

Boundary Change.

Comments and Opinions from :-



We have both been residents at the above addresss for more than 30 years and as a consequence feel thoroughly qualified to raise our views on the proposals to alter the Boundary status as advised in your communication and the request for comments and opinions.

We have read and considered the proposals from yourselves and also compared them with the alternative considerations prepared and submitted on behalf of the affected residents and the following is a list of bullet points from ourselves with regard to both proposals and we have nominated as A, the submission from yourselves and B alongside the considerations and preferences prepared by locals.

General Comment.

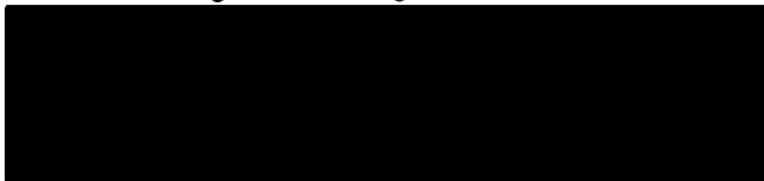
We agree with the priciple and the endeavour to balance out consituency population numbers and agree with the general aspects of the plans being undertaken but are concerned that the 'numbers' aspect of the exercise is not allowing a more detailed consideration of the history, heritage, experience, present circumstances and aspirations of the occupants of the areas under review.

It is within our consideration of these aspects and also the ' Numbers ' that we have prepared and submitted the following observations, views and preferences to establish our comparison between plan A and Plan B.

Specific Considerations and Preferences

- 1 Both proposalas fit within the 'Numbers' margin parameters and as a consequence carry equal merit
- 2 Both make thorough considerations of the area and geography but depart on the detailed segregations between Industrial, Commercial, Urban and Rural and do not appear to recognise any aspects of the importance of the aspects listed above under General Comments and it is the omission of these aspects that has biased our opinion to support plan B.
- 3 The topographical considerations of Plan A appear be confused as they are a natural conglomeration of hills, valleys, hamlets and roads in a largely Rural setting which are to be segregated and then only some partially stitched onto a well developed Industrial and Commercial zone without any significant consideration of heritage and the present and future aspirations of the populations concerned.
- 4 The 'Premium Factor' associated with the rural locations concerned has not been considered as the owners and residents of the properties to be allocated new Post Codes into Urban or Commercial locations are likely to suffer different 'risk' factor assesments for Insurance, Security, Health Service and other considerations resulting in increased charges for these and other services.
- 5 The ' Premium Factor ' also disturbs the perceived attractiveness of properties moving into Plan A to a potentially significant reduction in the asprational factors of some of these locations to a much greater degree than Plan B which largely preserves the original and future values of those remaining unchanged under Plan B.
- 6 Logistics of Plan B are significantly superior to Plan A as anyone familiar with the territory under review will be aware as this cannot be guaged by scutinising a two dimensional graph beside a Electoral Roll to make these kinds of changes.
- 7 Finally there are specific local differences between the population of Consett and the more rural villages in the Derwent Valley. We feel the needs of the rural area would be likely to receive less consideration in future if joined with Consett . The Derwent valley is an area of small villages and hamlets who have not previously associated themselves with a larger town and are used to having their own independent councillors to reflect their views.

It is with the above and also the shared opinions outlined on plan B as the alternative to Plan A that we support it's serious consideration during the forthcoming exercise



Response to Local Boundary Commission proposed changes

During a recent villages meeting on the 25th May 2023, the proposed boundary changes were discussed at length. Below are some of the points we would like to bring to your attention.

The existing Leadgate and Medomsley Division (including all the 6/7 separate villages) is predominantly a rural based Division and this has been proposed to be amalgamated into larger ever-expanding Urban Conurbation of Consett Town.

Why we are against this proposal.

- The existing Leadgate/Medomsley Division is predominantly a rural based Division, with extremely limited transport links particularly for the rural villages. It has no direct correlation with the ever-expanding urban conurbation of Consett Town.
- We want to maintain the rural relationships and not be considered co-joined to the Consett township.
- We fear Hamsterley Mill will not get appropriate levels of financial support via councillors, especially when in a small hamlet associated with a larger township.
- It is felt Medomsley is in the proposed boundary to make up the numbers required for a larger township. The Dene will be split from Medomsley and become part of Burnopfield/Dipton/Ebchester Division.
- Para 43 in the Local Boundary Commission's report refers to Ebchester, Hamsterley, Hamsterley Mill all being linked along the A694 in the Derwent Valley "with Leadgate and Medomsley somewhat separated from these communities by significant elevations". There is no reference in the report that both Burnopfield/Dipton (in a completely different valley to the A694 villages) are further separated from the communities on the A694 by even more significant elevations.
- Para 47 states that the Consett North Division would be split by the Villa Real Road yet the Boundary Commission has used the entirety of Front Street and Genesis Way (Para 48) as "clear and identifiable boundaries" between the divisions of Consett North and South, indicating a lack of continuity or double standards in the Boundary Commission decision-making progress.
- Para 42 refers to the introduction of Greencroft Parish with Consett Town Centre (an unparished area) yet the Boundary Commission declined the Joint Administration (Durham Council) proposal for the amalgamation of the Dipton Division (unparished) with Tanfield Division (parished), another example of a lack of continuity being exercised by the Boundary Commission decision makers.
- High Westwood and The Dene (which is closer to the Medomsley village than Medomsley Edge) are being included in the proposed

Burnopfield/Dipton/Ebchester division whilst Medomsley village and Medomsley Edge are included in the proposed Consett North Division.

- There is a cluster of communities across the existing Leadgate/Medomsley Division eg. CofE church communities across Hamsterley, Ebchester, Leadgate, Medomsley and Medomsley Community Action Group which encourage real partnership linked to community-based groupings across villages. Splitting this area into different divisions would cause significant disruption to groups working together for the benefit of the whole community.
- There has been no consultation from the Boundary Commission with the local representatives or local councillors.

We support the alternative proposal.

- The current division of Leadgate/Medomsley (6850) is amalgamated with the current Burnopfield/Dipton division ((6212) to create a 3 Councillor Division entirely rural based with a cumulative total electorate of circa 13000.
- The Electors/Councillors would be circa 13000/3 Councillors, giving 4335/Councillor which is +4.4% within the accepted +/-10% Elector/Cllr threshold.
- This new amalgamated division would be called The Derwent and Pont Valley Division, therefore no one village has predominance over the other villages across the new division and reflects the complete rurality of the whole area.
- Consett North becomes a one Member division based solely on the Town Centre Conurbation with an expected electorate of circa 4255 with a +2.7% within the +/- 10% elector threshold.
- Maiden Law (240 Electors) within the Greencroft Parish is proposed to be assigned to the Annfield Plain/Tanfield Division (Stanley Town Council ward) to balance and improve elector equality across the North Durham area ensuring parish boundaries are not compromised.

