
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

Part 1 of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 provides for the holding of a referendum in a region about the establishment of an elected assembly for that region (“a Regional Assembly referendum”) and on the same date holding referendums in the parts of the region that have both county and district councils, about the reorganisation of those local authorities into a single tier of local government (“a local government referendum”).

Article 3 of this Order provides for the holding of a Regional Assembly referendum in the North East.

Article 4 provides for the holding of local government referendums in the county areas of County Durham and Northumberland (both in the North East region).

Article 5 specifies the referendum period for each of the referendums.

Article 6 changes the period for applications to be made by a permitted participant at a Regional Assembly referendum held under this Order for appointment by the Electoral Commission as a designated organisation entitled to assistance with their campaigning. The period for application under section 109 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 becomes 42 days from the beginning of the referendum period, instead of 28 days. The date from which, in default of appointing a designated organisation, the Electoral Commission may provide information to voters about the Regional Assembly referendum issues, is 14 days later than provided in the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003. It becomes the 57th day of the referendum period if applications for designation are made, or the 43rd day if applications for designation are not made.

The local government referendum question asks voters to express a preference on the options presented for single tier local government. Articles 7 and 8 set out the text of the options for County Durham and Northumberland respectively, that will be put in the question to voters.

Article 9 gives effect to the Schedules which set out the explanatory material that will be made available for voters about the options for single tier local government in County Durham and Northumberland.

A full Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on the costs of businesses, charities or voluntary bodies.