

County Durham

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Comment text:


Dear Sirs – I am one of the 2 elected members representing the Leadgate & Medomsley Division of Durham County Council (DCC) and I have been involved both directly and indirectly with DCC electoral officers regarding the submissions and proposals (from varying political and independent groups/individuals) relative to the boundary changes affecting Co. Durham.

I have conducted several public meetings, engaging with local residents regarding the Boundary Changes and there has been considerable disquiet & frustration as residents were unaware of the complexity and effect of the imposed reduction of divisions within DCC with a resultant reduction in elected members, and they believe that more and relative public engagement should have been made.

Residents across the entire Leadgate and Medomsley division have raised relative and proportionate objections to the initial recommendations submitted by the Boundary Commission (specifically about the splitting and separation of the current Leadgate and Medomsley Division) and these objections + an alternative and genuine alternative proposal has been formulated and are included in the attachment, as are comments by myself and other local members regarding the remaining DCC divisions across the Consett locality.

I trust that this information will be duly considered as part of the ongoing consultation process and that the final recommendations will be shared with the relative officer and members of Durham County Council in due course.

Alan

Councillor Alan Shield
Cabinet Member Equality and Inclusion
Leadgate and Medomsley Division
Durham County Council


Attached Documents:

- BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSAL 2nd REVISION UPDATE FOR THE DIVSIONAL BOUNDARIES (002) (002).docx

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS FOR THE LEADGATE AND MEDOMSLEY DIVISION.

The Boundary Commission proposals are opposed for the following reasons: -

- The existing Leadgate and Medomsley Division (including all the 6/7 separate villages) is predominantly a rural based Division, with extremely limited transport links particularly for the rural villages and has no direct correlation with the ever-expanding Urban Conurbation of Consett Town. Most of the electors particularly within the Medomsley area of the division want to maintain the rural relationships and not be considered co-joined to the Township of Consett.
- Para 47 states that the Consett North Division would be split by the Villa Real Road, as per the proposal by the Joint Administration yet the Boundary Commission have used the entirety of Front Street and Genesis Way (Para 48) as “*clear and identifiable boundaries*” between the divisions of Consett North & Consett South. **This indicates a lack of continuity being applied in the Boundary Commission decision-making progress.**
- Para 43 in the report refers to Ebchester, Hamsterley and Hamsterley Mill all being linked along the A694, in the Derwent Valley “*with Leadgate and Medomsley somewhat separated from these communities by significant elevations*”. **There is no reference in the Boundary Commission report that both Burnopfield and Dipton (which is in a completely different valley to the A694 villages) are further separated from the communities on the A694 by even more significant elevations.**
- Para 42 refers to the introduction of Greencroft Parish with Consett Town Centre (an unparished area) yet the Boundary Commission declined the Joint Administration proposal for the amalgamation of the Dipton Division (unparished) with Tanfield Division (Parished). **This appears to be another example of lack of continuity being exercised by the Boundary Commission decision makers.**
- There is a cluster of Church of England religious communities across the churches at Hamsterley, Ebchester, Leadgate, Medomsley (**H.E.L.M.**) which has encouraged real partnership, evident in the shared congregations which are directly linked to the community-based groupings within their respective and adjoining villages.
- High Westwood and The Dene (which is closer to the Medomsley village than Medomsley Edge) are being included in the proposed Burnopfield/Dipton/Ebchester division whilst Medomsley village and Medomsley Edge are being in the proposed Consett North Division.
- Medomsley Community Action Group (**MCAG**) is a volunteer group operational across this locality. If this area (covered by Medomsley Community Action Group) were to be split as suggested by the Boundary Commission between different divisions, it would cause significant disruption to this group which strives to work together for the benefit of all residents across the whole community.

COMMUNITY PROPOSAL FOR THE DIVISIONAL BOUNDARIES.

- ❖ The current division of Leadgate/Medomsley (6850) is amalgamated with the current Burnopfield/Dipton division ((6212) to create a 3 Councillor Division entirely rural based with a cumulative total electorate of circa 13000.
- ❖ The Electors/Councillors = circa 13000/3 Councillors = 4335/Councillor which is +4.4% within the accepted +/-10% Elector/Cllr threshold.
- ❖ The new amalgamated division should be named as follows: -
The Derwent and Pont Valley Division, therefore no one village has predominance over the other villages across the new division thereby reflecting the complete rurality of this whole area of North Durham.

OTHER DIVISIONS WITHIN THE FORMER DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT

- ❖ It is proposed that Consett North should be renamed **Consett Central** and should become a one Member division based solely on the Town Centre Conurbation with an expected electorate of circa 4355 which is +4.9% within the +/- 10% elector threshold.
- ❖ Consett South incorporating the coalesced villages of Castleside, Moorside, The Grove and properties south and west of Fenwick Way & Genesis Way should become a one-member division as it has definite and succinct remoteness to the Labour proposal to include Delves Lane into an extended Consett South a 3-member division.
- ❖ The remainder of the Consett "Town" locality namely the villages of Crookhall, Delves Lane & Templetown should retain its own current individual 2-member status with any necessary minimal boundary changes to concur with the target Elector/Cllr status.
- ❖ Maiden Law (240 Electors) within the Greencroft Parish is proposed to be assigned to the Annfield Plain/Tanfield Division (Stanley Town Council ward) to balance and improve elector equality across the North Durham area ensuring parish boundaries are not compromised