

## Durham County Council

### Personal Details:

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### Comment text:

In response to the ongoing consultation relating to new divisional boundaries for Durham County Council. Urpeth Parish Council wish to make comments in respect of warding patterns, relating specifically to the existing Pelton Division. Pelton Division is one of the biggest in the County, currently served by 3 elected Members. Having reviewed the Commissions' recommendation that the County should consist of a warding pattern accommodating 98 Councillors, which has been further accepted by Durham County Council, we as a parish council would like to outline the following. Pelton Division is unique in that it has within it 3 parish councils, all of which work closely together given the links within the community, through groups and schools and as a result of irregularities in existing parish boundaries. Due the way those parish boundaries have been split historically by road or in some cases through an estate, leads to confusion amongst residents and ultimately means that we must work positively together on cross border issues affecting our villages. This is considered by the council to be important when looking at warding patterns as any split of the existing division would break these close working ties and potentially create added confusion for residents. Irregularities in the existing parish boundaries within Pelton Division are hoped to be reviewed by way of a Community Governance Review in the future. Urpeth Parish is a large parish within the Pelton Division, without any community facilities. The neighbouring Ouston Parish, whose boundary cuts through a housing estate has an excellent community facility which due to its proximity, ties to local schools and the community, is well used by residents of Urpeth. Many events held at this facility have received funding from Urpeth, despite it being outside the parish boundary. The Community Centre is a community asset we would wish to protect for use of residents of Urpeth. In addition, examples could be provided of where Pelton Parish Council have undertaken and paid for works on land owned and agreed to, by Urpeth Parish Council. This can further demonstrate our close relationship and ties to these settlements. In addition, it is worth noting that the parishes of Pelton, Urpeth and Ouston are currently working together on the development of a joint Neighbourhood Plan for our area. All 3 councils also have proven track record of working in partnership to utilise Section 106 funding to best serve the residents on a division wide basis. Whilst we appreciate that there will be a requirement for an increase in electors per council seat, the parish council's preference would be for the existing Pelton Division to remain, with the addition, if necessary, of an additional area such as Pelton Fell which is also a distinct community removed from Chester-le-Street, having indeed more in common with the settlements of Pelton, Urpeth and Ouston. The addition of an area like Pelton Fell would allow for the divisional elected Members and parish councils to continue to deliver effective, convenient local government for its residents, due to the ties that these settlements have with one another and minimise confusion and disruption for residents. I would be grateful if you could consider the comments of Urpeth Parish Council when determining the proposed new warding patterns.

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded