

**Northumberland County Council  
Community Governance Review 2024  
Draft Recommendations**

**A Review of the electoral arrangements of the Parish of Cramlington  
under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

**Background**

Cramlington Town Council has requested that Northumberland County Council undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Cramlington Parish in Northumberland County to consider its electoral arrangements with a view to increasing the number of Councillors for the Cramlington East and Cramlington Northwest wards from one to two. This would have the effect of increasing the Councillor representation on the Town Council from 12 to 14.

The recent review of electoral arrangements in Northumberland carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England recommended the creation of an additional ward (Cramlington North West) to be represented by one Town Councillor. This would mean that the new Cramlington North West ward and the existing Cramlington East ward would each be represented by one Town Councillor whereas the remaining five wards would each be represented by two Town Councillors.

Cramlington Town Council has requested that, in order to provide equality of representation and consistency of the electoral arrangements, Cramlington East and Cramlington North West wards both elect two Town Councillors. This would mean that the number of Councillors elected to the Town Council would increase from 12 to 14.

**Initial consultation**

On 16 February 2024 the Council published terms of reference to conduct a Community Governance Review of the Parish to consult on the proposal to change the electoral arrangements for Cramlington.

Initial consultation took place from 16 February 2024 for a four-week period involving all of the Cramlington Division County Councillors and Cramlington Town Council. A press release was issued to cover interested electors with articles appearing in the media, and information given on how to make representations. Relevant information was also published on the Council's website.

**Analysis of responses**

No responses were received to the consultation.

## The law, duties and guidance

In undertaking the review, the Council will be guided by Part 4 of Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (referred to as ‘the 2007 Act’), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972, guidance on CGR’s issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010. Also, the following Regulations which guide consequential matters arising from the review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625).

Following the guidance on community governance reviews referred to above, a CGR must reflect the identities and interests of communities and should take account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Before making any recommendation or publishing final proposals the Council will take full account of the views and suggestions of by local people and organisations and will comply with the statutory consultation requirements by:

- Consulting local government electors and other persons or bodies who appear to the Council to have an interest in the review.
- Considering any representations received in connection with the review.
- Notifying consultees of the outcome of the review; and,
- Publishing all decisions taken and the reasons for such decisions.

In particular, the Council will consult:

- Local government electors/residents in the Parish of Cramlington.
- The Parish Council of Cramlington.
- Northumberland County Councillors (as appropriate); and

## Timeline and key stages

16 February 2024	Issue press release and publish terms of reference and notices within the Parish
15 March 2024	Deadline for any comments/objections
12 April 2024	Publication of draft proposals
17 May 2024	Publish final recommendations
17 May 2024	Consult and seek approval from the LGBCE
To be confirmed and following a decision from the LGBCE	Report to Council informing it of the outcomes of the review and making

	recommendations for Council to resolve upon
To be confirmed	Making of the relevant order, subject to the LGBCE and Council's decision

## Electoral Forecasts

When considering the electoral arrangements of the parish, the Council must consider any likely future change in the number or distribution of electors within five years from the day the review commences.

The review will use the latest electorate figures available at a parish level together with the estimated delivery of new dwellings within the five-year period taken from the Council's most recent statutory development plan and were used by the LGBCE for their recent review.

The 2028 electorate figures for the electoral divisions are as follows

Cramlington North - 4131 - represented by 2 Councillors.  
 Cramlington North West- 3504 - represented by 1 Councillor.  
 Cramlington South East- 3757 represented by 2 Councillors.  
 Cramlington South West- 3519- represented by 2 Councillors.  
 Cramlington Village – 3896 - represented by 2 Councillors.  
 Cramlington Eastfield – 3941 - represented by 2 Councillors.  
 Cramlington East- 3770 - represented by 1 Councillor.

The figures highlight current inequality of representation across the divisions when considering the number of electors per division.

## Considerations

Legislation requires that the Council must ensure that community governance within the area:

- reflects the identities and interests of the communities in the area,
- is effective and convenient and takes into account any other arrangements for the purpose of community representation or engagement in the area.

In considering proposals for change, the Council will take the following into account:

- Parish status (council or meeting)
- Electorate – existing and forecast growth.
- The review aims to ensure that parishes reflect community identity and interest and that they are viable administrative and democratic units.

- Parishes with 150 or fewer local government electors cannot have a council and can only be a parish meeting (unless the parish already has a council).
- Between 151 and 999 local government electors the review can recommend that the parish should have a council (optional) and where the parish has 1000 or more local government electors the review must recommend that the parish has a council.

### **Council size (number of councillors)**

The minimum number of parish councillors that a council can have is five. A quorum for a parish council is three or a third, whichever is the greater number.

National research guidance suggests the following levels of representation for parish councils:

<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Councillor Allocation</b>
Less than 500	5 – 8
501 – 2,500	6 – 12
2,501 – 10,000	9 – 16
10,00, - 20,000	13 – 27
Greater than 20,000	13 – 31

Government guidance is that each area should be considered on its own merits having regard to population, geography, and the pattern of communities. The Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation and existing council sizes which have stood the test of time.

In considering requests to change the number of councillors on any individual parish council, the Council will review the electoral history for the parish including the number of contested elections that have been held, the number of vacant seats following normal parish elections (every 4 years) and the history of co-options (i.e., has the council been able to fill vacancies).

### **Draft recommendation**

Considering the guidance, the statutory obligations and the result of the consultation exercise, the Council's draft recommendation is as follows: -

- (1) that the number Councillors for the Cramlington East and Cramlington Northwest wards be increased from one to two.**
- (2) authorise the Monitoring Officer to make, sign and seal the appropriate Orders by virtue of the powers contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.**

## Comments

Any comments on these draft recommendations must be received, in writing, by no later than **10 May 2024** and the Council will publish final recommendations on 17 May 2024.

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