

NORTHUMBERLAND

C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

NO EMBARGO

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Plans for Communities Move Forward

INNOVATIVE plans for council services to be tailored more closely around the needs of different communities in Northumberland have moved a step closer.

Northumberland County Council approved boundaries for “Area” and “Belonging” communities as part of the move towards a brand new single unitary council for Northumberland.

It will involve classing Northumberland into three main “Area” communities, each with its own area committee in north, west and south east Northumberland. These are areas sharing similar issues and opportunities which require services to be delivered very differently.

On top of this, 27 smaller “Belonging” community forums will be set up which enable residents to get more involved in decision making in the areas in which they live.

Cllr Peter Hillman, Leader of Northumberland County Council, said: “This is all about giving local people a real say in decision making and setting up a system that recognises the very different demands and needs of our communities.

“There are very different requirements depending on where people live. The issues facing residents living in a rural village in North Northumberland may be different to those of a town in South East

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Northumberland in terms of access to education, housing, employment or transport. The services provided by the new council must be based around that.”

A report to a meeting of the Full Council presented the results of 18 months of consultation by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership in which stakeholders and residents were asked for their views.

Councillors agreed:

- **A recommendation for Thirston parish to sit within Alnwick Belonging Community as opposed to Castle Morpeth. In addition, Amble Belonging Community will become part of the North Northumberland Area Community.**
- **An amended motion for Morpeth town and several parish councils to be part of a northern Area Community. It would mean Pegswood, Ulgham, Longhirst, Widdrington Village and Widdrington Station and Stobswood, East Chevington and Cresswell being part of the new northern Area Community, with Ellington & Linton and Lynemouth joining the south east equivalent.**

The draft Northumberland (Structural Change) Order has now been laid before Parliament and is expected to be confirmed later this month.

The council also gave its agreement to draft terms of reference for the Implementation Executive – a joint committee made up of the county council’s Executive and opposition leaders and district council leaders, which will take decisions on local government re-organisation until the new council is elected in May.

The council noted progress with the transition programme towards a new single unitary council and proposed working arrangements for the Implementation Executive.

Feedback from local residents, town and parish councils also resulted in decisions on “Belonging” communities:

- **Ponteland, Heddon on the Wall, Stamfordham and Matfen parishes will form part of the West Northumberland Area Community. Thirston parish is moved to Alnwick Belonging Community from Hartburn & Rural West.**
- **Longframlington parish moved to Coquetdale Belonging Community (from Alnwick)**
- **Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham parishes are moved to Alnwick**

Belonging Community (from Coquetdale)

- **Stamfordham parish is moved to Ponteland Belonging Community (from Hartburn & Rural West)**
- **Matfen parish is moved to East Tynedale Belonging Community (from Hartburn & Rural West)**
- **Heddon on the Wall parish is moved to East Tynedale Belonging Community (from Hartburn & Rural West)**
- **Prudhoe parish is established as a new Belonging Community distinct from the rest of East Tynedale**
- **Haydon parish is moved to Allendale Belonging Community (from Hexham & Hexhamshire)**
- **Healey parish is moved to Hexham & Hexhamshire Belonging Community (from East Tynedale)**
- **The parishes of Corbridge and Sandhoe are moved to East Tynedale Belonging Community (from Hexham & Hexhamshire)**
- **Wark parish is moved to Mid Tyne Belonging Community (from North Tyne & Redesdale)**
- **Bavington parish is moved to North Tyne & Redesdale Belonging Community (from Mid Tyne)**

ENDS

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