

Northumberland

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Comment text:

Attached are our comments, suggestions, and alternatives. We thank you in advance for taking the time to consider our submission.

Attached Documents:

- Northumberland Labour Group on LGBC Proposals 4[24707].pdf

Foreword: Northumberland Labour Group on LGBC Proposals

Northumberland Labour Group have identified three local areas recognised and suggested for change by LGBC as being unsuitable for both local need and democratic accountability as well as possibly damaging community cohesion.

The three areas suggested by LGBC are radical in the extreme and have no links or very little history to resolve issues that may arise for member servicing and hold people's long term interest in democracy.

Our altered plans are not divisive and not democratically appealing to sitting members but they do represent communities which can be developed to ensure that people WANT to vote and remain part of the democratic process at Council level.

Labour Group would also like LGBC to accept the use of the term Ward to describe the areas represented by Councillors as opposed to Division which in some cases suggested divided places and not cohesive communities.

Open Invitation:

On behalf of Northumberland Labour Group I would like to invite members of the LGCB to visit the areas within our proposals to let us explain our thinking and models.

We do hope that you can give us that opportunity, we have open minds but we do believe your current suggestions may be seen as anti democratic and cause difficulties for the Council itself who need to service areas where the feeling of belonging does not exist.



Councillor Scott Dickinson MBE leader of Northumberland Labour Group

Organisation: Northumberland Labour Group

Comments on LGBC for England Northumberland Draft Recommendations.

1. New Hartley with New Delaval

Northumberland Labour Group are not against the formation of a new ward in South East Northumberland to resolve the future issues as described by the LGBC during the various conversations and public debate but the suggested change to form a ward linking New Hartley with New Delaval and Newsham would be catastrophic for both zones as there are no obvious associated links between the zones either historically or territorially: We would like members of the LGBC to visit the area with our members on the ground before making any final decision and take full cognizance of our our comments below.

1a. History and demographics

The two suggested areas sitting two miles apart as the crow flies, are separated by one of the two greenbelts within South East Northumberland. The land between New Hartley and the common boundary between the two small townships of Laverock Hall Road is primarily managed agricultural land organised through tenancies with the Hastings Family who have bequeathed their Seaton Delaval estates into the hands of the National Trust.

The homes in New Delaval and Newsham sit on land once owned by different coal barons and properties are either Local Authority, former Authority, freehold or in the case of some newer properties, with private leasing arrangements with developers.

The area of New Hartley until 1974 sat in Seaton Valley UDC whereas New Delaval and Newsham was an element of Blyth Town UDC. They were united under the former Blyth Valley Borough Council until 2009 but no other real links exist between the two communities. They sit in separate Parishes and will be in separate Constituencies from later this year.

1b Transport

Currently there are no direct public transport links between the two zones. In future the Northumberland rail line will have a station quite close to New Delaval with Newsham but no new station is planned for

New Hartley. Travel by road is neither direct or traffic free with the Unitary County Council considering a dual carriageway construction for Laverock Hall Road as traffic congestion is so high. This problem does not bode well for planning any bus links between the two zones and as neither areas are independently strong on service provision any public transport would have to be subsidised by the Unitary County Council to make it attractive to a transport provider. Both areas have good regular bus links with the City of Newcastle.

1c Shopping and Local Services

New Hartley is very low on shops and as a shopping experience it would measure towards the bottom of any organisations list. People tend to travel to Seaton Delaval for local supplies or Cramlington for a larger shop, both areas sat in the former Seaton Valley UDC. New Hartley has a visiting doctor on a part time basis, no dentist and no variety in personal services such as hairdressers etc. Doctors and Dentists are accessed at both Seaton Delaval and Cramlington. New Hartley has one social club and a welfare hall with two churches for social interaction

There is a larger number of shops in New Delaval and Newsham with a wider variety of goods which can be bought there and a greater number of services accessed locally including hot food of various types, a full time doctors surgery a variety of churches of differing denominations, a number of public houses and social clubs locally and as well as active church hall communities the area houses a well used Village Hall and has reasonable access to good youth services. For larger shops people use the huge range of stores sited across the wider town of Blyth area.

1d Education & Wider School Activity

The areas of New Hartley and New Delaval differ greatly when it comes to education, they do not share a catchment area.

New Hartley sits in an area of three tier education whilst New Delaval is in a primary/secondary two tier area.

Young people in New Delaval/Newsham have access to three very good local primary schools moving on to a highly rated Secondary Academy. All schools can be accessed on foot from their homes.

Young people from New Hartley go to the local village First School, and then travel into the Wider Hartley Ward to Middle School then on to a

good quality High School in Seaton Delaval. New Hartley children use public transport to access schools after first school.

Children from both areas do not have the opportunity to mix at an educational level.

In youth provision both areas differ greatly with churches and community based charities being in the fore in New Delaval and extended school offers being the norm in New Hartley.

1e Community Cohesion

New Delaval is home to one of the most deprived areas in Britain. It is an area which requires high input from the local authority in both Children's Services and Social Services; as a community it is welded closely to the Town of Blyth, Northumberland's largest town, and sees its wider home as that Town.

New Hartley on the other hand is wealthier, sees itself as a rural village oasis in an urban setting and does not have the problems which beset its proposed partner, cohesion between the two disparate settings will be difficult to gender and place an unnecessary burden on the Unitary County Council in attempting to forge cohesion.

1f Member problems

Traditionally both areas have been serviced by local members for decades and unlike rural areas who expect members to balance input across a number of villages both of these areas expect and currently get almost instant access to members to debate and resolve their issues.

The proposed make up of this ward will change that level of access considerably as Northumberland has single member wards making the traditional instant access in split urban wards as proposed different to wards attached geographically to the proposed areas.

In the area of New Delaval close working with the community and other community leaders can stop much of the volatility working in deprived areas bring members but that will take member service away from the New Hartley element of the LGBC proposal and if that member lived in New Hartley they may feel under pressure locally.

Suggested Change:

Please see map A



We believe that Labour Group's suggestion for an expanded Cramlington East ward brings in the compliance with the wishes of the LGBC for equity and keeps the wards within their new constituency setting as applied through the BCE changes to constituencies in Northumberland.

This ward suggestion sits completely in the brand new Cramlington with Killingworth Constituency.

1.i History and demographics

The areas of New Hartley, East Cramlington and East Hartford sat in the former SeatonValley UDC until 1974. All three have a close historical affinity as mining villages.

The formation of this ward retains the need to split New Hartley to resolve the numbers required by the LGBC yet retain a rural oasis feel as enjoyed by the residents of all three areas within a new urban constituency formed from two 'New Towns' sited closely to each other as they form the Green Belt and is home to a County Country park.

The East Cramlington ward is home to one of Northumberland's largest employers at the Cramlington NHS Foundation Trusts Emergency

Hospital which is central to health, welfare and care provision across Northumberland and North Tyneside.

1ii Transport

All three areas are well connected by public transport via the Cramlington transport exchange, to the wider region via its East Coast rail line station and the new Northumberland line station situated on the edge of Cramlington East Ward but will be named Seaton Delaval. This line links directly into the Tyne & Wear Metro system and Newcastle Airport.

The ward edge is defined by the A189 spine road to the A19 and A1 giving high speed road network access to residents of the ward.

The ward is very well connected by bus, road and in the near future rail transport to the City of Newcastle.

1iii Shopping and Local Services

The leaning of people from the proposed ward is towards both Seaton Delaval and Cramlington to enjoy their shopping and social experiences. Local services are delivered by the County Council and people from across the ward have access to a wide variety of restaurants and public houses within the ward and in areas closely surrounding the ward.

The country park area of the Ward is well maintained and is home to a large proportion of the Counties Red Squirrels. It's a great and popular place for dog owners.

1 iv Education and wider school activity

This area being closely linked for a decades is unusual as it is where parents express some of the most used parental choice when it comes to schooling with three tier education in the Seaton Delaval and New Hartley area and two tier education available in Cramlington.

A number of families who believe in three tier education opt to send their children to the Seaton Delaval educational zone and others to Cramlington.

Coaches also collect children who have entered the religious denominational schools in nearby Bedlington.

All children have the opportunity of wider school activity and the area is well serviced by good and excellent schools.

1v Community Cohesion

The area has many links through its historical involvement in the mining industry and the formation involving Seaton Valley UDC into the formation of Cramlington into a new town and growing its population into the second largest in the County of Northumberland.

The communities, although on the edge of a large urban area, have retained the village feel that those who choose to live there actively defend. The proposed changes place those villages in a single rural area with the benefits of urban social protection right on their doorstep and although some deprivation exists it is well managed and services are delivered equitably through design across the whole area defining this proposed ward effectively and efficiently.

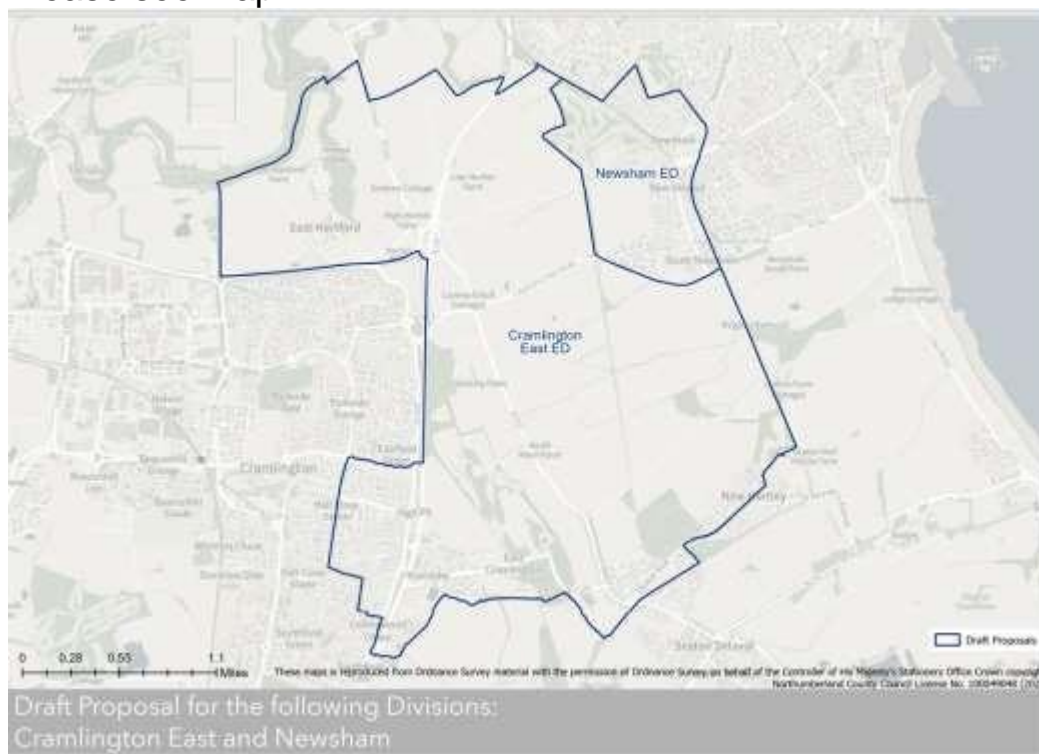
1vi Member problems

The proposed ward is much better placed to support communities when they require member involvement than most with travel across the ward being much easier than previously proposed involving Newsham/New Delaval into the mix. The area does not suffer as many congestion problems and public transport is available for members if they require it.

Surgery space is available for members in the areas this ward is proposed to cover.

Local Area Changes to support altered model

Please see Map 1A



Map 1A illustrates the formation of a Newsham with New Delaval Ward which is both a long standing ward within the Town of Blyth but much needed by residents due to the huge deprivation and social issues embedded in the community.

This is a ward of high member input.

To accommodate our suggested change and aid community cohesion right across Northumberland's largest town, a town in transition due to a high level of Government levelling up support offered to the area which is expected to rise to almost £90M to ease the Town's major economic problems, we, Northumberland Labour Group, fully support the revised County Council model as submitted to the LGBC earlier this year for the Town and was accepted by members at a meeting of full council.

Our suggested alteration gives tolerance levels as follows:

$$\text{Newsham} = (1759 - 153) + (2556 - 23)$$

polling district:

BV23NM (1759)

BV24NM (2556)

Newsham 4139 (7)

Cramlington East = (3778) + (444 - 36) + 2 + 23 + 15

polling district:

current proposal

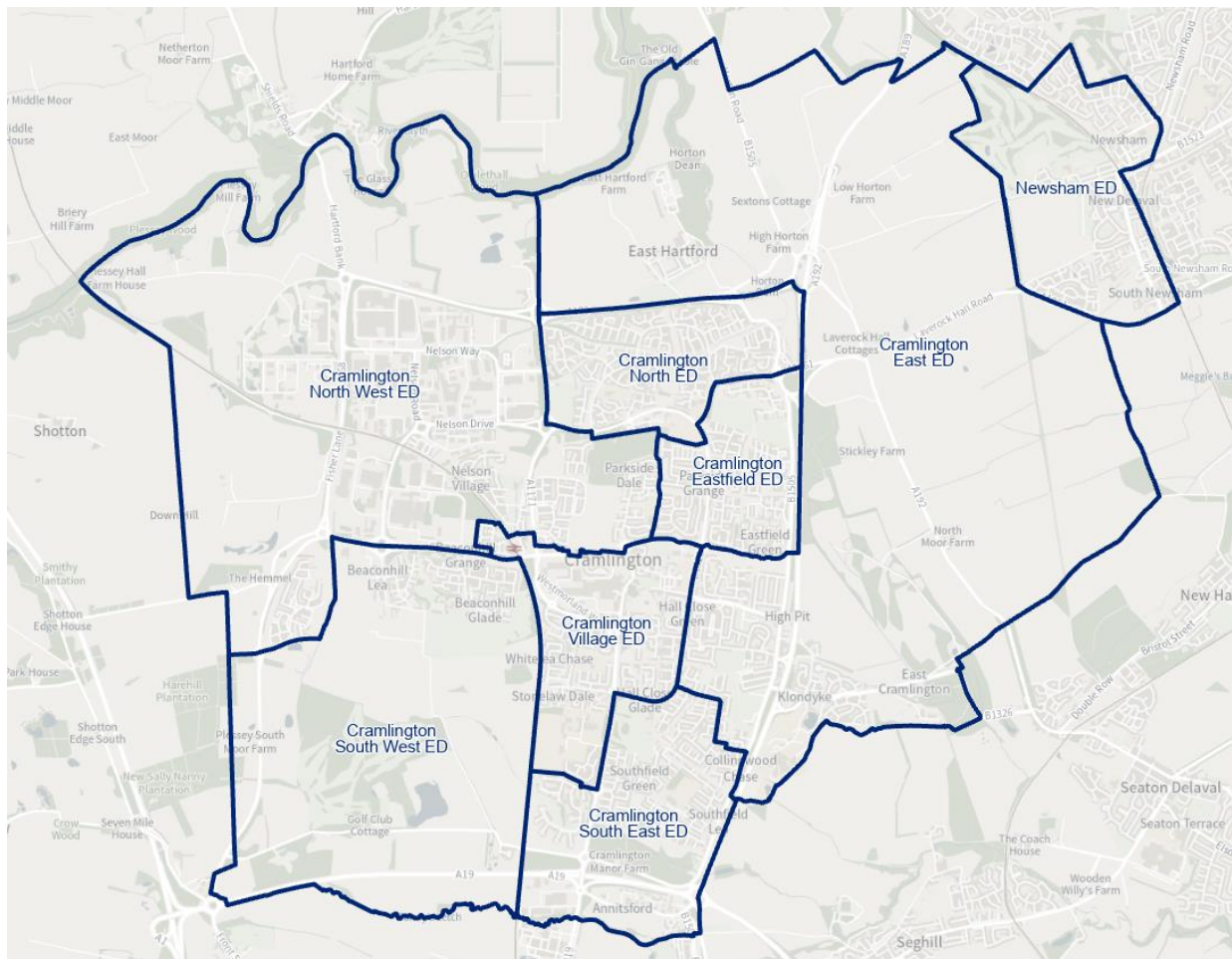
BV9CW (444)

BV22KW (**only** 2 voter)

BV24NM (**only** 23 voter)

BV26SS

Cramlington East 4226 (9)



Choppington with Hepscoth

2a History and Demographics

The village of Hepscoth is one of the wealthiest villages in the whole County of Northumberland and using the housing site Zoopla as a guide the average house price over the last 12 months in Hepscoth is just under £667,000 with the suggested partner Choppington being one of the most

deprived areas in Northumberland which has an average sales price of £104,000 over half a million pound difference.

Choppington is a very urban area containing a busy industrial estate whilst Hepscott is centered in a very tidy and hedged agricultural area sitting outside the market town of Morpeth.

The new suggested ward from the LGBC includes a relatively small area of housing known as Loansdean Estate. It has no public building anywhere near that housing which can be utilised as a polling station and people would have to travel a considerable distance to vote.

The homes at Loansdean which with the best will in the world will be therefore democratically excluded from the process as the homes sit adjoining a Morpeth Ward, Stobhill and the constituents need to be included within the new structure of that ward for the retention of democratic accountability.

Historically the areas have sat in two different council areas from 1974 until 2009, Castle Morpeth and Wansbeck District and few if any reliable community links have formed.

2b Transport

Public transport links between the three areas which make up the LGBC suggested ward are few and far between with no rail link and buses travelling into Morpeth and Bedlington from Choppington area with Hepscott lightly serviced by buses into Morpeth.

Choppington is very well serviced by buses to most of South East Northumberland's townships and has good links to the City of Newcastle.

2c Shopping and Local Services

Hepscott has a village hall, a very small general dealer at the Paddock and no public house for entertainment.

People from Hepscott mainly shop in the nearby market town of Morpeth.

Choppington is well serviced by shops, public houses, a large health centre and social clubs, two community centres one containing a public library facility and a number of food outlets and restaurants.

For a larger shopping experience both Ashington and Bedlington Town centres are close by.

2d Education and wider school activity

Choppington is well serviced with good primary schools which offer additional help to those falling behind, some of that help is centered towards parents and guardians as well as young people which is helping to break down barriers deprivation creates. Most young people travel to Bedlington for their high school education, some go to Ashington.

Hepscott children are educated in the Morpeth pyramid of schools which have very good reputations.

With the 2021 census figures not fully analysed down to ward level we cannot ratify the number who hold level 4 qualifications and above but work done in early 2010 by NCC showed that the number of people with higher level qualifications living in Hepscott was much higher than average, with Choppington having very low levels of higher educational attainment and is dogged by both low prospects and low ambition.

2e Community Cohesion

Choppington is home to a high level of community cohesion with centres well placed around the ward to accommodate the community on many levels.

Social clubs, allotment associations and youth provision is all high in this area and has been used to develop community cohesion and a feeling of developed community within the ward. The area has a village feel within an urban setting as people have blended together well for decades.

Hepscott is a village which has very few third generation people in residence and has developed as a dormitory area mainly for people working in better paid employment in the Tyneside conurbation it has little if any links with the community of Choppington.

2f Member problems

Choppington is an area which needs and has high elected member input with a well developed team spirit which includes local Town/Parish Councillors who readily assist the single member.

Hepscott is not so draining from its member having a rural idyll and mainly wealthy residents who do not rely on member involvement on a regular basis.

Suggested changes:

Please see Map B



2i History and demographics

By extending Choppington ward geographically along the rail line kept for by pass routes to the East Coast mainline in case of railway emergency or break down the proposal at Map B defines a new community boundary taking some of the New Housing in Bedlington West to the south of the Swan Inn into the close knit community of Choppington which will benefit the newcomers in this area.

Choppington's links with Bedlington are very high indeed with it being one of the two shopping areas people rely on for expanded need outside the ward and is the town where most Choppington young people travel to high school, attend youth projects and extended school sports activities, the links are endless and historical.

We also propose that Hepscott South of the rail line should return to its former ward of Longhorsley where it has enjoyed a link with rural Northumberland that we expect will be maintained as it sits alongside most of that ward in the extended Green Belt surrounding Morpeth as described in NCC's Local Plan.

As explained previously homes at Loansdean need to transfer into Stobhill ward to ensure attempts to maintain democratic accountability are managed through these proposed changes.

2ii Transport

Choppington Ward in its proposed extended format North of the rail line has regular bus transport links running along the A196 linking Choppington and its proposed extension into Bedlington West with the East Coast Mainline Station at Morpeth.

The whole of the area has good links with the City of Newcastle for employment and leisure.

2iii Shopping and Local Services

The new proposed constituents will have and will use the shops situated within Choppington Ward as well as the larger shopping experience in Bedlington Town Centre.

2iv Education and wider schools activity

The new proposed ward bringing in children and young people from Bedlington West simply enhances the school situation in the new ward both an excellent High School and expanded primary schools in Bedlington West used by pupils from Choppington and extended school facilities are readily available at both higher schoolsites. The proposal allows all young people to be educated within the 'Bedlingtonshire' school pyramid with Hepscott young people remaining in the Morpeth pyramid cluster group; both areas have excellent schools within the scope of parental choice.

2v Community cohesion

The proposal for change for Choppington from Northumberland Labour Group enhances the historical links with the larger Town of Bedlington and the efforts residents of both communities make to maintain links with each other. Many families are spread across both areas and bringing

them closer together will only enhance the cohesion of community ties locally and not detract from it.

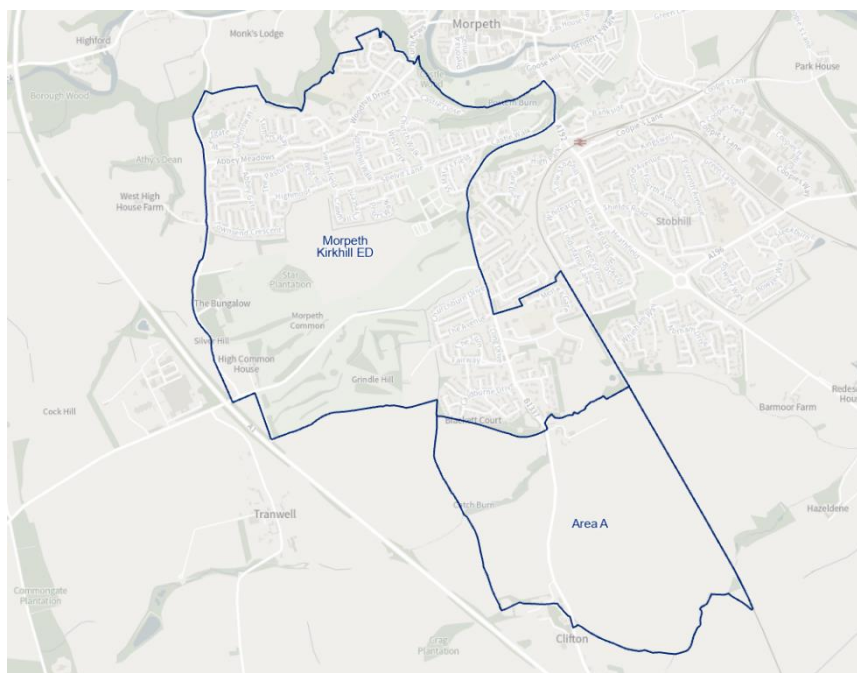
In Hepscoth its long standing retention in Longhorsley Ward will settle the nervousness some residents have about being linked with one of Britain's most deprived wards and ease any pressure the Council will get if the LGBC proposal goes ahead in its current form.

2vi Member problems

Hepscoth ward is currently encompassed into the rural ward of Longhorsley and the current member is the Leader of the County Council, his vast knowledge of Castle Morpeths problems where he was also the leader is utilised in his handling of his workload and were sure if he retires an experience replacement will be found from within his group to take on what is an extremely safe Conservative council seat.

Choppingington is a very needly ward in respect of member involvement and is a team effort supported by Town/Parish councillors who assist as necessary in supporting the single member. The current member manages well through this process and will certainly be able to service the suggested new ward admirably.

Potential suggested alteration - Morpeth Kirkhill absorbing 15 voters from Choppingington, boundary running south with railway line 4155 (8) new figure for Morpeth Kirkhill 4170 (8)



Prudhoe

3a History and demographics

Prudhoe is a town steeped in history and was strategically developed to protect the Tyne Valley. It is therefore a very compact community with ties primarily westward with the townships and villages it was designed to safeguard.

A previous LGBC review broke away from the historical position the town had enjoyed for decades having sat in the former Tynedale District from 1974 to 2009 with an East-West split that almost split the town equally from a central position along Front Street the B 6395.

Local people and labour group wish to see the restoration of that split as the designed changes put forward by LGBC do not accommodate local need or absorb the change in a manageable manner with new homes already on stream split away from this community as if unwanted.

Prudhoe is home to a number of work opportunities at its thriving industrial estate and has long term links with Team Valley, Tyneside major manufacturing centre which is easily accessed by Road and public transport.

3b Transport

Prudhoe sits 11 miles west of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and just south of the River Tyne. Situated on a steep, north-facing hill in the Tyne valley.

At the foot of the valley runs the Carlisle to Newcastle rail line with frequent trains running to and from local Northumberland transport hubs and into the City of Newcastle as well as rail links with the MetroCentre, a huge shopping experience in Gateshead on the South bank of the Tyne.

Bus Transport is excellent with easy travel by bus from the middle of Prudhoe to Hospitals and services in Hexham, Gateshead, Newcastle and beyond.

Its road links via the A695 which links to the A69/68 to the west coast and Scotland and the A1M to travel both North through Northumberland and South into Durham makes Prudhoe one of the best commuter towns in the North-East region.

3c Shopping and Local Services

Front Street in Prudhoe has a good array of shops, an excellent Leisure facility housing both wet and dry activity, a well used park, Public Houses eating places and hot food takeaway premises, it has survived many of the ravages which beset other high streets in Northumberland.

Health and dental services can be readily found as can Golf and other sporting activity areas within a stones throw of the main centre.

A project with a local housing provider brought back empty premises in the town centre and developed them as homes bringing life back into the Town keeping up its vibrancy.

Prudhoe is still home to a children's centre which is very highly rated.

In nearby Low Prudhoe right on the edge of town a number of other services are available such as supermarket shopping, fast food etc which seems to enhance the town and not detract as in some other areas.

3d Education and Wider school activity

Prudhoe is home to a Children's centre, a good number of primary schools and an excellent Academy High School, it also has a Catholic Primary facility which is very well thought of locally.

After school and active learning is well embedded into education with schools using the local leisure facility with swimming, an early learning issue as the River Tyne runs along the valley at the foot of the town.

Other youth projects have been maintained with help from charities and the Town Council to help young people feel they are as much part of the community as their elders.

Good after school sports activities are readily available, particularly at High school level.

3d Community cohesion

Prudhoe is moderately unique in having a great blend and excellent links between the Town and its neighbours who dwell alongside them within the Tyne Valley.

The community feel is quite high to very high and surrounding villages talk about Prudhoe as their centre, making the appeal of Labour Groups

model for change ideal to suit this growing community. It accommodates all and those who for democratic accountability may have to be placed in Stocksfield ward do not feel isolated by the change as Prudhoe is central to their thinking and they know that by joining with their close neighbours they are not being excluded from their base community but enhancing it.

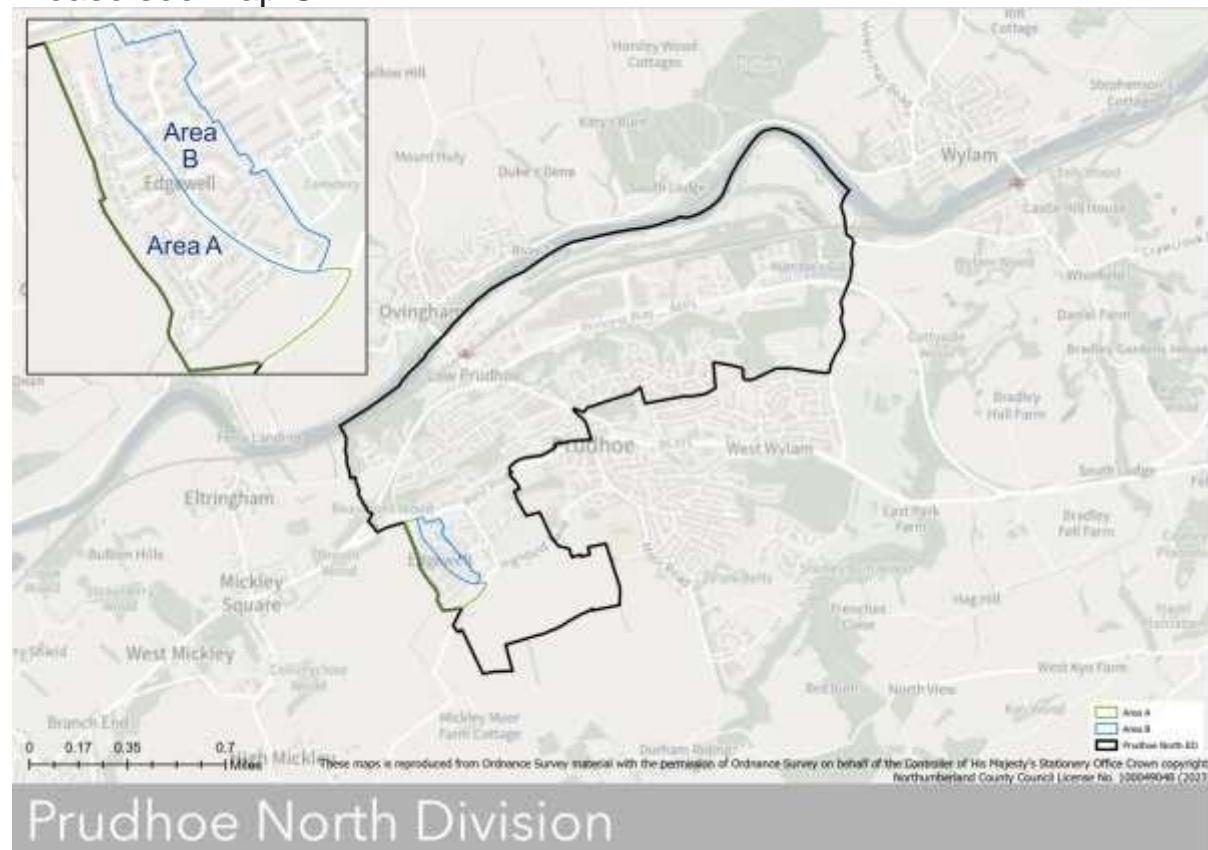
3e Member problems

The model put forward by LGBC splits this community making it difficult for members to service disparate parts.

The new development on Prudhoe Hall site is to be centered in a split ward with the members having to cross from one ward to service members in the other part of the town; it's hardly conducive to easy access for a largenew element of this community or to maintain the spirit of community that the older part of the town has developed well.

Proposed changes

Please see Map C



3i History and Demographics

Prudhoe enjoyed a East West democratic split for 35 years prior to the formation of a single unitary County Council in 2009 and that model was acceptable until the 2020 review but people in Prudhoe have excellent links with the Community Council AKA Prudhoe Town Council, who have

retained the East-West split.

The area known as Prudhoe Hall was for decades Prudhoe's largest employer being home to a huge mental hospital facility. It sat in Prudhoe East. That site is now under development for homes and the LGBC have suggested a change that may damage the development of this new community element of the town with its radical proposals and this element of an ancient community may lack loyalty if their definition is not Prudhoe centric.

3ii Transport

Labour groups changes will not weaken the excellent transport links Prudhoe enjoys.

3iii Shopping and Local Services

Labour Groups suggested changes hopefully enhance the feeling of belonging for people living in the Prudhoe Hall area as their road access sits in Prudhoe east facing Ryton in the Borough of Gateshead and the need to encompass this growing community into Prudhoe is paramount to maintain the growth of the Town itself.

3iv Schools and wider schools activity

Labour Groups proposals do not alter the nature of education of the provision of wider schools activity in this area.

3v Community Cohesion

The movement of people in areas A,B and Eltringham Village on Map C from Prudhoe to Stocksfield ward will not place those people in denial of belonging to the Prudhoe community and balances the numbers as per the remit of the LGBC.

As stated previously, the villages to the west of Prudhoe recognise Prudhoe as their place and when asked say 'Oh I live near Prudhoe' or 'Close by Prudhoe' so disenfranchisement will not take place.

The East-West split along Front Street the B6395 will enhance the understanding of wards within the Town of Prudhoe and encompass a feeling of belonging for the new residents of Prudhoe Hall.

The moving of voters into Stockfield ward will help that area define itself as it has lost its near neighbour, Riding Mill in the wider suggestions from LGBC and needs to democratically redefine an area it has historically associated with for decades, developing closer links between these very closely knit Wards Prudhoe East-West and Stocksfield.

3vi Member problems

The suggestions within the Labour Group plan iron out many of the problems placed before members in the LGBC offer.

It also places County Council members more closely ward wise with their Community Council colleagues and team work to help constituents will be able to be managed more closely as members gel in areas they recognise and do not have to travel across other wards to meet constituents.