

Gateshead

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: The whole council area

I broadly support the Commission's proposals, but some further alterations to boundaries and names can be made to improve the recommendations. The boundary changes relate to the Winlaton and Wrekenton areas. The names changes cover a number of wards and seek to concisely and accurately indicate the area that these wards cover. I have attached my full response.

Attached Documents:

- submission-to-lgbce-on-gateshead-council.docx

Blaydon/Winlaton and High Spen

I would like to express support for the Commission's alterations to the boundary between these 2 wards. Tyne Street forms a strong boundary, with residents south of it clearly part of Winlaton (Parkhead estate) rather than Blaydon. Therefore, I propose that the remaining streets south of Tyne Street still proposed to be part of Blaydon ward instead move to Winlaton and High Spen ward as well. To retain electoral equality, I would recommend moving streets such as Garth Farm Road or Hill Top into Blaydon ward. The need to achieve electoral equality means that Blaydon ward needs to encroach on Winlaton, but Tyne Street would provide a clearer boundary between the 2 wards.

Furthermore, I would recommend the Commission include the properties along Long Ridge Road and Liddells Fell Road in Winlaton and High Spen ward (or Blaydon if this is not possible). These rural properties are currently located in Crawcrook and Greenside ward, but Liddells Fell Road in particular is geographically closer to Winlaton/Blaydon and they both enjoy greater community ties to this area than Greenside (or Crawcrook).

Ryton, Crookhill and Stella

I would like to express support for the changes to Ryton, Crookhill and Stella ward. Summerhill has greater ties to Blaydon so the Commission is right to move it into Blaydon ward. I also support the Commission's proposal to unite Barmoor within Crawcrook and Greenside ward. The area has greater ties to Ryton, but given the constraint of electoral equality it is necessary to make this change.

However, the Commission should consider renaming the ward to 'Ryton and Stella'. The inclusion of Crookhill is unnecessary given that Crookhill is only a part of Ryton rather than a separate village, and simply makes the ward name needlessly long. I see no reason why the Commission should feel the need to include Crookhill when it does not include other parts of Ryton in the name like Stargate.

Whickham North and Swalwell

I support the Commission's inclusion of Swalwell in this ward's name. Swalwell is contiguous with but a distinct part of Whickham. However, I propose that the ward be named 'Whickham West and Swalwell'. The ward does cover part of northern Whickham (the other half is in Dunston Hill and Whickham East ward) but the Commission proposes that it stretch increasingly far into southern Whickham as well. The ward goes as far south into Whickham as the aforementioned Dunston Hill and Whickham East, yet its name would not give this impression. Consequently, it is more accurate to say it covers western Whickham than it does northern Whickham and should be renamed accordingly.

Dunston, Teams and Riverside

I strongly support the Commission in rejecting the Council's proposals to move the area bounded by Glebe Terrace and Park Terrace into Dunston, Teams and Riverside ward. The Commission is correct that the A1 forms a very strong boundary between the 2 halves of Dunston and this should not be crossed unless absolutely necessary for electoral equality, which it is not.

However, I oppose the inclusion of Riverside in the ward name. It is not stated in the Commission's report why this change has been made and without an explanation it appears completely unnecessary. The northern boundary of Gateshead Council is the River Tyne so the name does not indicate which riverside the ward includes. The ward is composed of Dunston north of the A1 along with Teams. 'Dunston and Teams' remains an accurate and concise name for the ward so no change is needed.

Bridges

I recommend that the Commission rename this Bridges ward 'Gateshead Central'. The current ward name does not give a clear indication of where it is located. Blaydon ward has 2 bridges and Redheugh Bridge in Gateshead is just outside the ward. Renaming it to Gateshead Central would clearly state that the ward covers the centre of Gateshead.

High Fell/Birtley North and Lamesley

I recommend that the Commission rename High Fell ward to 'Beacon Lough'. High Fell is not a name commonly used to refer to the area and it is not a community within the ward. Beacon Lough estate is a well-known area and located in the centre of the ward. It would much more clearly indicate where the ward is located and the area it covers.

I recommend that the Commission consider moving southern Wrekenton (polling district UDG2) from Birtley North and Lamesley ward to High Fell ward. Birtley North and Lamesley ward would remain in quota, and High Fell ward would require only minor adjustments by removing a few streets in the north or west of the ward. This change would unite Wrekenton within a single ward so would better reflect community identity.

I recommend that the Commission should rename Birtley North and Lamesley ward to 'Birtley North, Eighton Banks and Kibblesworth'. The Commission proposes that northern Birtley should now be acknowledged and I agree with this. However, the Eighton Banks/southern Wrekenton area (assuming the latter remains in the ward) remains unrecognised in the ward's name. I propose the inclusion of Eighton Banks to provide a clearer indication that this area is included within the ward. Furthermore, Lamesley itself is only a very small village, with Kibblesworth housing most of the population outside Birtley/Eighton Banks/Wrekenton. Consequently, including Kibblesworth rather than Lamesley would better indicate the location of the ward. Therefore, the ward should be named 'Birtley North, Eighton Banks and Kibblesworth'.

Conclusion

The Commission has produced a largely good warding arrangement for Gateshead Council. The proposed changes on the whole improve ward boundaries by separating different communities into their own wards and giving them names that better reflect this. However, I believe some small changes can be made to improve the boundaries in the west of the borough. I also recommend that some ward names be changed to be more concise and better indicate the areas they actually cover.