

Conservative Group Position on DCC Boundary Review

29th Jan 2023

Introduction

The Conservative group is the largest of the four-party coalition that forms the Joint Administration (JA) that runs DCC. It broadly supports Option A as submitted by the JA. However it has some specific areas where it has particular knowledge and expertise and would like to emphasise these as follows.

1. Teesdale (Barnard Castle West, East and Evenwood Divisions)

We propose to retain three wards with two members, with the justification as follows.

BARNARD CASTLE EAST & WEST

The division of Teesdale and Barnard Castle town into east and west by a near- vertical boundary was established in previous reviews in 2009 and 2013 as the best split having regard to people flows being mainly up and down Teesdale (east/west) rather than north/south. The boundary changes proposed therefore seek to keep this basic format. The proposal does involve splitting the Marwood Urban parish ward, but this oddly shaped ward is a fertile source of inconvenience at parish and county levels and it is submitted it should not stand in the way of the sensible proposals explained here.

The changes are:

Barnard Castle East

Transfer in from Evenwood division the Parish of Cockfield. This is a similar size and type of village to Staindrop, only 3 miles away, with which it has ties with transport, pub games leagues etc. and church activity.

Transfer out to BCWest

BASF - Hope
BASG - Scargill
BAXC - The Oval

Langleydale & Shotton (BAYD) - necessary to give continuity with BC West and Woodland Parish.

Split BAVA2 polling district, and the below streets moved into Barnard Castle West:

- Dickens Road
- North Fields
- Prospect Place

Split BAVB polling district, and the below streets moved into Barnard Castle West:

- Ashtree Drive
- Darlington Road 6 Properties
- High Riggs
- Hollinside
- Middlewood Close
- Sledwick Court
- Teesbank Court

Electoral Equality

Example Ward Pattern	Number of Seats	Electorate 2028	Per Cllr
Barnard Castle East	2	7833	3927
Barnard Castle West	2	7715	3858

Barnard Castle West

The transfers in from BC East as described above, in addition transfer in the parish of Woodland from Evenwood division.

Warding proposals checklist

Community links.

Many organisations operate in the dale: luncheon clubs, WI, churches, sports clubs. Most tend to centre on Barnard Castle and serve both divisions.

Boundaries easily identifiable:

The current boundary within Barnard Castle town is obvious being the road from Westwick, through Newgate, Market Place, Galgate, Bede Road and then the A688 Staindrop road. It is proposed to move the boundary a few degrees clockwise to become the A67 Darlington road, the busiest road serving the town and a very obvious boundary.

The New BC West division also includes the parish of Woodland, a parish of a rural nature of scattered farms and a small village, connected to the rest of the division by the B6282, a busy road which joins the B6278 at Folly Top.

Transport links:

This Dale divides naturally into Upper and Lower Teesdale, with buses from either end stopping at Barnard Castle where you have to change to make a through journey between the two divisions. This reflects the split between BC East and West.

Deliver effective, convenient local government:

The relatively minor changes to the division mean minimal disruption to established relationships between Cllrs and parish councils.

Community groups in the area

The whole of BC East and West divisions are parished with Parish Councils.

Facilities such as schools, leisure facilities, shopping, medical facilities:

All secondary school age children from the West Division have Teesdale School at Barnard Castle as their school. In Barnard Castle East some secondary school age children go to Staindrop Academy. There are primary schools at Middleton, Cotherstone (which takes children from Eggleston too), Bowes, Barnard Castle, Staindrop and Gainford.

Doctors from Middleton serve nearly all of BC West whereas BC East is served from Barnard Castle. For both divisions Barnard Castle supplies a range of services: supermarkets, vets, solicitors, surveyors, travel agents, a range of shops etc.

Anything particular that binds this area as a community?

Teesdale is a Durham Dale that follows the course of the River Tees, getting narrower the further up the dale you go. The dale divides naturally into Upper and Lower Teesdale, with buses from either end stopping at Barnard Castle where you have to change to make a through journey between the two divisions. All secondary school age children from the West Division have Teesdale School at Barnard Castle as their school.

The composition of the proposed wards is given below:

BARNARD CASTLE EAST

Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
BAAAA - Ingleton	362
BAAAB - Headlam	34
BAAAC - Langton	27
BAAAD - Bolam	72
BAAAE - Morton Tinmouth	11
BAAAF - Hilton	36
BAAAG - Wackerfield	48
BAKA - Cockfield	1221
BARA - Brignall	37
BARB - Rokeby	61
BARD - Egglestone Abbey	10
BASA - Barningham	123
BASB - Ovington	124
BASC - Barforth	59
BASD - Hutton Magna	93
BASE - Wycliffe with Thorpe	80
BAUA - Barnard Castle East	1280
BAVA2 - Barnard Castle East	666
BAXA - Westwick	50
BAXB - Stainton	245

BAXB1 - Stainton South	126
BAXD - Whorlton	150
BAYA - Staindrop	1159
BAYB - Cleatlam	71
BAYC - Raby	53
BAZA - Gainford	1239
BAZB - Winston	285
BAZC - South Cleatlam	56
BAVB -2 Marwood Urban	55
Grand Total	7833

BARNARD CASTLE WEST

Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
BALC - Woodland	196
BANA - Eggleston	350
BANB - Marwood Rural	173
BAOA - Forest	124
BAOB - Middleton-In-Teesdale	912
BAOC - Newbiggin	105
BAPA - Romaldkirk	143
BAPB - Hunderthwaite	93
BAPC - Holwick	61
BAPD - Lunedale	79
BAPE - Mickleton	342
BAQA - Cotherstone	440
BAQB - Briscoe	42
BAQC - Lartington	116
BARC - Boldron	95
BARE - Bowes	361
BARF - Gilmonby	30
BASF - Hope	16
BASG - Scargill	26
BATA - Startforth	1007
BAVA1 - Barnard Castle West	313
BAWA1 - Barnard Castle West	1935
BAXC - The Oval	94
BAYD - Langleydale	64
BAVA2 -1 - Barnard Castle East	85
BAVB -1 - Marwood Urban	513
Grand Total	7715

EVENWOOD DIVISION

The changes are:

Transfers in from West Auckland

BAFA - Witton Park

BAFB - Escomb

Transfer out to BC East

BAKA - Cockfield

Transfer out to BC West

BALC - Woodland

The composition of the proposed ward is given below.

Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
BAFA - Witton Park	479
BAFB - Escomb	2292
BAIA - Etherley (West Auckland)	283
BAIB - Etherley & Toft Hill	1424
BAIC - Witton	190
BAJA - Toft Hill	47
BAJB - Evenwood	1319
BAJC - Ramshaw	214
BAJD - Lands	174
BALA - Butterknowle	598
BALB - Copley	395
BAMA - Hamsterley	385
BAMB - South Bedburn	147
Grand Total	7947

Overall the effect of these changes is to make Evenwood division more homogeneous, with the new West Auckland division defining the continuous urban area, and the new Evenwood division being comprised of smaller villages and countryside.

The Parishes to the North of the proposed division which are currently in the West Auckland division (Escomb, Witton Park) have their own identities being much more rural in nature and are proposed to be part of the Evenwood Division as a consequence. This also ensures electoral equality within the more rural areas to the west. Escomb has its own primary school attended by pupils from the surrounding rural parishes as well as the village itself.

Electoral Equality

A balanced ward:

Example Ward Pattern	Number of Seats	Electorate	
		2028	Per Cllr
Evenwood	2	7947	3974

Boundaries easily identifiable

The boundary with the continuous urban area of West Auckland is easily identifiable. The whole division being parished, the boundaries with BC East and West will also be well understood.

Transport links

Bus services in the division tend to all focus on Bishop Auckland,

Deliver effective, convenient local government

This will be facilitated by having a division that is similar in character and composition.

Facilities such as schools, leisure facilities, shopping, medical facilities

Some secondary school age children from the Evenwood Division attend Teesdale School at Barnard Castle, some go to Staindrop Academy and some to schools in Bishop Auckland.

Anything particular that binds this area as a community?

A large part of the Evenwood division is the Gaunless Valley, that flows into the the River Wear, on which sits Bishop Auckland. It is fair to say that people and cultural activities tend to follow the same flow towards Bishop Auckland. In this way the proposed Evenwood division works with established patterns of movement and community links.

2. Delves Lane/Lanchester Area

We propose to retain two wards with two members with the justification as follows.

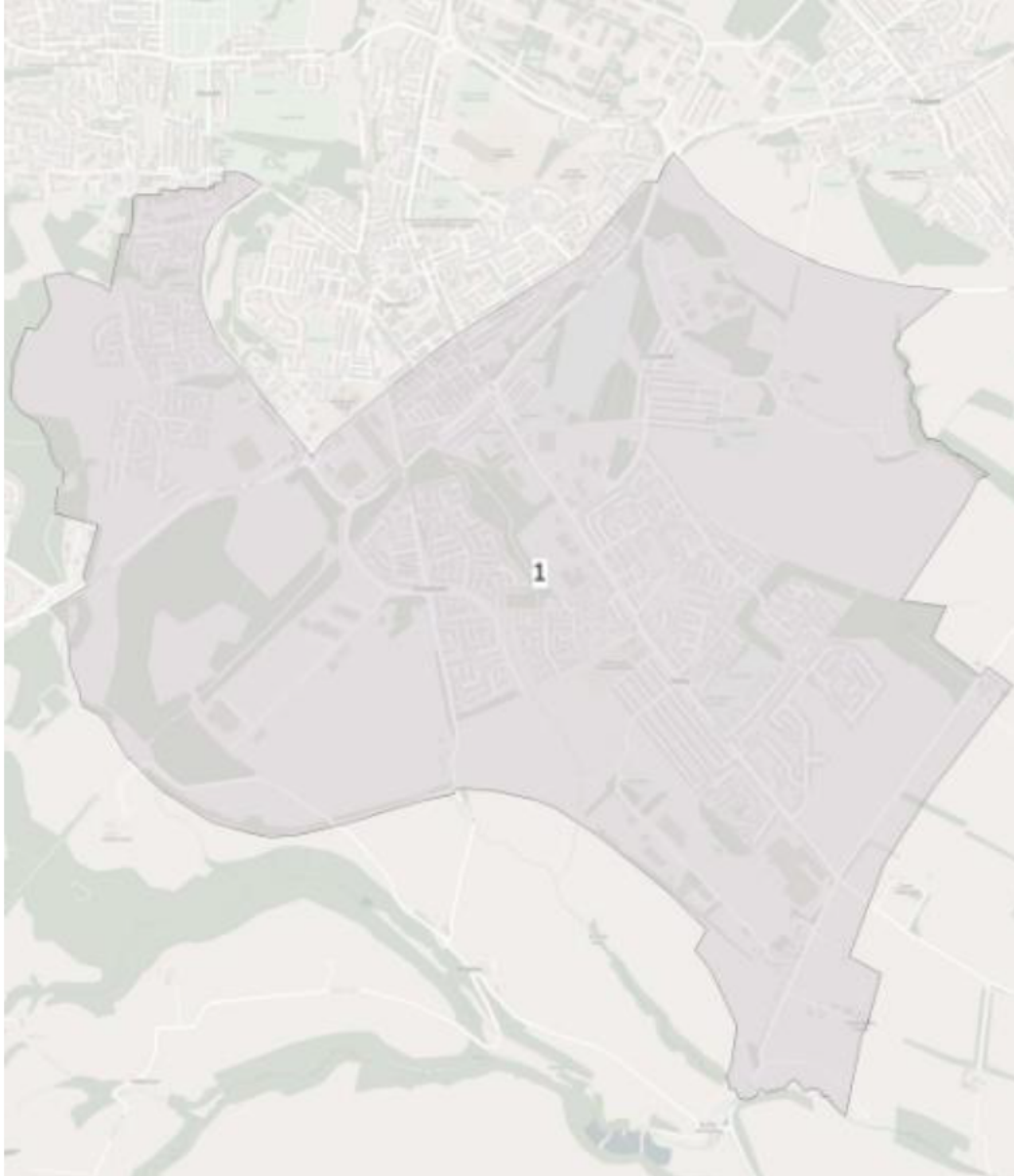
Delves Lane

- **Electoral Equality:** Ensures this, so that neighbouring divisions can meet the electoral equality numbers. Significant additional housing of several hundred large detached family homes to be built south of Greenways and further housing has been referred to south of Redmire Drive Estate and West of Delves Lane in the County Durham Plan, as well as the Estate west of the Genesis Way continues is currently being developed.
- **Community Links:** Delves Lane, Templetown and the Genesis Estate have strong sense of community cohesion and identity. Adding the Genesis Way Estate into the ward fits well as it is better connected with Templetown and are connected around the Genesis project site. They are closely linked communities with many people living within the area and working nearby. Moving Hownsgill Industrial Estate into the ward where many local residents work.
- **Contiguous boundaries:** The ward map as proposed by the Conservative group has clear natural boundaries that do not cut through existing residential streets or estates nor cut through likely sites of future development.
- **Public Transport:** Bus routes running through these areas are used by residents across the proposed boundaries. Bus numbers 826 and 827 run directly through all parts of the ward with many other bus services linking via Consett bus station.
- **Schools:** Schools across the area are in the same electoral division, such as Delves Lane Primary School. Children who live on the Genesis Way estate attend the same secondary schools, namely Consett Academy and St Bedes. Indeed school service bus numbers 826 and 827 link all parts of the proposed ward.
- **Doctors:** Consett Medical Centre is the main surgery for the area and is located in the current Delves Lane ward, accessed by residents in the Genesis Way estate.
- **Links/Parliament:** This whole proposed division sat within the Parliamentary constituency of North West Durham and would move into the new Consett & Blaydon constituency that seems likely to be implemented as part of the ongoing Westminster boundary review.

The composition of the proposed ward is given below.

Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
NWDHA - Consett East	766
NWDHB - Templetown South	964
NWDIC - Berry Edge West	1389
NWDJA - Crookhall	574

NWDJB - Delves Lane North	1995
NWDJC - Templetown North	186
NWDJD - Delves Lane South	2217
Grand Total	8091



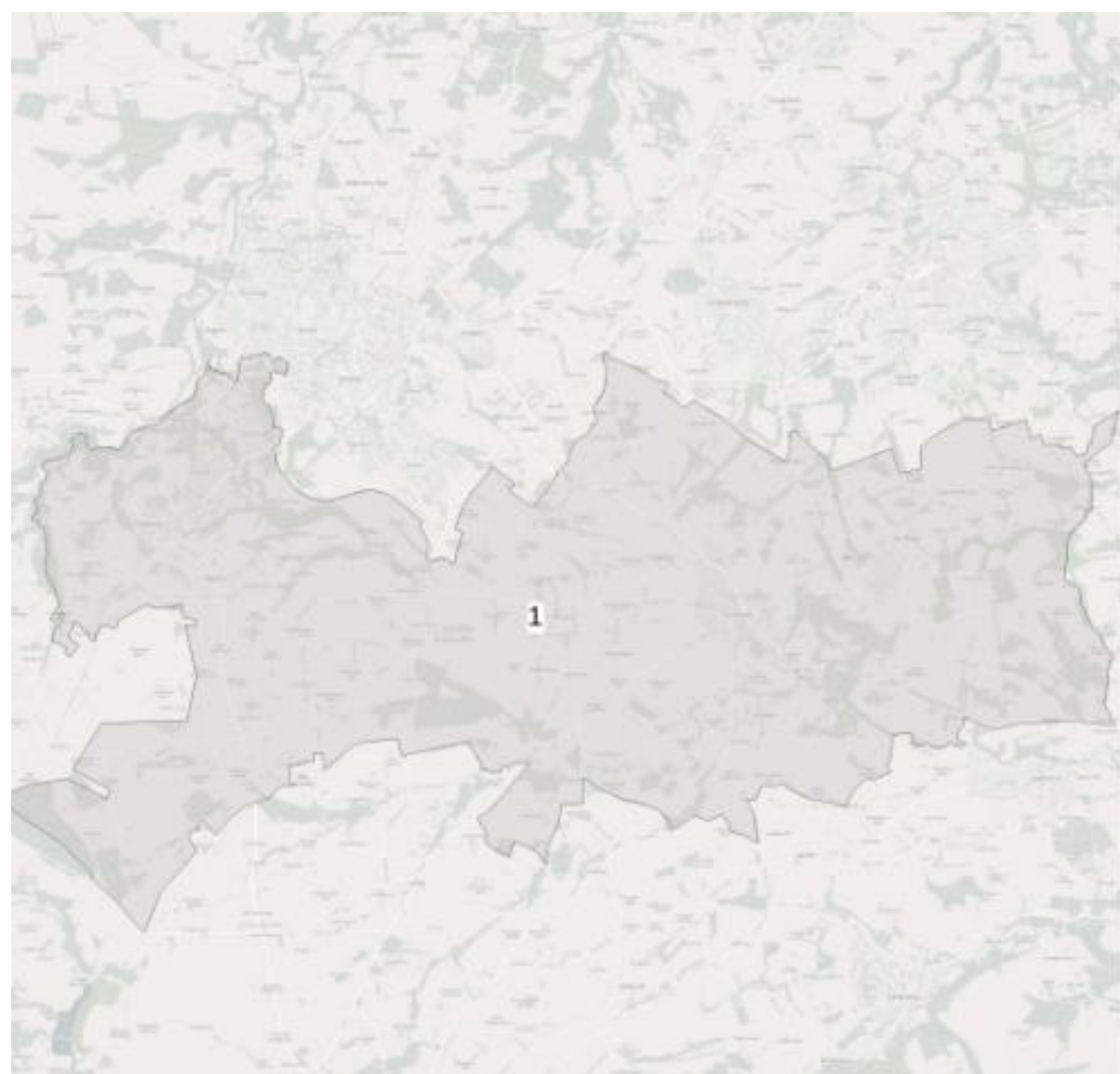
Lanchester

- Electoral Equality: Ensures this, so that neighbouring divisions can meet the electoral equality numbers. Additional housing scheduled in Burnhope area on Greenwood Avenue in the next few years.

- **Parish Boundaries:** The proposed ward encompasses the existing parishes of Lanchester, Burnhope, Healeyfield and Greencroft, ensuring that these existing rural parishes are joined together in the new ward, along with the currently unparished area of Moorside and The Grove which is closely aligned with Castleside.
- **Community Links:** the villages and hamlets in the current ward are closely linked in nature, with it covering a large rural area south of Consett. The bulk of the proposed ward is already in the existing Lanchester ward, with the addition of Moorside and The Grove, which is particularly closely linked to Castleside. However, Lanchester, with its large number of shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants is a significant hub for residents in the neighbouring areas on the south side of Consett and elsewhere in the proposed ward.
- **Natural boundaries:** the proposed ward includes clear natural boundaries that do not involve separation of any estates or villages.
- **Transport Links:** Burnhope and Lanchester are well-linked with many people travelling between the two villages for leisure and recreation. Castleside, Moorside and The Grove are linked by the X-15 bus, though rural connectivity is a shared theme of casework across the ward.
- **Council delivery of services:** Whilst the villages and hamlets of the existing ward have their own identity they share a range of rural issues and concerns that are distinct from Consett. Moorside and The Grove are better linked to Castleside than to the existing Genesis Estate. Meanwhile, Greencroft Parish and the coterminous village of Maiden Law very closely aligned to Lanchester, with the two parishes frequently working together on matters like road safety and shared environmental concerns.
- **Community Groups:** The area is linked together on similar boundaries and are aligned in the same Mid-Durham AAP. Many residents in The Grove and Moorside and Castleside use services together and this area is well-linked.

The composition of the proposed ward is given below.

Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
NWDIA - Moorside	1540
NWDIB - The Grove	1079
NWDKA - Castleside	1308
NWDLA - Lanchester North	818
NWDLB - Lanchester East	2533
NWDMA - Burnhope	1146
NWDMB - Holmside	71
Grand Total	8495



3. Chester-le-Street Area

We propose a slight variant on Option A of the JA submission, namely the enlargement of the current one member North Lodge ward to become a 2 member Chester-le-Street and North Lodge ward, and a 3 member Chester-le-Street South ward. In our view it is difficult to justify single member wards in a continuous urban area. The current one member North Lodge ward already takes in unparished areas as well as the parish of North Lodge, and as it is necessary to enlarge it this already flimsy justification is weakened further.

Chester-le-Street and North Lodge / Chester-le-Street South

- **Electoral Equality:** Ensures this, and neighbouring divisions meet the electoral equality numbers. This involves a two-member Chester-le-Street and North Lodge, alongside a 3-member Chester-le-Street South ward, with relatively limited changes to the existing boundaries in Chester-le-Street area (see below Polling District list).
- **Community Links:** This version of the ward boundaries links South Pelaw to Chester-le-Street as these two settlements have close community links. South Pelaw and Chester-le-Street have been linked in the past and was in 2008 in the old District Council division.
- **Public Transport:** These areas are well-linked through public buses and school buses that connect Chester-le-Street to South Pelaw and North Lodge. Chester-le-Street's main railway station is well used by residents of all of the proposed Chester-le-Street and North Lodge ward.
- **Parish Boundaries:** Whilst North Lodge has its own Parish Council, it includes unparished areas, so there is limited reasoning for it to be retained as a one-member ward.
- **Doctors and other public services:** Doctors, Opticians and the Community Hospital are all linked between North Lodge, South Pelaw and Chester-le-Street and this is another unifying link.
- **Churches:** five churches located in Chester-le-Street town centre and are well-linked together to church-goers resident in North Lodge.

The composition of the proposed Wards are listed below.

New Ward	Chester-le-Street South
Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)
NDDA - Kimblesworth & Plawsworth No 1	764
NDDC - Kimblesworth & Plawsworth No 3	264

NDFA - Edmondsley & Waldrige No 1	211
NDFB1 - Edmondsley & Waldrige No 2a	1851
NDFB2 - Edmondsley & Waldrige No 2b	1188
NDFC - Edmondsley & Waldrige No 3	201
NDFD - Edmondsley & Waldrige No 4	435
NDIA - Chester West No 1	556
NDIB - Chester West No 2	1345
NDIC - Chester West No 3	722
NDJA - Chester South	2457
NDKB - Chester Central No 2	1308
NDLB2 - Chester North No 2b	936

Grand Total	12238
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New Ward	Chester-le- Street and North Lodge
Polling Districts	Constrained Area Forecast (2028)

NDCA - Chester East No 1	581
NDCB - Chester East No 2	1085
NDCC - Chester East No 3	895
NDKA - Chester Central No 1	573
NDLA - Chester North No 1	842
NDLB1 - Chester North No 2a	1252
NDLC1 - Chester North No 3	347
NDLC2 - Chester North No 4	384
NDMA - North Lodge No 1	2382
NDMB - North Lodge No 2	522

Grand Total	8863
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Ward Name	Number of Seats	Electorate 2028	Per Cllr	Variance
Chester-le- Street and North Lodge	2	8863	4432	6.79%
Chester-le-Street South	3	12238	4079	-1.69%

