

County Durham

Personal Details:

Name: Pete Molloy
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Organisation Name: (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Dear Sir,

Durham County Council Boundary Review 2023

The Local Government Boundary Commission is looking to reduce the amount of County Councillors at Durham County Council from the current 126 to 98, which will result in 28 fewer Councillors to represent the people of County Durham across the lower number of Divisions from 63 to 48.

These two changes will have the potential to increase the workload on 98 councillors, especially Independent councillors, from their respective constituency work to possibly sitting on more council committees and outside bodies.

I am a 52 year old, Independent Councillor, who is one of three councillors that represent the Spennymoor Division, and with being an Independent councillor, and not a councillor that is a member of a political party with fellow party councillors and members that could provide support and assistance, I have to rely on myself to do my council work

The amount of time I spend doing my council work in my Division as one of three councillors is on average 16 hours per week, which can be demanding, because I work full time, so do most of my councillor work of an evening and weekends, with some of my councillor work being done during the day on my tea and dinner breaks. I am also married and have a young family who are naturally demanding the attention of both their parents.

I feel by doing this boundary review, it should be taken into consideration by the Local Government Boundary Commission when wanting to decrease the amount of councillors, that not all councillors are members of political parties and are not either retired, semi-retired with grown up families, which allows for greater free time from normal day to day life or run their own businesses to allow them more time to perform their councillor duties and by reducing the amount of councillors the Local Government Boundary Commission will potentially increase a councillors work load and run the risk of discouraging people from wanting to become councillors, which is opposite of what actually needs to be done and will not be good for the constituents if they are not receiving the same representation, so for those reasons I would not like to see a reduction in either the number of councillors or Divisions.

However, If the Local Government Boundary Commission decide to proceed with its proposals of reducing the number of councillors in the Spennymoor Division and adjusting the size of its boundary to include Newfield and Binchester, I can understand the reason behind it with the two areas being situated on the edge of Spennymoor parish and the good road links to those areas from Spennymoor, but I do not agree with the shrinking of the Division's boundary to take the whole of the Spennymoor town centre out the Division, along with Ox Close Crescent and the Dundas Street area to Jackson Street and place it into the Tudhoe Division.

The proposal to take the boundary between Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions from its current natural position running through the Dene between Ox Close Crescent and Deneside, to around the rear of Ox Close Crescent, running along the edge of Jubilee Park to Carr Street and down to the A688 to incorporate the Dundas Street and Jackson Street areas into the Tudhoe Division will divide the Spennymoor Ward on the parish town council between the two Divisions, thus separating the community and making it very confusing on who represents them.

As well as separating the community, the new boundary proposal will deprive the majority of the people living in the Spennymoor ward, as well as the residents of Middlestone Moor and Byers Green, of having direct representation on their own town centre. Spennymoor town centre belongs in the Spennymoor Division, because it is part of the town of Spennymoor and not the village of Tudhoe.

There is currently five County Councillors that all have a direct input into Spennymoor's town centre due to it being split between the two Divisions. By placing the whole of the town centre in the Tudhoe Division, it will result in a reduction to only two County Councillors having a direct input on issues that affect the town centre, which is not good for the people of the parish as a whole, compared to the town centre remaining being split between two Divisions after the boundary review with direct input from four County Councillors that creates equality for all that reside within the two Divisions.

With regards to renaming the two Divisions 'Spennymoor West' and 'Spennymoor East', I feel that the former will be disrespectful to the residents of both Binchester and Newfield, because those two areas are not part of the Spennymoor parish. An alternative could be 'Spennymoor and Newfield'

Renaming Tudhoe Division 'Spennymoor East' would also be disrespectful to the villagers of Tudhoe, since there is mention of Tudhoe going as

far back to the 13th century, so the village's name needs to remain in the Division's name. 'Tudhoe and Croxdale' would be better than Spennymoor East,

Cllr Pete Molloy
Spennymoor Division

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Attached Documents:

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