

Northumberland

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Comment text:

Related subject: Choppington and Hespcott

Response attached

Attached Documents:

- Boundary Commission Response.pdf



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th July 2023

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing as the Member of Parliament for Wansbeck to make comments on the current review of Boundaries in Northumberland. I would like to put on record my thanks to you for having done so in a manner which largely takes into consideration the ties between communities which I understand is a secondary consideration to the electoral numbers.

Whilst this is generally the case, I would like to raise an issue specifically with the proposed **Hepscott and Choppington Division**. I note that in producing the report you are specifically welcoming evidence as to where Hepscott's community ties lie, as well as how the proposals impact upon effective and convenient local government and electoral equality.

Hepscott previously formed part of the Castle Morpeth District Council area and shares links with other parts of that former borough. Children from Hepscott attend schools in the Morpeth school system as an example. The village forms part of a band of affluent settlements around the town of Morpeth and lies in easy commuting distance of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Choppington was previously part of the Wansbeck District Council area and has strong links with the remainder of the Choppington Parish Council area. It lies between Bedlington and Ashington and as such looks to those two communities for additional services. Children from Choppington attend secondary schools in the town of Bedlington. The parish itself is also part of the historic area known as Bedlingtonshire.

I am not aware of any ties between the communities of Choppington and Hepscott despite their relative proximity. I would also be concerned about the difficulties any councillor would face in providing effective local representation given the disparities between them demographically. Whilst Hepscott is one of the county's most prosperous villages Choppington has significant pockets of deprivation.

With all of this in mind, I believe a more appropriate solution would be for electors from the village of Hepscott to be in a ward with electors from similar communities which were previously in the Castle Morpeth District area. Looking at the commission's proposals this may be a better fit with Ponteland East and Stannington.

With regards to Choppington, a more appropriate solution would be to move the boundary of Choppington and Stakeford east and to amend the boundaries between Stakeford, Sleekburn, Bedlington East, Bedlington Central and Bedlington West in a clockwise manner to better balance the number of electors.

Kind Regards



Ian Lavery MP