



Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

BOUNDARY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHUMBERLAND - APPENDIX ONE INFORMATION

HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BERWICK-UPON- TWEED BOROUGH

There has been local government in the Berwick area for hundreds of years and this heritage is an intrinsic part of the culture of the area.

More recently, Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council resulted from the merger of:

Berwick Corporation
Belford Rural District Council
Glendale Rural District Council
Norham & Islandshires Rural District Council

There have been no changes to the local government boundaries in Northumberland since 1974.

MAPS AND SUPPORTING DATA

Boundaries of Public Bodies – submitted by Northumberland County Council

Other Public Bodies – submitted by Northumberland County Council

Services Devolved to Local Level – submitted by Northumberland County Council

Travel to Work Patterns – submitted by Northumberland County Council

Shopping Areas – submitted by Northumberland County Council

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council Offices and Main Service Delivery Points – see attached map.

Known areas of development – submitted by Northumberland County Council but please note proposed extension to north of Berwick as part of North Road Industrial Estate.

PARTNERSHIPS

- **Northumberland Strategic Partnership**

- Nature: Sub-regional partnership drawing down strategic funding from RDA and with responsibility for the Community Strategy at the county level
- Scale: Sub-Regional - Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council has been involved since inception and is represented on the Board and represents three districts on the Executive
- Length: Since 1997
- Cost: £5k contribution

- **North East Purchasing Organisation**

- Nature: A joint procurement vehicle for a range of goods and services
- Scale: most local authorities in the North East Region
- Length: from 1st April 2003 and in its developmental stages
- Cost: n/a

- **Northumberland County Council/Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council Highways Arrangements**

- Nature: One of six parallel Agreements with each District Authority to deal with highway management and maintenance issues.
- Scale: Borough-wide but subject to specific agreement over range and geography.
- Length: Since 1974 but currently subject to review.
- Cost: £250k per annum

- **Berwick Borough Local Strategic Partnership**

- Nature: Across the sectors partnership developing networks and Community Strategy and Plan
- Scale: Borough-wide and including partners in all sectors working at local, sub-regional, regional and national levels

Length: In its infancy but thriving – a mere six months old

Cost: c£200k over three years

- **Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership**

Nature: Wide ranging partnership led by Borough, Police and County delivering strategy and direction under Crime and Disorder legislation

Scale: Comprehensive coverage of Borough with links to Drug Action Team, Drug reference Group and CDRPs in other districts. Integral part of the BBLSP

Length: Started early in response to the Morgan Report with a community safety strategic group. Berwick group in place since 1995 and has gone from strength to strength, subsequently becoming the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in July 1998.

Cost: circa £30k plus associated costs absorbed within mainstream budgets - administers and determines spend on a range of Government funding streams

- **Northumberland On-Line**

Nature: Countywide partnership between 6 district and county councils delivering joint approaches to improved service delivery. CRM, EDM and joint portal projects are being developed and implemented.

Scale: County wide and expected to roll out to non statutory partners in due course

Length: Project planning started some 18 months ago and the partnership will be ongoing

Cost: Around £2m from ODPM supplemented through IEG and mainstream budgets

- **Northumberland County Council/Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council CRM Agreement**

Nature: Implementation agreement between two councils for joint delivery of CRM solutions through a single provider - Oracle

Scale: Encompassing whole of Northumberland and reflecting local and joint services in Berwick Borough, the approach dovetails with those systems being introduced through neighbouring

partnerships and capable of including other service providers on roll out.

Length: Partnership relatively new and developing

Cost: Incorporated into Northumberland On Line costs as above

- **Consilium/SX3 contractual agreement**

Nature Provision of ICT framework

Scale Specific to Berwick although same provider as for Alnwick and similarities with Castle Morpeth

Length 5 year contract

Cost £275k per annum

- **Northumberland Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy**

Nature: Partnership between all Local Authorities and Environment Agency to deal with municipal waste and its management, including recycling.

Scale: County-wide.

Length: Three or four years old, no anticipated end date.

Cost: No set figure, costs of initiative shared between partners.

- **Tripartite Arrangements**

Nature: Strategic forum for all three tiers of local government - offers opportunities for joint learning and project development

Scale: Borough-wide, involving all 25 Parish Councils, Borough Council and County Council representatives together with the Community Council for Northumberland. Others are invited as and when required.

Length: Into second year and continuing

Cost: Mainstream budgets account for costs

- **Safety Advisory Committee**

Nature: Standing group of statutory and not for profit organisations Convened by this Council to establish policy and strategy for safe event management and for ensuring ongoing safety. Resource for event organisers.

Scale: Borough wide - and some synergy with Alnwick's parallel body with joint meetings where appropriate

Length: Ongoing - established some 18 months ago

Cost: Mainstream funded

◆ **Northumberland Benefits Group**

Nature: Liaison and discussion of current hot topics, problems, training, new legislation etc - meets quarterly for about half a day; networking in addition

Scale: Northumberland District Councils

Length longstanding group and network

Cost Officer time only

◆ **North East Benefits Study Group (NEBSG)**

Nature: Group uses consultation and training to promote best practice in the administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit - quarterly meetings

Scale: North east region

Length Our membership is relatively recent, but the group has been extant for some time

Cost Largely officer time although contribution made to establishing Website

◆ **Benefits Training Partnership**

Nature: Following the success of a Northern Consortium bid for funding through the Help Fund a training package has been put together involving five out of six districts in Northumberland (Alnwick excepted) - maximising attendance and learning through mixed venues and times

Scale County wide

Length ongoing

Costs met through Help Fund and officer time

- **Northumberland Licensing Partnership**

Nature: forum for developing strategies and sharing experience for implementation of the new Licensing Act

Scale Five of the six Northumberland districts involved

Length recently formed

Cost n/a

- ◆ **North Locality Management Group for Health**

Nature Brings together a wide range of agencies with an interest in health in its broadest sense

Scale North Northumberland

Length A new arrangement

Cost Officer time

- ◆ **Swan Centre for Leisure**

Nature Management agreement with private company

Scale agreement for the management of the leisure centre in Berwick

Length 10 years

Cost £160k per annum

- ◆ **North Northumberland Personnel Partnership**

Nature Joint arrangements for training and, in particular, for jointly procuring management training development with the Open University.

Scale Berwick, Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Boroughs

Length partnership has been in development and is now launched

Cost Contributions from separate training budgets according to agreed criteria. In our case, appraisals and changes to corporate structures will trigger the recipients

- **Berwickshire Housing Association and Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council Partnering Agreement**

Nature: To procure on a partnering basis building maintenance services for repairs and major improvements to council

housing stock. This forms a contractual agreement with Berwickshire and partnering contractors

Scale Cross border formal partnership extending through this Borough and into much of south east Scotland

length: 5 years beginning in May 2003

Cost: Joint purchasing 'power' with Berwickshire Housing Association of £4 million per annum

- **Supporting People Programme (SPP)**

Nature: To oversee the new SPP across the whole of Northumberland: a joint working group between all districts in Northumberland, Northumbria Health Care Trust and Probation Service to continue implementation of the SPP and monitoring of the funding arrangements.

Scale: Joint working between six districts, Northumbria Health Care Trust and Probation Service

Length started in November 2000 and likely to continue for the duration fo the programme

Cost: Responsibility for the annual SPP budget for Northumberland – during 2003/04 this is in excess of 2 million

- **Blyth Valley Care Alarm Monitoring Service**

Nature: To provide a 24 hour monitoring service for customers in receipt of care alarms, covering all sheltered housing., dsipoersed and group schemes.

Scale: The service currently covers in the region of 270 care alarms

Length In place since 1992, currently beign reviewed

Cost £24k per annum

- **Attendo**

Nature: To provide a maintenance service for all care alarms in the Borough, this is a new contract in partnership with the Northern Housing Consortium, a number of Local Authorities and Housing Associations in the North East region.

Scale: The service currently covers in the region of 270 care alarms in this Borough

Length this si a new arranegm,ent, buildiung on previously establiushed relationships

Cost: approximately £6,000 per annum

- **Peer groups - Legal, Finance, Personnel, Housing, Environmental Health, Chief Executives, etc.**

Nature Enables closer working and shared experiences across a range of topical issues and strategic developments

Scale across the county and beyond in many cases

Length longstanding and continuing groups

Costs largely officer time and met from within existing budgets

PERFORMANCE DATA

Performance Data:

- Best Value Performance Plan - performance indicators 2003/04 - attached
- Best Value Reviews Inspection Reports - hard copies available for :
 - Housing repairs
 - Car parking
 - Public conveniences
 - Street cleansing
 - Access to servcies
- Management letter available - executive summary attached

AREA PROFILE

The Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed is the second smallest local authority in England with a resident population of 26,000 persons and the northern-most in England. It is deeply rural; half the population live in the town of Berwick, the next largest village is Wooler, which has a population of less than 2,000 people and Belford with less than 1,000. Seahouses and Beadnell villages on the coast to the south east of Berwick are 25 miles distant. They are closer to Alnwick District Council, the only English authority with which the Borough shares a boundary.

With an area of 97,184 hectares (370 square miles), our average population density is 27 people per square kilometre, compared with 61 (Northumberland) and 241 (UK) averages elsewhere.

There was a modest population increase in the Borough between 1971-1991, almost wholly due to inward migration compensating for a net loss in natural population levels. These demographic patterns are characterised by a loss of young adults and an increase in the population of the elderly people living in the Borough. Almost 25% of the population is of pensionable age, compared with a UK average of 18%.

During the peak summer months, the population of the Borough increases to approximately 100,000. The majority of visitors stay at holiday centres and camps located in the Borough's coastal areas. Increases in self catering and smaller guest houses accommodation is noticeable.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE BOROUGH

The economic structure of the Borough is similar to that of Northumberland as a whole. However, research undertaken in 1993 and 1997 revealed that the Borough had a substantially higher percentage of employment in agriculture than the county average; higher employment in retail distribution (reflecting the importance of the tourism sector) and in business services.

Public sector and tradable services remain comparatively under-developed strands of the local economy. Manufacturing employment is concentrated amongst a small number of major employers.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS IN THE BOROUGH

Sectors	Berwick %		Northumberland %	
	1997	2001	1997	2001
Agriculture	8	9	3	4
Energy and Water	1	1	3	1
Manufacturing	20	12	21	15
Construction	4	7	14	7
Retail Distribution	19	20	14	15
Transport/Communications	3	5	3	6
Business Services	9	8	7	9
Public Services	19	4	35	8
Tourism and Leisure	17	10	9	5

Source: Northumberland Economic Review 1998, Census 2001

The impact of Foot and Mouth Disease on tourism was mixed in the Borough, with coastal areas benefiting with increased visitor numbers. That trend seems to have continued with under-provision being reported by accommodation providers. At the same time, the season itself is extending with increased demand early and late in the year. There is also some spin-off from the successful launch of Alwick Garden as people visit the whole area.

THE HERITAGE AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Steeped in history and a glorious natural environment, there is no shortage of visitor attractions. Just a few themes include:-

- Berwick-upon-Tweed – unique as an entirely walled town, Guild of Freeman, Border Garrison and Barracks.
- The Border Castles – Norham, Etal, Ford, Wark.
- Cradle of Christianity – the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, St. Cuthbert, St. Aidan and St. Boisil.
- Sporting Interest – Berwick Rangers (the only English football team to play in the Scottish League), the Sports Centre, Berwick Speedway, golf – whether it be links, clifftop or in parkland.
- Locally Produced Food – cheese, fudge, meat, mead, ice cream and baked goods.
- Transport – major routes through with the A1 and the East Coast railway, Berwick's three bridges, Heatherslaw Light Railway, the Causeway to Holy Island.

- Pre-History with Ancient Sites throughout the Area – Gefrin, Yeavinger Bell and the Cheviot settlements.
- Walking and Rambling throughout the Area – in the Cheviots, along the coast, St. Cuthbert's Way etc. Rock climbing on some of the inland cliff faces.

THE ECONOMY

Agriculture continues to diversify but is also reducing employee numbers. Manufacturing industry has significantly reduced with little prospect of radical change.

Of increasing importance are:

- Tourism, as described above
and
- The Borough as a service centre for its rural hinterland and beyond.

This latter deserves elaboration. Berwick-upon-Tweed provides a range of services for a wide area both within Northumberland and in the Scottish Borders Region. We have:

- A main railway station servicing commuters travelling to Newcastle and Edinburgh area on a regular basis.
- Retail facilities for communities south, west and north.
- Increasing number of households are positively choosing to live in this rural area and commute rather than live in more urban environments.
- The only private school which can accommodate and educate pupils through the whole of their secondary education and which offers both English and Scottish education qualifications.

Currently, there is considerable interest in inward investment opportunities within the area. A number of enquiries have been received with regards to tourism and our heritage coastline, as well as the rural hinterland. Visitor figures and attraction investment is on the increase according to recently received statistics. This confidence is reinforced by the number of firm proposals received in respect of our important sites including Berwick Quayside, Spittal Point, north of the town of Berwick and the area around the harbour in Seahouses.

Following on from this, some primary research has revealed that a number of major hotel chains and investors are interested in Berwick as a potential investment location. Amongst those enterprises expressing an interest are major food and non-food stores as well as leisure and amenities.

Coupled with this interest, is the growing demand for housing – not reflected in our housing allocation. In fact, Berwick's allocation for housing is set to decrease from 1,000 dwelling over a 15 year period to around 450. Berwick must provide sufficient quantity and choice of housing opportunity to attract and retain skilled people within the labour market. The low allocation is likely to result in a shortage of housing land resulting in increased land values.

A reduced house building rate will have a significant impact on local building trades and the associated local economy further undermining our ability to support community and economic regeneration. The rate of house building in the Borough should in fact be increased as in previous development reviews. Those have confirmed that "as Berwick is far from the commuter pressure area, additional development would not prejudice the overall strategy for the county, indeed, any growth on population would be of benefit to the whole area."

Numerically, planning applications have been around 50% up on last year's figures since the beginning of 2003.

POLITICAL MAKE-UP

Following the municipal elections in May 2003, the 29 Members of the Council represent the following Political groupings:-

Conservative	12
Liberal Democrat	9
Independents	4
New Labour/Independent	2
Tweed Alliance	2

In 2001, the Council was the first Council in the country to hold a Referendum on the subject of an Elected Mayor as a result of a petition, The referendum failed with the Council resolving to adopt the fourth option of alternative arrangements. Under this constitutional arrangement, which was implemented from May 2002, the Council has the following structures:-

- Council
- Two Policy Committees
- An Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Standards Committee
- Town Committee (Area Committee)
(covering the Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal settlements)

Although a No Overall Control Council, the Leader of the Council is also the Leader of the Conservative Group and heads the administration with, generally, the support of the Independent Group.

THE THIRD TIER

The whole of the Borough, except the main settlement is parished. 25 Parishes have active Parish Councils and moves are afoot to explore the popularity of parishing the remainder of the Borough.

Grouping Orders to bring together some of the less populace parishes were effected for the 2003 Parish Council Elections, following a substantial consultation process.

Parish Council Chairs and Clerks meet quarterly with representatives of the Borough and County Councils and as well as sharing experiences, this forms a significant part in our two way communications network.

DEMOCRACY

At the Referendum to determine whether or not there should be an Elected Mayor, turn out was as high as 64%, helped no doubt by the contemporary General and County Council Elections. Generally, however, turnout exceeds the national average figure and there is considerable interest in local affairs.

CONTACT DETAILS

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RESIDENTS AND TENANTS ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER COMMUNITY BASED GROUPS

Tenant Customer Panel
Eastcliffe Residents Association
St Bartholomew and St Boisil Residents Association
Castlegate Area Residents Association
The Greenses Residents Association
Prior Park Tenants Association
Highfields Tenants Associations
Belford Tenants Association
Roberts Lodge Tenants Association

Glendale Gateway Trust
North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust
Holy Island of Lindisfarne Development Trust

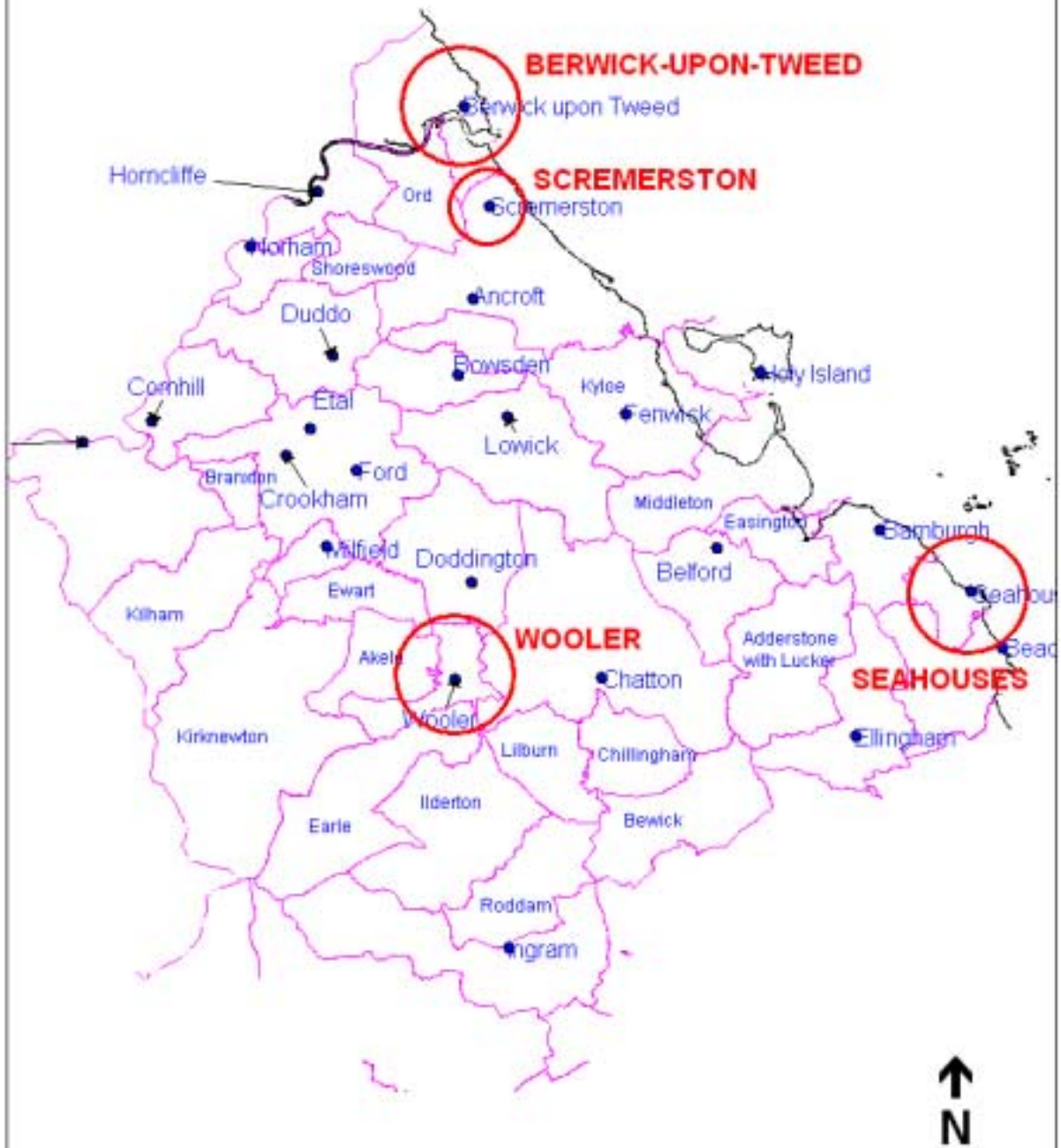
Belford Development Trust
Berwick Development Trust (in development phase)

Voluntary Forum
Berwick Youth Project

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Results of the most recent consultation that has been carried out as appended.

BERWICK BOROUGH - SERVICE POINTS



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