

# County Durham

## Personal Details:

**Name:** Mark Wilkes  
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**Organisation Name:** (District or county officer)

## Comment text:

Dear Jonathan/LGBCE  
Apologies for the incorrect title in the previous email.  
Please find enclosed the Liberal Democrat comments in respect of the Draft Recommendations.  
Thank you for what is clearly a very carefully considered proposal the vast majority of which we are able to support.  
The areas where we feel there could be improvements are enclosed.  
Kind regards  
Mark

County Councillor Mark Wilkes  
Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Neighbourhood Services  
Councillor for Framwellgate & Newton Hall including Finchale Abbey Village, Brasside, Pity Me and Durham Moor

[REDACTED]  
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## Attached Documents:

- Liberal Democrat - LGBCE - Amendments to Proposed County Durham Boundaries.pdf

## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LGBCE (3 pages)**

The Liberal Democrat's are broadly in support of the boundary commission proposals and thank you for talking into consideration our, and the Joint Administration proposals across the County.

There are a small number of areas where we feel that the current proposals can be changed to improve local democracy, community cohesion and to ensure electoral equality.

In respect of all of your other proposals we support them.

It has become clear having listened to some Town and Parishes, local residents and elected members that we have support for these proposed changes, which would mirror our original submissions in some cases and support your changes elsewhere.

### **Consett South (and Delves Lane)**

There is significant support for keeping these two communities apart. Current proposals are for a three member ward.

**Our proposal, which reiterates our initial submission is that Consett South should be kept separate from Delves Lane due to the significant differences between these communities and the overwhelming public support for such separation.**

We would note that having Consett South as a one member ward with Moorside, The Grove and Castleside (Healeyfield Parish) is also supported by the Derwentside Independents and the Green Party, and there is a recognition by the Commission too that this approach could be acceptable..

Key reasons for this include:

- Healeyfield Parish as you have stated shares much closer links with communities near Consett like Moorside and The Grove, we agree with the Boundary commission on this.
- The three villages have a strong sense of community with many ties and close transport links.
- The church in Castleside has its Church Hall in Moorside and residents of all three villages use both. Residents of Delves Lane do not use these buildings as they have their own unique community facilities.
- The school links are particularly close with children from each village attending any one of the four schools in three villages, whereas Delves Lane primary school children mostly attend Delves Lane Primary School.
- Unlike Delves Lane which is almost entirely either side of the Delves Lane road, all three villages of The Grove, Moorside and Castleside sit on the A692 trunk road sharing the same buses – X5, X15 and 764 with no need for changes. Access to Delves Lane from these villages requires taking a bus to Consett bus station and waiting for an alternative bus service.
- We support the commission's view that Lanchester and Healeyfield parishes should not be part of the same division.

### **Consett North and Burnopfield, Dipton and Ebchester**

- **We are really very concerned about the boundaries proposed for the Consett North and Burnopfield, Dipton and Ebchester Divisions**
- **The built up area of Consett is completely different in all relevant respects from the more rural villages across the rest of the proposed Consett North Division.**
- Form the point of view of electoral equality this is not necessary as there are sensible alternatives to the current draft recommendations.
- **We feel that the central “Consett town” part of the proposed Consett North division would be more democratically represented as a one member division and support the proposed boundaries which the Derwentside Independents (submitted by Councillor Alan Shield) is recommending, including the Consett Central name change.**
- It has been suggested by some residents that the housing between Leadgate Road/Sherburn Terrace/Front Street and the A692 Trunk Road would sit better with a Consett Central Division, and where this does not impact upon the electoral equality of our proposed two member Delves Lane and one member Consett Central Divisions we would support all or part of this housing being in our proposed Consett Central Division.

### **Elvet and Gilesgate / Bowburn & Coxhoe**

We agree with the boundary commission in terms of much of your proposal for the Bowburn & Coxhoe Division.

- The moving of the Hett and Croxdale parishes into Tudhoe makes sense in light of the amended parliamentary boundaries which move these parishes into a new Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor parliamentary constituency.
- We support the inclusion of West Cornforth in this division to ensure that there is electoral balance.
- **However we feel there are still very strong and indeed even stronger reasons for Shincliffe Parish to be retained in the Durham City area, within most sensibly the Elvet and Gilesgate Division.**
- **Although it could equality be placed within Neville’s Cross Division given the close links, we note that Shincliffe Parish Council has expressed strong views not only that Shincliffe should be within a Durham City division but that this should be the Elvet & Gilesgate Division and we would lend our support to their view and endorse their reasoning.**
- **We reiterate that Shincliffe Parish would be an outlier being unnecessarily in a different parliamentary constituency to the rest of the Bowburn & Coxhoe Division.**
- Placing Shincliffe Parish into Elvet and Gilesgate would still mean that the Bowburn & Coxhoe division was well within the electoral balance required, indeed closer than the current draft proposals.
- We also support Shincliffe Parish Council’s suggestions to ensure that there is electoral balance in the Belmont Division.

### **Langley & Esh and Weardale Divisions**

- Whilst not the original views of the Liberal Democrats, we can accept the Labour proposal which places Witton Gilbert within the Sacriston Division, and the associated changes this results in, in Chester-le-Street.
- We are also supportive of a one member Langley & Esh Division and a two member Weardale Division.

- However we feel quite strongly after consultation with residents and councillors that the inclusion of Satley within Weardale is not acceptable. Weardale is already proposed to be a vast Division, and Satley is likely to be sidelined in such an area, whereas right now it is very well supported in the current Esh Division which will become a smaller one member division.
- Satley Parish will now be part of the Durham City parliamentary constituency under the finalised boundaries, whilst Weardale is to be in a constituency with electoral wards in the Gateshead Council area.
- We feel it would be significantly to the detriment of Satley Parish to be both in such a large electoral division and also not in a division in the Durham City Constituency where it will sit.
- There are significant links between Satley and the rest of the proposed Esh Division, with Satley primary school age children attending schools in the proposed Esh Division including in Quebec and Esh Village.

#### **North Lodge and Chester-le-Street**

- We are more than happy to support the proposed boundaries for the whole of the Chester-le-Street area which closely mirror our proposals, and particularly those boundaries for the North Lodge Division.
- We support residents, North Lodge Parish Council and local Councillor Craig Martin's submissions and their desire for a one member division to ensure current representation for the Parish is not diluted.