

Sunderland

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Comment text:

Dear Colleague,

Please find attached a submission in response to the Electoral Review for Sunderland Consultation which closes today.

I would be grateful if you can acknowledge receipt of this submission please?

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Kind regards

Lindsay

Attached Documents:

- Boundary Commission Review - Consolidated Submission (11.12.23).pdf

Professor Colin Mellors
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Office of the Chief Executive
City Hall, Plater Way
Sunderland, SR1 3AA

Date: 11 December 2023
Our ref:
Your ref:

Dear Professor Mellors

**Electoral Review of Sunderland City Council
Proposals for new Wards in Sunderland (December 2023)**

I write in response to the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Sunderland City Council, and enclose the attached submission for your consideration.

This submission has been prepared based on the considerations of a cross-party working group of fifteen Councillors, whose work was supported by Council officers. Over the most recent consultation period, the working group has considered the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations in detail, and taken the time to debate and evaluate these recommendations, with regard to the statutory criteria in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

This response sets out the proposals from the working group, in respect of a limited number of Ward names and Ward boundaries. It represents those matters where the working group was either able to agree a consensus on the Boundary Commission's proposal, or collectively agreed to an alternative proposal.

Any of the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations that are not referred to in this submission are those which the working group was unable to agree a consensus on, either in respect of the Commission's proposal, or an alternative proposal.

To clarify, this is not an official Sunderland City Council proposal, to the extent that it has not been formally considered by and approved at a meeting of full Council. It is however a response which is endorsed and approved by each of the Council's three main political groups. I also anticipate that the Council's main political groups may submit their own, separate responses to the consultation, in addition to the working group's submission.

I hope this submission helps support the Boundary Commission's final considerations and recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Sunderland City Council. Should you require any further information about this submission please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Patrick Melia
Chief Executive

WARD NAMES

Proposed Ward Names – Boundary Commission Draft Recommendations

The working group agrees with the proposed Ward names in the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations, for the following Wards:

- Barnes and Thornhill
- Herrington
- Hetton
- Pallion
- Roker
- Ryhope
- Tunstall and Humbledon

Proposed Ward Name – Silksworth and Farrington

The working group proposes that the 'Farrington and Silksworth' Ward in the draft recommendations is instead named "Silksworth and Farrington".

This proposal reflects the fact that Silksworth is the larger of these two main communities within the Ward, and also acknowledges the significant history of the parish of Silksworth. The working group considers that this name better reflects the community identities within this Ward.

Proposed Ward Name – Pennywell and South Hylton

The working group proposes that the 'Pennywell' Ward in the draft recommendations is instead named "Pennywell and South Hylton".

It was considered by the working group that these two important communities have distinct identities, and are places 'in their own right', both of which should be acknowledged in the new Ward name. Residents of Pennywell do not typically consider the area of South Hylton to be a sub-district of their community, and vice-versa.

It was also noted by the working group that 'South Hylton' was the historic name for this Ward, before it became known as St Anne's.

The working group considers that "Pennywell and South Hylton" better reflects the community identities within this Ward. It also follows the 'two-place' Ward naming convention that is a common theme across several of the Boundary Commission's proposals.

Proposed Ward Name – Grindon and Thorney Close

The working group proposes that the “Sandhill” Ward in the draft recommendations is instead named “Grindon and Thorney Close”.

This change was suggested primarily as Sandhill does not represent the name of a real place, village, or other settlement within this Ward. It is not an area name with which residents will typically identify. The name Sandhill also does not help residents either recognise where the Ward is geographically located, or establish which communities the Ward includes.

Grindon and Thorney Close are the two biggest communities within this Ward, and as such the working group considers that this name better reflects its community identities, and the use of a ‘real’ place name supports more effective and understandable local government which residents are able to engage with and participate in.

Proposed Ward Name – Penshaw and Shiney Row

The working group proposes that the “Shiney Row” Ward in the draft recommendations is instead named “Penshaw and Shiney Row”.

The working group considers that Penshaw and Shiney Row are the two most significant communities within the proposed Ward, and should be recognised in the new Ward name. It also reflects the fact that Penshaw Monument, a distinctive and widely known local landmark, is located in this Ward.

The working group considers that this proposed name makes the location of the Ward immediately recognisable to the electorate, and better reflects the community identities within this Ward.

Proposed Ward Name – Doxford Park

The working group proposes that the “Doxford” Ward in the draft proposals is instead named “Doxford Park”.

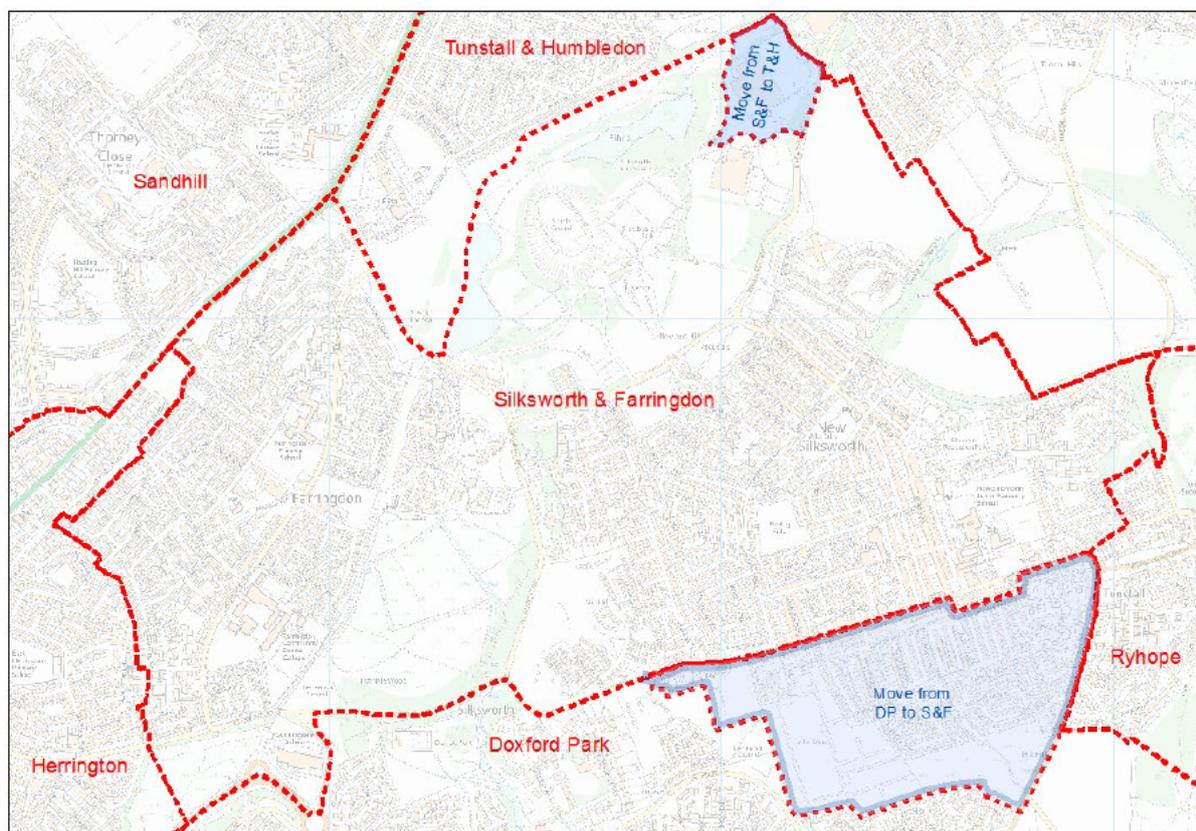
This change is proposed as “Doxford” is not the name of a real place or settlement, and housing in this area is commonly known as Doxford Park (as well as this being the name of an actual park in the area). While the working group recognise that this is not a significant change to the current Ward name, it believes that this revised name better reflects the community identity within this Ward.

WARD BOUNDARIES

These proposals should be read in conjunction with the separate proposals provided by the working group in respect of Ward Names. For the purpose of clarity, all Wards are referred to using the names proposed by the working group.

1. Proposed New Ward Boundaries – Silksworth and Farrington (also affecting Doxford Park)

The working group proposes a revised southern boundary to the Silksworth and Farrington Ward, as illustrated in the plan below.



The proposed revision comprises the following streets being removed from the current Doxford Park Ward and included within Silksworth and Farrington:

Cambridge Road, Surrey Avenue, Pembroke Avenue, Quarry Street, Quarry Road, Orr Avenue, Davison Avenue, Norman Avenue, Park Avenue, Emmerson Terrace West, Byrne Terrace West, Hill Brow, Londonderry Terrace, Londonderry Street, Tom Urwin House, Hill Street, Maria Street, Robert Street, Lord Street, Aline Street, Fairways, Tunstall Village Road, Cherrywood Gardens, Shoreswood Drive and Redwood Grove.

The estimated impact which the proposal has on electoral equality in both the Silksworth and Farringdon Ward and the Doxford Park Ward is set out in the following table:

	Electors in 2029 with current boundaries	Electors in 2029 if recommendations accepted
Silksworth and Farringdon	8470	9726
Doxford	9254	7998

The working group considers that the proposed revision better reflects the communities, street pattern and topography of the area. The revised Ward pattern will help promote improved engagement between residents and Members, both in the provision of Council services and with electoral processes.

The revised proposal ensures that streets which are an integral part of the community of Silksworth north of Ruswarp Drive and west of Burdon Road (and which use local shops, schools and other community facilities in Silksworth) are in the Silksworth and Farringdon Ward, respecting the natural settlement gap between the communities of Silksworth and Doxford Park north of Ruswarp Drive and Woburn Drive.

The working group also proposes a revision to the northern boundary (shown in the plan above) that separates the Silksworth and Farringdon, and Tunstall and Humbledon Wards. The Boundary Commission's draft recommendations currently divide the Sainsbury's site on Silksworth Lane in half, with the store in Silksworth and Farringdon and the petrol station in Tunstall and Humbledon Ward. The boundary proposed in the draft recommendations, between the footpath and the rear of the Sainsbury's site, crosses an area of green open space which is totally indistinguishable and unidentifiable, making it extremely difficult for all interested parties to understand the exact boundary in this area.

The working group proposes that the Ward boundary should follow the north-south footpath to the west of Sainsbury's and then the northern edge of the "Silksworth Sports Complex" car park and east-west access road to lead out to Silksworth Lane. It considers that this proposal will result in a more easily identifiable Ward boundary and will also ensure that any local matters associated with the large Sainsbury's site are all contained within one Ward.

The working group agreed that there was merit in Bracknell Close and Camberley Close (which are situated to the South-East of the proposed Ward boundary) both being included in the Silksworth and Farringdon Ward. While this would provide for a more easily identifiable boundary, the working group's estimates show that adding these further properties to the proposed Silksworth and Farringdon Ward results in a variance of +10.75% above the average number of electors per councillor in a Ward. As such, the working group's proposal is that Bracknell Close and Camberley Close will remain in the Ryhope Ward.

2. Proposed New Ward Boundaries – General Submissions

The working group also wishes to make two further representations in response to the Boundary Commission's consultation.

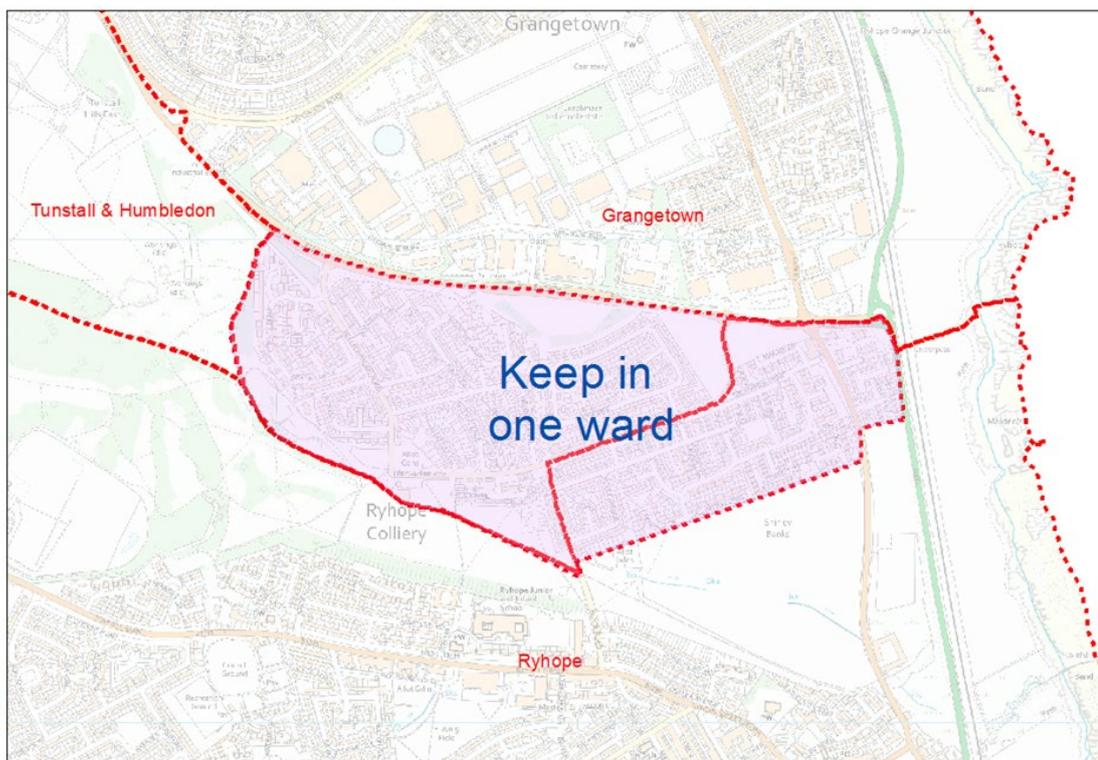
The following are two areas where the working group agreed that changes to the Boundary Commission's draft recommendation would be beneficial, but was unable to reach a

consensus on how the boundaries should be re-drawn to accommodate these specific alterations.

The Council's main political groups may decide to submit their own, separate responses to the consultation which will make similar general representations to those below, but which may also detail suggested the changes to Ward boundaries that flow from these general proposals:

2.1 Hollycarrside Estate (Grangetown and Ryhope Wards)

The working group agreed that the Hollycarrside Estate, shown edged in red on the plan below, should not be split between the Grangetown and Ryhope Wards with only a small proportion in the latter.



The working group considers that the Hollycarrside estate is a contiguous and identifiable community and that consequently it is not helpful to include a small number of its streets in a different Ward to those that neighbour them.

The working group considers that this change keeps an identifiable community together as a whole within this Ward, and accordingly supports more effective and understandable local government.

2.2 Barnes Park (Barnes and Thornhill Ward)

The working group agreed that Barnes Park, shown edged in red on the plan below, should not be split into two separate Wards.



Barnes Park is a large and popular area of Sunderland and a number of local residents and community interest groups make important contributions to its upkeep and operation. It is important that users, residents and interest groups clearly understand which Ward councillors are responsible for the park.

Although Barnes Burn is a clear natural boundary dividing the park, potential issues such as littering, pest control or anti-social behaviour can affect the whole park, and can be more effectively addressed where responsibility for the entire park remains with one group of Ward Councillors.

Whilst the working group was unable to agree the precise details of an alternative boundary proposal in this area, it would welcome the Commission's reconsideration of the boundary to take account of the above. Retaining the entire park within one Ward will help support its effective maintenance and management and understandable local government.