

Further clarification: electoral division boundaries in County Durham

This paper has been sent to:

- Durham County Council
- Parish and town councils affected by the Boundary Committee's proposed electoral arrangements for divisions in County Durham
- Local MPs and MEPs
- Local political groups
- Any local residents who have made submissions to us

Copies of this paper can also be downloaded from our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

What is the Boundary Committee for England?

We are a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. Our main role is to conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England with the aim of ensuring the number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Other duties include reviewing local authority boundaries and advising the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.

Background

Electoral review in County Durham

The aim of this electoral review is to provide fair electoral arrangements for the new County Durham unitary authority.

The review began on 15 July 2008. After an initial council size stage the Boundary Committee agreed that the new council should have 126 members. The first consultation stage started on 17 March 2009 and ended on 8 June 2009. The Committee published its Draft Recommendations on 15 September 2009. The second consultation stage started on 15 September 2009 and end on 7 December 2009.

During the first consultation stage we received 58 submissions. During the second consultation stage we received 243 submissions, including several entirely new proposals for parts of the county. The submissions and the draft recommendations are available for viewing on the Committee's website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Areas on which we would like views

In response to the Committee's draft recommendations, we received a number of alternative proposals that were supported by good evidence. However, because these proposals have not been formally consulted upon and to help us put forward the most appropriate recommendations for these areas, the Committee would like to hear further local views. In this document we explain the options. Please tell us which option you prefer, taking care to explain your reasons.

We are holding further consultations in the following areas:

- 1. Chester-le-Street North**
(including North Lodge)
- 2. Chester-le-Street South**
(including Waldrige)
- 3. Durham City and the surrounding area**
(including Langley Moor, Shincliffe, Belmont, Framwellgate Moor, Newton Hall and the unparished city area)
- 4. Tow Law and Crook**
(including the Hill Top villages)
- 5. Great Aycliffe**
- 6. Shildon**
- 7. South East of Durham City**
(including Spennymoor, Ferryhill, Bishop Middleham, Cornforth, Sedgefield, the Trimdons, South Hetton, Shotton and Sherburn)

We have sent you the consultation document for the area in which you live. If you would like to see the consultation documents for the other areas, please visit our website: www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

We are not at this time seeking views on our draft recommendations for other parts of County Durham.

This consultation paper is being sent to those local residents who made a submission to us during our consultation stages. However, additional consultation papers can be downloaded from our website.

Further clarification: electoral division boundaries in Tow Law and Crook

Our consideration of submissions received and the need for further views

Our draft recommendations were for a single-member Crook West, a two-member Crook North, and for Tow Law to be included in a three-member division with Esh and Esh Winning.

In response to our draft recommendations, the County Council re-submitted their original proposal which would necessitate the creation of a parish ward (of Wolsingham parish) containing fewer than 30 electors in order to join two other areas. In our view, such a small parish ward would not provide for effective and convenient local government

We received a number of submissions opposed to our suggestion that Tow Law be joined in a division with Esh and Esh Winning. In addition to eight submissions which specifically focused on Tow Law, four other letters focussed on neighbouring areas and opposed our draft recommendation in this area. Many submissions emphasised links between Tow Law, the Hill Top Villages and Crook. There was a consensus that Tow Law had no connections to Esh or Esh Winning.

Two county councillors put forward a suggestion for a three-member Crook & Tow Law division. This proposal allows Tow Law to be combined with the Hill Top Villages without creating a small parish ward in Wolsingham.

Based on the submissions received, we have been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations. However, we are concerned that alternative electoral arrangements for this area were not proposed during the first stage of consultation and have therefore not had the benefit of being considered by all interested parties locally.

We are therefore seeking views on two proposals for the Tow Law and Crook area which are detailed on the following page. Maps showing both options are enclosed. Once you have decided which option you prefer, please email us (stating your preference clearly) or post the enclosed form back to us.

It is important that you tell us not only which option you prefer, but also why this is the case and provide evidence in support of your view.

Option one: Alternative proposal by the Boundary Committee

This proposal places the majority of Crook in a two-member division. The western section of Crook is combined with Tow Law, the Hill Top Villages and the rural area in a two-member division.

The Crook division would include the urban area to the east of Peases Way and to the north of West Road. The area to the south west of those roads would be included in the Tow Law division.

Division Name	Number of Cllrs	Number of Electors 2008	Variance from the average 2008*	Number of Electors 2013	Variance from the average 2013
Crook	2	5829	-7%	6225	-2%
Tow Law	2	5658	-10%	6146	-4%
Hunwick	1	2511	-20%	2933	-8%

Option two: Proposal from Councillor Jopling and Councillor Bailey

This proposal is based on the suggestion from two councillors. The western part of Crook becomes a single-member division, while the remainder of Crook is combined with Tow Law, the Hill Top Villages and the rural area in a three-member division.

The urban area of Crook to the west of Foundry Fields and Peases Way would comprise Crook West division. The northern and eastern section of Crook would be part of Tow Law & Crook North division.

Division Name	Number of Cllrs	Number of Electors 2008	Variance from the average 2008	Number of Electors 2013	Variance from the average 2013
Crook West	1	2753	-12%	3175	0%
Tow Law & Crook North	3	8734	-7%	9196	-4%
Hunwick	1	2511	-20%	2933	-8%

Maps detailing both options are enclosed with this paper. There are two maps: one map showing Option One and one map showing Option two.

* Variance from the average: we try to ensure that each councillor represents as close as possible to the same number of electors. The average number of electors per councillor in County Durham in 2008 is 3,134, so a councillor in a division with 2,990 electors is representing 143 (5%) fewer electors than the average. The average number of electors per councillor in 2013 is predicted to be 3,187.

Making a representation

Please send submissions to the Boundary Committee for England by **26 March 2010**. We are unable to consider responses received after this date. Tell us clearly:

- Which option you prefer
- Why this option is better than the other option

Please feel free to refer to evidence you may already have provided to us. However, additional evidence and further comments would strengthen the case for your chosen option. We welcome responses in writing by post, email or fax.

Please send your response to the questions raised in this consultation to:

The Review Manager
Durham Electoral Review
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
30 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW
Tel: 020 7271 0500
Fax: 020 7271 0505
Email: reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Further clarification: electoral division boundaries in Tow Law and Crook

Feedback form

The deadline for responses to this consultation is **26 March 2010**. We will be unable to consider responses received after this date.

Name

Organisation

Please tick the option you prefer and would like to see implemented.

Option one: Alternative proposal by the Boundary Committee

Option two: Proposal based on suggestions from Councillor Jopling and Councillor Bailey

Please tell us why you prefer this option. Please feel free to attach any further evidence or additional information to this form.

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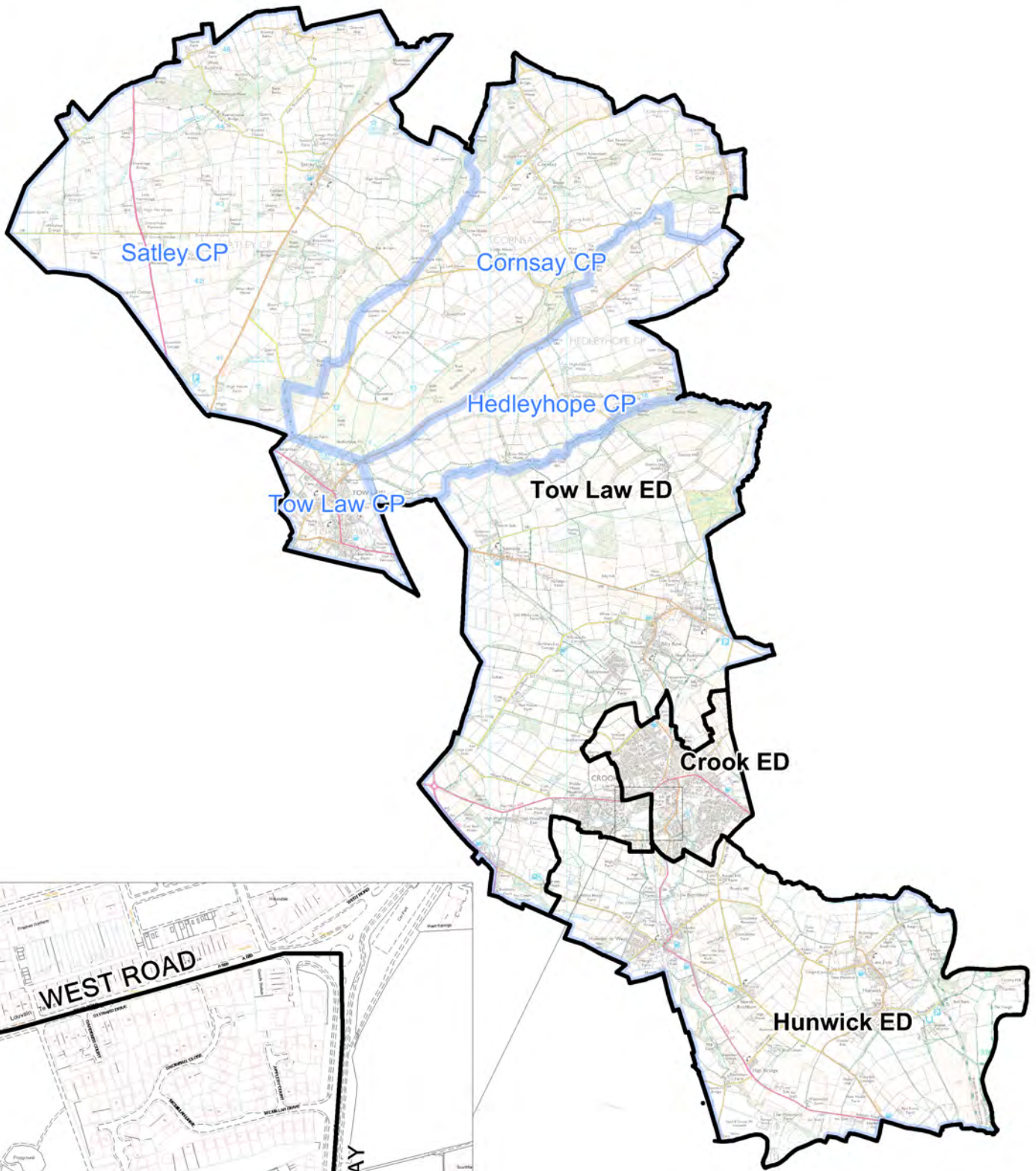
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Please send this form to:



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Email: reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Option One: Tow Law, Crook and the surrounding area

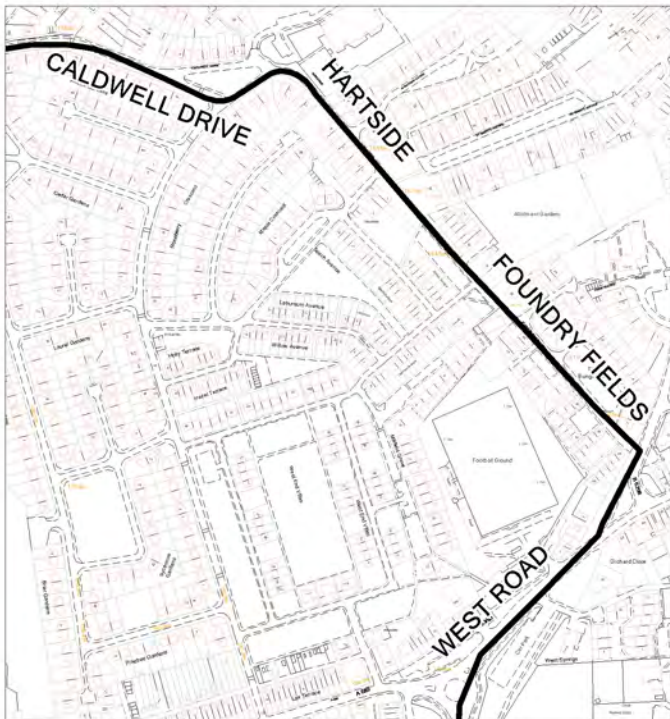
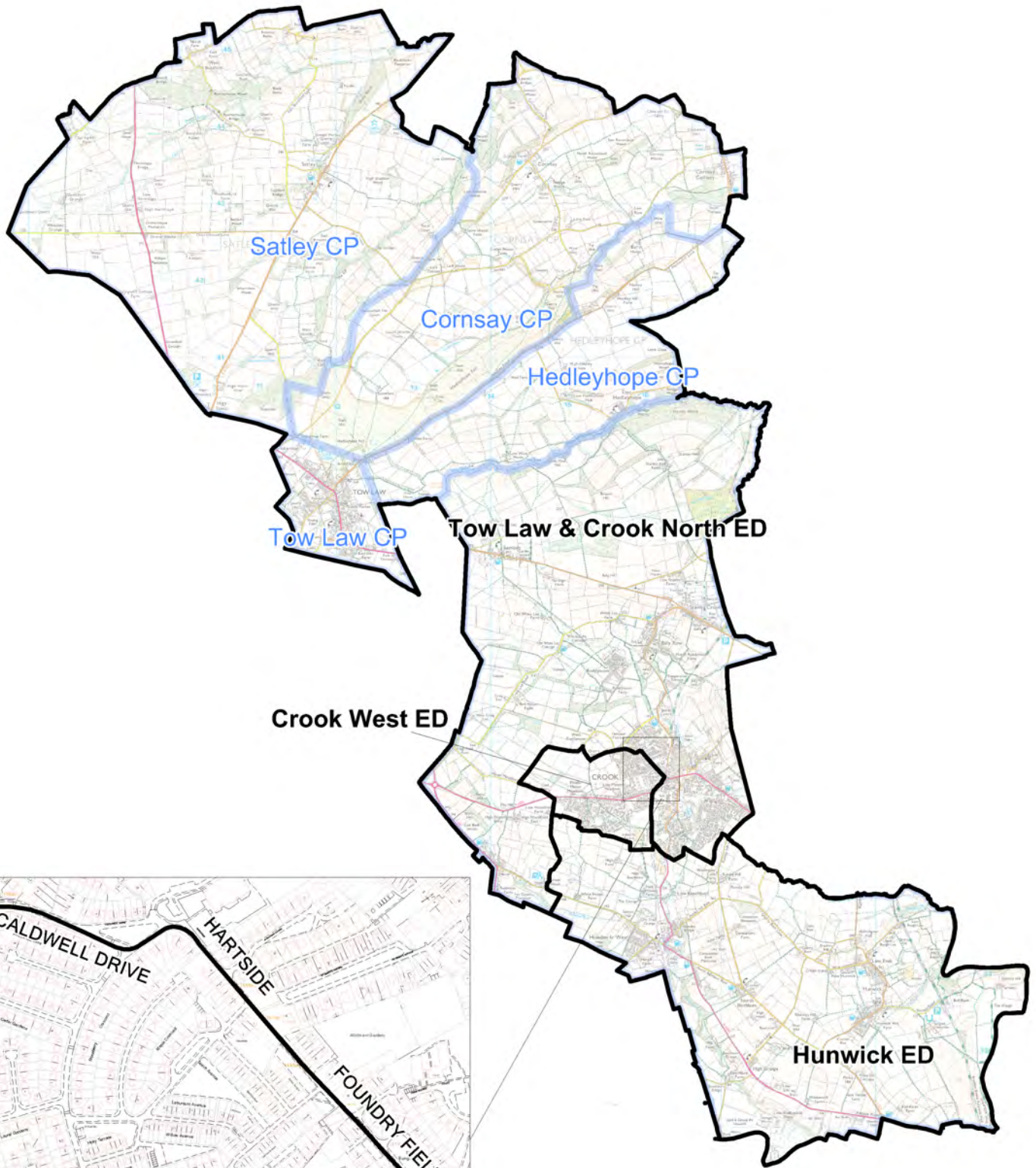


Legend



-  Proposed divisions
-  Parish boundaries

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Option Two: Tow Law, Crook and the surrounding area



Legend

-  Proposed divisions
-  Parish boundaries

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