

Northumberland

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Related subject: New Delaval with New HARTley

the proposed creation of an artificial division containing two communities that have no connection and nothing in common whilst at the same time dividing a close-knit and integrated village is contrary to two of the three stated tasks that need to be balanced in this review. It is not just a numbers exercise and there are better and less divisive ways of achieving the three statutory tasks as detailed in the attached document

Attached Documents:

- boundary commission.docx

Thanks for sharing this and apologies for the delay in responding.

In short the proposed revisions are completely stupid and do not stand up to any serious examination.

The three statutory criteria under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 of the boundary review as stated in the full report para 34 are:

Equality of representation

Reflecting community Interests and identities

Providing for effective and convenient local government

Basically, this is total rubbish as far as New Hartley is concerned!

Splitting the integrated community of New Hartley in two fundamentally flies in the face of the second and third criteria. The only one that is possibly met is that of equality of representation, and this can be achieved in other ways.

Equality of representation

In equalising representation a predicted average representation per councillor cross Northumberland is one councillor per 3,856 electors by 2028. (para 21)

Good electoral equality is achieved if each division is within 10% of the authority average. Therefore every division within Northumberland should have between 3,470 and 4,242 electors by 2028..

Current proposals show the revised Blyth and Seaton Valley as having:

Hartley (Seaton Sluice+ New Hartley South)	-5%	3,663 electors
New Delaval and New Hartley	7%	4,126 electors

New Hartley at the last census had a population of 2,286 of which approx. 385 were under 18!

Assuming the proposed boundary splits the village in half with 950 votes in Hartley and 950 in New Delaval, keeping New Hartley entirely within Hartley parish would alter the electoral representation to:

Hartley	+19%	4613
New Delaval	-15%	3265

Clearly this is non equitable in representation. Therefore consideration needs to look wider afield to adjust the boundaries.

Whilst the review seems to achieve equality of representation, it fundamentally fails to reflect community identities or provide efficient and convenient local government.

Reflecting community Interests and identities

New Hartley is an homogeneous entity with its own community and religious organisations and school that serve the whole village. It has no connection of interaction with the areas to the north

identified as New Delaval. This separation and individuality are also true for the Wheatridge estate area of Seaton Delaval which is also proposed to be included in the New Delaval and New Hartley parish

Providing for effective and convenient local government is also compromised by this proposal with half the area being in Seaton Valley and half in Blyth. Recent proposals by the Boundary Commission for England due to be put before parliament on 01 July (consultations now closed) have removed Seaton Valley from the Blyth parliamentary constituency and placed it within Cramlington and Killingworth.

Para 12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which division you vote in, which other communities are in that division, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in.

Para 13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the county or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Perhaps they should! Whilst they cannot affect the external boundaries of the council, they clearly can affect internal administrative boundaries and create total confusion and inefficiency with the delivery of local representation

Quite why the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (1st Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL) chose to retain the original grouping of Blyth and Seaton Valley parishes beggars' belief when its sister organisation Boundary Commission for England, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ is proposing a different alignment for Seaton Valley as a whole?

Is this yet another case of reinforced silo mentality within local and national government!

Surely for some sort of administrative consistency any modification in boundaries to achieve equality of representation should be considered with adjacent areas that are also within the same higher administrative divisions.

Consider changes to Seaton Valley with adjacent areas in Cramlington rather than Blyth!

This eases the pressure on the boundary revisions within Blyth and enables Isabella to be reduced below a 10% variance!

Taking half of New Hartley out of New Delaval reduces this by an estimated 950 voters to 3186 or 18% below average. The adjacent parishes of Isabella +10% Plessey +3% and South Blyth 0% could be adjusted to reduce this imbalance.

This leaves the imbalances in Seaton Valley to be accommodated within Cramlington and Killingworth adjustments.

Hartley is currently made up of Seaton Sluice and New Hartley with an anticipated voting population by 2028 of 2497 and 1874 respectively or a total of 4321, Holywell would have 4028, Seaton Delaval 2417 and Seghill 2274 or a total of 4691 voting population.

These give inequalities of +13%, +4% and +21% to the average representation.

The revised Hartley had 700 removed from the original prediction to give a proposed voter population of 3671 (or -5%)

Rather than have a half councillor within Seaton Valley, is it better to add an area of Seaton Valley into the under average areas of Cramlington? The excess from Blyth could be balanced across the Bedlington East, Central, and Sleekburn area; -3%, 0% and -5% respectively (if it could not be accommodated within Blyth itself as suggested above).

Holywell wards BV17HY and BV18HY, with a combined voting population predicted at 4028 in 2028 are within the 10% variance of the average and can be left alone.

New Hartley on its own is predicted to have 1874

Seaton Sluice on its own is predicted to be 2497

Seaton Delaval on its own is predicted to be 2417

None of these areas as they stand can combine to produce a ward within variance limits, but together would justify 1.75 councillors with a total voting population of 6788. Split in half to share two councillors amongst 3 wards gives 3394 per councillor or -13% variance.

Seghill on its own is predicted to be 2274 and would not justify a single representative.

By taking in the area of Cramlington East west of A 186 Spine road a new parish can be created. Difficult to be precise on numbers but should be around 1750 voters (polling district BV2CE currently predicted to have 3500)



This raises the total number of predicted voters to 10812 and gives an average allocation across three parishes of 3604 or -7% of average.

The remainder of Cramlington East could be absorbed within the surrounding areas of Cramlington that has less than average allocation across 3 wards of 3354

This is within the limits proposed and retains cohesive communities. The split in representation would be within Seaton Delaval -part with New Hartley and part with Seghill. How Seaton Delaval is split depends on actual distribution of voters, but should be feasible along recognised boundaries such as A190 or A192. This way all voters remain within the same administrative districts, and recognised communities remain intact.

Not perfect as it is impossible to verify specific numbers from the presented report, but at least it seeks to balance representation, maintain administrative efficiency and reflect community interests, rather than prioritising a single objective!

