

Further draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements in the north-west of North Tyneside Council

Electoral review

July 2023

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

Contents

Analysis and further draft recommendations in the north-west of North Tyneside	1
Have your say	7
Equalities	10
Appendices	11
Appendix A	11
Further draft recommendations for wards in the north-west of North Tyneside Council	11
Appendix B	12
Submissions received	12

Analysis and further draft recommendations in the north-west of North Tyneside

1 Following our consultation on the draft recommendations for North Tyneside Council, we have decided to hold a period of consultation on further draft recommendations in the north-west of the district – specifically our proposed wards of Annistford, Burradon & Backworth; Benton & Forest Hall; Dudley, Seaton Burn & Wideopen; Holystone; Killingworth; and Longbenton – prior to publication of our final recommendations. We believe we have received sufficient evidence relating to the rest of North Tyneside to finalise our recommendations, so this consultation is focused on above-mentioned wards only.

2 During consultation on the draft recommendations we received 320 representations, a large number of which commented on the proposed wards mentioned above. The submissions contained both support and opposition to our proposed wards and an alternative warding pattern drawn up by North Tyneside Council ('the Council'). This revised pattern was submitted to us by the Council as their response to our consultation and contained the results of a consultation they had conducted.

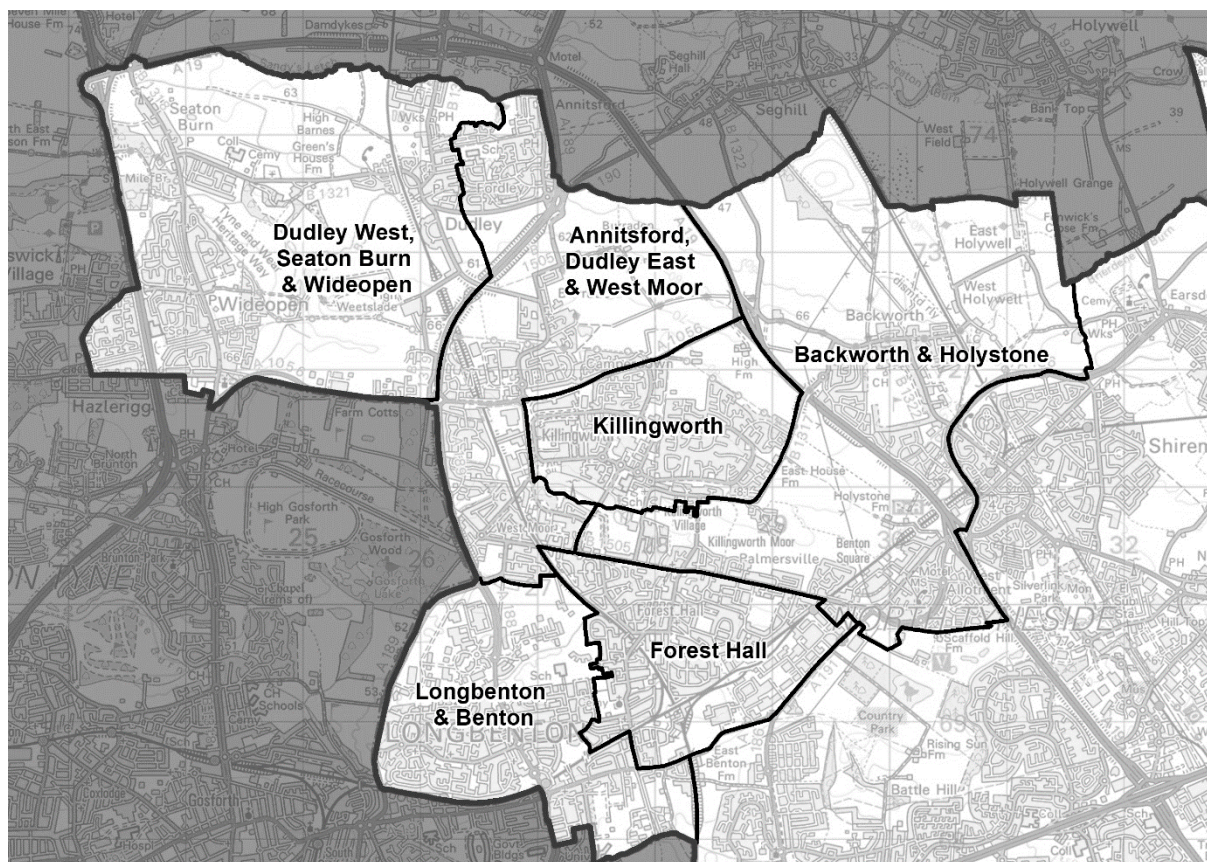
3 We have been persuaded to amend our proposals and thus publish further draft recommendations for Annistford, Dudley East & West Moor, Backworth & Holystone, Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen, Forest Hall, Killingworth and Longbenton & Benton wards. These modifications are the wards that were proposed to us by North Tyneside Council, upon which we would like to receive further comments and evidence to allow us to propose the most appropriate warding pattern for the area as part of our final recommendations.

4 We welcome all comments on these proposals, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries and the names of our proposed wards. This stage of consultation begins on 25 July 2023 and closes on 4 September 2023. Please see page 7 for more information on how to send us your response.

5 The table, map and text on pages 2–5 detail our further draft recommendations for north-west North Tyneside. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory criteria:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

North-west North Tyneside (Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor, Backworth & Holystone, Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen, Forest Hall, Killingworth and Longbenton & Benton wards)



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor	3	-13%
Backworth & Holystone	3	-7%
Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen	3	-4%
Forest Hall	3	-4%
Killingworth	3	-8%
Longbenton & Benton	3	-7%

Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor and Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen

6 We received 20 submissions for these two wards, with five in support of our draft warding pattern and 15 opposed to it. As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed a three-councillor ward that paired Annitsford, Burradon and Camperdown with the village of Backworth which we suggested should be named Annitsford, Burradon & Backworth. We also proposed a three-councillor Dudley, Seaton Burn & Wideopen ward.

7 As part of their response to our draft recommendations consultation, the Council proposed two modified wards.

8 The Council proposed a slightly modified Dudley, Seaton Burn & Wideopen ward which included the Ashkirk area. This ward would have an electoral variance of 4% fewer electors than 2028, whereas our proposed Dudley, Seaton Burn & Wideopen is forecast to have 10% fewer electors by 2028. The Council stated that their revised proposal would ensure that the Dudley community is not divided and 'recognises the cluster of facilities around the John Willie Sams Centre and reflects important transport routes in this part of North Tyneside'.

9 We considered this proposal as well as looking at other options for the boundary between these two wards, including using the railway line from the point it is crossed by the A189 northwards to the edge of the district. While such an arrangement would result in electoral equality for the ward based around Annitsford, it would produce an electoral variance with 21% fewer electors for the ward containing Seaton Burn and Wideopen.

10 The Council also proposed a revised Annitsford & West Moor ward which paired the areas of Annitsford, Burradon and Camperdown with the West Moor community. This is in contrast to our draft recommendations which paired those areas with Backworth.

11 The Council's proposed Annitsford, Dudley & West Moor ward would have 13% fewer electors than the average for the district by 2028. The Council argued that the A19 formed a strong boundary between Annitsford and Backworth which should not be breached in that location, but that it could be crossed in the area between Backworth and Holystone due to the stronger connections between those two areas. This is discussed in the next section of this report.

12 As part of the submission of their revised proposal, the Council surveyed the affected residents for each of their proposed wards. Their proposed Annitsford, Dudley & West Moor and Dudley, Seaton & Wideopen received mixed responses with residents both in favour and opposed to the proposed wards. This reflected the pattern of responses to our draft recommendations.

13 We note the Council's argument that the A19 forms a stronger boundary between Annitsford and Backworth than between Backworth and Holystone. We are aware that the road links between Annitsford and Backworth are much fewer in number than those south from Backworth to Holystone.

14 We have therefore adopted the Council's suggested warding arrangement in this area as part of our further draft proposals. We are keen to hear evidence from interested parties as to their views on this proposal as well as our initial draft recommendations.

15 While we have adopted the boundaries suggested by the Council for these wards, we have amended the names to differentiate the different parts of the village

of Dudley. We propose to name the wards Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor and Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen.

16 Our further draft recommendations for this area are for two three-councillor wards of Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor and Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen. These wards have electoral variances of -13% and -4%, respectively, by 2028.

Backworth & Holystone and Killingworth

17 Our draft recommendations proposed a three-councillor Killingworth ward and a three-councillor Holystone ward, the latter of which included Killingworth Village and parts of the Forest Hall community.

18 We received 20 submissions for our draft proposals for these two wards with a mixture of support and opposition. Those in support agreed with a Killingworth ward that contained all of the Killingworth community. Those who opposed noted that while the ward did contain all of the Killingworth community, it did not include Killingworth Village which was viewed as an integral part of the Killingworth community.

19 The Council's revised proposal for Killingworth ward moved Killingworth Village into Killingworth ward with a modified boundary that runs to the south of Killingworth Lake and to the south of properties on West Lane. They proposed that electors living on the streets off Northumbrian Way are included in a ward with West Moor. This results in a three-councillor Killingworth ward with an electoral variance of -8%.

20 The Council also proposed a ward that paired Backworth with Holystone. This ward crosses the A19 and unites Backworth with electors in the Holystone, Benton Square and Palmersville areas. The ward incorporates the new housing development on Killingworth Moor, which the Council stated will unite the two areas when completed. The response from local residents to the Council's consultation on their proposed wards showed a degree of support for pairing Backworth and Holystone.

21 We have adopted this ward as part of our further draft proposals. We are eager to hear the views of local residents and other interested parties for this area, in particular views on the new housing developments in this area and their potential future community ties.

22 Our further draft recommendations for this area are for two three-councillor wards of Backworth & Holystone and Killingworth with variances of -7% and -8%, respectively.

Forest Hall and Longbenton & Benton

23 We received 69 submissions that referred directly to these two wards with the majority referring to our proposed Benton & Forest Hall ward. Of those comments,

54 were in favour of our proposed Benton & Forest Hall ward and 15 were opposed to it. Our proposed Longbenton ward included the area of West Moor.

24 The Council's revised proposal suggested a three-councillor ward named Forest Hall which they stated would include all of the Forest Hall community in a single ward by using the B1505 as its northern boundary. Their proposed Longbenton & Benton ward included the majority of the Benton community in a Longbenton & Benton ward, with a small part of the community to the south-east of Benton station remaining in Forest Hall ward. The support for the inclusion of the Benton community in our proposed Benton & Forest Hall ward was a common theme in the submissions we received, as was opposition to any division of the Benton community. The responses received by the Council as part of their consultation also showed a mixed response to these proposed wards.

25 Given the contrasting views received so far we are eager to receive further evidence for this area and we have adopted the Council's revised warding pattern as part of our further draft proposals to enable residents and other interested parties to make submissions to the Commission on these wards.

26 Our proposed further draft recommendations are for two three-councillor wards of Forest Hall and Longbenton & Benton as suggested to us by the Council. These wards would have variances of -4% and -7% by 2028, respectively.

Have your say

27 The Commission has an open mind about its further draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from.

28 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for north-west North Tyneside, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

29 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (North Tyneside)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

30 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for North Tyneside which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively

31 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government

32 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in North Tyneside?

33 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or another group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

34 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

35 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in London and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us upon request after the end of the consultation period.

36 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

37 In the light of representations received, we will review our further draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the further draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

38 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for North Tyneside in 2024.

Equalities

39 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made its best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Further draft recommendations for wards in the north-west of North Tyneside Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Annitsford, Dudley East & West Moor	3	6,941	2,314	-12%	7,190	2,397	-13%
2	Backworth & Holystone	3	6,266	2,089	-21%	7,691	2,564	-7%
3	Dudley West, Seaton Burn & Wideopen	3	7,947	2,649	1%	7,925	2,642	-4%
4	Forest Hall	3	7,854	2,618	-1%	7,908	2,636	-4%
5	Killingworth	3	6,687	2,229	-15%	7,624	2,541	-8%
6	Longbenton & Benton	3	7,609	2,536	-4%	7,663	2,554	-7%

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Tyneside Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for North Tyneside. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-tyneside

Local Authority

- North Tyneside Council

Political Groups

- North Tyneside Council Conservative Group
- North Tyneside Conservative Federation

Councillors

- Councillor L. Bartoli and Councillor C. Johnson – Joint Submission – (North Tyneside Council)
- Councillor L. Bones (North Tyneside Council)
- Councillor O. Scargill (North Tyneside Council)

Local Residents

- 313 local residents