

Sunderland

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Friends of Silksworth Park (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: Silksworth Ward

I disagree with the current proposal that is out for consultation by the Boundary Commission. I would urge the Boundary Commission to support the latest proposals by the local Labour Party group, that I understand has received broad support from other political parties. I am not putting a political viewpoint forward but I strongly believe that the current proposal to split Silksworth in half would be very damaging to Silksworth village for a number of reasons, outlined below.

My husband has worked as a town planner in this area for 30 years and has used Ward boundaries to plan future development- these need to reflect how places work, so that the city can plan sustainably and so that local people can access services with a minimum of bureaucracy. It also enables funding bids to be put together that have demographic context, relevance and strength. Splitting a village between different political representatives often leads to delays and confusion.

I have also lived in the village all of my life and can easily recognise the strong cultural and social identity that Silksworth has, stemming back to the 1870's when Silksworth pit was first sunk and the miners houses were built (most of which still stand). These houses were bounded by a village wall, which still survives in parts. Half of these houses would no longer be part of Silksworth, after standing in Silksworth for 150 years. Furthermore, the parish church (St Matthews) would leave the Ward and village, as would Silksworth Health Centre, a number of the village centre shops, pubs and two main care homes. Ward boundaries need to be viewed not purely as numbers of voters, but reflect cultural, social and economic identity of places. Key streets that need to remain in Silksworth Ward include: Oak Tree Drive, St Matthews View, Cambridge Road, Orr Drive, Robert Street (where I was brought up) and Park Avenue. Realistically, Cherrywood Gardens, Redwood Grove and Tunstall

Village Green would also be included in Silksworth Ward.

I would also point out to you that over the next 10 years, 3,000 new homes will be built immediately to the south of Silksworth, Doxford Park and Ryhope, that will add 8,000 population, which will be split between Doxford and Ryhope Wards. There is therefore every need to retain the Wards of Silksworth, Doxford and Ryhope, and to retain 3 Councillors for each Ward, which will be appropriately balanced in relation to the rest of the city of Sunderland population.

Finally, if Silksworth's boundary is altered to include Farrington (a post-war housing estate extension), then the new Ward name needs to reflect the importance of Silksworth – it needs to be named Silksworth and Farrington, and not the other way around.

Attached Documents:

None attached