

Sunderland

Personal Details:

Name: Mrs Sharon Hodgson
Email: hodgsons@parliament.uk
Postcode: NE37 2SQ
Organisation Name: (Member of Parliament)

Comment text:

Dear Boundary Commission,

See the attached letter from Sharon Hodgson disagreeing with the Boundary review for Washington.

Kind Regards

Attached Documents:

- scan.pdf



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sharon Hodgson MP
Suite 1 and 1A,
Vermont House,
Concord, Washington,
Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ
Tel. (0191) 417 2000
hodgsons@parliament.uk

Our Ref: BF/SH39611

11 March 2024

Dear Boundary Commission,

I am writing to you with feedback regarding the boundary review in my constituency.

I have read your proposals for the five Washington wards and would like to provide feedback. I have been the elected Member of Parliament to represent Washington South & West wards since 2005 and then all 5 Washington wards since 2010.

Under your full report in February 2024, you have made points about Washington from 87 - 93, I will refer to these throughout the report. I may also refer to the previous report from October 2023.

Firstly, I would like to confirm I largely support the draft recommendations for Washington but I do not support the draft name changes for the Washington Wards.

Washington was founded in 1964 and made up of small villages, over time these have formed wards by compass points. For example, I will highlight Washington West. Under your recommendations, Washington West will be formed by the villages of Ayton, Blackfell, Oxclose and Springwell. The name, however, does not reflect the area. Changing the name from Washington West to Ayton & Springwell Village does not reflect the whole community. Under point 93 on Page 26 of your report in February 2024, you ask for feedback based on what is representative of their communities.

It is not representative to select two of the four village names, creating a two-tier naming system. The villages of Oxclose & Blackfell will be left behind by the name change and I have received feedback from constituents advising they feel that way as well. Choosing the name Washington West does not offend anyone, and will be reflected accurately on a map of Washington.

In your report in October 2023, on page 23, point 73, you mentioned the now-adopted Liberal Democrat scheme maintained the compass points but had the correct level of variance. If you look at Washington on a Map, these recommendations reflect the compass points, why change the names?

My next point covers your recent report, page 25, point 92. In my 14 years as an MP covering Washington Central ward, nobody has confused the name with the Sunderland Central constituency. It will be more confusing to call Washington Central Ward Albany & Biddick, as it misses out on the villages of Glebe & Lambton. The name Washington Central reflects this on the map of Washington.

This is a theme that continues throughout your recent report. The Washington North ward being called Concord also missed out on the villages of Donwell, Hertburn and Usworth. Whilst I recognise Concord has a historical value to the area, it discriminates against the other villages and does not reflect the community. If you lived at the top of Stone Cellar Road where The George Washington Hotel is located, the name Concord does not reflect the community. However, being called Washington North does not discriminate and accurately reflects the map of Washington.

Print Envelope

On page 25, point 92, I would like to highlight the comment made regarding Mount Pleasant, which is on the other side of the River Wear. I agree with the resident's feedback they are separated from Washington but they are still next to Washington. It is more confusing to call the name Riverside for the villages of Rickleton and Harraton, which aren't near the Riverside. Plus, the village of Barmston in another ward is closer to Riverside than Rickleton. I would like you to revert this name to Washington South.

The final ward is the Barmston & Sulgrave ward, this should be called Washington East. This ward also contains the villages of Columbia and Washington Village which are missing from the name. Columbia has Brady Square, which is one of the most famous parts of Washington, as it was a train station many years ago.

Washington Village has connections to the great George Washington and is the oldest part of Washington. The name Barmston & Sulgrave does not represent the historical value that Columbia and Washington Village hold in Washington.

On page 24, point 87, I would like to mention my constituency hasn't elected a Liberal Democrat councillor since 2004 and a Conservative since 2021. The elected Conservatives resigned from their party in 2023 and they also have no councillors in Washington.

If they understood the community in Washington, they would not have called Barmston & Sulgrave by that name. The name should revert to Washington East.

I would also like to highlight page 25, point 88. The feedback considered by a resident is not accurate and I urge you to correct the record on this. At no point would anything in the current Washington East ward become part of the new Washington West ward.

My final proposals to you are;

Albany & Biddick reverts to Washington Central
Barmston & Sulgrave reverts to Washington East
Concord reverts to Washington North
Riverside reverts to Washington South
Ayton & Springwell Village reverts to Washington West

There is no good reason to change the names of the Washington Wards. The existing ward names are defined by compass points and the updated maps reflect this. Changing the names would create a two-tier system and look like you have cherry-picked villages without considering the damage it would do by missing the names of the other villages. The suggestions put forward by parties who don't understand the community as I have mentioned in this document, don't understand Washington.

The fairest solution is to maintain the compass points and it won't cause further confusion for residents.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Washington & Sunderland West Constituency

Covering the Castle, Redhill and St Anne's Wards of Sunderland, and the Washington Central, East, North, South and West Wards.

www.sharonhodgson.org

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