

# Northumberland

## Personal Details:

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## Comment text:

Dear Sirs,

I am writing concerning my position on the Local Government Boundary changes as the Member of Parliament for Hexham.

I want to thank the Local Government Boundary Commission for their work on the initial proposals - a difficult task, and I am pleased to support most of the proposals.

I am, however, concerned about the draft proposals for the divisions of Prudhoe North, Prudhoe South, Bywell and Stocksfield. As such, I wish to support the Conservative Party's counter-proposals to create Prudhoe North with Wylam, Prudhoe West with Mickley, Prudhoe South, and Stocksfield and Bywell division.

In the draft, the Boundary Commission proposes dwellings in Humbles Wood and Cottier Grange at the southern end of the current Prudhoe South Division to a new Stocksfield Division. These proposals would leave parts of Prudhoe isolated in a large rural ward, with little geographical, social or cultural connection to the rest of the Stocksfield Division. Residents in Humbles Wood or Cottier Grange must drive through two other divisions to reach any other part of the Stocksfield Division.

Prudhoe is a culturally distinctive town with a clear cultural identity, and residents within Humbles Wood and Cottier Grange are very much part of Prudhoe, with the town acting as the main focal point for shopping, social and cultural activities. Residents use local GP services, and the vast

majority of children go to school in the current Prudhoe South Division. Prudhoe Town Council also serves the areas of Humbles Wood and Cottier Grange, and it would make no sense whatsoever for a Councillor covering a vastly larger rural area, covering many Parish Councils to represent this small part of Prudhoe with little cultural, geographical or economic relevance to the Stocksfield Division.

The Conservative proposals create three distinctive urban and one rural division, giving residents distinctive and local council representation.

The proposed Bywell and Stocksfield division unites rural and culturally similar communities. Whilst the River Tyne runs through the heart of the division, this is the heart of the community, and residents cross the river to access local services and visit friends and family daily. Other Divisions, such as Corbridge and Hexham North, are separated by a river, making the Conservative proposals consistent with others. The parishes north and south of the river face each other in a valley setting. They are linked by the A69 and the A68 artery roads and by a series of minor roads north, south and east-west.

The Conservative proposals unite Mickley - part of Prudhoe Town Council - within a more urban Prudhoe Division will help align priorities for residents with issues such as verge cutting and transport, and schools.

The Conservative proposals also create a new Prudhoe North and Wylam Division. Wylam and Ovingham align closely with Prudhoe, with a vast majority of residents visiting Prudhoe almost daily for GP appointments and education. Many residents work in the lower Prudhoe Industrial Estate, and whilst it is not immediately apparent from the map, Prudhoe is very much elevated. Both "Wylam" and the "Castlefields and Low Prudhoe" have stations located on the Newcastle to Carlisle Railway, and Prudhoe Community High School also serves all pupils living within Wylam and Ovingham, and the two villages have closer cultural, economic and social links with Prudhoe than with the broader current Bywell Division.

I want to thank the Boundary Commission for their work in this process.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Opperman

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*