

Review of Community Governance in the Parish of Pelton and the unparished area of Newfield by Durham County Council

Final Recommendations

On 25 February 2015 the County Council approved and published terms of reference to conduct a Community Governance Review which primarily covered the unparished area of Newfield and affected the parished area of Pelton.

The terms of reference were to consult and consider whether the proposal submitted by way of petition received from Newfield and Pelton Lane Ends Residents Association was convenient and reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.

Background

Newfield and Pelton Lane Ends Residents Association submitted a request, by way of petition asking the County Council to undertake a review of community governance in the Newfield area. They organised a petition in support for the unparished area of Newfield to be incorporated within Pelton Parish Council (extending the boundary of Pelton parish). The residents association collected signatures from residents to show the level of support from the people of the village. Pelton Parish Council also wrote to the County Council expressing their support for the petition and the request to undertake a community governance review in the area.

Initial Consultation

Consultation took place with households and stakeholders in the area between 25 February 2015 and 8 April 2015. The consultation documents comprised of an information leaflet and feedback form.

121 consultation documents were sent to households identified as being directly affected by the proposal. A number of other properties (11 in total) with a Newfield postcode that had not been included in the plan accompanying the petition were identified and included within the area to be moved to Pelton parish.

In addition to this consultation letters were sent to the local MP, Kevan Jones, Chester-le-Street and District Area Action Partnership, County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC), local County Councillors and Pelton Parish Council.

The consultation document and response form was made available on the County Council's website.

The consultation document set out two options for future governance arrangements with consultees being asked to indicate one of two options.

Option one was to implement changes to the current governance arrangements in accordance with the petition submitted by the Residents Association. This would see

the current parish boundary of Pelton parish extended to include the unparished area of Newfield.

Option two was to leave the current governance arrangements in the unparished area of Newfield and the parished area of Pelton unchanged. This would mean that proposals suggested by the residents association would not be implemented and there would be no change to the current governance arrangements in the area.

Analysis of Responses

23 responses were received. Of those 23 responses, 17 respondents favoured option one - to implement changes to the current community governance arrangements in accordance with the petition submitted by the Residents Association.

6 respondents favoured option two - to leave current governance arrangements in the areas under review, unchanged.

In terms of the statutory consultees, the Chester-le-Street and District Area Action Partnership commented that there was support for the proposal as long as the County Council felt that there had been sufficient public consultation and support for the proposal.

The CDALC Executive Committee resolved that they would be happy to concur with the wishes of the residents of Newfield/Pelton following the community governance review process.

Although no response was received from Pelton Parish Council during the consultation, a letter to the County Council in support was submitted by the Parish Council at the time that the residents association had submitted the petition.

Local members had advised of their support for the wishes of the local people.

No completed web forms were received.

The Council also received representations from Pelton Fell Community Partnership ("the Partnership"). In its response the Partnership stated that it believed the current consultation was slightly premature in view of its own proposed consultation of the residents of Pelton Fell for the provision of a Community/Parish Council for Pelton Fell which included part of the area being consulted on as part of the review. They went on to say that part of the area proposed to be transferred to Pelton Parish was considered to be better served by the Pelton Fell area. It was not opposed however to a more appropriate part of Newfield being incorporated into Pelton Parish. The Partnership said that if the proposal identified in option 1 of the consultation, were approved the proposal would result in the need for a change in the electoral boundaries of the Council's Chester-le-Street and Pelton wards and could disrupt the Lower Super Output area, County Durham 011F. The Partnership also stated that it could result in an awkward administrative boundary in the vicinity of the unparished area of Pelton Fell.

The responses and additional comments made by households are broken down by area as follows:-

Area	Forms issued	Forms returned	Option 1 Number of responses & summary of associated comments	Option 2 Number of responses & summary of associated comments
The properties in Newfield identified in the petition from the Residents Association	110	20	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve local and community services • To have representation within a parish • To have a voice in decisions made for the Newfield area 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not want to pay more Council Tax
The 11 additional properties with Newfield postcodes that were identified and included in Option1.	11	3	0	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No understanding of what Pelton Parish Council do or what the benefits would be • Do not feel associated with Newfield

Analysis of Consultation Responses

From the relevant electorate of which there were 121 properties identified; 23 responses were received, which equated to a 19% response. From those that responded 73% were in favour of the proposals.

Having considered the issues put forward by the Partnership the responses have been broken down further:-

Of the 110 properties which formed part of the petition area identified for Newfield, 20 responses had been received which equated to a 18% response. Of those 17 were in favour which meant from the responses 85% were in favour.

Of the other 11 properties which have been included in option 1, 3 responses were received which equated to a 27% response. All were opposed to the option to transfer which meant from the responses 100% were against.

The County Council were aware that the Partnership had been seeking views from residents regarding the possible establishment of a parish council in the area, however Pelton Fell would be considered as a separate review if a valid petition was received. Having considered the views of the Partnership it is correct that there was an overlap in the area proposed to be transferred which included a small number of properties which the Partnership had identified as being more associated with their area. Looking in closer detail at this, the 11 properties with a Newfield postcode appear to be more associated with the Pelton Fell area, and are within the same electoral division as the remainder of the unparished area of Pelton Fell.

The Law, Duties and Guidance

Under section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, a Principal Council must comply various duties when undertaking a community governance review, including:

- i. It must have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
 - a. reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area
 - b. is effective and convenient.
- ii. In deciding what recommendations to make, the Council must take into account any other arrangements, apart from those relating to parishes and their institutions:

that have already been made, or that could be made for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in respect of the area under review.
- iii. The Council must take in to account any representations received in connection with the review.

Under Section 100 of the Act, the Council must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In March 2010 Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Community Governance Reviews, published guidance on community governance reviews.

The guidance refers to a desire to help people create cohesive and economically vibrant local communities and states that an important aspect of this is allowing local people a say in the way their neighbourhoods are managed. The guidance does stress that parish councils are an established and valued form of neighbourhood democracy and management in rural areas that increasingly have a role to play in urban areas and generally have an important role to play in the development of their communities. The need for community cohesion is also stressed along with the Government's aim for communities to be capable of fulfilling their own potential and overcoming their own difficulties. The value which is placed upon these councils is also highlighted in the fact that the guidance states that the Government expects to

see the creation of parishes and that the abolition of parishes should not be undertaken unless clearly justified and with clear and sustained local support for such action.

The guidance also states that the Council must have regard to the need to secure community governance within the area under review reflects the identities of the community in the area and is effective and convenient.

The guidance also acknowledges that how people perceive where they live is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents.

In this case having considered separately the two areas that were included in the proposal, there is strong support in favour of the unparished area of Newfield, with the exclusion of the 11 properties with Newfield postcodes, to be incorporated in the boundary of Pelton Parish Council. The proposed boundary change would be consistent with current electoral division boundaries. The 11 properties would remain in the Chester-le-Street West Central electoral division. This would reflect identifiable communities within the current area, retain the existing electoral divisions, and maintain effective and convenient local government arrangements

Draft Recommendations

Draft recommendations were published on 17 June 2015 and a further period of consultation commenced which ended on 29 July 2015. The draft recommendations were issued to the stakeholders and householders who were part of the initial consultation, and a press release was issued.

We received one response in support of the draft recommendations from Pelton Fell Community Partnership.

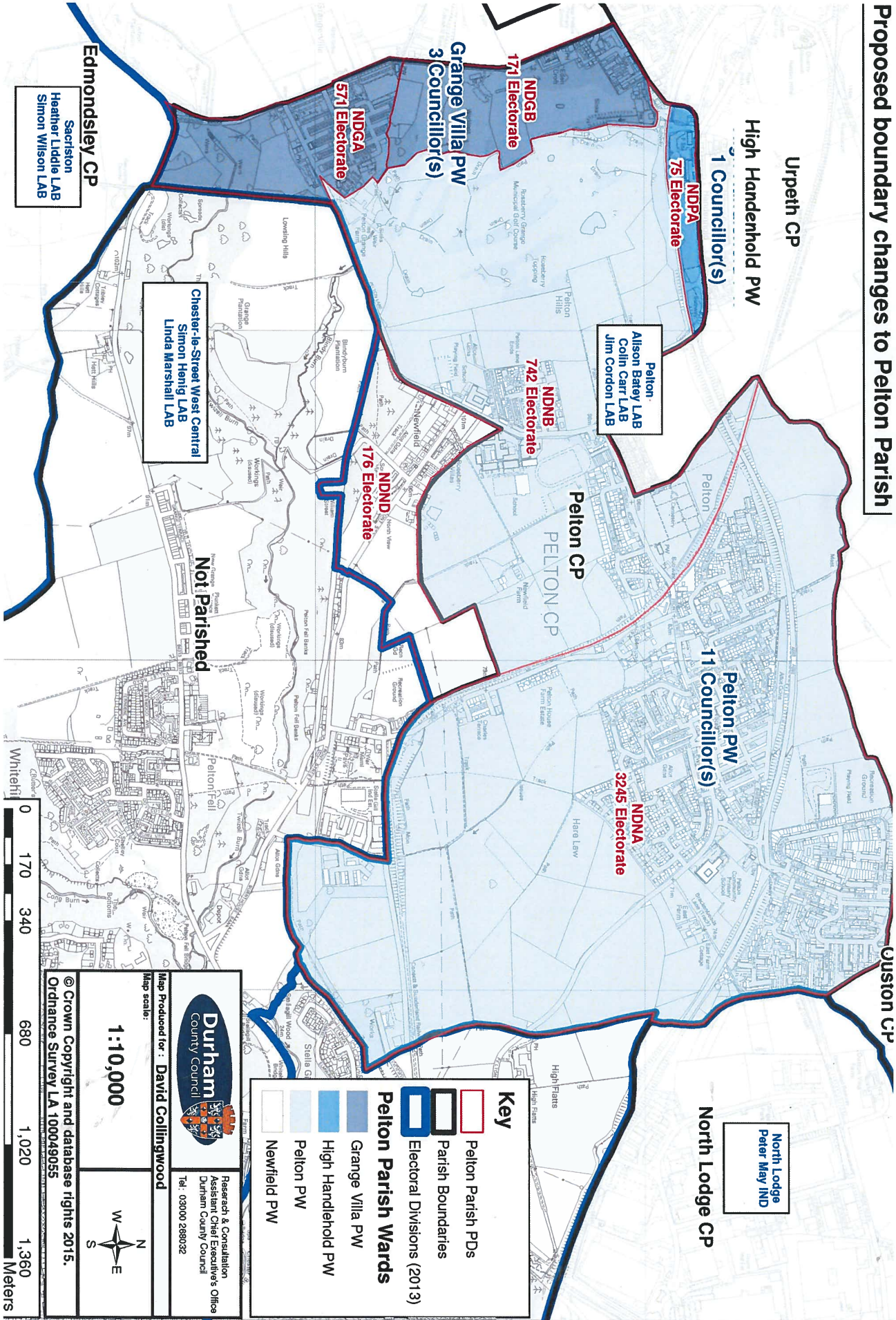
Final Recommendations

Taking into account the guidance, the statutory obligations and the results of the consultation exercises and the response received following the publication of the draft recommendations, the County Council's final recommendation be that the Pelton Parish Council boundary be extended to incorporate the unparished area of Newfield as identified on the plan. This excludes 11 properties within Newfield with postcodes that are within the same County Council Electoral Division as the remainder of the unparished area of Pelton Fell.

Convenient community governance would be best achieved by retaining the current council size. Warding arrangements are to be amended by incorporating the area to be transferred in the Pelton Parish Ward with effect from 1 April 2016.

A reorganisation order will be made following the publication of these final recommendations.

Proposed boundary changes to Pelton Parish



North Lodge
Peter May IND

Pelton.
Alison Batey LAB
Colin Carr LAB
Jim Cordon LAB

Chester-le-Street West Central
Simon Henry LAB
Linda Marshall LAB

Sacriston
Heather Liddle LAB
Simon Wilson LAB

Key

- Pelton Parish PDs
 - Parish Boundaries
 - Electoral Divisions (2013)
- ### Pelton Parish Wards
- Grange Villa PW
 - High Handenhold PW
 - Pelton PW
 - Newfield PW

Durham County Council

Map Produced for: **David Collingwood**

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Map scale:
1:110,000



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