

Northumberland

Personal Details:

Name: Mr Barry Flux

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Northumberland Conservative Association (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Related subject: This is part 2 of our response. Part 1 covered Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Valley, Part 2 covers the rest of the county

This is part 2 of the response from Northumberland Conservative Association. This covers all parts of the county other than Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Valley which we covered in part 1 of our response.

Attached Documents:

- NCA PART 2 OF 2 FINAL.pdf

Northumberland Conservative Association response to the electoral review of Northumberland

Part 2 of 2

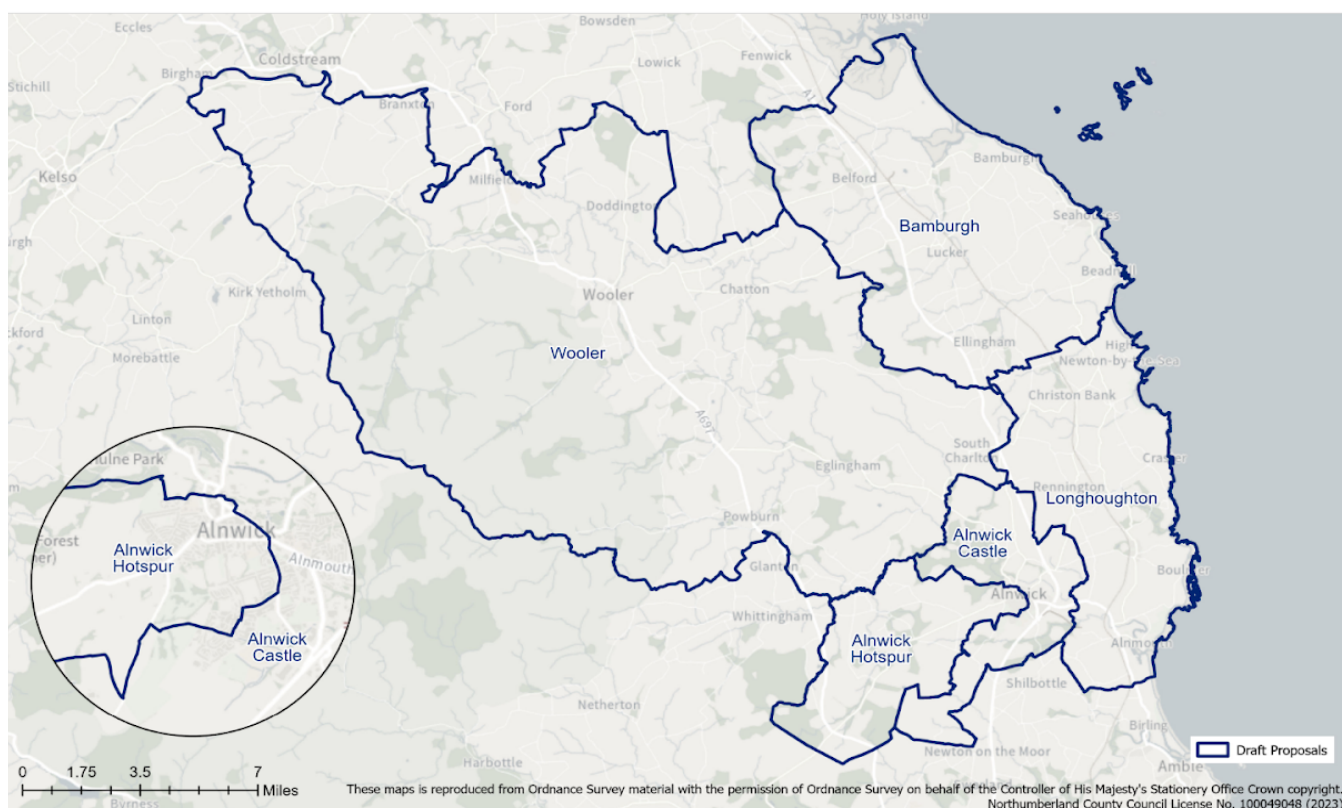
Note: Map Data contains Ordnance Survey and National Statistics Data, Crown Copyright.

Berwick-upon-Tweed and surrounding area

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Berwick East
- Berwick North
- Berwick West with Ord
- Norham and Islandshire

Northumberland Conservatives would suggest changes to the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:



- That Bamburgh Electoral Division is as per the commission's proposal with the addition of Ellingham Parish. We feel the addition of this ward makes for a much more logical geography of the ward combining parishes that share much in common in terms of local issues.
- That Wooler Division is as per the commission's proposal with the addition of the parishes of Eglingham and Hedgeley. We feel that these two inland parishes reflect the character of the inland Wooler Division better than the coastal Longhoughton division.

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Bamburgh	3,957	3
Berwick East	3,729	-3
Berwick North	3,917	2
Berwick West with Ord	3,492	-9
Norham and Islandshire	3,675	-5
Wooler	4,175	8

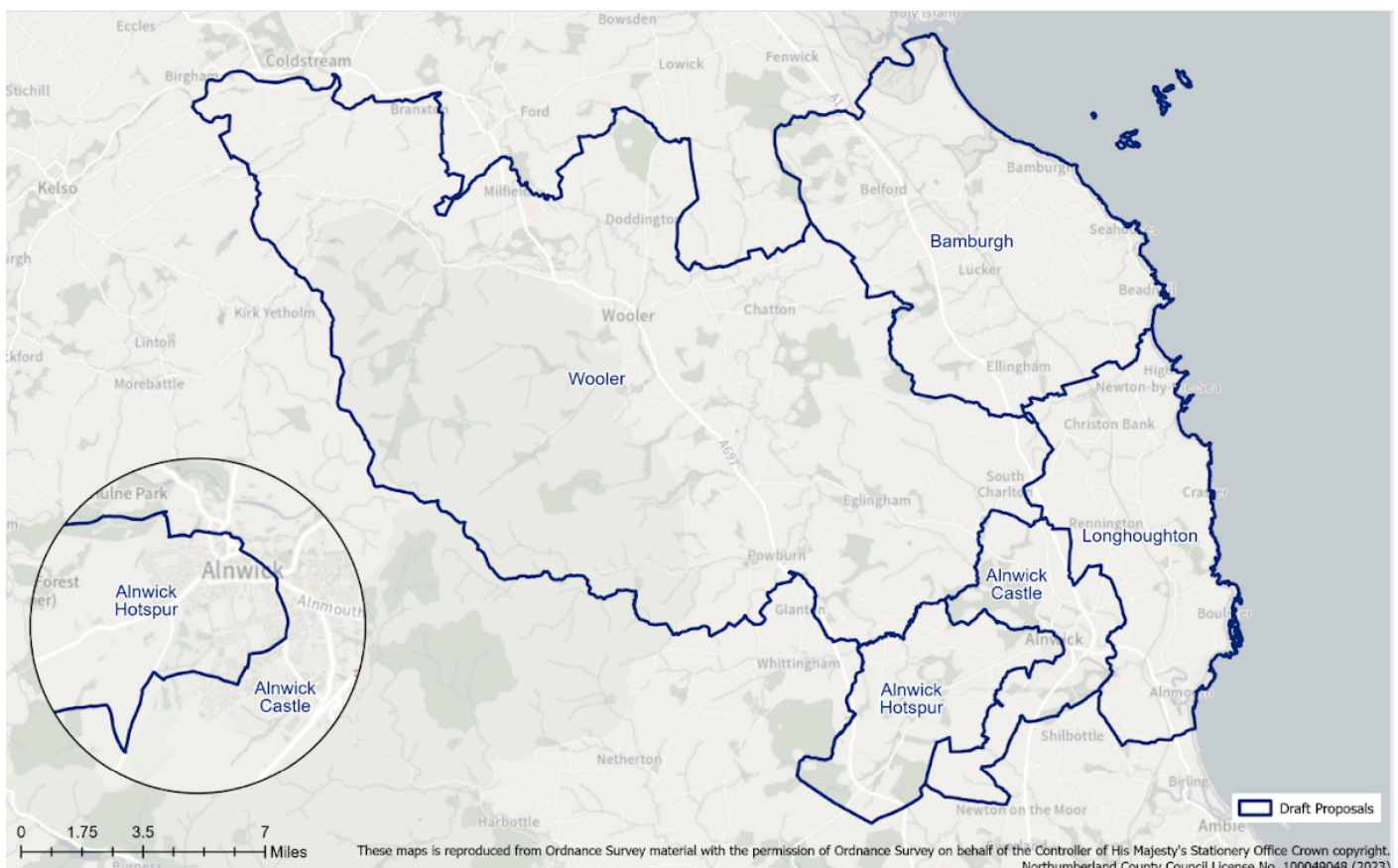
Alnwick and surrounding area

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Amble
- Amble West with Warkworth
- Shilbottle

Northumberland Conservatives would suggest changes to the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Alnwick Castle - we do not support the view that Alnwick should be a two-member division. The entire rest of Northumberland operates as single member divisions and therefore we find it an anomaly that Alnwick does not. We would suggest firstly a division known as Alnwick Castle. This would correspond with the Alnwick Castle Parish Council ward, excluding the sparsely populated parts to the west of this ward around Alnwick Moor. It would also include the parish of Denwick.
- Alnwick Hotspur – We would propose this division which would cover the entirety of Alnwick Hotspur and Alnwick Clayport parish council wards. We would add the western parts of Alnwick Castle parish council ward to this division. We would also add the parish of Edlingham. We would contend that Edlingham residents are more linked to Alnwick as a service centre, rather than Longhoughton.
- Longhoughton – The existing Longhoughton division is a mixture of coastal villages and inland areas which we would suggest do not have particularly strong links. We therefore propose a much more coastal division consisting of the parishes of Longhoughton, Newton by the sea, Embleton, Craster, Rennington, Lesbury and Alnmouth.



Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Alnwick Castle	3,690	-6
Alnwick Hotspur	4,129	7
Amble	4,060	5
Amble West with Warkworth	3,863	0
Longhoughton	3,935	2
Shilbottle	3,640	-6

Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Ashington Central
- Bothal
- College with North Seaton
- Haydon
- Hirst
- Newbiggin-by-the-Sea
- Seaton with Spital

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Ashington Central	3,602	-7
Bothal	3,605	-7
College with North Seaton	3,801	-1
Haydon	3,744	-3
Hirst	3,596	-7
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	3,976	3
Seaton with Spital	4,207	9

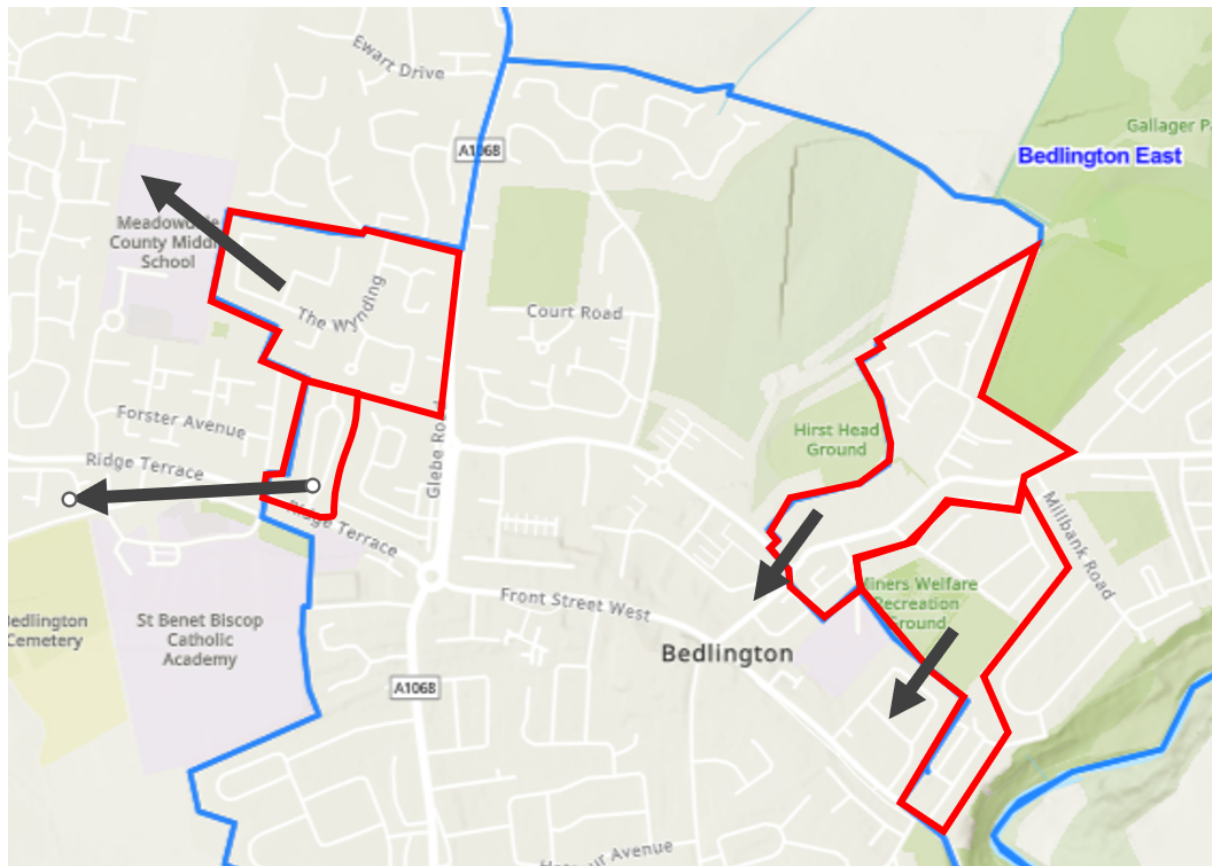
Bedlington and surrounding area

We note Bedlington West and Bedlington Central are predominantly located within West Bedlington Parish. West Bedlington Parish is made up of 5 polling districts W3BEDC, W4BEDC, W6BPR, W7BEDW and W8BEDW with a total of 8338 electors in 2028. We feel therefore there is considerable merit from an administrative perspective for creating two wards of c. 4169 which would be c. 8% above the ideal division size. Currently the Bedlington West Division has 4270 electors (+10.7%) and Bedlington Central 3814 (-1.1%).

Northumberland Conservatives would suggest changes to the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- **Bedlington Central** – We Propose that the 254 electors in W6BPR move into the existing boundary of Bedlington Central (not the BC proposed version) which gives a total of 4068 electors (i.e. W3BEDC, W4BEDC & W6BPR) before any redistribution from Bedlington West to Central is considered. We then propose that the boundary between Bedlington Central and Bedlington West be amended to relocate some voters into Bedlington West from the boundary proposals proposed amendment. For the avoidance of doubt we propose the area that the BC proposed be moved into Bedlington East from Central remains in Central. The below map shows our proposed changes. The total number of electors would be 4180.
- **Bedlington West** – We propose the estates of “The Wyndings” move back into West Bedlington when compared to the BC proposals. We then propose Cumberland and Westmorland Avenues potentially both move into Bedlington West from Bedlington Central albeit this may not ultimately be necessary. Other changes between the West and Central boundaries proposed by the BC we retain.

We feel there are obvious administrative benefits to the approach we propose. We have had to estimate the number of electors in The Wyndings estate, and Cumberland and Westmorland Avenues but feel that even if this does not correspond with the exact number of electors to stay within the +/- 10% there is a solution to be identified that avoids splitting West Bedlington Parish.



- Bedlington East** - We propose what we consider to be logical changes to Bedlington East Division. To set context the current BC proposals size Bedlington East -3% of the ideal size for a county electoral division. We believe there is obvious logic in not having Bedlington East Division cross over into a neighbouring parish council as addressed above. This is an administratively neater solution that results in Bedlington East being entirely located in the parish of East Bedlington.

In Bedlington East we propose one change in addition to that described above. We move parts of polling district W38SLK (Jubilee Terrace etc.) which are West of the railway line from Sleekburn Division and placed in Bedlington East. We feel this area is better aligned to the Bedlington East ward than to Sleekburn with the railway providing a logical geographical boundary.

The Bedlington East division therefore would comprise the 3033 electors from current polling district W5BEDE plus 918 from W38SLK to give a total of **3951** or **+2.4%**.

- Sleekburn** – We note that due to the size of both East Bedlington Parish and Choppington Parish there is no logical solution to avoid a division at Sleekburn that does not cross the parish boundary between the two areas.

We agree with the decision of the BC to move properties north of Wansbeck Terrace into Sleekburn Division. It is our feeling however that this leaves the remainder of the community of Bomarsund a little isolated and the proposal could be developed.

We disagree that properties at the end of Stakeford Road should move into a Stakeford Division as these residents are more connected to East Bedlington Parish / Sleekburn Division despite being in Choppington parish. This can clearly be appreciated from the geography.

It is our opinion that the community of Bomarsund, which is a distinct community, should move in its entirety into the Sleekburn Division. This reunites the wider Bomarsund area with the remainder of the Bomarsund / Wansbeck Terrace community and creates a neater solution to distributing parts of Choppington parish into the three wards it will need to split.

Whilst it may not seem obvious from any desktop exercise these areas all have some form of interaction with the Sleekburn peninsula, the A1147 and issues associated with the old power station site in the heart of the division (as we propose) that will at some point house a new major employment opportunity on the associated land.

Our proposed changes to the western boundary with Bedlington East division and with the Stakeford/Choppington Division boundary create a logical south western boundary of the railway for a significant portion of the ward boundary. This is logical both from a geographical point of view but also from a community one.

- **Stakeford** – The division as presented by the BC proposals is one of the smallest wards in the county in terms of electors and we think given the above logical and considered changes we have proposed that we can create a ward that is better proportioned whilst reflecting well the estates and communities that make up the remainder of the wider Choppington Parish area.

The BC proposals show Stakeford to be 3,550 electors in total. In our counter proposals we explain above why we feel the area of Bomarsund and other eastern and south eastern parts of the original Stakeford division should move into Sleekburn division. T

Having proposed later in this document that the balance of Hepscoth Parish is added to Choppington (c. 700 electors by 2028) and Choppington under the BC proposals being already 4,068 electors c. 5% oversized, there is a need to balance the number of electors better.

With the previous changes having avoided splits in many cases with parish and town councils the rebalancing in this instance is to relocate residents of Choppington parish within their own parish community.

We note to help balance existing imbalances before our changes are considered, the BC has already in their proposals added the second half of an estate south of “Stakeford Lane” to their proposed Stakeford division” (i.e. Cambridge Road, Wellington Road, Nelson Road and Stakeford Terrace). We agree this is logical. The BC have also added more of Ashington Drive, including also Hiltop close, Mitford Gardens etc. Again, we have no objection to this.

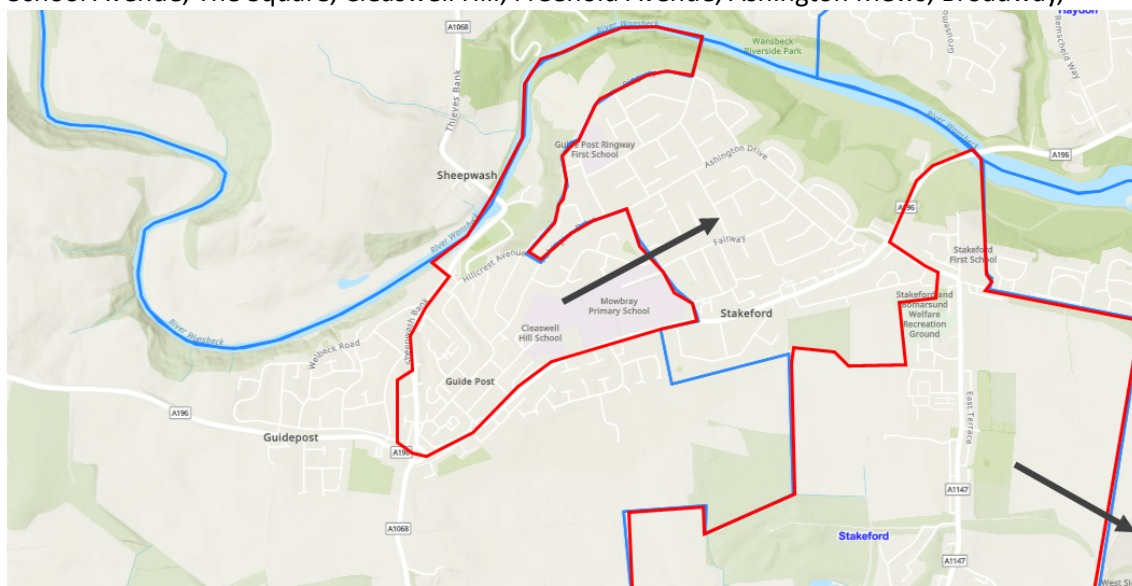
However, given the need to further amend the boundary between Stakeford and any Hepscoth and Choppington division we would propose to go further. We feel moving electors

from W10CHP polling district into the new Stakeford Division is illogical geographically and from a community perspective. Therefore, we have focused on electors in W11CHP.

We feel there are two logical block areas, to move into Stakeford Division.

Area A including the remainder of Ashington Drive, Horsley Close, Wansbeck Avenue, Woodhorn Drive, Hillcrest Avenue, Parkway, Walton Drive and Meldon Gardens

Area B Byron Close, Cleasewell Hill, Crossway, Northway, Olympia Avenue, Rutherford Close, School Avenue, The Square, Cleaswell Hill, Freehold Avenue, Ashington Mews, Broadway,

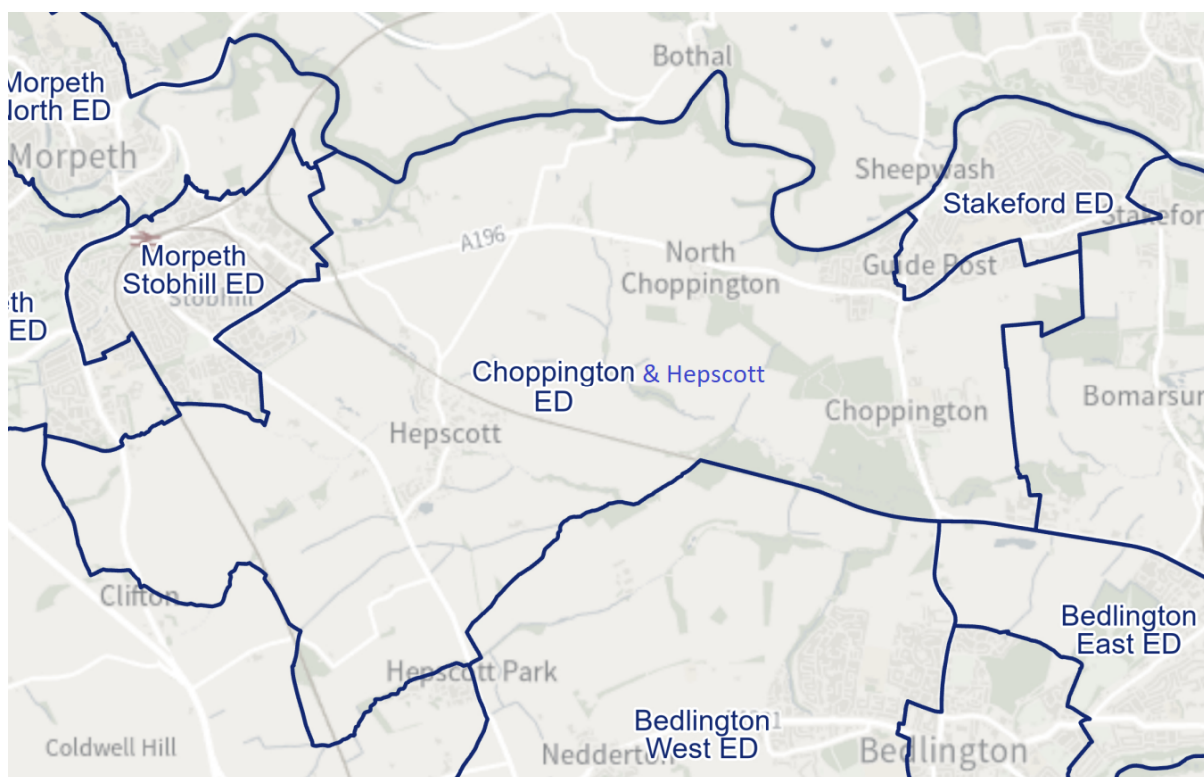


Back Mowbray Terrace, Front Street, Laburnum Court and Mowbray Terrace We simply feel both these areas provide a more logical distribution.

We feel the resulting division is logical geographically, in terms of the estates and communities it is made up from, is administratively located in one parish area and in terms of electors is closer to the ideal number.

- **Choppington and Hepscoth** – Firstly we would propose the name **Choppington and Hepscoth** for the division. Our proposal is a variation on the one produced by the BC. We move the entirety of Hepscoth Parish into Choppington a total of 1272 electors in 2028. As discussed in the information we provide for the Morpeth divisions we feel recent consultations on parish boundaries make this logical and reflect locally established preferences. It also keeps the parish of Hepscoth in one county division which is more desirable from an administrative perspective.

The entirety of the W10CHP polling district is retained i.e. 806 electors. The balance of the areas not moved into the neighbouring Stakeford division (itself a part of Choppington parish in its entirety) then also included a total of about 1749 electors. The above shows the changes that we would propose with the final boundary presented below.



Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Bedlington Central	4,180	+8.4
Bedlington East	3,951	+2.4
Bedlington West	4,158	+7.8
Choppington and Hepscott	3,827	-1
Sleekburn	3,609	-6.4
Stakeford	3,745	-3

Ponteland and surrounding area

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Ponteland East and Stannington
- Ponteland North
- Ponteland South with Heddon
- Ponteland West

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Ponteland East and Stannington	4,013	4
Ponteland North	3,954	3
Ponteland South with Heddon	4,155	8
Ponteland West	3,746	-3

Rural South Northumberland

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Haltwhistle
- Haydon and Hadrian
- South Tynedale

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Haltwhistle	3,789	-2
Haydon and Hadrian	3,689	-4
South Tynedale	4,005	4

Rural West Northumberland

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Bellingham
- Humshaugh
- Rothbury

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Bellingham	3,768	-2
Humshaugh	3,454	-10
Rothbury	4,150	8

Hexham

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Hexham East
- Hexham North
- Hexham West

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Hexham East	3,816	-1
Hexham North	3,460	-10
Hexham West	3,541	-8

South Central Northumberland

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Druridge Bay

- Longhirst
- Longhorsley
- Lynemouth

Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Druridge Bay	3,803	-1
Longhirst	3,857	0
Longhorsley	3,829	-1
Lynemouth	4,015	4

Morpeth

Northumberland Conservatives accept in full the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- Pegswood

Northumberland Conservatives would suggest changes to the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

We observe that the outer boundary of the three Morpeth Wards does not change in the BC proposals other than in two places. A Ward from Hepscott Parish is added to Stobhill Division and the St Georges Estate is moved from Morpeth North into Pegswood Division.

Our proposal accepts the moving of St Georges but proposes not to move the ward from Hepscott Parish.

The commission make a series of minor tweaks to the internal boundary of the town that we consider not to be necessary as our proposals retain the old boundaries in many places whilst solving the issue of the number of electors.

Morpeth Kirkhill – we accept there are limited options to redistribute the electors in the division due to the nature of its estates which form 2 cohesive blocks “Loansdean” (Polling district W20KIR) and Kirkhill (Polling District W19KIR).

The BC in their proposals remove Kendor Grove and Horseshoe way from Kirkhill division. We propose that Loansdean Wood, the Kylins and Sweethope Dean also are moved in to a newly defined Stobhill Division. In this block there are c. 320 electors. These voters have no more or less affinity with the rest of the ward than those residents at for example “Kendor Grove”. There needs to be a line drawn somewhere on a map and on balance there is logic in the changes being from the north east corner of W20KIR.

We make no amendments to W19KIR having achieved the necessary redistribution through amendment to just W20KIR.

Under our proposals the final population of Kirkhill would therefore be as per the projection of the BC, 4,155 less electors in Loansdean Wood, the Kylins and Sweethope Dene; both then adding back in Castle Close leaving a total of c.4059, i.e. **+5.2% over** the ideal target number of electors of 3856. This is an improvement on the **+8%** under the boundary commission proposals.

Morpeth North – we accept there is no way that the St Georges Estate can remain in the Morpeth North Division. There are 1800 homes eventually being built in the St Georges Estate, many have already been completed leaving North at the risk of becoming far too large. Having examined the proposals from the BC carefully we can see no straightforward option but for this “St Georges” area to move into a revised “Pegswood” division. We note that 900 or so residents will move from Hebron Parish into Morpeth Town Council controlled area in 2025 as part of the 2021 local governance review. We note that the County Council has not previously advised the Commission of this, however we can see no straightforward way in which these residents could be brought into any Morpeth North division given all three core Morpeth divisions (Stobhill Kirkhill & North) even under the BC proposals are close to being oversized.

We propose as pre the changes noted to Kirkhill that Castle Close does not move into Morpeth North. Given the later discussion pertaining to South Fields (Hepscott) and the impacts to the number of electors in Morpeth Stobhill we however propose a further change to Morpeth North removing those electors the BC proposed move from polling district W24MS. That would result in an electorate of c.3843 leaving Morpeth North **-0.4%** below the ideal target number of electors of 3856. This is an improvement on the **+9%** under the boundary commission proposals.

Our proposals leave Morpeth North, other than the change we accept to relocate St Georges new estate unchanged. The area that remains is a cohesive area once the anomaly of Castle Close is removed.

Morpeth Stobhill - We propose more substantial changes to the BC proposals for Stobhill. Specifically, we highlight that the current boundary commission proposals for Stobhill add the new estate of “South Fields” to Stobhill. This is a parish council ward in its own right in the Parish of Hepscoth. As part of the Morpeth & Hepscoth Local Community Governance Review 2021 residents of this area rejected the opportunity to relocate the South Fields estate into Morpeth Town Council area. They noted that they identify with Hepscoth Parish. By contrast 309 residents in the Hepscoth Parish but in the current Stobhill electoral division (i.e. polling district W27HSM) elected to become part of Morpeth Town Council at the point of council elections in 2025.

Given this feedback relatively recently from residents of the Southfield estate and further noting that this is one of the only rural “Parish” councils split in half by the BC in their proposals we suggest that Hepscoth Parish remains as a block and that South Fields moves into the Choppington Division along with the remainder of the Hepscoth Parish. It is worth noting in making this suggestion that by 2028 the larger part of Hepscoth Parish population wise will live in Southfields.

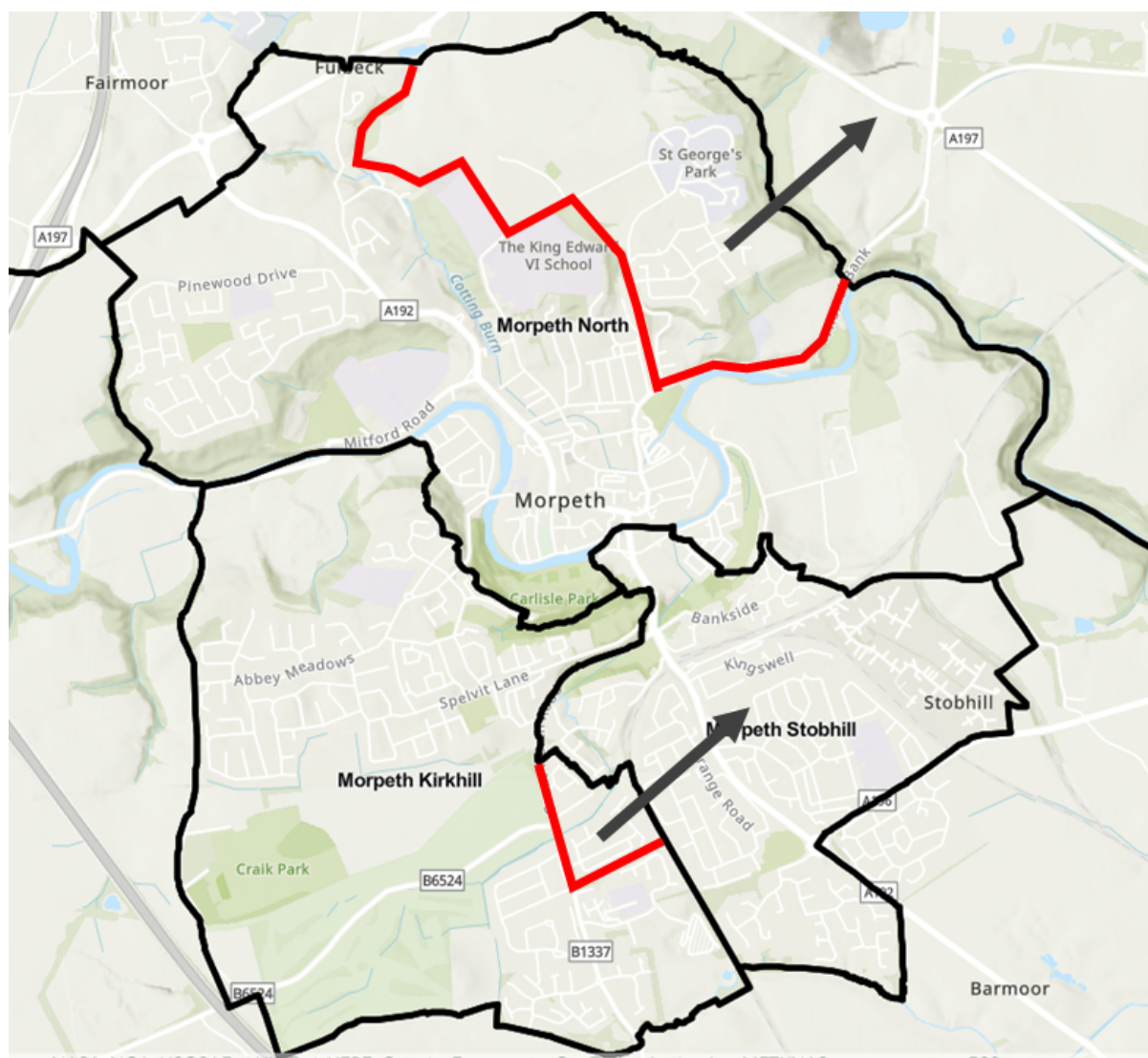
The total population of Hepscoth Parish in 2028 is 1272 of which we estimate that c. 700 are residents of South Fields.

Currently there are some **3643** residents projected to live in the polling districts that make up the current Stobhill Ward, i.e. W24MS, W25MS, W26MS and W27HSM. The BC proposed to move Southfields into this area and then add Kendor Grove and Horseshoe way, whilst moving some parts of current Stobhill polling district W24MS into Morpeth North.

In our proposals for the other two Morpeth divisions we accept moving Kendor Grove and Horseshoe way into Morpeth Stobhill cannot be avoided. We also propose moving c. 236 electors in Loansdean Wood, the Kylins and Sweethope Dene.

By our calculation this is a total of the order of **4022** putting Morpeth Stobhill **+4.3% over** the ideal target number of electors of 3856. This is a significant improvement on the 10% over proposed by the BC and causes minimal changes to the existing boundary which is very settled and cohesive.

We present below a map of the proposed boundaries for the 3 Morpeth divisions. Please note the black line boundaries shown revert back to the original (current) division boundaries.



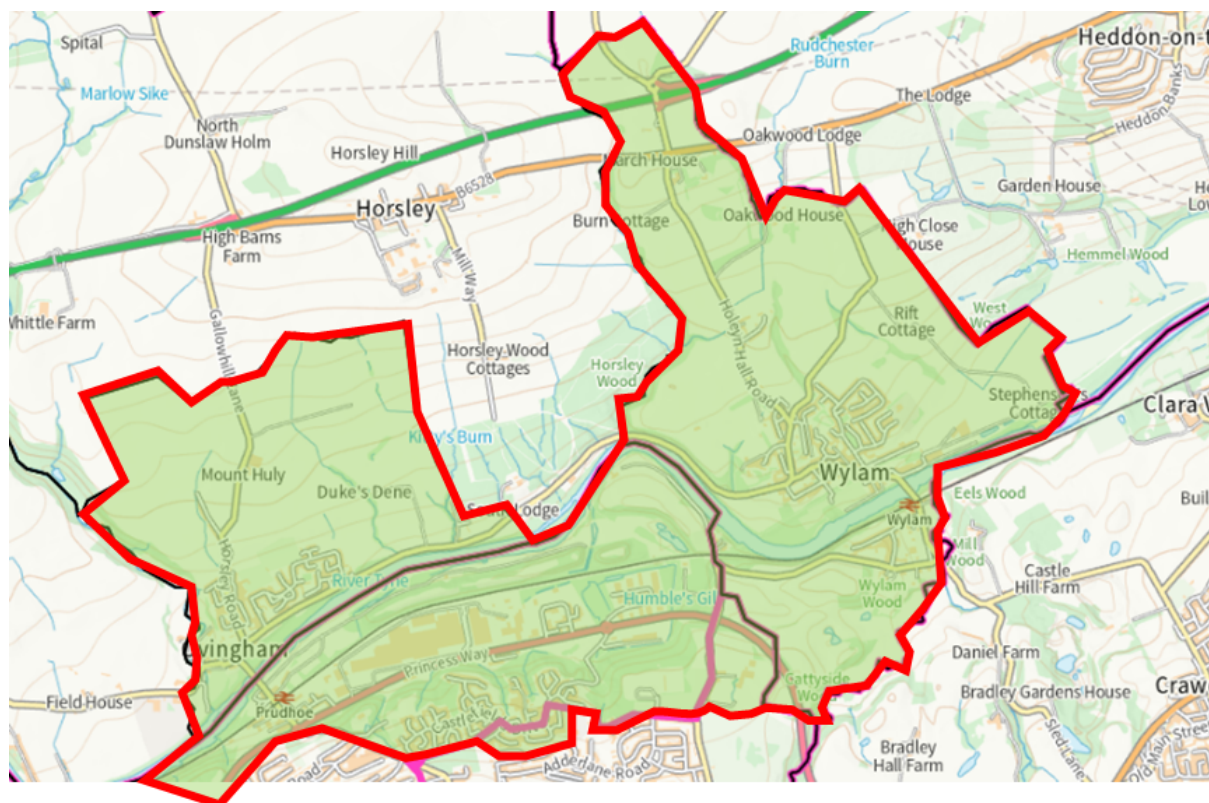
Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Morpeth Kirkhill	c.4,059	5
Morpeth North	c.3,843	-0.4
Morpeth Stobhill	c.4,022	4.3
Pegswood	3,887	1

Prudhoe and surrounding area

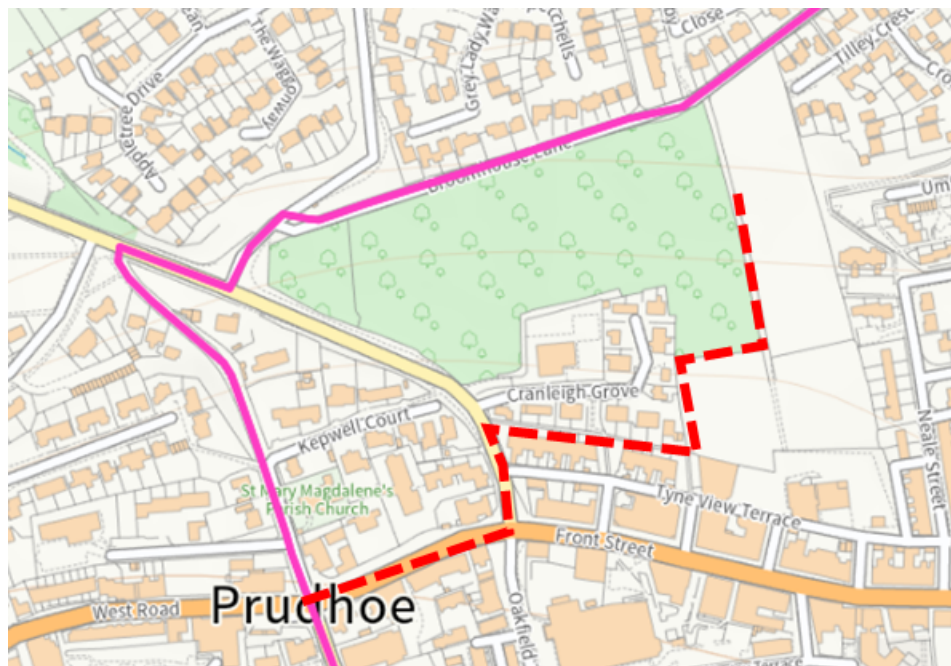
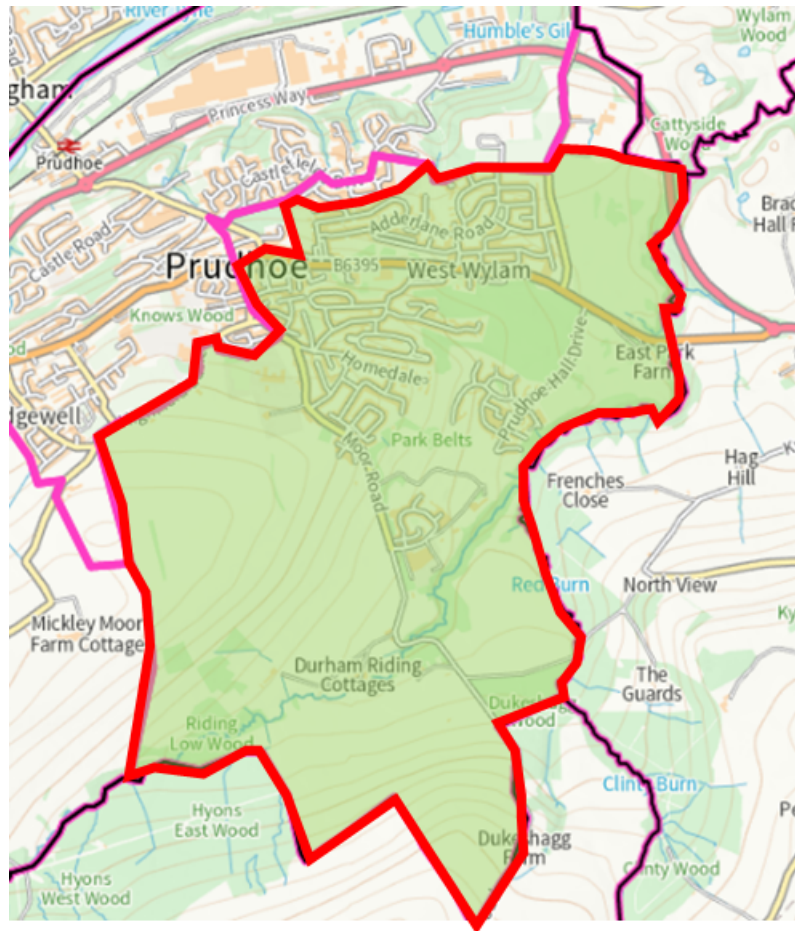
Northumberland Conservatives would suggest changes to the commission's proposed boundaries for the following:

- **Prudhoe North and Wylam** - We would propose a Prudhoe North and Wylam division which covers the Castlefields and Low Prudhoe Ward of Prudhoe Town Council, along with the parishes of Ovingham and Wylam. Additionally we would suggest there is a legitimate argument to add Tilley Crescent, Rolley Way, Towneley Court and Cross Street to this proposed division and that they should also be placed into the more logical Town Council ward of Castlefields and Low Prudhoe (see second figure below). We also move a small number of homes at Eastwood Villas

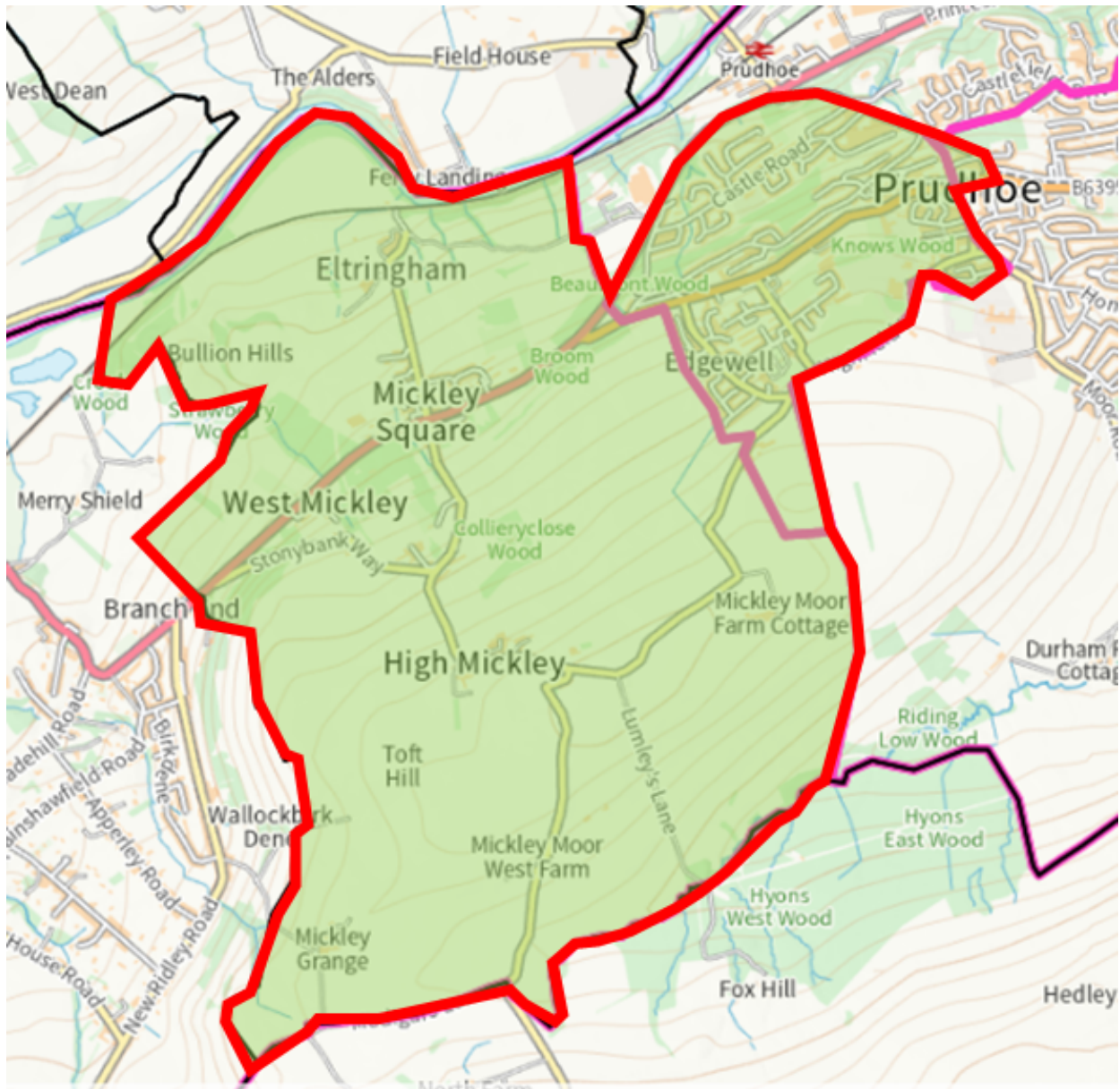


- **Prudhoe South** - We would propose a Prudhoe South Division that is the same as the current existing Prudhoe South division, minus three specific areas in order to make the electorate size within the 10 percent tolerance. Firstly, the streets of Tilley Crescent, Rolley Way, Towneley Court and Cross Street we would move to our proposed Prudhoe North and Wylam division, we also move Eastwood Villas in the north east of the existing division into the new Prudhoe North and Wylam division. The final ward boundaries are shown in red in the first map below. Please note, the purple lines show existing boundaries rather than the BC proposals.

Secondly we would propose moving the area show in the second map below into our proposed Prudhoe West and Mickley Division and would suggest changes to the Prudhoe Town Council wards to reflect these three specific areas changing divisions.



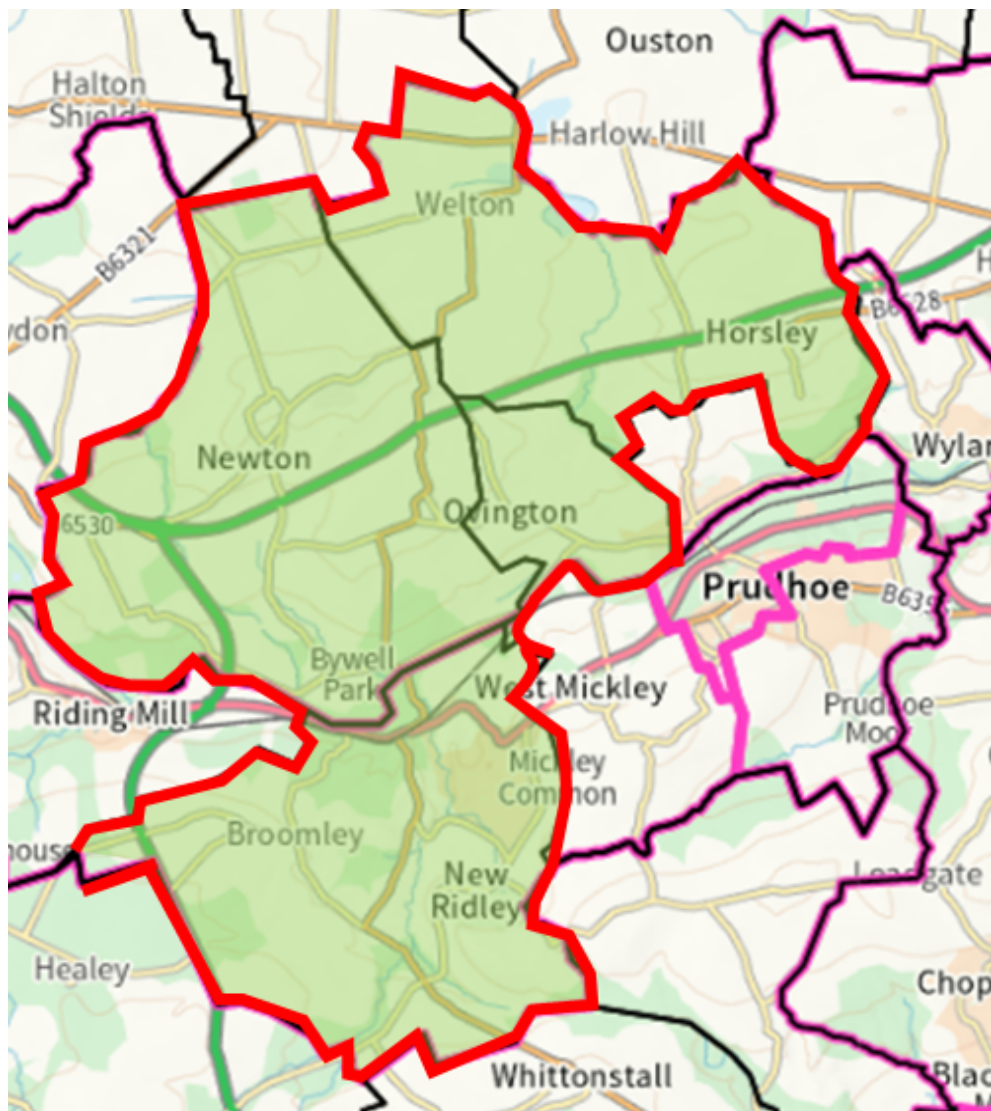
- **Prudhoe West and Mickley** - We would propose a Prudhoe West and Mickley Division that covers the Prudhoe Town Council Wards of Castle and Eltringham, Mickley, Prudhoe West and Halfway as well as taking in the small area of Station Road, Tyne View Terrace, Cranleigh Grove, Kepwell Bank Top, Kepwell Court, Library Court and Percy Cottage as described in our proposal for Prudhoe South.



- **Stocksfield and Bywell** - Our proposal of a Stocksfield and Bywell Division, would be a rural division made up of parish councils of Bywell, Horsley, Ovington and Stocksfield . Bywell and Stocksfield as communities are separated only by a bridge. Whilst the river Tyne runs through the division this is also the case for Corbridge, for Hexham North and others such that we do not see it as a geographic obstacle. In fact the parishes north and south of the river effectively face on to each other in a valley setting. They are linked by the A69 and the A68 artery roads and by a series of minor roads north south and east west.

Adding Ovington and removing Mickley means that part of Prudhoe Town Council returns to a more Prudhoe / urban focused councillor as might be appropriate for a town council area. In terms of issues for residents in the new division these will be the more typical rural issues, verge cutting, school transport schools (with all the relevant parishes in the same catchment).

The option avoids the proposal that the commission currently outline in their consultation which splits off part of Prudhoe South presumably creating warding issues for the parish. We also note that the area split from Prudhoe South has no link to the Stocksfield area it would move into generally (in terms of issues) and indeed physically as it is impossible to drive from one area to the other without passing through other wards as part of the journey.



Projected 2028 electorate figures

	2028 projected electorate	Variance from 2028 project average
Prudhoe North and Wylam	c.3,967	3
Prudhoe South	c.4,189	9
Prudhoe West and Mickley	c.4,085	6
Stocksfield and Bywell	3,496	-9