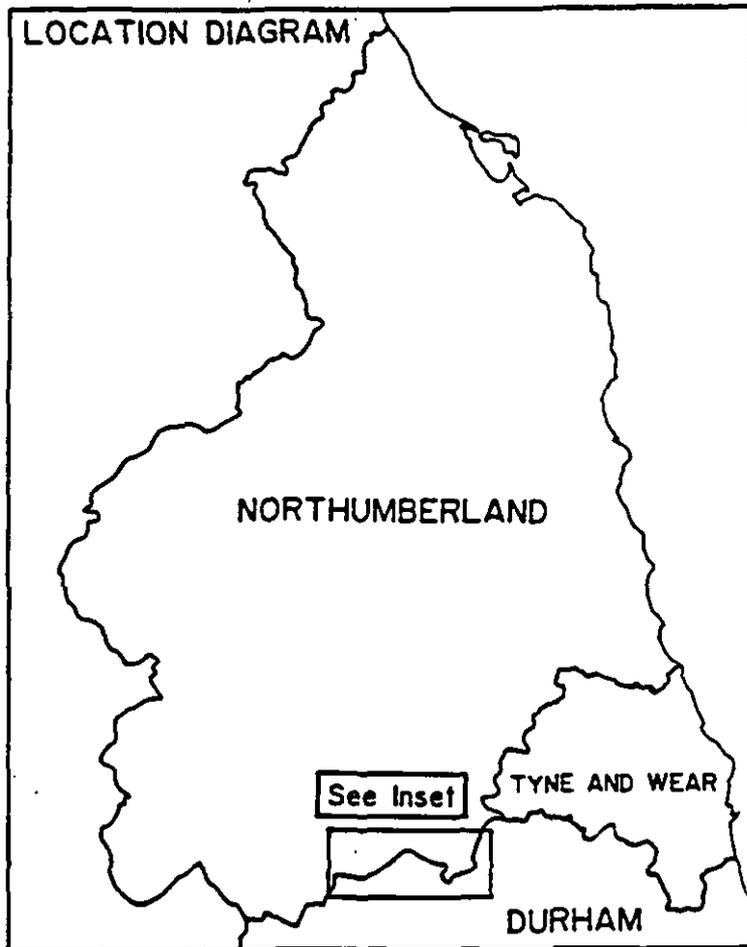
Existing County Boundary

Proposed County Boundary

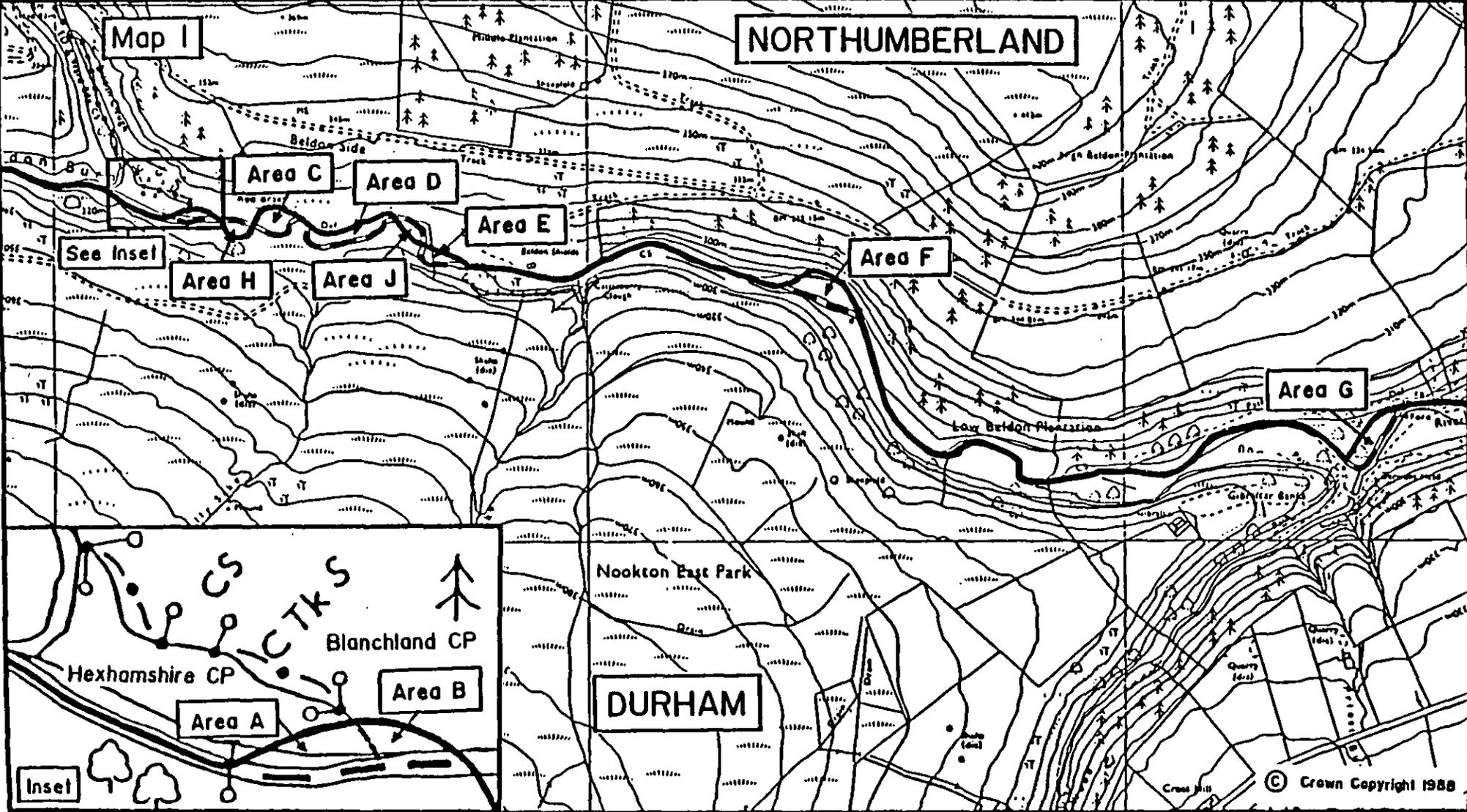
Existing CP Boundary

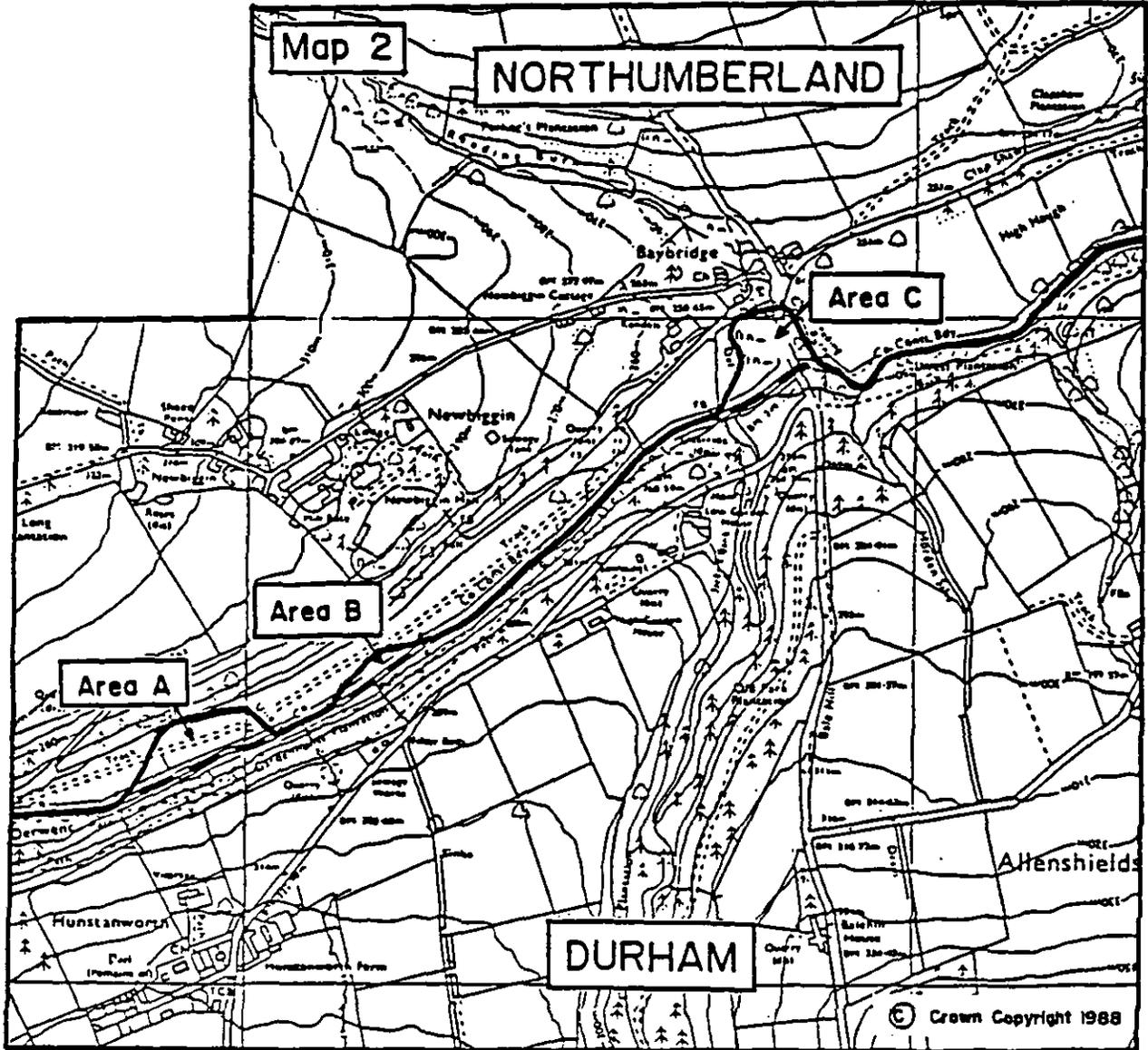
Boundaries affected by proposals

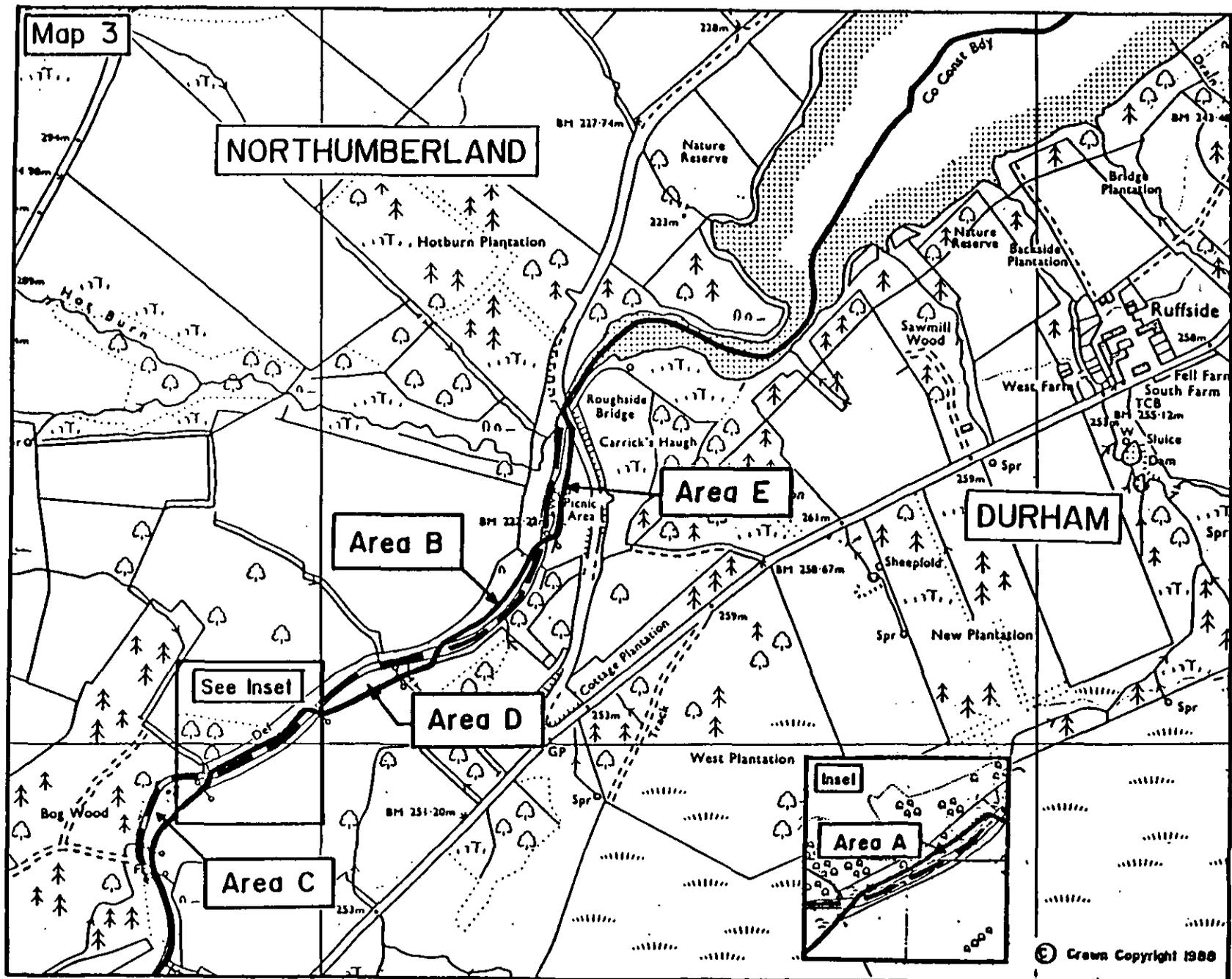


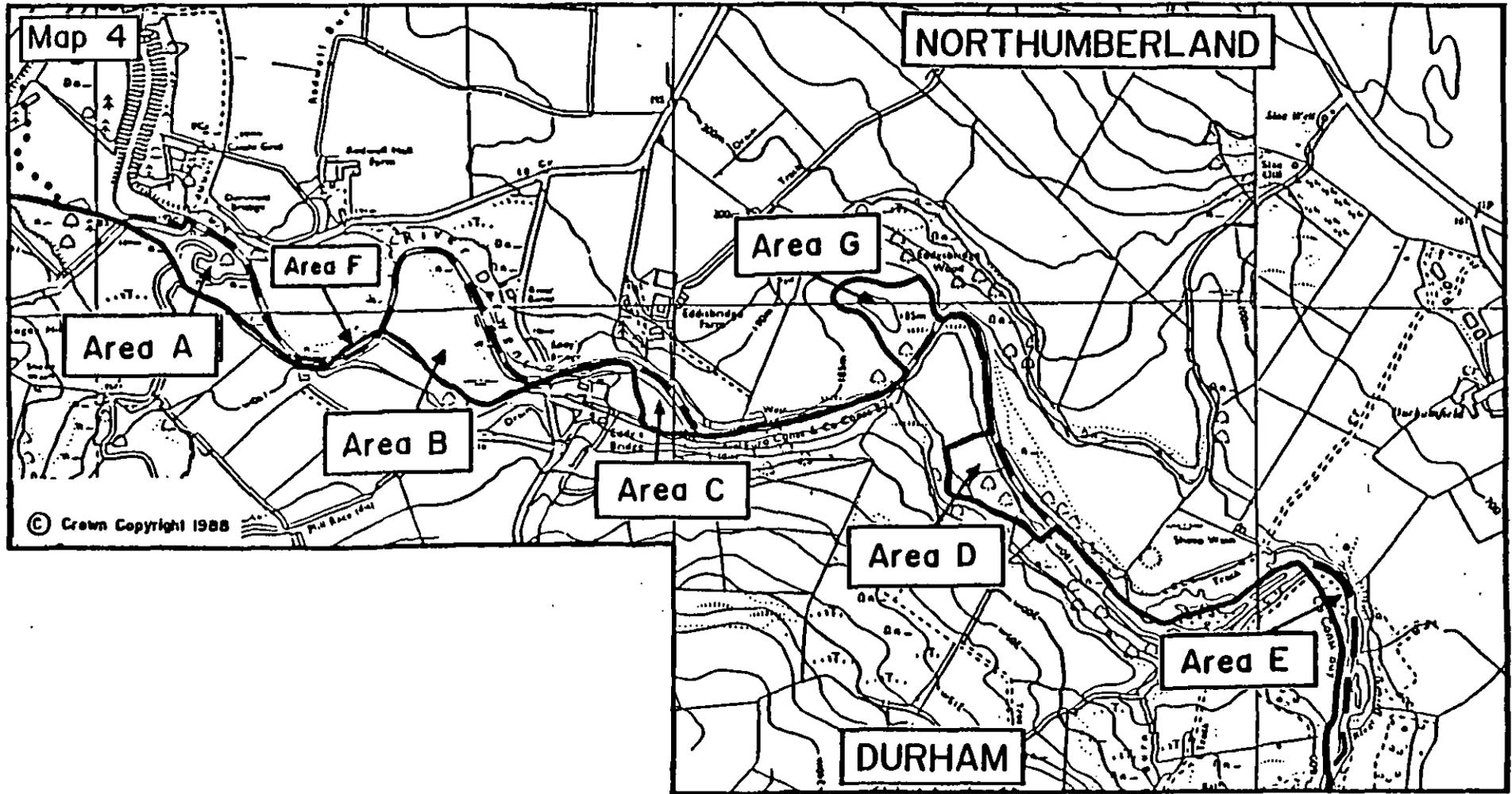


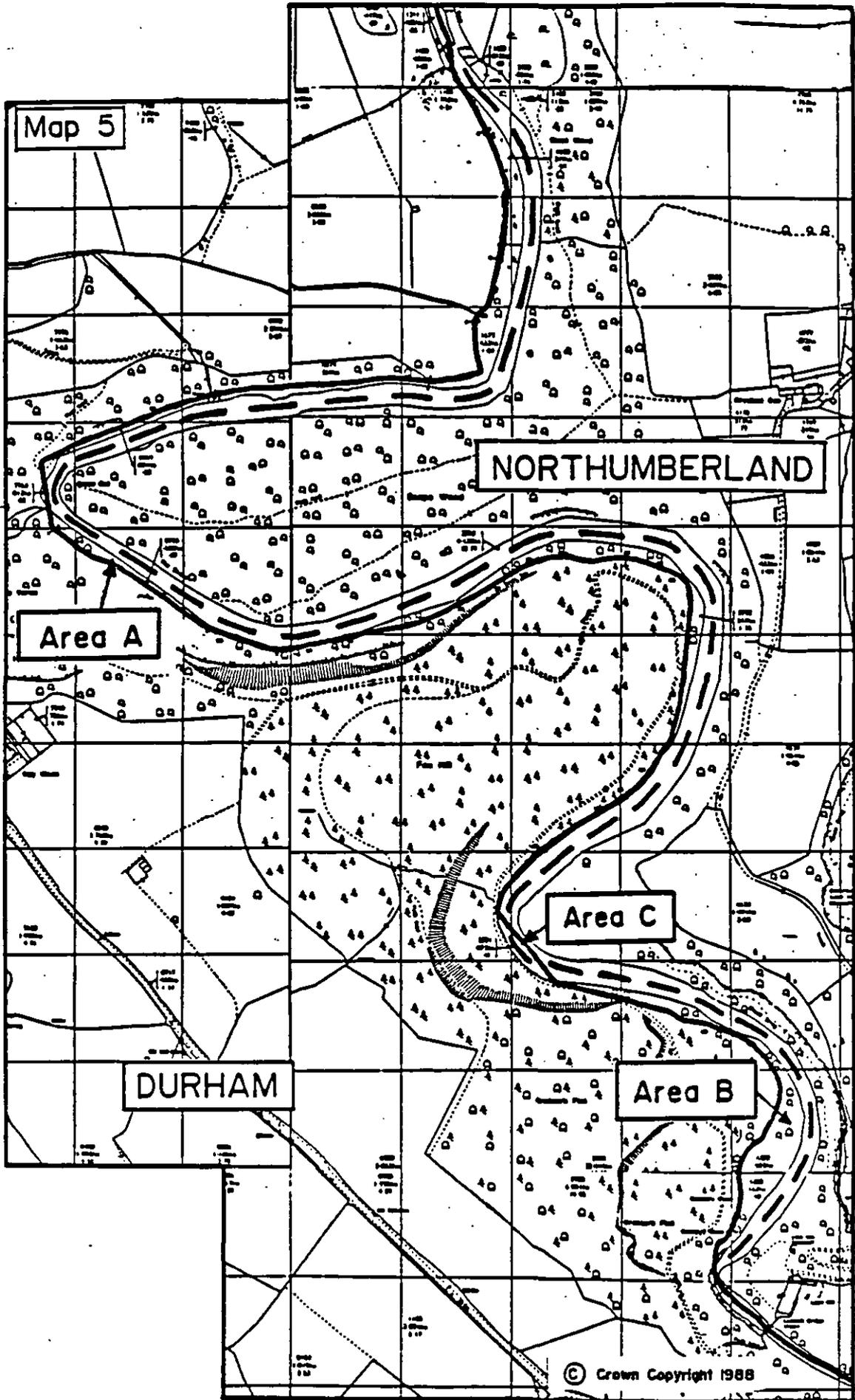
NORTHUMBERLAND

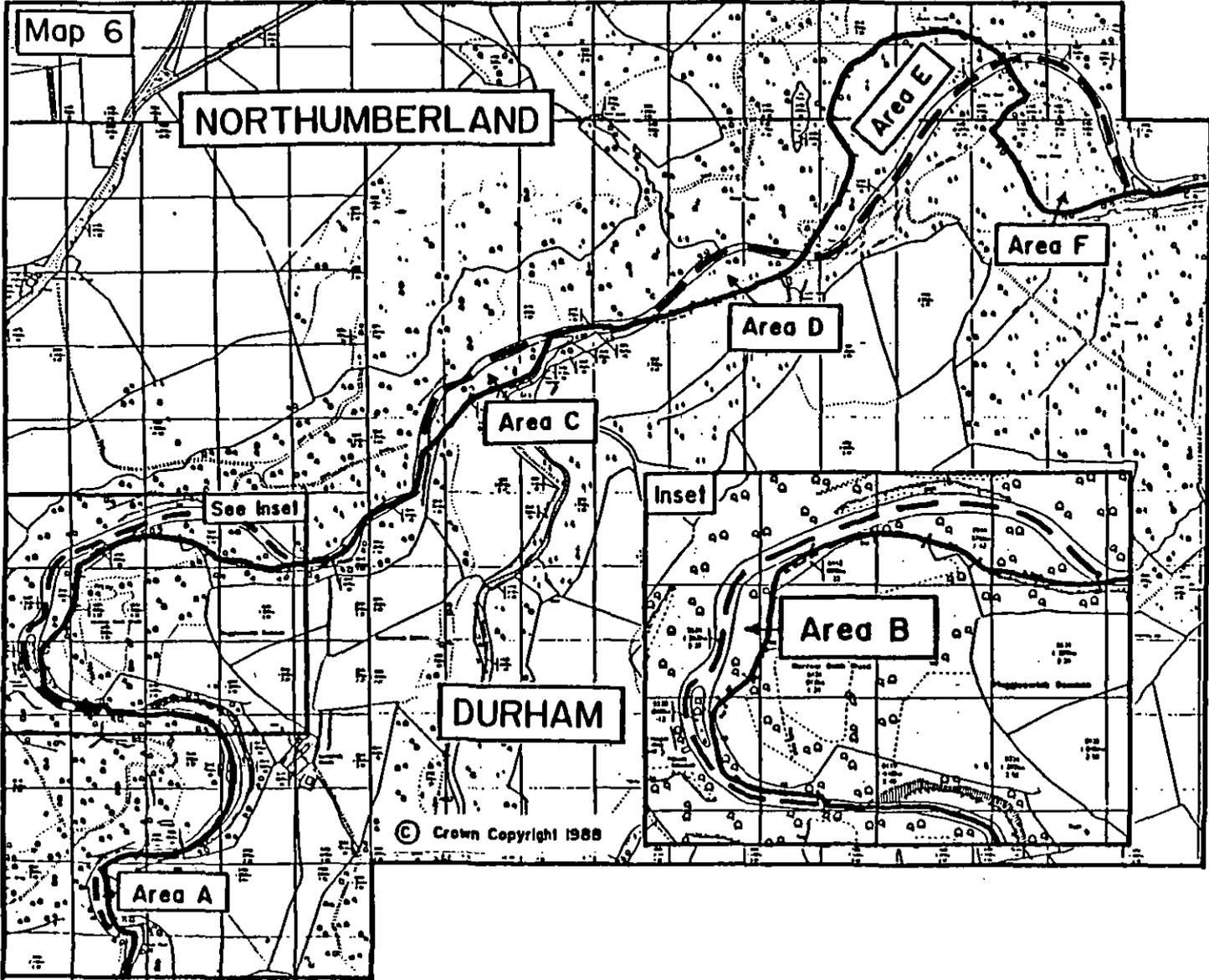












Map 7

NORTHUMBERLAND

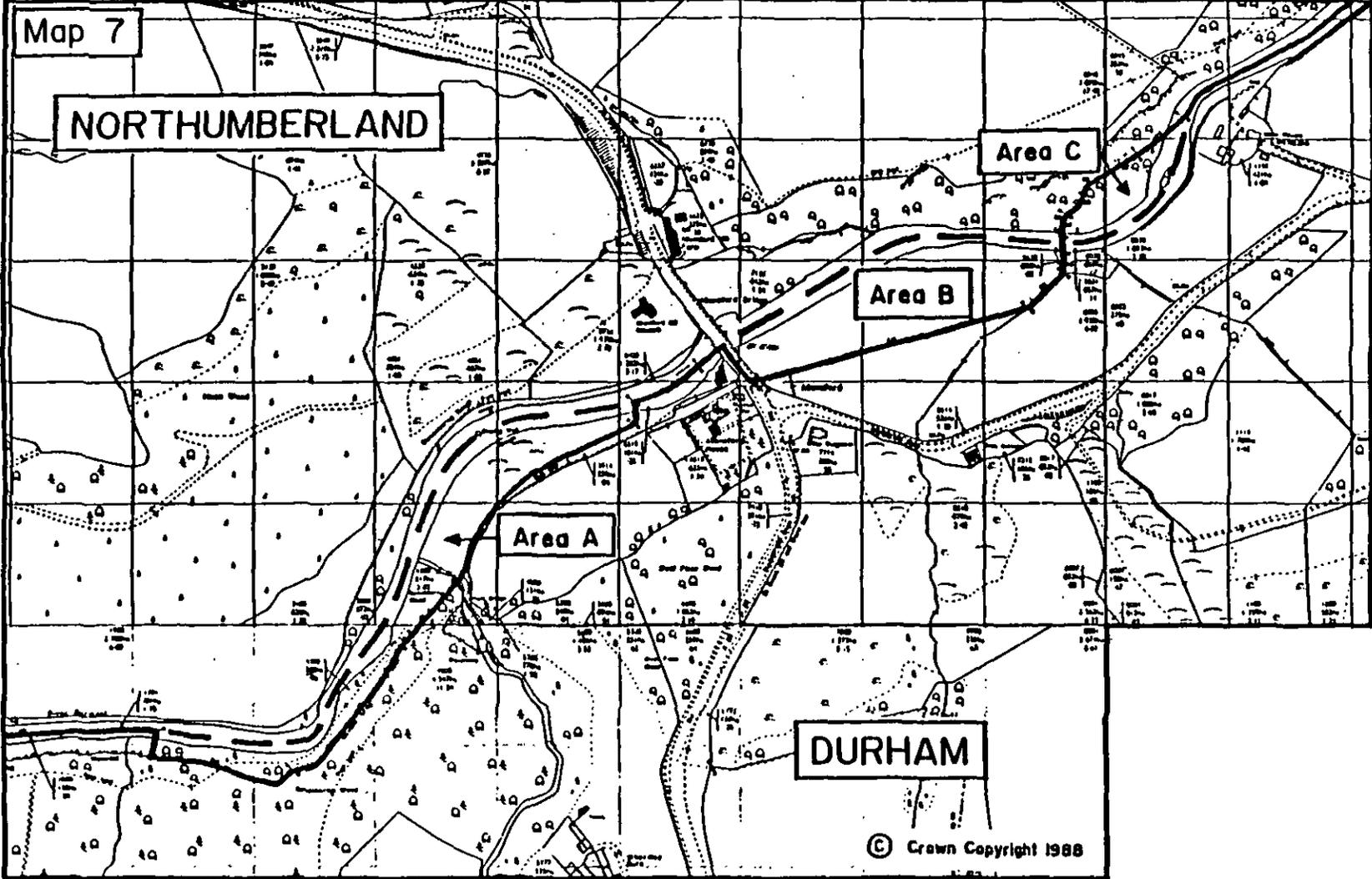
Area C

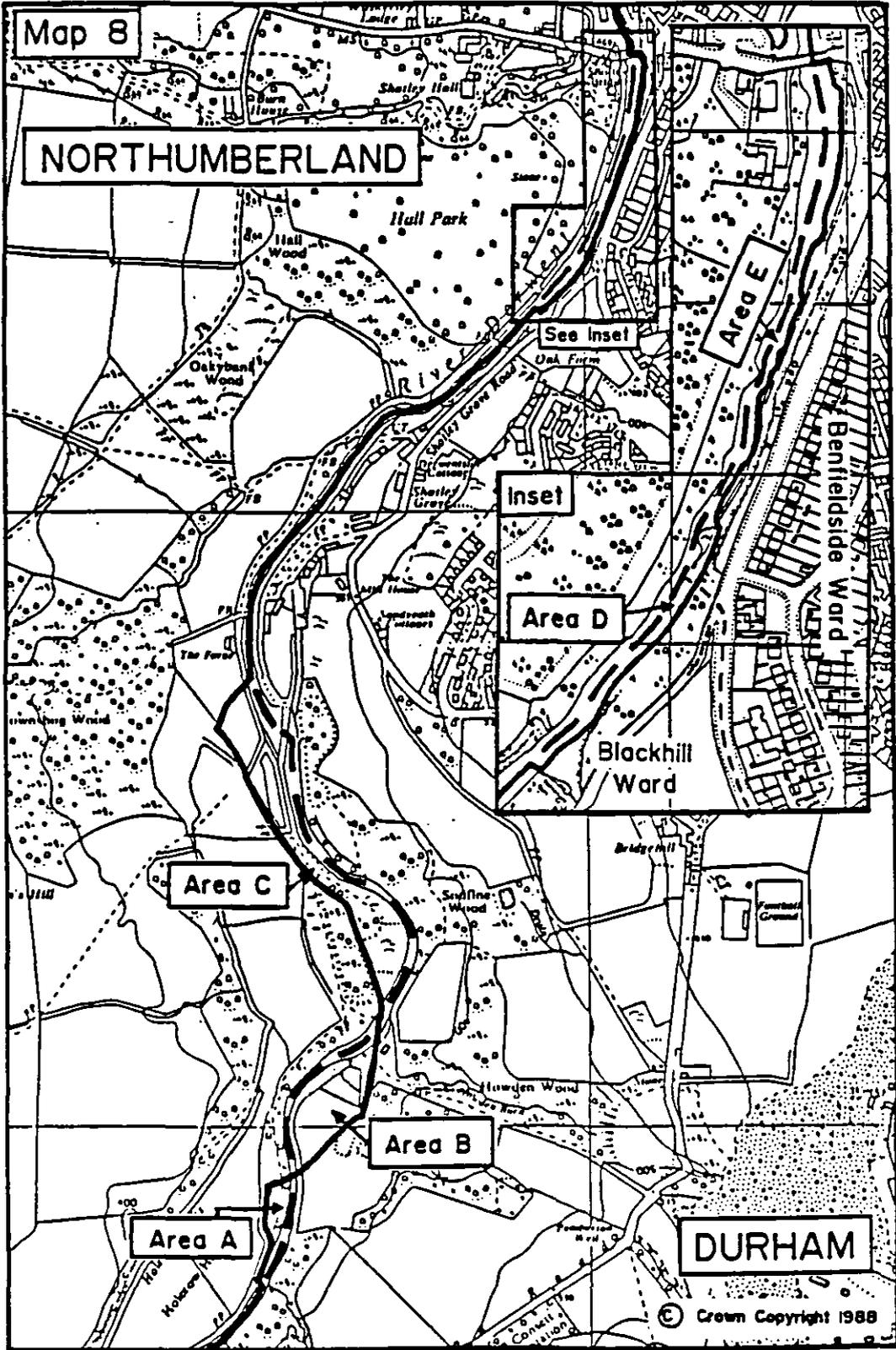
Area B

Area A

DURHAM

© Crown Copyright 1988





Map 9

NORTHUMBERLAND

Area D

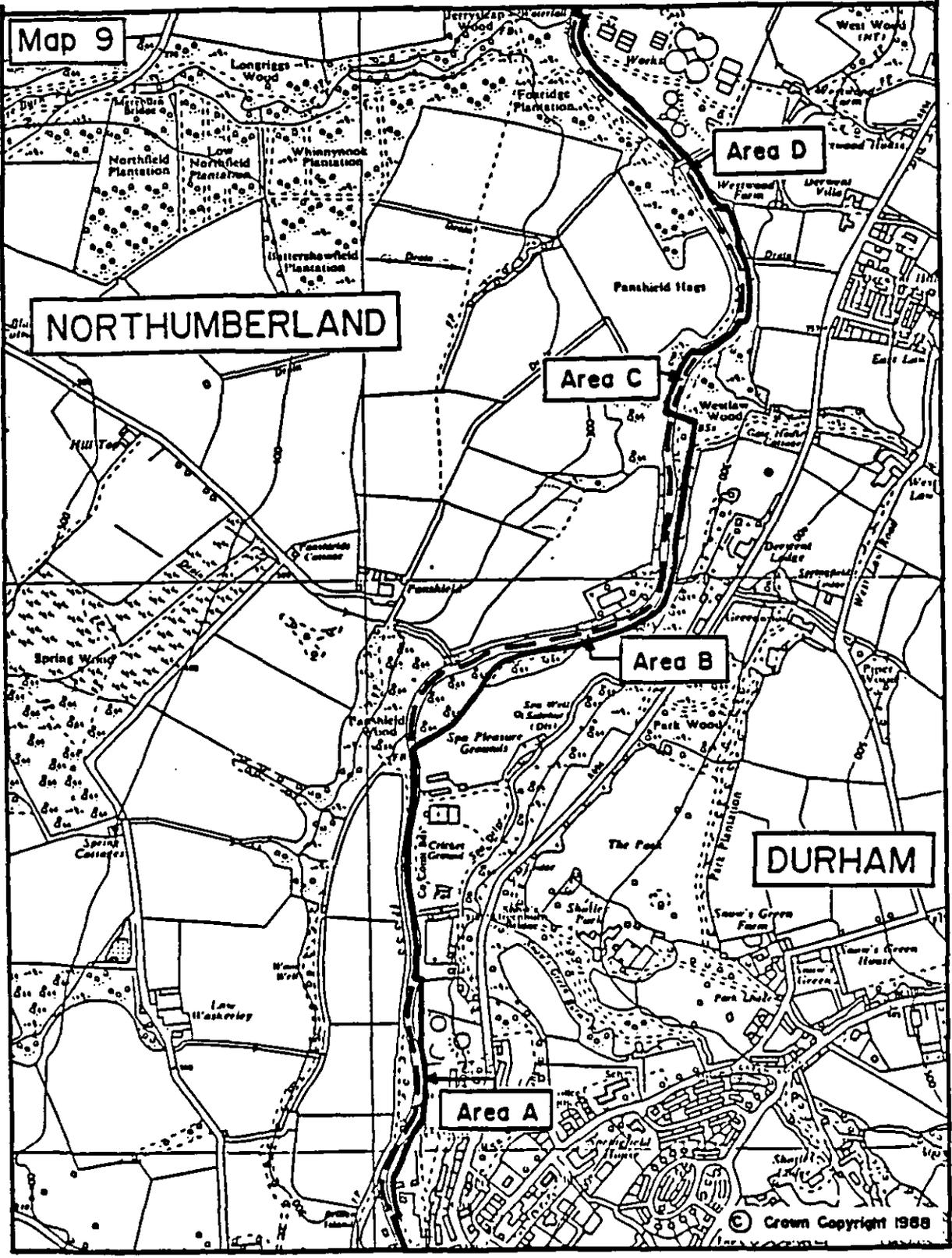
Area C

Area B

DURHAM

Area A

© Crown Copyright 1988



CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES			
MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO
1	A	Durham Wear Valley District Hunstanworth CP Stanhope Ward Weardale ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Hexhamshire CP Slaley and Hexhamshire Ward Slaley ED
1	B C D E F G	Durham Wear Valley District Hunstanworth CP Stanhope Ward Weardale ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Blanchland CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
2	A B C		
1	H J	Northumberland Tynedale District Blanchland CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Durham Wear Valley District Hunstanworth CP Stanhope Ward Weardale ED
3	A B	Durham Wear Valley District Edmondbyers CP Stanhope Ward Weardale ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Blanchland CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
3	C D E	Northumberland Tynedale District Blanchland CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Durham Wear Valley District Edmondbyers CP Stanhope Ward Weardale ED
4	A B C D E	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Durham Derwentside District Muggleswick CP Castleside Ward Lanchester ED
5	A B		
6	A B C		
4	F G	Durham Derwentside District Muggleswick CP Castleside Ward Lanchester ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
5	C		
6	E	Durham District Derwentside District Healeyfield CP Castleside Ward Lanchester ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED

CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO
6	D F	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP	Durham Derwentside District Healeyfield CP
7	A	South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Castleside Ward Lanchester ED
7	B	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett
8	B	South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Consett South Ward Consett ED
7	C	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP
8	A	Consett South Ward Consett ED	South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
8	C	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett Blackhill Ward Benfieldside ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
8	D	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett Blackhill Ward Benfieldside ED
8	E	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett
9	A B	South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Benfieldside Ward Benfieldside ED
9	C	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett Benfieldside Ward Benfieldside ED	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED
9	D	Northumberland Tynedale District Shotley Low Quarter CP South Tynedale Ward Slaley ED	Durham Derwentside District non-parished area of Consett Ebchester and Medomsley Ward Leadgate and Medomsley ED