

# Northumberland

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Hepscott in Longhorsley Ward

Northumberland County Council proposed amending the boundary between Sleekburn and Stakeford to follow the parish boundary between Choppington and East Bedlington. The area of West Sleekburn north of Wansbeck Terrace and south of the River Wansbeck comprising of River Bank, River Bank East and Carlow Drive and the streets off it would be included in the Sleekburn ward. Changes were also proposed to the boundary between Stakeford and Choppington, with all of Nelson Road, Wellington Road and Cambridge Road, just to the south of Stakeford Lane, in Stakeford division, as well as moving from Ringway to Ashington Drive.

The LGBCE accepted the council's proposals.

However, it also proposed the addition of the remainder of the village of Hepscott into the Choppington Ward, with the area of Hepscott Parish containing the South Fields housing development being included in the Morpeth Stobhill division.

During the Initial consultation period (22 November 2022 - 6 February 2023) - which must also be about the least convenient possible for both Councils, councillors and residents, etc - there were not any parties in Choppington who proposed the inclusion of Hepscott in the Choppington Ward, nor does there appear to have been any parties from or for Hepscott who proposed such a merger.

The Village of Hepscott and with it the properties within the Hepscott Parish boundary represent a homogenous rural and semi-rural residential community largely devoid of both industrial and commercial/retail activity. It blends extremely well within its existing County Council Ward of

Longhorsley that currently wraps around the north, east and thence south-east Morpeth Town to incorporate Hepscott.

The vibrant and engaged spirit of the Hepscott community would be seriously diluted if not destroyed if it were to be removed from its current electoral District (Longhorsley) and merged with Choppington.

The interests, lives and concerns of Local Residents should not be reduced to a matter of simply juggling numbers that can change from one relatively short period to another in comparison to the human lifespan and affiliations.

It must also be said that the so-called 'public consultation' process, which is being conducted online and which requires considerable computer skills, hardware, software and good internet access is totally inappropriate for such an important and fundamental issue.

The revision in boundaries is looking toward the 2025 elections and there is no reason why a letter cannot be sent out to every household in the County stating the changes proposed by the LGBCE with a simple tick box response for whether the recipient agrees 'YES' or 'NO' well before the end of this year (2023).

However, so far as the residents of Hepscott are concerned, I would bet a pound to a penny, that the vast majority would be against a merger with Choppington.

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*