

## **THE CABINET reports as follows:-**

### **1. Publication of the Regional Spatial Strategy**

That they have given consideration to a report of the Director of Development and Regeneration (copy attached) on the publication of the Secretary of State's final version of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) entitled, "The North East of England Plan" in July. The report forms part of the statutory development plan for Sunderland.

The Cabinet recommends the Council to note the contents of the report and adopt the North East of England Plan as part of the City's development Plan.

**N.B. Members are requested to note that the full Plan and documents can be accessed on the Government Office for the North East website:-**

[http://www.gone.gov.uk/gone/planning/regional\\_planning/](http://www.gone.gov.uk/gone/planning/regional_planning/)

### **2. Review of Area Arrangements : Area Committee Review**

That they have given consideration to a joint report of the Chief Executive (Acting) and the City Solicitor (copy attached) on proposals to revise the number of Area Committees as part of the Council's overall Review of Area Arrangements and a preferred option for the future configuration of Area Committee boundaries.

The Cabinet recommends the Council to approve the changes to the Constitution set out in Section 5 of the report and option 10 to take effect from Annual Council next year (13<sup>th</sup> May, 2009).

They also referred the matter to the Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee for advice and consideration. The comments of the Committee will be reported to the meeting.

### **3. Second Capital Programme Review 2008/2009**

That they have given consideration to a report of the City Treasurer on the outcome of the Second Capital Programme Review for 2008/2009 which sought specific approval to the changes made to the Capital Programme since the First Capital Programme Review 2008/2009.

They also referred the report to the Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee, for advice and consideration, in the context of the inclusion of additional schemes and revisions to scheme costs for 2008/2009 which are set out in the attached extract of the original Cabinet report. The Review Committee agreed to endorse the proposed additional schemes and revisions to scheme costs for 2008/2009 as set out in the attached extract.

Accordingly Cabinet recommends the Council to approve the inclusion of the additional schemes for 2008/2009 as set out in the attached extract.

**PUBLICATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Secretary of State's (SoS) final version of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), entitled "The North East of England Plan" was published in July. The purpose of this report is to bring the document, which forms part of the statutory development plan for Sunderland, to the attention of the Council and to summarise the main content as it affects the city.

**2.0 Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

Recommend the Council to note the contents of this report and the adoption of the North East of England Plan as part of the City's development plan.

**3.0 Background and Current Position**

- 3.1 The RSS sets out a long-term strategy (2004 – 2021) for the development of the region and provides the spatial context for the delivery of other regional strategies, which are the Regional Economic, Transport and Housing strategies. The RSS is part of the statutory Development Plan and Local Planning Authorities must ensure their Local Development Frameworks are in general conformity with the adopted RSS.
- 3.2 The Submission Draft of the RSS for the North East was published in June 2005. A Panel appointed by the First Secretary of State conducted an Examination in Public (EiP) of selected issues arising out of the Draft of the RSS. Following the EiP a Panel Report (July 2006) was produced delivering key recommendations for the policies, guidance and allocations within the Draft RSS.
- 3.3 The SoS published Proposed Changes for consultation in 2007 incorporating many of the Panel's recommendations. The SoS published Further Proposed Changes (FPC) for consultation in February 2008 taking account of representations made at the previous stage.
- 3.4 Council at its June 2008 meeting endorsed the Director of Development and Regeneration's response previously sent to meet the consultation deadline. This included an agreed joint response on matters of common interest to and on behalf of the five Tyne and Wear districts.

3.5 The adoption of the North East of England Plan (the RSS) now draws this chapter of regional plan making to a close. The document is accompanied by several supporting publications, including a statement of reasons for the final changes and the sustainability appraisal. The full plan and documents can be accessed on the Government Office for the North East web-site:

[http://www.gone.gov.uk/gone/planning/regional\\_planning/](http://www.gone.gov.uk/gone/planning/regional_planning/)

3.6 The Plan is now part of the City's Development Plan in conjunction with the saved policies of the UDP and, in future, the Core Strategy and other development plan documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF). The RSS policies must be taken into consideration in preparing the LDF, whilst several are directly applicable to taking decisions on planning applications.

#### **4.0 Previous response to the Further Proposed Changes (February 2008)**

4.1 The most significant elements of the council's response were:

- The RSS was considered to be too long and repetitious.
- Control over the development of land, particularly of greenfield sites, was considerably weakened, which could be to the detriment of heavily urbanised districts reliant on brownfield development such as Sunderland.
- The Tyne and Wear districts objected to the re-inclusion of major, largely greenfield, employment sites in peripheral and unsustainable locations.
- The term 'core regeneration areas' that refers to areas such as central Sunderland, where Sunderland arc has been set up to pursue regeneration, had been taken out of all policies. It was felt that this significantly diluted the focus of policies aimed at regeneration of the core localities of Tyne and Wear.
- Sunderland maintained its request to have Hetton and Houghton re-designated as part of the Tyne and Wear conurbation.
- The City Council wished to ensure that the potential shortfall of employment allocations in the three districts south of the Tyne is recognised in RSS.
- The net additional housing allocation for the region had been increased to 128,860 dwellings. The Tyne and Wear districts maintained their view that 118,000 would be an acceptable figure. The number proposed, increased the potential for shire county districts to bring forward unsustainable greenfield sites that would divert market interest away from the regeneration of the conurbation.
- Notwithstanding the above, the allocation to Sunderland equated to 14,960 dwellings and this was considered acceptable.
- Further clarification was requested of the policy concerning the provision of land for gypsies and travellers.

- Sunderland and the other Tyne and Wear districts sought the reinstatement of targets for the provision of on-site renewable energy generation capacity in major new developments.

## **5.0 The main final changes to RSS**

5.1 The SoS has not seen fit to reduce the length and complexity of the final RSS. The representations made to the FPC version have been summarised in a document accompanying the RSS to the point where the City Council's representations can't be specifically identified. Similarly the SoS's statement of reasons for the final set of changes does not refer to specific representations. What is clear is that the SoS has only considered representations to the FPC and not long-standing objections to policies that had not previously been addressed. In this respect the representation by Sunderland to the treatment of Hetton and Houghton as 'regeneration towns' rather than as part of the conurbation has not been reflected in the published document; neither has the Tyne and Wear districts' joint concerns over the potential for unsustainable allocations of housing and employment land in the shire counties.

5.2 The main changes that the SoS has made to the RSS are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report. In essence they are:

- The climate change policy has been amended so that all strategies, plans and programmes must reflect UK targets for cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050 with "real progress by 2020".
- There is increased support for the proposed River Wear crossing.
- No change has been made to the sites proposed as 'Key Employment Locations'. This is notwithstanding the Tyne and Wear districts' joint objection to the introduction of new greenfield locations at the FPC stage. No explanation is provided as to why the representations were not supported.
- The policy for gross and net dwelling provision for each district in the region remains essentially as set out in the FPC. Sunderland's allocation of 14,950 net additional dwellings 2004 to 2021 is acceptable. The policy now makes clear that the allocations are not to be construed as ceilings to development.

- Outwith the content of RSS, as part of Government efforts to achieve its national target of 3 million additional homes by 2020 bids were invited from local authorities to become 'growth points'. There have now been two rounds of bids, the first for authorities in the midlands and south of England and the second from authorities in the north of England. In the north east region South East Durham, comprising the districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley, has been selected for Growth Point status. Its bid proposed a 75% uplift in housing numbers over the next eight years above the RSS allocation, amounting to 4,680 dwellings additional to RSS. As Easington is within Sunderland's housing market area, the success of this growth point could prove a substantial challenge to housing planned for the City. It is understood there may be a further round which would allow for a bid from Sunderland to be made, should it be deemed appropriate.
- RSS now states that the assessment of gypsy and traveller pitch requirements should be regarded as a broad indication and that local studies will provide evidence for where pitch provision should be considered in LDFs.
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) must set size thresholds for major new developments and require that these secure their energy supply from "decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources". RSS has re-instated the minimum target that was included in the earlier version. It now says that in advance of local targets being set in DPDs at least 10% of the energy supply for major developments should come from the above sources; 'major developments' are also defined in the RSS. The target re-instatement meets the Sunderland and Tyne and Wear districts' objection.
- The target for recycling and composting of 40% by 2010 remains, but an additional target of 46% by 2016 is set.

## 6.0 **Sunderland related policies**

6.1 Whilst most RSS policies apply generally to the city and must be taken into account in preparing the LDF and taking development control decisions, several include specific references to Sunderland and its constituent parts. These have been scheduled in Appendix 2 and in summary they cover:

- The concentration of the majority of new development to be in Sunderland and Washington, with development to meet local needs in Houghton and Hetton.
- Regeneration of central Sunderland is supported, with economic, retail and leisure development to be focussed on the city centre and also support given to the influential economic role of the University.
- Support is given to the sustainable growth of the Port of Sunderland for short-sea shipping connections.
- The Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor and the rejuvenation of Metro are supported, with the Leamside railway line protected for future re-instatement.

- The broad extent of the Green Belt around the city must be maintained and a new strategic network of green infrastructure created through the urban area.
- Provision for 225 hectares of employment land must be made in the LDF, with the city and town centres to be the preferred locations for major office development.
- The Sunderland LDF must make provision for 14,960 net additions to the dwelling stock at average annual rates of:  
2004-2011 700  
2011-2016 940  
2016-2021 1,070  
giving an average over the plan period 2004 – 2021 of 880 dwellings.
- 80% of housing development must be provided on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- Consideration in plans is to be given to the estimated need for 19 pitches for gypsies and travellers by 2020 in the Sunderland, Chester le Street, Derwentide and Durham area.
- Particular consideration must be given to achieving appropriate development and management of the candidate World Heritage Site and the Durham Heritage Coast.
- Sunderland must play its part in meeting the Tyne and Wear target for renewable energy, including plans to make provision for small wind farms in the urban area and on the urban fringe.
- Similarly it must help meet the Tyne and Wear targets for provision of aggregate minerals and meet city targets for managing waste arisings.
- The Local Transport Plan and LDF should support the development of a 'core and feeder' public transport system focussed on key interchanges including the City Centre.

## **7.0 Next Steps**

- 7.1 The preparation of the Sunderland Core Strategy must now take account of the final provisions of RSS, with appropriate policy amendments. The publication of RSS will actually allow some simplification of certain issues and policies.
- 7.2 The council must take account of the policies of RSS in determining planning applications and taking other decisions.

## **8.0 Reason for Decision**

- 8.1 To ensure that the Council is aware of the publication of the RSS and its contents and its implications for its own plans and decisions.

## **9.0 Alternative Options**

- 9.1 There are no alternative options. The RSS took effect on publication by the Secretary of State.

## 10.0 Relevant Consultations/ Considerations

- a) **Financial Implications** – The final RSS does not involve any direct costs to the Council.
- b) **Policy Implications** – The RSS is part of the statutory Development Plan and the City Council must ensure that the emerging Local Development Framework generally conforms with it.
- c) **Consultations** – The RSS has been prepared following the statutory consultation requirements of Planning Policy Statement 11 Regional Spatial Strategies (Annex D) and the City Council has been appropriately involved in the consultation process in the formulation of the RSS.
- d) **Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment** – A Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment are an integral part of producing the RSS, and have been published by GO-NE.

## 11.0 Background Papers

Letter from Baroness Andrews OBE, July 2008.

The North East of England Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, July 2008 and supporting documents.

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## APPENDIX 1: MAIN FINAL CHANGES TO RSS

**Climate Change Policy 3:** This has been amended so that all strategies plans and programmes must reflect UK targets for cutting carbon dioxide emissions, i.e. by 60% by 2050 with “real progress by 2020”.

**Protecting and Enhancing the Environment Policy 8:** An amendment to para 2.68 further confirms that the Government does not wish to refer to ‘core areas’ of city regions, with deletion of this term in the text to Policy 5 and its replacement by “central parts of ” the city regions.

**Tyne and Wear City Region Policy 9:** There is increased support for the new River Wear crossing through revised wording that says, in 6.4(d), “promoting a further crossing of the River Wear”.

**Casino Development Policy 17:** to reflect national guidance on casinos included in PPS6 the need must be established if casinos are proposed outside of town centres.

**Key Employment Locations Policy 20:** Whilst some changes to energy criteria have been made concerning development, no change has been made to the list of sites proposed. This is notwithstanding the Tyne and Wear districts joint objection to the introduction of new greenfield locations at the FPC stage. No explanation is provided as to why the representations were not supported.

**Gross and net dwelling provision Policy 28:** The policy remains essentially as set out in the FPC. Sunderland’s allocation of 14,960 net additional dwellings 2004 to 2021 is acceptable. Allocations elsewhere in County Durham and Northumberland that the Tyne and Wear districts maintained their joint objection to have been retained. The policy now states, by transfer of wording from former Policy 31, that “The District Allocations ...should not provide the justification for the refusal of windfall housing proposals that fall within the guidance set out for Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.” i.e. that the allocations are not to be construed as ceilings to development.

**Improving inclusivity and affordability Policy 30:** The FPC set out a table of gypsy and traveller pitch requirements to be found, inter alia, within the sub-region of Sunderland, Chester le Street, Derwentside and Durham City. RSS now states that the assessment should be regarded as a broad indication of where accommodation needs arise and that local studies will provide evidence for where pitch provision should be considered in LDFs.

**Sustainable construction Policy 38:** An addition to this policy now supports Sunderland’s and the Tyne and Wear districts’ objections by requiring Development Plan Documents to set size thresholds for major new developments and to require that these secure an ambitious but viable percentage of their energy supply from “decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources”. In advance of such documents Policy 38, applicable to planning applications, defines major new developments as those over 10 dwellings or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floor-space. These should secure,

unless not feasible or viable, at least 10% of their energy supply from the above sources. Note that THE Glossary explains that the definition of major development is a general definition that also relates to other RSS policies.

***Waste management provision Policy 46:*** the target for recycling and composting of 40% by 2010 remains, but an additional target of 46% by 2016 is set, reflecting the Waste Strategy 2007

## APPENDIX 2: SUNDERLAND RELATED POLICIES

<b>RSS Policy</b>	<b>Significance for Sunderland</b>
Policy 6 LOCATIONAL STRATEGY	<p>In seeking to maximise the major assets and opportunities available in the North East and to regenerate areas of deprivation, the locational strategy urges plans, strategies and programmes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tyne and Wear City Region by concentrating the majority of new development in the conurbation and main settlements (Sunderland and Washington);</li> <li>b) Allow development appropriate in scale within the Regeneration Towns (Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole) to meet local needs and achieve a balance between housing, economic development, infrastructure and services.</li> </ul>
Policy 9 TYNE AND WEAR CITY-REGION	<p>Strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals should support the Tyne and Wear City Region by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Regeneration – priority in the River Wear Corridor in Central Sunderland, as well as supporting Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring for sustainable growth without adversely impacting upon regeneration initiatives in the Tyne and Wear Conurbation;</li> <li>b) Economic Prosperity – focusing the majority of new economic development on Sunderland city centre; supporting the influential economic role of Sunderland University; focusing knowledge-based SME and offices within Sunderland city centre and in regeneration centres to meet local need;</li> <li>c) Sustainable Communities – support housing market renewal of Sunderland Arc area; locate the majority of new retail and leisure development in Newcastle and Sunderland centres;</li> <li>d) Connectivity – support the sustainable growth of the Port of Sunderland; support the SSTC and River Wear crossing; modernisation of the Metro system; improving rail connections to beyond the City Region; improve interchange facilities at the public transport hub of Sunderland; protect the Leamside Line from development to enable its reinstatement in the longer term;</li> <li>e) Green Belt – prevent the merging of Sunderland with Seaham, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington and Tyneside; Washington with Gateshead and Chester-le-Street;</li> <li>f) Environment – supporting green infrastructure, and subjecting development proposals along the Durham Heritage Coast to rigorous examination.</li> </ul>

Policy 12 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	New economic development and investment should be concentrated in the conurbation and main settlements of Tyne and Wear (Sunderland and Washington). Economic activity of an appropriate scale and nature should also be encouraged in the Regeneration Towns (Houghton-le-Spring and Hetton-le-Hole).
Policy 13 BROWNFIELD MIXED-USE LOCATIONS	Major mixed-use regeneration projects should be supported in sustainable locations, including Central Sunderland.
Policy 14 SUPPORTING FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	Strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals should support the growth and increasing role of Universities in the region.
Policy 18 EMPLOYMENT LAND PORTFOLIO	LDFs should make the appropriate provision of up to 225 hectares of employment land in Sunderland, and base their land portfolio upon sub-regional and local employment land assessments based on a 25 year level of supply and take up.
Policy 19 OFFICE DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF CITY AND TOWN CENTRES	City and town centres are the preferred locations for major office development (B1a) which is not ancillary to other uses. Other locations for office development (not already identified in existing adopted development plans) will only be approved in Key Employment Locations provided that they cannot be accommodated in city, town, edge of centre or other brownfield mixed-use locations (in that order) and also do not put at risk the strategy for key centres already approved in LDDs.
Policy 22 PORTS	Supporting the development of short-sea shipping connections (Port of Sunderland is a short-sea specialist).
Policy 25 URBAN AND RURAL CENTRES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) in conurbations and main settlements development of retail, commerce, entertainment, community, cultural and religious facilities, recreation, education, health services, business, public services and other high trip generating uses are focused within defined urban centres commensurate with their appropriate scale and capacity;</li> <li>b) the majority of retail and leisure floorspace should be located in Newcastle and Sunderland centres (within the T&amp;W City Region);</li> <li>c) in Regeneration Towns (Hetton and Houghton) and other centres development should be consistent with their scale and function.</li> </ul>

<p>Policy 28 GROSS AND NET DWELLING PROVISION</p>	<p>Strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals should develop an integrated package of measures to address low demand and abandonment to improve the housing stock in Tyne and Wear: 2004-11: 1,595 Demolitions; 1,005 Replacements; 2011-16: 780 Demolitions; 820 Replacements; 2016-21: 750 Demolitions; 715 Replacements; 2004-21 average: 1,110 Demolitions; 865 Replacements.</p> <p>Local Development Frameworks and planning proposals shall provide for annual net additions to the dwelling stock by district. Additions in Sunderland are as follows: 2004-11: 700 2011-16: 940 2016-21: 1,070 2004-21 average: 880.</p> <p>Local Development Documents should make an assumption that the annual rate of provision during the early years after 2021 will be the same as the average for 2004-21.</p>
<p>Policy 29 DELIVERING AND MANAGING HOUSING SUPPLY</p>	<p>The LDF and planning proposals shall meet the Tyne and Wear target of 80% of housing development to be located on previously developed land and through the re-use of existing buildings.</p>
<p>Policy 30 IMPROVING INCLUSIVITY AND AFFORD-ABILITY</p>	<p>Provision of sites for gypsies and travellers need to be considered in association with an estimated regional need for the joint Sunderland, Chester-le-Street, Derwentside and Durham City areas: By 2010: 4 pitches; By 2015: 7 pitches; By 2020: 8 pitches.</p>
<p>Policy 31 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER</p>	<p>Promote development appropriate to the special qualities of the Durham Heritage Coast. Promote integrated management initiatives to sustain the valued landscape of the Durham Heritage Coast.</p>
<p>Policy 32 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>Strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals should encourage the preparation and review of the management plans for the candidate World Heritage Site at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth incorporating their principles and objectives.</p>
<p>Policy 39 RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION</p>	<p>Strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals should facilitate the generation of at least 22MW from renewable sources in Tyne and Wear to 2010.</p>
<p>Policy 41 ONSHORE WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>Small wind farms in urban areas and on the urban rural fringe should also be supported, particularly within the following areas: Sunderland, South Tyneside and Tees Valley.</p>

<p>Policy 43 AGGREGATE MINERALS PROVISION</p>	<p>LDFs should make provision to maintain a landbank of planning permissions for primary aggregates. The Tyne and Wear contribution is: Sand and gravel: 3.5 million tonnes; Crushed rock: 6.0 million tonnes.</p>
<p>Policy 46 WASTE MANAGEMENT PROVISION</p>	<p>Strategies, plans and programmes and planning proposals should provide the management capacity for the annual tonnage of waste arisings. In Sunderland the growth in Municipal Solid Waste is set to slow year-on-year from 185,526,000 tonnes in 2005-06 to 226,661,000 tonnes in 2014-15 and to remain at this level annually to 2020-21. Commercial &amp; Industrial waste levels in Sunderland is set to increase gradually from 350,731,000 tonnes in 2005-06 to 438,496,000 tonnes by 2020-21.</p> <p>LDFs should allocate sites for waste management facilities and contain policies which identify specific criteria for the location of waste management facilities.</p>
<p>Policy 48 INTER-NATIONAL GATEWAYS</p>	<p>To support the Region's ports, strategies, plans and programmes should seek to achieve good surface access and multi-modal links to all ports in the Region, including the development of existing infrastructure for strategic multi-modal road-rail and rail-sea freight interchanges.</p>
<p>Policy 49 REGIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDORS</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and LDFs should focus on improving sustainable accessibility and the efficiency of movement along the strategic transport networks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A1 / East Coast Main Line;</li> <li>• A19 / Durham Coast rail line.</li> </ul> <p>Priorities include rail services between the city-regions and beyond to London and Scotland.</p>
<p>Policy 50 REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and LDFs should develop public transport provision that encourages a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of more sustainable modes. New development and redevelopment should be located and designed to promote and encourage walking, cycling and public transport provision. Within Tyne and Wear specific policies should encourage and support the revitalisation of the Metro system.</p>
<p>Policy 51 STRATEGIC PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUBS</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and LDFs should support the development of a 'Core and Feeder' public transport system focused on a network of key interchanges (including the Strategic Public Transport Hub of Sunderland) and improving services along 'Core Corridors' linking regional hubs.</p> <p>Priorities to support sub-regional and local hubs in the main settlements, Regeneration Towns, metro stations and district level interchanges that act as hubs for their surrounding areas include: focusing higher density land uses and mixed uses in these areas; improving services and integration with other transport modes to/from these hubs.</p>

<p>Policy 55 ACCESSIBILITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE CITY-REGIONS</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and LDFs should seek to improve access, particularly by public transport, between the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley City-Regions, and the conurbations and Regeneration Towns within the city-regions.</p>
<p>Policy 57 SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT DISTRIBUTION</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans and LDFs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protect the Leamside Line from development in order to assist its possible reinstatement for freight services and improved public transport accessibility in the longer term;</li> <li>• prioritise the development of new services and multi-modal freight interchange capacity at existing operational facilities, including rail-connected ports.</li> </ul>

**REVIEW OF AREA ARRANGEMENTS: AREA COMMITTEE REVIEW**

**Joint Report of the Chief Executive (Acting) and City Solicitor**

**1.0 Purposes of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- i. Request Council approval of proposals to revise the number of Area Committees as part of the Council's overall Review of Area Arrangements.
- ii. Request Council to select its preferred option for the future configuration of Area Committee boundaries.

**2.0 Description of Decision**

2.1 That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution set out in section 5 of this report to take effect from Annual Council next year (13 May 2009).

**3.0 Introduction/Background**

3.1 The Council is currently engaged in a fundamental review of Area-based governance arrangements and of the way in which services could be delivered more flexibly, responsively and effectively on an area basis.

3.2 To support this review, in July 2008 Members participated in a workshop which reviewed the Council's current area arrangements. This review was considered to be both important and timely in order to enable Area Committees to perform their crucial and fast-developing Community Leadership role most effectively.

3.3 In his opening presentation, the Leader set out his aspiration to increase the extent of devolution of service coordination and decision making to Areas as the basis of a more responsive approach to addressing neighbourhood level issues and opportunities. Members were invited to consider changes to current Area governance arrangements which would enable this to take place most effectively.

3.4 Working in three groups, Members suggested a range of ways in which current Area Committee operation, in particular, could be developed to improve Area level performance monitoring and management, to enable Area Committees to identify and promote action upon areas of concern and to engage key partner interests more effectively in both identifying local priorities and acting upon them.

3.5 Initial discussions held with key service delivery partners and interests within the Council following the workshop have highlighted a range of factors which will need to be addressed in the further development of proposals for increased service responsiveness on an area basis. These have included the need to have a clear and broadly consistent framework for equitable service decentralisation across the City and have resulted in the development of the proposals contained within this report.



- 3.6 This process identified the urgent need to conduct a review of current Area Committee boundaries in order to ensure that there is a broad consistency of population size between each Committee area. In particular, that Areas are of a sufficiently viable size (in terms of population and area) to support effective and appropriate potential devolution of service delivery.

#### **4.0 Current Position**

- 4.1 Analysis of current area arrangements, principally the population and geographic extent of Area Committee catchments, immediately highlights issues relating to consistency of population between the Areas. This has clear implications for the efficient and equitable delivery of key services which the Council would wish to be within the scope of future service devolution arrangements.

- 4.2 Against an average Area population of c.46,765 people, the six Area Committees currently in operation have the following population sizes

North	56,690
Washington	56,557
Coalfield	47,654
West	44,356
East	43,887
South	31,449

- 4.3 There is therefore a wide disparity between the population sizes of the various Areas of the City as they are currently arranged. With a population of 31,449, Sunderland South has only just over half the population of Sunderland North and Washington. Even when compared to the current Area population average the South is relatively small.

- 4.4 At a time when the Council is working with its partners to promote greater devolution of decision making on service delivery, the present situation leads to complications for service providers when considering the practicalities of devolving delivery of a wider range of services to local areas. With the current disparity in sizes of Area population, providers would, for example, experience problems in establishing consistent service standards across the City and, most importantly, in organising their resources to deliver services most efficiently and equitably. Conversely, service providers would welcome the opportunity to organise service delivery more efficiently through five instead of six Area structures.

- 4.5 Service providers have also indicated that, whilst the move towards a more consistent, larger size of Area Committee catchment population would be desirable, there would be merit in attempting to maximise continuity by positively minimising the extent of change to that which is absolutely necessary to support achievement of service devolution objectives. This reflects the fact that, through both the Council and its major area-based partners, significant progress has already been made over recent years in the establishment and operation of more responsive area arrangements. Next steps proposals would generally involve improved coordination and development of these rather than starting afresh.

## **5.0 Proposed New Boundaries**

- 5.1 It is considered both unnecessary and inappropriate to suggest a complete revision of all Area Committee boundaries given the respective current sizes and natural catchment areas of the Washington, North and Coalfields Areas. It is therefore proposed that there should be no change to the boundaries of the North, Washington and Coalfield Areas. The review would therefore focus upon currently three areas which make up the area to the south of the River Wear and to the East of the A-19.
- 5.2 The timing of this review is important as the Council is currently embarking upon development of Local Area Plans (LAP's). Based upon agreed Area Committee boundaries LAP's will summarise the priorities for each Area over a rolling three year period. They will form the basis for more effective targeting of increasingly devolved area services and will underpin far stronger performance management on an area level by Area Committees. They will therefore potentially guide future Area budget allocation and help to focus the efforts of the Council and its partners on key problem solving priorities in a more structured and systematic way. It is therefore vital that revised boundary arrangements are confirmed before the LAP development process for the Areas affected begins.
- 5.3 Main area-based service partners have indicated their support in principle for the move towards larger, more consistently sized areas and have indicated their willingness to work with the Council to prepare the way for further area service devolution on the basis of revised Area boundaries.
- 5.4 A range of options for boundary review are included at Annex 1. Cabinet is requested to identify a preferred option from amongst these. In doing so Cabinet is recommended to take into account those factors set out in paragraph 7.3 (below). An overall analysis of all ten options based on these is attached at Annex 2.

## **6.0 Reasons for the Decision**

- 6.1 Cabinet approval for the revision of Area Committees is requested to:
- promote greater consistency in the population sizes of Area Committees.
  - make areas more viable in order to provide the basis for future area service devolution by the Council and its service delivery partners.
  - enable key developmental work (particularly the development of Local Area Plans) to proceed on schedule.
  - provide sufficiently robust changes to have a lifetime of at least five years
  - minimise any changes required whilst achieving the objectives

## **7.0 Alternative Options**

- 7.1 The option of transforming the three current Areas south of the River Wear and East of the A-19 into a single area has been rejected on the basis of population size (just under 120,000 people) and geographic extent (the implications of which are considered likely to be counter productive in terms of promoting improved responsiveness of local service delivery).
- 7.2 There are, however, a number of potential options for reconfiguration of Area Committee boundaries which are potentially viable. Cabinet is requested to select a preferred option from amongst these.
- 7.3 In arriving at a preferred option Cabinet is recommended to take the following factors into account:
- i. it is considered important to retain existing Ward boundaries as the fundamental 'building blocks' of the proposed new Area Committee boundaries.
  - ii. the need to arrive at an overall population size for the preferred option which approximates to the average population size for the proposed five Area Committee arrangement i.e. 56,500. An exact match with this is unlikely to be achieved and an even split of Wards between the two proposed Areas is impossible to achieve in view of the fact that the overall area in question contains eleven Wards.
  - iii. the desirability of minimising change and potential disruption to existing Area-based organisational arrangements and partnership working structures.
  - iv. the need to recognise and preserve natural geographic and community links within the Area Committee arrangements.

## **8.0 Relevant Considerations or Consultations**

- (a) **Financial Implications / Gershon**  
Changes to the number of Area Committees as proposed in this report will necessitate a supporting review of the way in which current Area budgets, the Strategic Initiatives Budget and Community Chest, will be allocated in future.

The Review will also necessitate a revision of proposals for the allocation of Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) allocations between areas.

- (b) **Employee Implications**  
Although proposals would result in the reduction in the number of Area Committees from six to five, it is envisaged that the volume and complexity of business transacted under future Area governance arrangements will result in the need for at least equivalent, if not enhanced, support requirements.

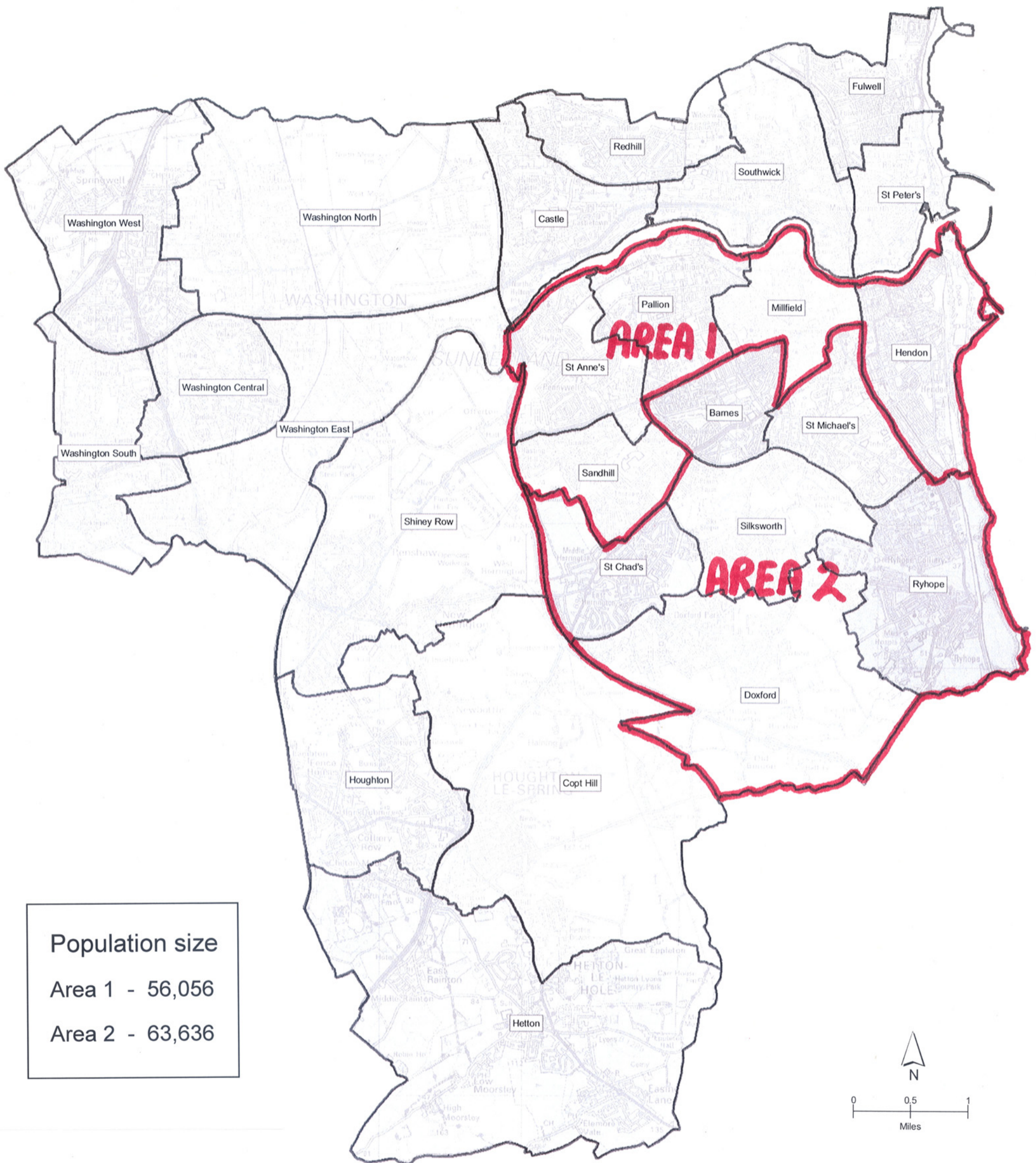
- (c) **Legal Implications**  
Proposals will require the approval of full Council.

- (d) **Policy Implications**  
Proposals will form the basis for next steps planning and action on a key priority of the Council and are therefore considered to be aligned with the policy framework and Corporate Improvement Priorities.
- (e) **Implications for Other Services**  
All Directorates have been consulted on proposals during the preparation of this report.
- (f) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion**  
Proposals reflect the views and priorities of the Safer Sunderland Partnership in relation to the continued operation and evolution of Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups (LMAPS Groups) as the Partnership's principal mechanism for tackling crime and the fear of crime at the Area level and below.
- (g) **Project Management Methodology**  
The Review of Area Arrangements, of which the Area boundary review is a Workstream, is a defined Project within the Council's emerging Community Leadership Programme. The Project will operate using the Council's agreed project management methodology and the overall Programme will use the Council's programme management methodology based on the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) methodology for the Management of Successful Programmes (MSP).

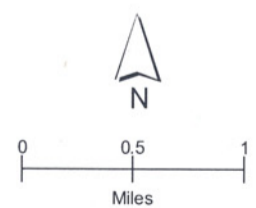
## 9.0 **Background Papers**

Ward Profiles – Contact John Howard, Corporate Policy (0191) 5611146. E-mail address: [John.howard@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:John.howard@sunderland.gov.uk)

# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 1



Population size  
Area 1 - 56,056  
Area 2 - 63,636

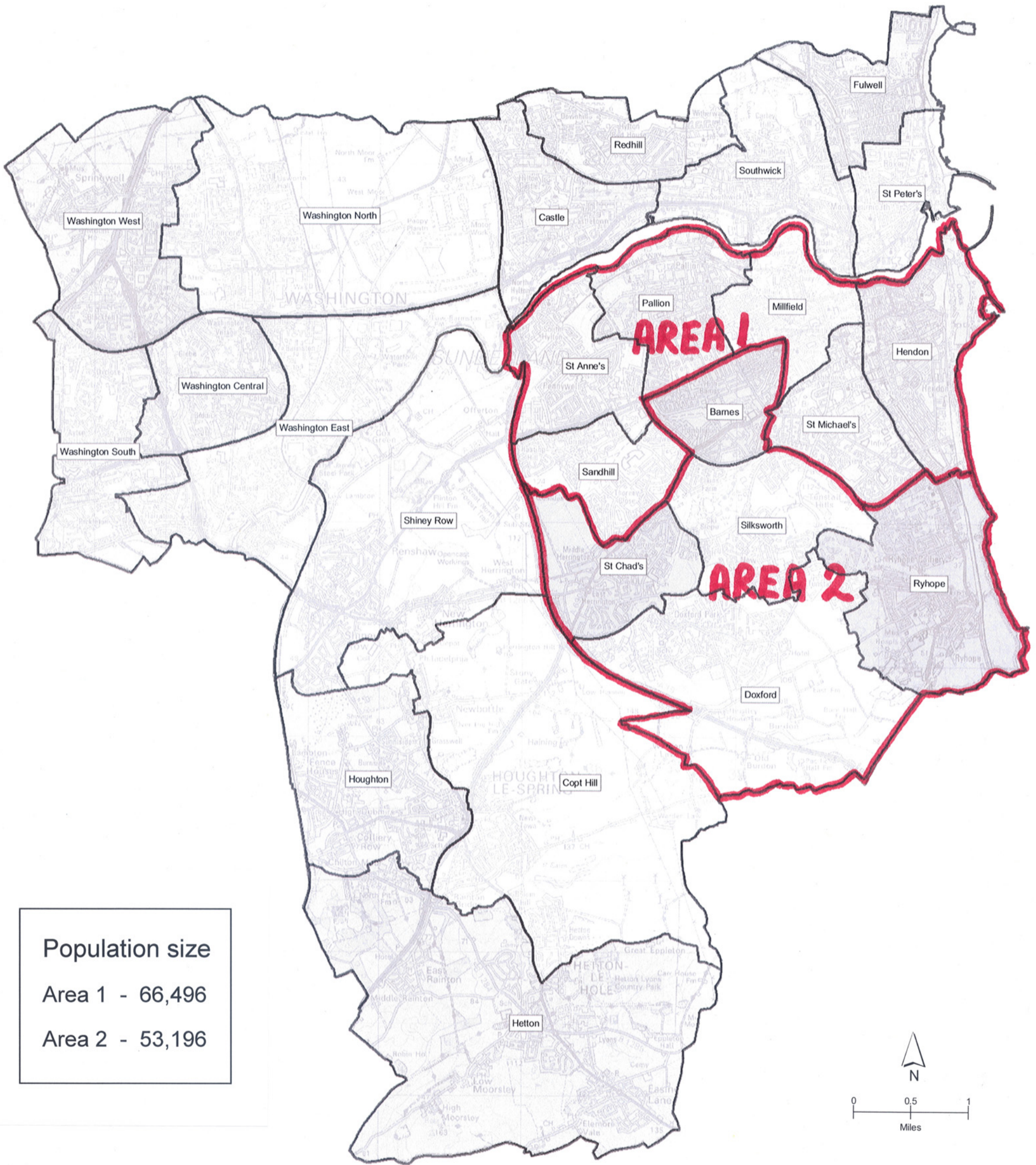


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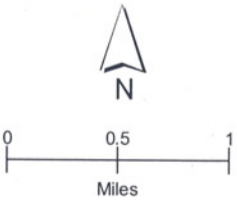
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E-mail: peter.lowdon@sunderland.gov.uk



# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 2



**Population size**  
 Area 1 - 66,496  
 Area 2 - 53,196

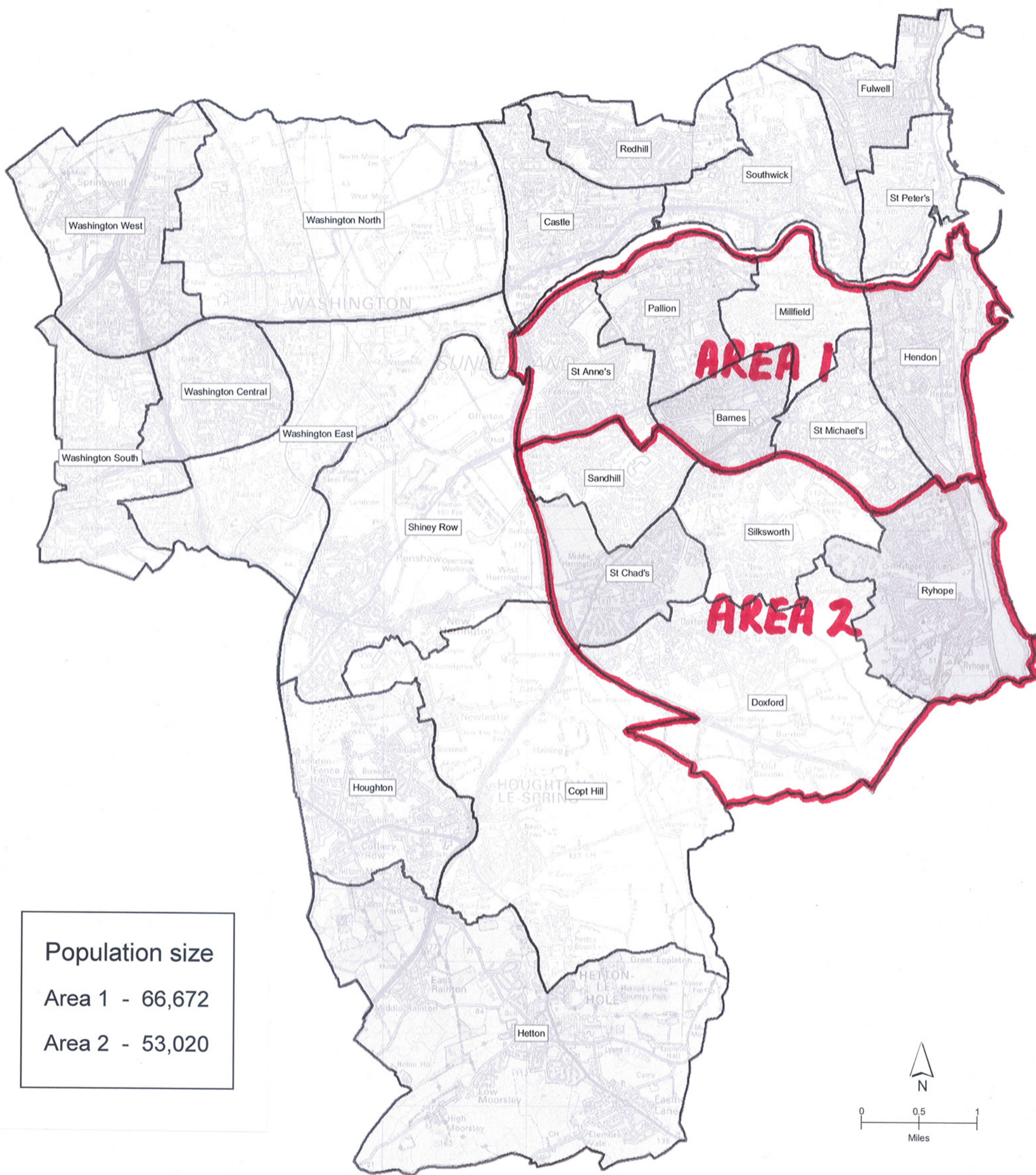


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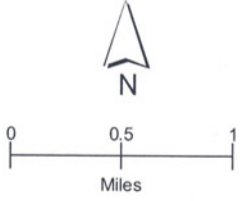
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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 3



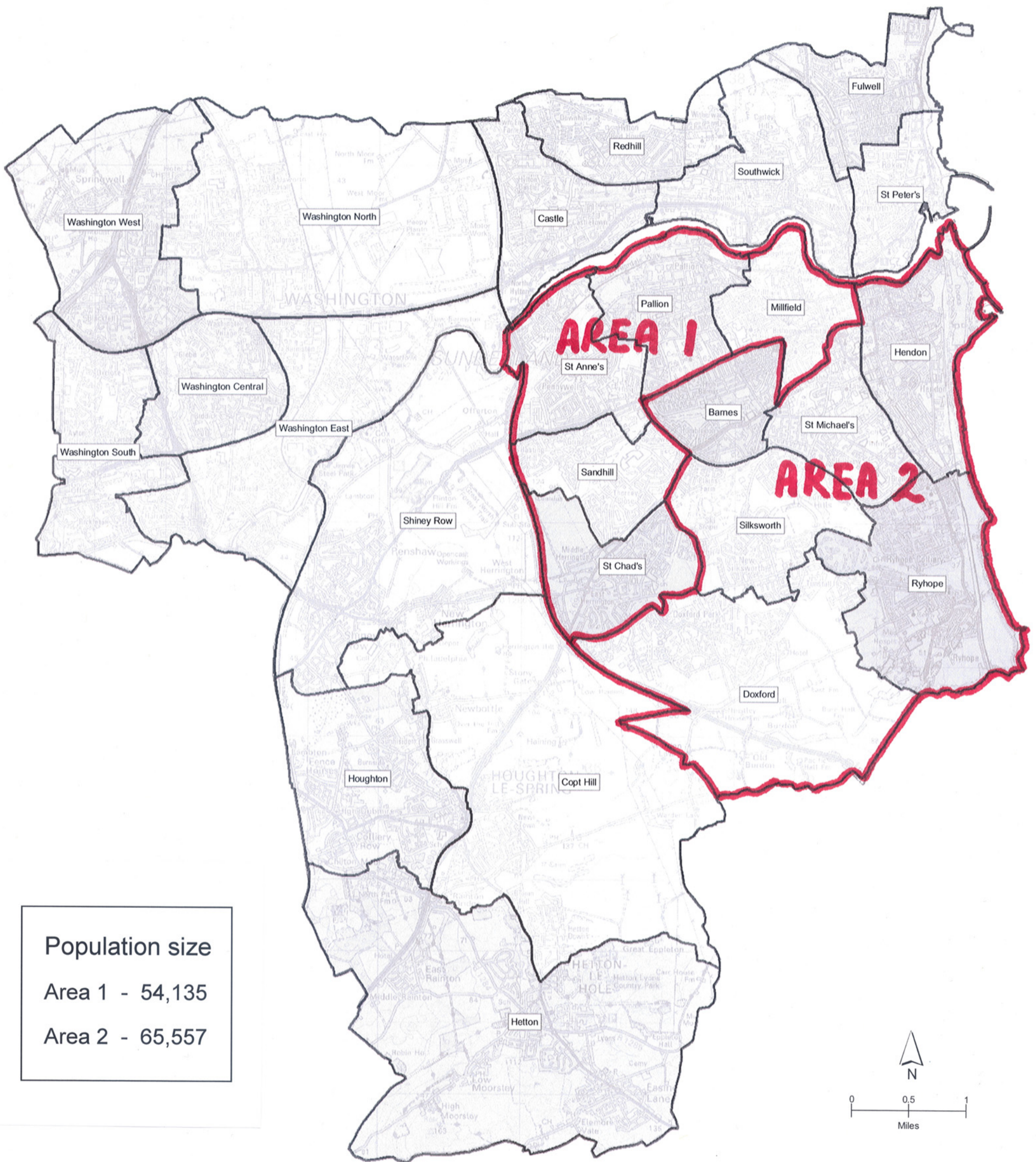
Population size  
 Area 1 - 66,672  
 Area 2 - 53,020



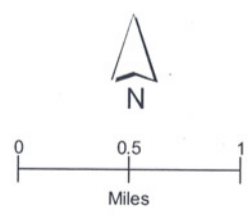
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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 4



**Population size**  
 Area 1 - 54,135  
 Area 2 - 65,557

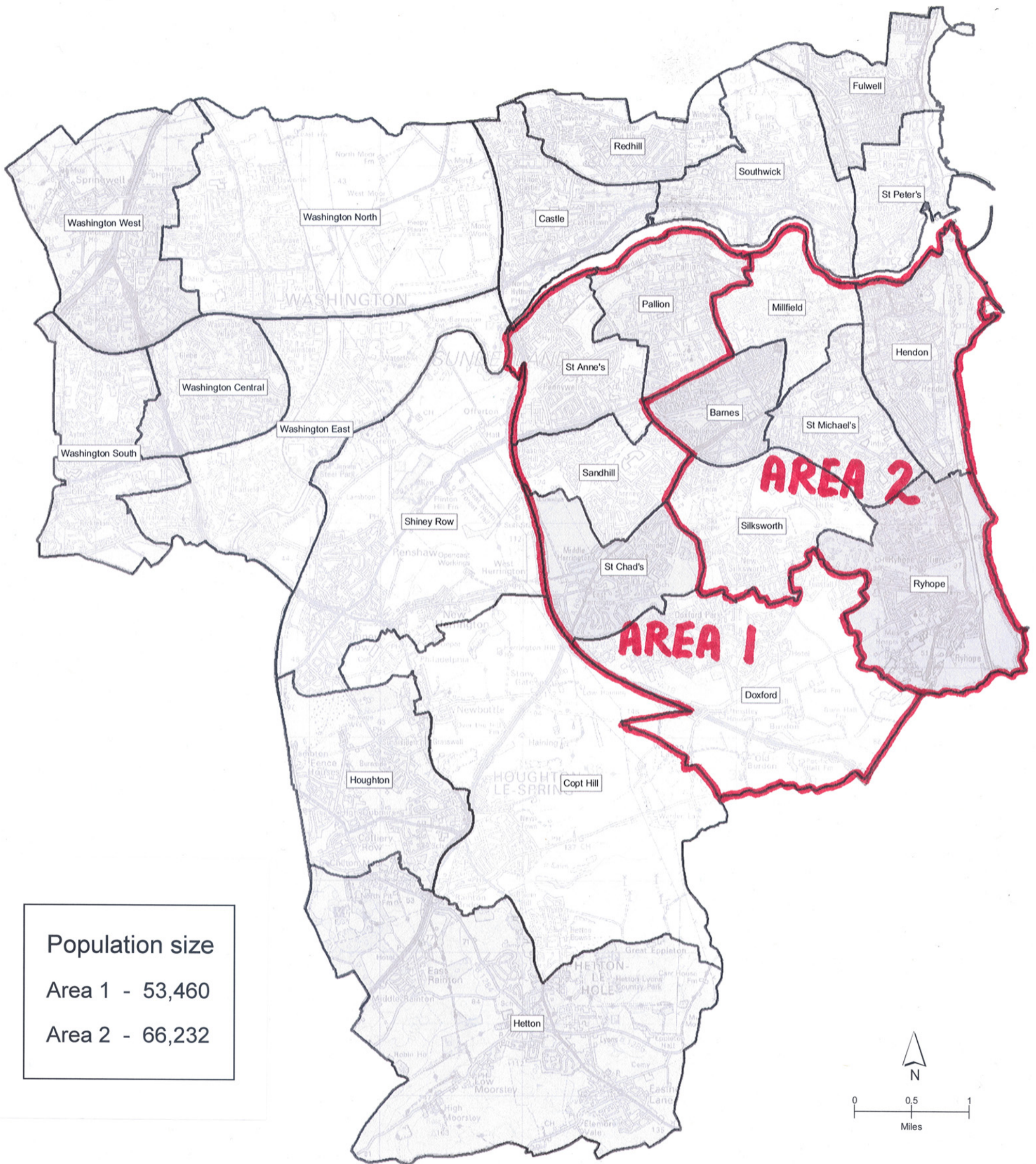


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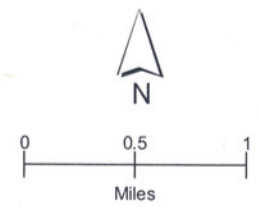




# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 5



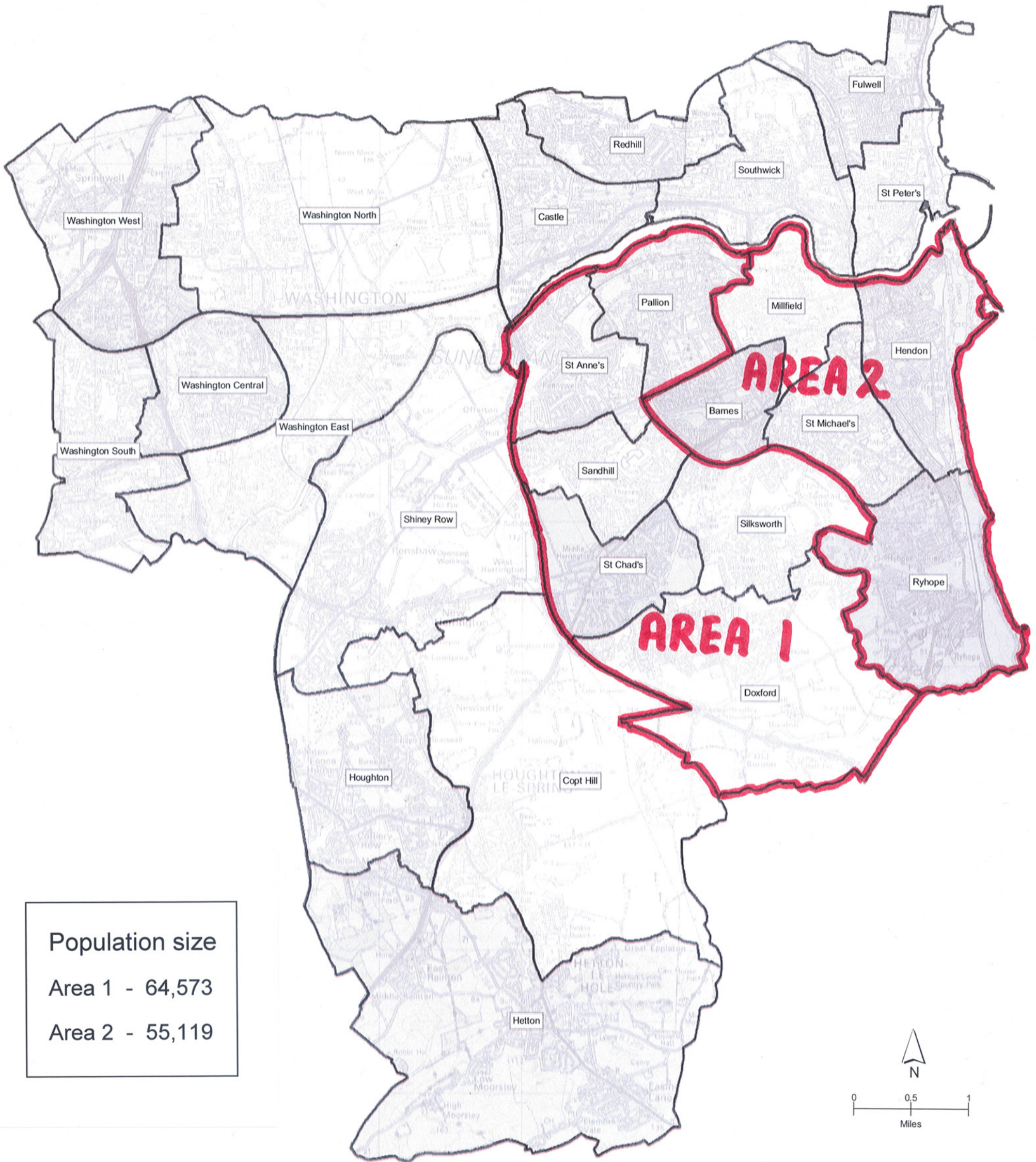
Population size  
 Area 1 - 53,460  
 Area 2 - 66,232



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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 6

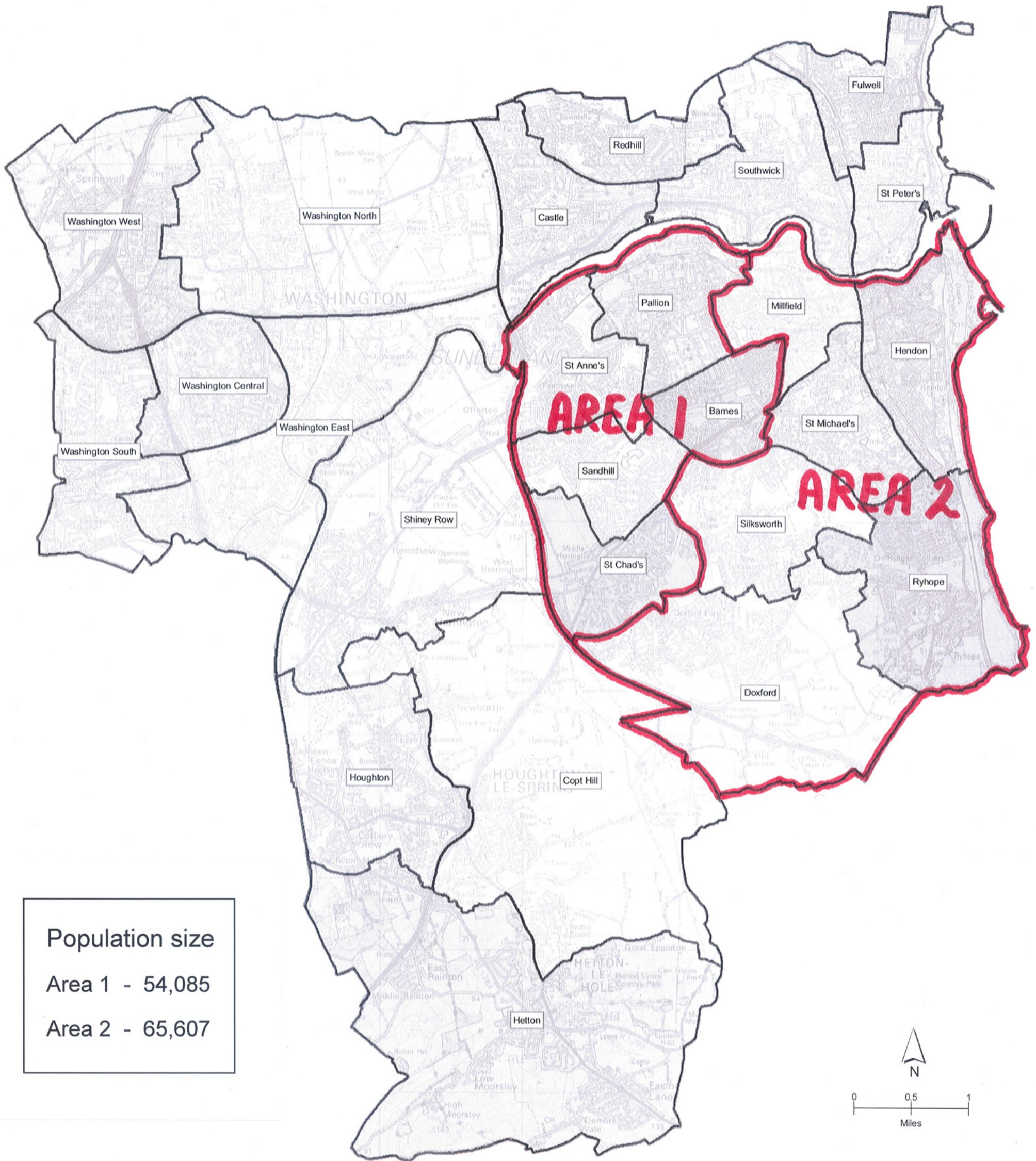


Population size  
Area 1 - 64,573  
Area 2 - 55,119

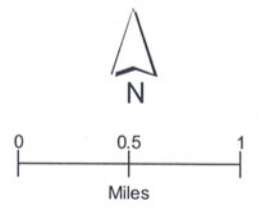
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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 7



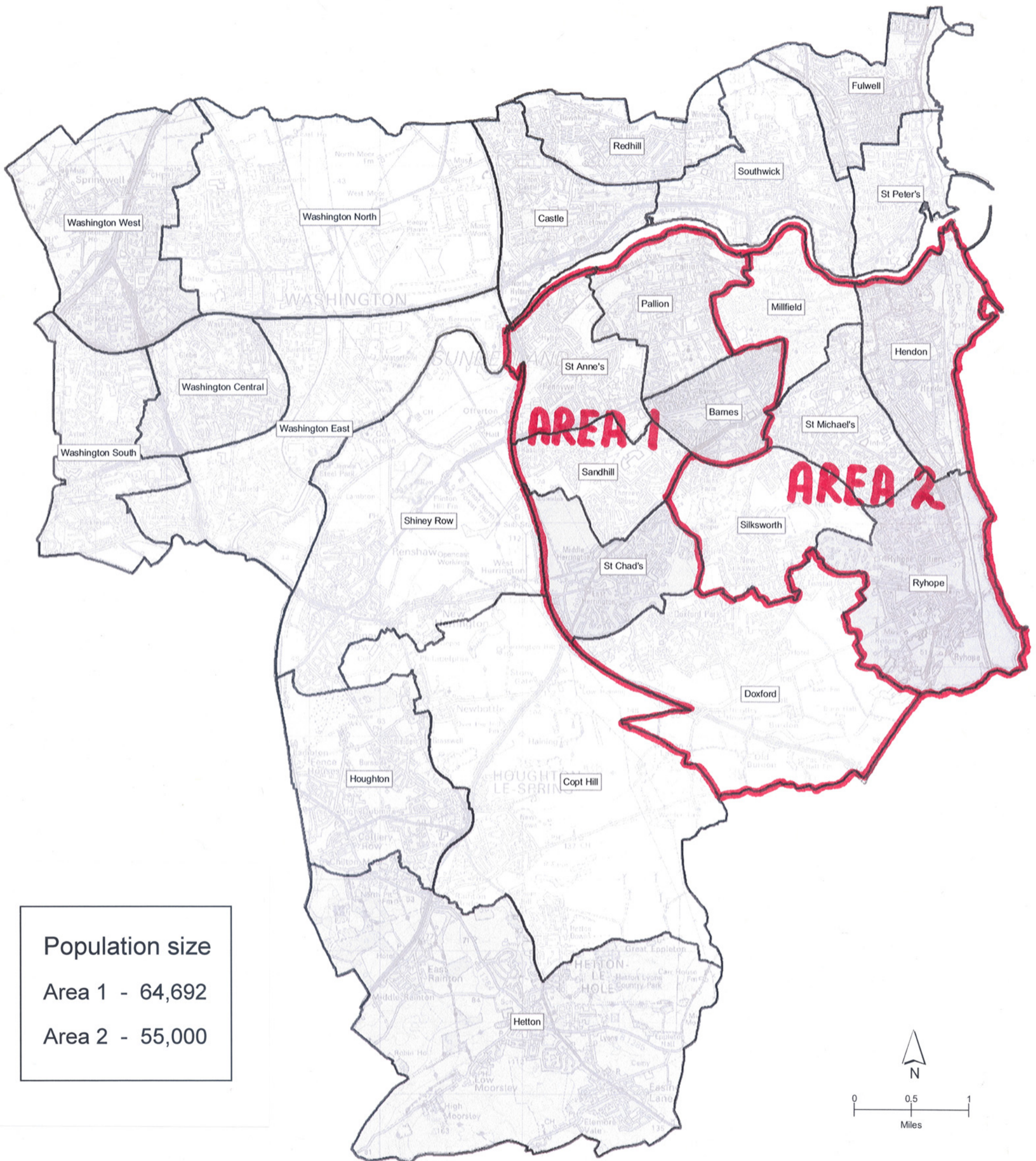
Population size  
 Area 1 - 54,085  
 Area 2 - 65,607



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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 8

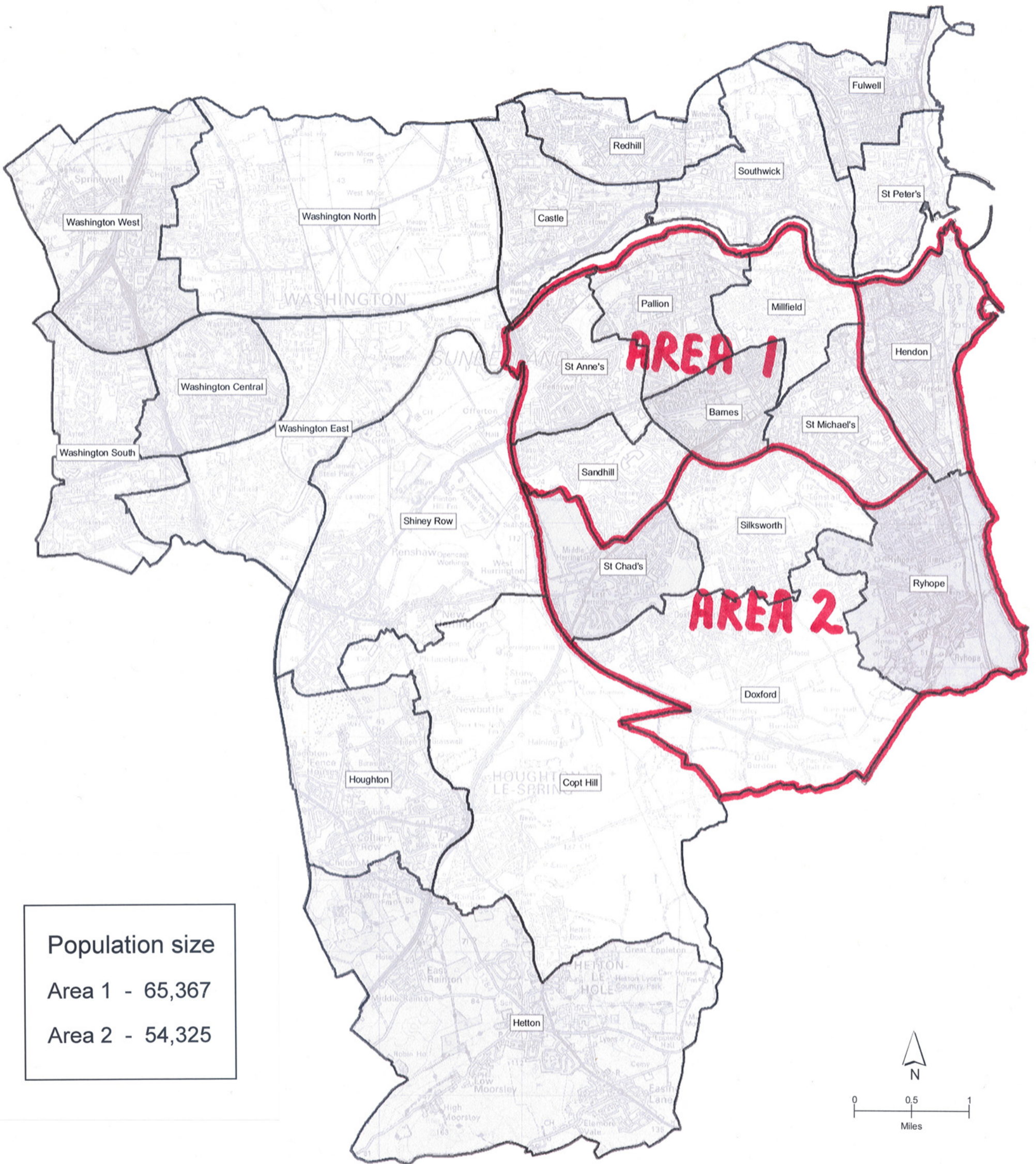


Population size  
 Area 1 - 64,692  
 Area 2 - 55,000

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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 9



Population size

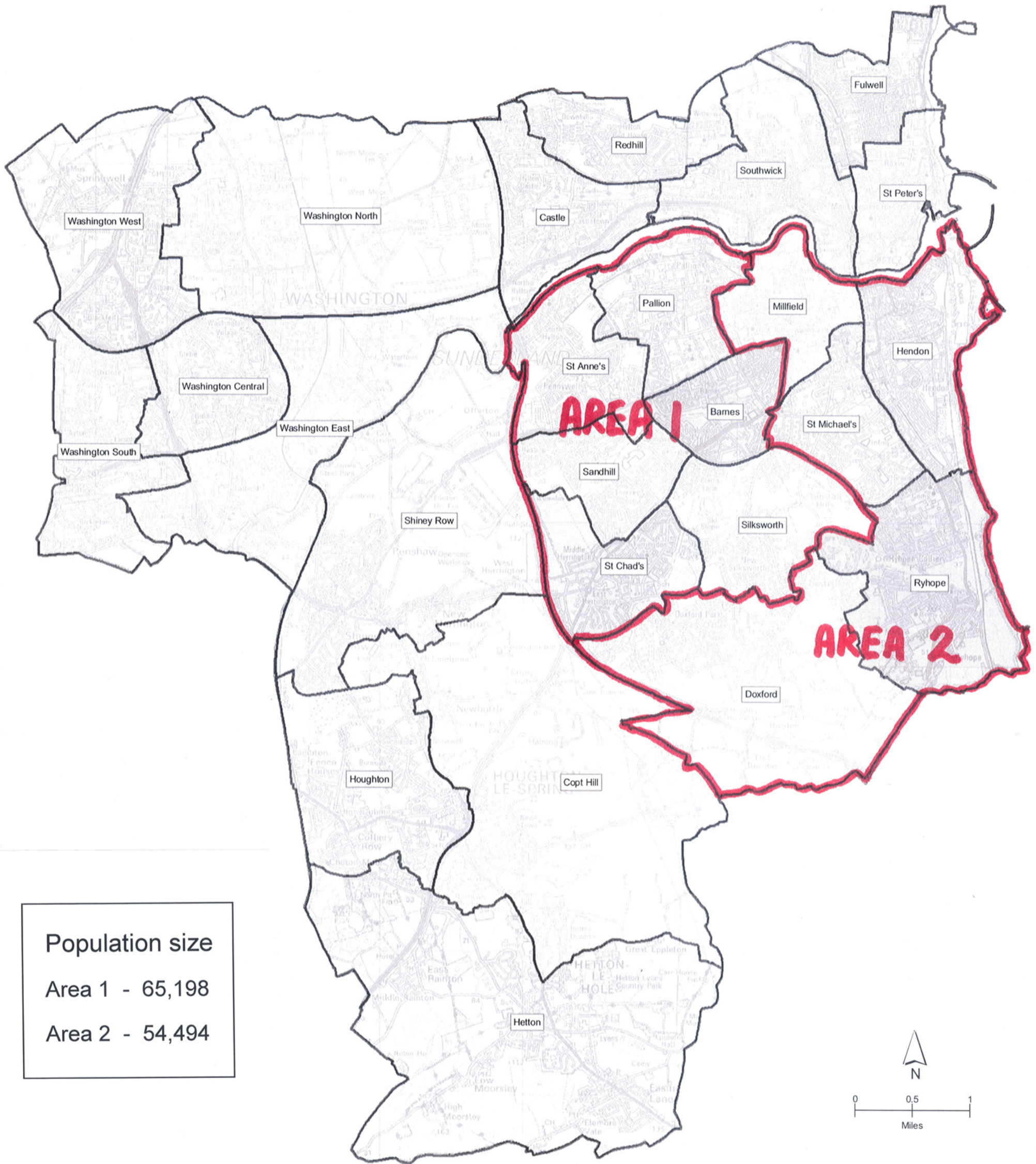
Area 1 - 65,367

Area 2 - 54,325

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# Revision of Area Committee Boundaries: Option 10



Population size  
Area 1 - 65,198  
Area 2 - 54,494

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## SECOND CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2008/2009 – EXTRACT OF REPORT

### Scheme Variations since the First Capital Review 2008/2009

	£000
<b>Additional Schemes since the First Review 2008/2009</b>	
<b>Children's Services</b>	
Diploma Delivery	750
<b>Culture and Leisure</b>	
Play Pathfinder	1,244
<b>Planning and Transportation</b>	
Public Transport Schemes	268
<b>Housing and Public Health</b>	
Extra Care Scheme - Woodlands	316
Extra Care Scheme - Moorhouse	363
<b>Regeneration and Community Cohesion</b>	
Rapid Deployment of CCTV across the City	430
<b>Revisions to existing scheme costs since the First Review 2008/2009</b>	
<b>Housing and Public Health</b>	
Castletown Renewal Area	1,281