

County Durham

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Comment text:

Dear Local Government Boundary Commission for England,

Please find attached a copy of the submission on behalf of the Durham County Council Labour Group.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Best wishes,

Danny

Cllr Danny Wood
Pelton Division
[REDACTED]

Attached Documents:

- Labour Group Amendment to Boundary Review.pdf

Labour Group Amendments to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Warding Pattern for County Durham

In reviewing the Draft warding pattern, the Durham County Council Labour Group would like to submit a number of amendments that we believe would improve the proposals and provide a better reflection of the original criteria set by the Commission.

Amendment 1 – Chester-le-Street

In considering the proposals for Chester-le-Street, we were pleased to see that the LGBCE opted for a pattern that enabled most of the town itself to be represented by two electoral divisions, each with two councillors. We were also pleased that the Town Centre itself would be wholly represented within a single ward.

However, we are concerned that because this pattern has been drawn from the changes to the North Lodge Division, this has resulted in concerns about the ward boundary between the proposed North and South wards that we feel could be improved.

We are proposing that the polling district NDCC (Chester East No. 3) should be part of the new Chester-le-Street North Division. In order to balance this, we are proposing that the two polling districts from the current West / Central Ward that have been split, should both move into the new Chester-le-Street South Ward.

Polling district	Description of area	Existing ward	Amendment	Electorate 2022	Electorate 2028
NDCA	Chester East No 1	North	North	578	581
NDCB	Chester East No 2	North	North	1079	1085
NDCC	Chester East No 3	South	North	890	895
NDIA	Chester West No 1	North	North	246	260
NDIA split	Chester West No 1	North	North	280	296
NDKA	Chester Central No 1	North	North	570	573
NDKB	Chester Central No 2	North	North	1300	1308
NDLA split	Chester North No 1	North	North	194	195
NDLB1	Chester North No 2a	North	North	1245	1252
NDLB2	Chester North No 2b	North	North	931	936
NDLC1	Chester North No 3	North	North	345	347
NDFA	Edmondsley & Waldrige No 1	South	South	210	211
NDFB1	Edmondsley & Waldrige No 2a	South	South	1840	1851
NDFB2	Edmondsley & Waldrige No 2b	South	South	1181	1188
NDFC	Edmondsley & Waldrige No 3	South	South	200	201
NDIB rem	Chester West No 2	North	South	964	979
NDIB split	Chester West No 2	South	South	361	366
NDIC rem	Chester West No 3	North	South	339	341
NDIC split	Chester West No 3	South	South	379	381

Electoral Equality

Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2028	Variance
Chester-le-Street North	2	7,728	-7%
Chester-le-Street South	2	7,975	-4%

This amendment improves the electoral equality across the two wards, as the Chester-le-Street South Ward increases from -9% to -7%.

Community Links and Identity

We feel that the Amendment improves the proposals by providing a better reflection of community identity and links – particularly to the eastern boundary for the proposed South Ward, which would become the East Coast Mainline.

Transport and Community Links

The East Coast Mainline is by far the most distinctive boundary in Chester-le-Street and this wholly separates NDCC (Chester East No. 3) polling district from the rest of the proposed South Ward. The only point at which the railway line can be crossed is at Waldrige Road in the North-West corner of the polling district.

All of the links and transport patterns in this area run north-south rather than east-west. This is because Durham Road is on a main bus route, but also the polling district is a short walk from the Town Centre. By contrast, there are very few reasons for these residents to travel into the rest of the South Ward. We feel that the interests of residents will be best represented alongside the Town Centre.

Historical Links

During the previous local government boundary review, consideration was given to the current North and East Wards being part of a three-member ward (along with North Lodge). Even at this point it was accepted that this area is best situated with the Town Centre, rather than with the West/Central or South Wards.

Convenient and Effective Local Government

This proposal will create more effective and convenient local government by simplifying the changes to the boundaries as much as possible. It will mean that the entirety of East Ward will move into the new Chester-le-Street North Ward.

In practice, the draft proposals have abolished the Chester-le-Street West/Central Ward and this amendment means that the main changes are for those residents in West/Central who are being split between Chester-le-Street North, Chester-le-Street South and Pelton Division respectively.

Amendment 2 – Dawdon and Seaham

We were disappointed that the Commission felt that they could not adopt our proposed warding pattern for Dawdon and Seaham as part of your draft proposals. The report indicates that this was because it left one Division (Dawdon) at -11% variance, which you felt was too high.

Whilst this was correct – the variance was based on a Council size of 96 (rather than 98). Under a pattern for 98 Councillors, the variance for our proposed two-member Dawdon ward comes out at -9.25% which is within the tolerance, and we feel would be worth of further consideration.

In order to provide a more balanced amendment, we have changed our initial proposals slightly in order to ensure a better balance between the proposed Divisions and to ensure a better level of electoral equality.

Polling district	Description of area	Parish	Draft ward	Amendment	Electorate 2028
EOA	Dawdon No. 1	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Dawdon	1367
EOB	Dawdon No. 2	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Dawdon	1123
EOC	Dawdon No. 3	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Dawdon	593
EOD	Dawdon No. 4	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Dawdon	1096
EPA	Dalton Urban	Dalton Le Dale	Dalton & Dawdon	Dawdon	957
EQB	Seaham Harbour No. 2	Seaham	Seaham	Dawdon	972
EQC	Seaham Harbour No. 3	Seaham	Seaham	Dawdon	386
EQD	Seaham Harbour No. 4	Seaham	Seaham	Dawdon	719
ERB2	Seaham North No 1b	Seaham	Seaham	Dawdon	331
ERC	Seaham North No. 2	Seaham	Seaham	Dawdon	1276
ENA	Dalton Village	Dalton Le Dale	Dalton & Dawdon	Murton	340
EKA	Hawthorn	Hawthorn	Murton	Murton	834
EKD	South Hetton	South Hetton	Murton	Murton	2119
EMA1	Murton West No. 1a	Murton	Murton	Murton	1552
EMA2	Murton West No1b	Murton	Murton	Murton	137
EMB	Murton West No. 2	Murton	Murton	Murton	354
EMC	Murton West No. 3	Murton	Murton	Murton	566
ENB	Murton East No. 1	Murton	Murton	Murton	1484

ENC	Murton East No. 2	Murton	Murton	Murton	1091
END	Murton East No. 3	Murton	Murton	Murton	275
EPB	Deneside No. 1	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Seaham & Deneside	821
EPC	Deneside No. 2	Seaham	Dalton & Dawdon	Seaham & Deneside	2010
EQA	Seaham Harbour No. 1	Seaham	Seaham	Seaham & Deneside	1901
ERA	Seaton	Seaton with Slingley	Seaham	Seaham & Deneside	1062
ERB1	Seaham North No. 1a	Seaham	Seaham	Seaham & Deneside	1139
ERD	Seaham North No. 3	Seaham	Seaham	Seaham & Deneside	1241

Electoral Equality

Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2028	Variance
Dawdon	2	8,820	6%
Murton	2	8,752	5%
Seaham & Deneside	2	8,174	-2%

We feel that this amendment enhances both our original proposal and the draft proposals from the LGBCE as it presents a much better spread of electors between the three divisions, reducing the highest variance from 9% to 6%. This presents a much better level of electoral equality for residents across this area.

Community Identity and Links

We feel that the best reflection of community links and identity is to have East Shore Village part of a two-member Dawdon Ward. This creates a much clearer boundary along the railway line between the Dawdon and Seaham Wards.

Convenient and Effective Local Government

We feel that this amendment will improve the warding pattern and will provide more convenient and effective local government for residents.

Amendment 3 – West Auckland, Evenwood and Barnard Castle

We were disappointed that the LGBCE did not accept our proposals for a two-member West Auckland as we feel that this is by far the best reflection of community identity and links. We are proposing to split the BAIA along Copeland Lane.

These rural communities to the West of Bishop Auckland have close links with West Auckland and St Helen Auckland.

The Labour Group are concerned that the proposed 3-member Evenwood Ward is too large and too rural and that residents in Etherley, Toft Hill, Witton Park, Escomb and the surrounding areas have much more in common and much closer ties with West Auckland. In order to balance this we are proposing to change the proposed boundaries between Evenwood (which would become a two member ward) and Barnard Castle which would remain a three member ward.

We have worked to ensure that all of our Amendments are balanced and create a full pattern for County Durham that reflects the Boundary Commission's criteria. However we would ask that even if the Commission considers changing the warding pattern for Evenwood and / or Barnard Castle, that you still try to balance this with a two member West Auckland.

Polling district	Description of area	Existing ward	Counter Proposal	Electorate 2028
BAHA	St Helen Auckl&	West Auckland	West Auckland	2560
BAHB	West Auckl& 1	West Auckland	West Auckland	962
BAHC	West Auckl& 2	West Auckland	West Auckland	889
BAFA	Witton Park	Evenwood	West Auckland	479
BAFB	Escomb	Evenwood	West Auckland	2292
BAIA	Etherley (West Auckl&) Rem	Evenwood	West Auckland	229
BAIB	Etherley & Toft Hill	Evenwood	West Auckland	1424
BAYC	Raby	Evenwood	Evenwood	53
BAAAA	Ingleton	Evenwood	Evenwood	362
BAAAB	Headlam	Evenwood	Evenwood	34
BAAAC	Langton	Evenwood	Evenwood	27
BAAAD	Bolam	Evenwood	Evenwood	72
BAAAE	Morton Tinmouth	Evenwood	Evenwood	11
BAAAF	Hilton	Evenwood	Evenwood	36
BAAAG	Wackerfield	Evenwood	Evenwood	48
BAIA	Etherley (West Auckl&) Split	Evenwood	Evenwood	66

BAIC	Witton	Evenwood	Evenwood	190
BAJA	Toft Hill	Evenwood	Evenwood	47
BAJB	Evenwood	Evenwood	Evenwood	1319
BAJC	Ramshaw	Evenwood	Evenwood	214
BAJD	L&s	Evenwood	Evenwood	174
BAKA	Cockfield	Evenwood	Evenwood	1221
BALA	Butterknowle	Evenwood	Evenwood	598
BALB	Copley	Evenwood	Evenwood	395
BALC	Woodl&	Evenwood	Evenwood	196
BAMA	Hamsterley	Evenwood	Evenwood	385
BAMB	South Bedburn	Evenwood	Evenwood	147
BAYA	Staindrop	Evenwood	Evenwood	1159
BAYD	Langleydale	Evenwood	Evenwood	64
BANA	Eggleston	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	350
BANB	Marwood Rural	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	173
BAXB	Stainton	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	245
BAXB1	Stainton South	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	126
BAXC	The Oval	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	94
BAYB	Cleatlam	Barnard Castle	Evenwood	71
BAOA	Forest	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	124
BAOB	Middleton-In-Teasdale	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	912
BAOC	Newbiggin	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	105
BAPA	Romaldkirk	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	143
BAPB	Hunderthwaite	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	93
BAPC	Holwick	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	61
BAPD	Lunedale	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	79
BAPE	Mickleton	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	342
BAQA	Cotherstone	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	440
BAQB	Briscoe	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	42
BAQC	Lartington	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	116
BARA	Brignall	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	37

BARB	Rokeby	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	61
BARC	Boldron	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	95
BARD	Egglesstone Abbey	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	10
BARE	Bowes	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	361
BARF	Gilmonby	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	30
BASA	Barningham	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	123
BASB	Ovington	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	124
BASC	Barforth	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	59
BASD	Hutton Magna	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	93
BASE	Wycliffe with Thorpe	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	80
BASF	Hope	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	16
BASG	Scargill	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	26
BATA	Startforth	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	1007
BAUA	Barnard Castle East	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	1280
BAVA1	Barnard Castle West	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	313
BAVA2	Barnard Castle East	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	679
BAVA2 split	Barnard Castle East	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	72
BAVB	Marwood Urban	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	70
BAVB split	Marwood Urban	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	498
BAWA1	Barnard Castle West	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	1935
BAXA	Westwick	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	50
BAXD	Whorlton	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	150
BAZA	Gainford	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	1239
BAZB	Winston	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	285
BAZC	South Cleatlam	Barnard Castle	Barnard Castle	56

Electoral Equality

Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2028	Variance
West Auckland	2	8835	6%
Evenwood	2	7877	-5%
Barnard Castle	3	11206	-10%

All three of the wards impacted by this amendment are within the 10% variance. Whilst we acknowledge that Barnard Castle would be right at the limit of what the Boundary Commission are able to accept, we feel that this would be fair and justified in the circumstances, considering the size and rurality of the area.

We note that the Teesdale Branch of the Labour Party have made a submission for three single-member wards, one of which would cover the Town of Barnard Castle. We would welcome this in principle so long as it does not subtract from a two-member West Auckland Ward as outlined above.

Community Links and Identity

We feel that the draft warding pattern can be most improved in this part of the County by recognising the close community links and shared identity that villages to the North of West Auckland share with the current West Auckland Ward. We feel that the LGBCE should listen to these communities and should ensure that they are represented as part of a two-member West Auckland Ward. Close links were formed between many of these villages after they were subject to Category D status.

This amendment would also reduce the size of the proposed Evenwood Ward. We feel that it would be a much better reflection of community links and identity as a two-member ward.

We have previously made the case for a three member Barnard Castle Ward and maintain that this would be a feasible option, but we note the comments from the Commission about our original proposal for Evenwood and Weardale. In order to reflect this, we are now proposing to change the boundary between Evenwood and Barnard Castle to ensure that both areas present decent levels of Electoral Equality alongside a two member West Auckland Division.

As explained above, we would also be minded to support a pattern of three single-member wards for Barnard Castle, with one ward representing the town itself. This is because the Town has different needs and identity to the rest of the ward. However, we would only be supportive of such a move, if it could sit alongside a two-member West Auckland ward.

Convenient and Effective Local Government

We feel that this amendment will make all three divisions much more effective. For West Auckland this will ensure that community links are respected and protected and will make

local Government more convenient. The ward will have clear boundaries and already has strong internal community links.

This amendment will also ensure that the Evenwood Ward does not become too large and unwieldy. It will also reduce the amount of electors in the Barnard Castle Division, as a reflection of the predominantly rural nature of the ward.

Amendment 4 – Trimdon & Wingate

We are proposing to separate the proposed Trimdon & Wingate Wards into two separate single-member divisions in order to best reflect the distinct identities of their respective communities.

Polling district	Description of area	Existing ward	Counter Proposal	Electorate 2028
SKB	Old Trimdon	Trimdon & Wingate	Trimdon	2255
SLA	New T& T Grange No. 1	Trimdon & Wingate	Trimdon	421
SLB	New T& T Grange No. 2	Trimdon & Wingate	Trimdon	878
SMA	Station Town	Trimdon & Wingate	Trimdon	844
SMB	Trimdon Foundry No. 1	Trimdon & Wingate	Wingate	643
SMC	Trimdon Foundry No. 2	Trimdon & Wingate	Wingate	407
SMD	Wingate No.1	Trimdon & Wingate	Wingate	893
SME	Wingate No.2	Trimdon & Wingate	Wingate	2483

Electoral Equality

Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2028	Variance
Trimdon	1	4398	6%
Wingate	1	4426	7%

Separating these out into two single member wards provides good levels of electoral equality for both of the new wards.

Community Links & Identity

By creating two single member wards we ensure that each of these communities retains its own distinctive identity within a smaller County Council. As per our original submission, there is a strong case for a separate Trimdon Ward. There were also submissions from Wingate, including from Cllr Higgins for a separate Wingate Ward.

Convenient and Effective Local Government

We feel that the draft proposal could be best improved by separating these out into two distinct single-member wards.

Amendment 5 – Blackhalls (Monk Hesleden & Castle Eden)

In order to improve the draft warding pattern, we are proposing to merge the wards of Monk Hesleden and Castle Eden to create a two-member Blackhalls Division.

Polling district	Description of area	Existing ward	Counter Proposal	Electorate 2028
EAA	Hesleden	Monk Hesleden	Blackhalls	629
EAB	Sheraton	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	89
EAC	Nesbitt	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	10
EAD	Hutton Henry	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	377
EAE	Castle Eden	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	517
EBA	Blackhall Colliery	Monk Hesleden	Blackhalls	2096
EBB	Blackhall Rocks No. 1	Monk Hesleden	Blackhalls	898
EBC	Blackhall Rocks No. 2	Monk Hesleden	Blackhalls	950
EDA	Passfield No. 1	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	2505
EDB1	Passfield No 2a	Castle Eden & Passfield	Blackhalls	968

Electoral Equality

Ward	Cllrs	Electorate 2028	Variance
Blackhalls	2	9039	9%

This amendment provides a good level of electoral equality within the tolerance set by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Community Links and Identity

Blackhall, Hesleden, Hutton Henry and Castle Eden share a significant history of coal mining dating back to 1841. The mine that was located at Hesleden (before the village was built), which was within the Monk Hesleden area, was known as Castle Eden Colliery. Castle Eden, the village, was closer to the mine than Monk Hesleden was – hence the name of the pit. Castle Eden Colliery was sunk but re-opened in 1900. The residents of Castle Eden then faced the decision of moving away or commuting to the nearest colliery which was in Blackhall. Due to the historic railway, residents were also able to travel to Hutton Henry for work. The closure of Hutton Henry mine meant that many residents ended up moving away

and the village of Castle Eden reduced in size which then gave way to the community of Hesleden.

Since this time, the communities have shared many struggles and faced many issues together. This includes the current on-going issue of the restoration of the above mentioned pit heap. The residents of Castle Eden and Hesleden have come together to support one-another.

Hesleden and Castle Eden both have limited amenities within the villages. Hesleden has a small village shop which is heavily relied on by the residents of Castle Eden. Children from Castle Eden also attend the local primary school within Hesleden and spend time within the local Workingmen's Club in Hesleden.

All of the villages face similar issues with regards to local transport. As they are rural communities, transport not only links all of the communities together but they also share the same bus to link to the nearest towns. They all face similar issues in being able to access vital amenities due to their nature and layout.

The above information shows how the villages within both divisions share a linked history and share similar current circumstances and in light of this, we feel that there is a strong justification for combining the proposed Monk Hesledon and Castle Eden Divisions.

Convenient and Effective Local Government

We feel that this arrangement will improve the warding pattern and provide more effective and convenient local government by ensuring that these communities are represented in a two-member ward, most of which already share significant historic and community links.