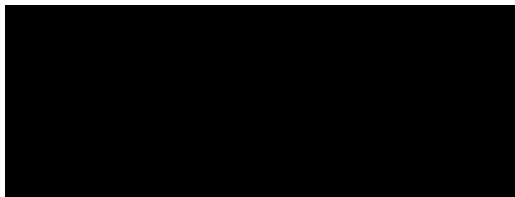


Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**Personal Details:****Name:****E-mail:****Postcode:****Organisation Name:****Comment text:**

Please see attached documents.

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1626735352_LGBCE+Consultation+Response+Letter.pdf

Dear LGBCE,

I heard about your proposal to abolish Grangefield ward and subsume Grangefield into Newtown, from a neighbour, not too long ago. The neighbour in question was not happy, at all, for Grangefield to become associated with Newtown – as, I gather, is the general feeling amongst a lot of other residents in Grangefield. I have since seen a few comments raised on the consultation site, mentioning rather angrily that Newtown is a bad area, associating with it may pull the value of Grangefield's houses down, etc.

Now, I am a relative newcomer to Grangefield, having moved here not quite two years ago – from Newtown! My experience of living in both areas does confirm a lot of what people are saying. It's crazy – it takes me just five minutes to cycle from where I used to live, to where I live now, but the difference in character between the two areas is huge!

In Newtown, there are massive social problems which are getting worse – including low aspiration, low incomes and hugely more crime and antisocial behaviour. Where I used to live, I would constantly have people making a racket under my windows, whilst smoking and drinking, all day, until late into the night – making it impossible for me to hear my television when my windows were open on hot summer days. When I asked them to quieten down, they responded very rudely and when I reported what was going on, they become louder out of spite. Meanwhile, the house opposite frequently had noisy parties with bonfires, which created a lot of smoke – so much so that the fire service had to come and put their fires out on more than one occasion. There was also one occasion when one of our outside waste bins was set on fire. I kept my bike at work (which was nearby) instead of at home, because the bike shed was repeatedly broken into and bikes were stolen and damaged. The last straw, however, was when marijuana became more and more prevalent in the area – until it got to a point where the streets, the local shops and the block of flats where I lived stunk more or less constantly of the stuff. I reported this to the police but it didn't change anything – which is the sort of thing that contributed to other residents' feeling of low aspiration, hopelessness and helplessness, feeding into widespread mental health problems that made all of the above keep getting worse, and sometimes led to brawls etc.

In Grangefield, meanwhile, it could not be more different. Of course, you get the occasional whiff and the occasional sound (what place doesn't?!) but on the whole, it is so quiet and so peaceful. It's very much got a feeling of suburbia about it, and it's very leafy. And I am living amongst people who largely have jobs or are retired from working, rather than predominantly long-term sick and unemployed people.

I happen to have a keen interest in neighbourhood and ward statistics, and have been looking up those for the two wards and one or two others nearby – which also back up everything I have been saying here. In particular, they highlight that:

- Newtown is the second most deprived out of the 26 wards in the borough, and one of the most deprived in the country; while Grangefield is ranked mid-high on both scores (i.e. closer to the least deprived).
- Newtown has far higher rates of crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic violence than Grangefield.
- Newtown has far more children in need, children subject to child protection plans and children in care than Grangefield – where there are apparently no children in care at all!
- The majority of people in Newtown rent their homes, while a staggering majority in Grangefield (over 80%) own their homes.
- Homes are also worth greatly more in Grangefield, and incomes are greatly higher.
- There are a lot more problems associated with widespread smoking and smoking-related disease in Newtown, which contribute to a life expectancy (in both males and females) of around 5 years less than in Grangefield!
- There are far more children in Newtown on free school meals, and children's educational attainment is lower across the board.

I've attached a table to the bottom of this letter for you, which I have compiled so you can see the stats for yourself – which came from September 2019. I've highlighted the areas in red where Newtown is significantly worse than Grangefield, so you can see how many there are.

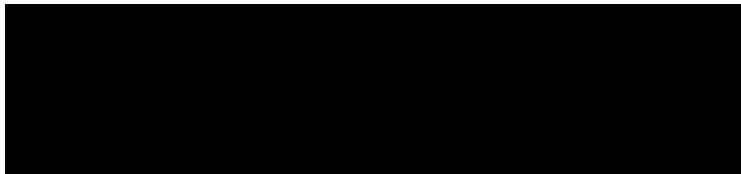
My concerns, in the light of this, are that:

The local councillors in the current ward of Newtown have so much social need to attend to, with such different priorities to in Grangefield, that it doesn't make sense to join them together. Having the same councillors in both areas would surely overstretch them – which could then see Grangefield go downhill due to councillors not having sufficient time to attend to our needs adequately, amidst everything they are dealing with in Newtown. This then raises the very real prospect of our house prices going down as others fear; and of morale and aspiration diminishing as has happened in Newtown.

I think it would be far better to join Grangefield up with Fairfield – which also borders with Grangefield and which you are proposing to give two wards to, where up until now it has only had one. As the stats will show you, Fairfield is far more like Grangefield, with the same kind of demographic and a much more level playing field in a number of areas (marked green on the table) – including crime levels, income levels, value of houses and high home ownership. So, rather than having two wards called Fairfield North and Fairfield South, I propose that Grangefield be joined up with one of the Fairfield wards, and that ward be called “Grangefield and Fairfield South”; or “Fairfield South and Grangefield”. The numbers of households in this and in the other Fairfield ward would obviously need to be adjusted – and to make up the shortfall in Newtown ward I would take some households from Ragworth, which is more much similar to Newtown and looks rather large.

I hope you will take my suggestions into serious consideration, and I look forward hopefully to hearing a favourable outcome.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature and name of the sender.

Newtown, Grangefield and Fairfield Ward Comparisons 2021 (Using 2019 stats)			
	Newtown	Grangefield	Fairfield
Summary			
Predominant Demographic	Families with children who are likely to have limited resources and squeezed budgets	Older families with adult children still living at home, likely not to have moved address in some years.	Older families with adult children still living at home, likely not to have moved address in some years.
Deprivation rank within Stockton-on-Tees Borough	2 nd most deprived (out of 26)	16 th most deprived (out of 26)	17 th most deprived (out of 26)
Deprivation rank nationally	129 th most deprived (out of 7,522)	4,960 th most deprived (out of 7,522)	4,998 th most deprived (out of 7,522)
Household Income	Likely to be under £15K	Likely to be between £30K - £39K.	Likely to be between £30K - £39K.
Housing	Likely to be rented; Likely to live in terraced properties	Likely to own home; Likely to live in semi-detached properties. Predominantly suburban, mid-range, 3-bedroom homes.	Likely to own home; Likely to live in semi-detached properties. Predominantly suburban, mid-range, 3-bedroom homes.
Education, Children and Young People			
% Take-up of Free Childcare for 2-year-olds	100	100	118.2
% Vacant 30-hour places for 3 and 4 year olds	59.0	63.0	28.4
% Children and young people eligible for free school meals	39.1	10.0	8.6
% 4-19 year olds recorded with SEN involvement	16.9	14.0	12.6
% Pupils achieving Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (as at the end of Reception)	67.5	79.5	84.5
% Pupils achieving Expected Standard in combined Reading, Writing and Maths (at Key Stage 2)	69.0	72.7	66.7
% Pupils' Average Attainment 8 Score	44.1	53.1	49.9
% Pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths GCSE	42.2	69.0	58.9
% Pupils achieving 4+ in English and Maths	63.3	77.5	78.6
% Young people aged 16-18 in full time education	78.6	87.2	83.1
% Young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)	3.7	1.4	3.4
Number of children in need	90	33	16
Number of children subject to a child protection plan	16	4	2
Number of children in care	34	0	2

	Newtown	Grangefield	Fairfield
Crime			
Number of crimes recorded	955	363	257
Crime recorded rate per 1,000 population	129.3	54.9	46.7
Number of domestic abuse crimes recorded	287	55	63
Domestic abuse crimes recorded rate per 1,000 population	38.9	8.3	11.4
Number of criminal damage and arson crimes recorded	185	37	35
Criminal damage and arson crimes recorded rate per 1,000 population	25.1	5.6	6.4
Number of vehicle theft offences recorded	90	19	31
Vehicle theft offences recorded rate per 1,000 population	12.2	2.9	5.6
Number of recorded antisocial behaviour incidents	570	164	147
Antisocial behaviour incident rate per 1,000 population	77.2	24.8	26.7
Economic Regeneration and Transport			
Number of residents aged 16-64 claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit	410	70	60
% residents aged 16-64 claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit	8.8	1.7	1.8
Number of residents aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit	95	25	20
% residents aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit	13.3	5.1	5.7
% residents in elementary occupations	18.0%	9.1	9.4
% residents travel to work by train or bus	6.5	3.3	4.0
% adults with no qualifications	31.0	18.5	21.1
% residents aged 16 and above with a degree, HNC or professional qualifications	12.6	27.6	23.3
% Households likely to have a net annual income <£15K	29.3	9.8	33.2
% Households likely to be finding it difficult/very difficult to cope on income	47.2	20.0	10.2

	Newtown	Grangefield	Fairfield
Environment and Housing			
% Households in fuel poverty	17.2	9.9	8.0
Average House Price for all sold property in a year	£85,982	£166,843	£139,863
Median House Price for all sold property in a year	£65,000	£144,250	£134,000
% of residents who are social renters	33.3	9.3	6.1
% of residents who are private renters	18.2	6.6	6.5
% of residents who are house owners	47.6	82.8	86.2
Health and Wellbeing			
Mothers smoking during pregnancy	34.4% (31 out of 90)	< (<5 out of 38)	< (<5 out of 29)
Low birth-weight babies born	0.1% (7 out of 114)	< (<5 out of 61)	< (<5 out of 40)
Children not “school-ready”	30.3% (36 out of 119)	(22 out of 87)	(12 out of 55)
% 11 year olds who are obese	22.7%	17.2%	21.3%
Admissions to hospital for unintentional injuries to children (under 19)	26	14	15
% of people over 16 who binge drink	31	27	26
Number of new cases of cancer	35	45	44
Number of over 65s referred into mental health services	75	60	85
Life expectancy at birth (males)	75.5 years	79.9 years	80.6 years
Life expectancy at birth (females)	78.0 years	85.2 years	83.3 years
Number of emergency admissions to hospital	1072	846	762
Number of emergency hospital admissions due to chronic heart disease	30	28	23
Number of emergency hospital admissions due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	32	22	15