

SCHEDULE 1

Explanatory material for options for County Durham

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION ABOUT THE REFERENDUM OPTIONS FOR SINGLE TIER LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN COUNTY DURHAM

You currently live in an area that has both a county council and a district council. This is known as two tier local government. However there are already many areas in England, especially the larger towns and cities, where single tier local government exists, with all local government services being provided by the one authority.

Your county council provides large scale services across the whole of the county and is responsible for transport, minerals and waste planning, highways, education, consumer protection, refuse disposal, libraries and personal social services. Your district council has a more local focus, providing services in its own area and is responsible for environmental health, housing, most planning decisions and refuse collection. Both county and district councils can provide facilities such as museums, art galleries and parks.

If an elected Regional Assembly is established for the North East region, local authorities in your area will be reorganised. This means that your county and district council will be replaced by a single tier local authority, which will deliver all local government services.

You are asked to help decide how the current pattern of two tier local authorities in County Durham would be reorganised into a single tier.

You have two options to choose from. Please express a preference for either Option A or Option B on the ballot paper titled, “*Referendum on Options for Single Tier Local Government*”.

The options

Option A: this option proposes the creation of one single tier local authority—County Durham; covering the whole of the existing county council area.

The existing district councils of Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, Durham (city), Easington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley would be abolished.

This single tier local authority would exercise the functions of the existing county council and those of the former district councils.

Option B: this option proposes the creation of three single tier local authorities. The areas of these single tier authorities would be formed from combinations of existing district council areas.

Durham county council and the district councils of Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, Durham (city), Easington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley would be abolished.

In its area, each single tier local authority would exercise the functions of the former district councils and those of the former Durham county council.

The proposed single tier local authorities are:

1. East Durham: this authority would cover the former districts of Durham (city) and Easington.
2. North Durham: this authority would cover the former districts of Chester-le-Street and Derwentside.
3. South Durham: this authority would cover the former districts of Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley.

Option A and Option B are illustrated on the maps in this explanatory information.

Draft Legislation: This is a draft item of legislation. This draft has since been made as a UK Statutory Instrument: *The Regional Assembly and Local Government Referendums (Date of Referendums, Referendum Question and Explanatory Material) (North East Region) Order 2004 No. 1963*

For more information contact the Electoral Commission on 0800-3280-280, textphone 0800-3280-838, or visit www.regionalvote.co.uk.

