

Barnsley

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Comment text:

Related subject: The whole Borough

Attached is the formal response to the recommendations that was approved by the Cabinet of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council on 14 August.

Attached Documents:

- appendix-a---response-to-the-local-government-boundary-commission.docx
- full_boundary.zip

1. Introduction

1.1 Response from Barnsley Council

1.1.1 This is the official response to the recommendations by the Local Government Boundary Commission on the future wards for Barnsley Council. It was approved by Barnsley Council's Cabinet on 9 July 2024. It is accompanied by Shapefiles of our proposed alterations to these recommendations.

1.2 Principles of our Response

1.2.1 Barnsley Council is supportive of many elements of the proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission. The areas of our response where we have proposed alternatives to the Commission's recommendations are based upon the two principles that we believe should help inform our new wards.

Uniting Communities

1.2.2 There are many different local communities within the borough of Barnsley. In addition to the town of Barnsley itself there are the six principle towns of Cudworth, Goldthorpe, Hoyland, Penistone, Royston and Wombwell, with many smaller villages and localities.

1.2.3 Many of these communities have a significant historic heritage, the Old Town area of Barnsley is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086.

1.2.4 These local community identities are held in high esteem by their residents and, for Barnsley Council, this is the single most important factor when considering local ward boundaries.

1.2.5 Our response seeks to ensure that communities that are divided in the Commission's recommendations are reunited and that communities that are united in the Commission's initial recommendations remain so.

Embedded Identities

1.2.6 Barnsley Council's current wards have been in place for over twenty years since the last boundary review in 2003. Many of the wards that we have existed before this review.

1.2.7 These ward identities are embedded in the local population and the ward names are highly recognisable.

1.2.8 This is in no small part down to the work of our Ward Alliances; these are groups where the local councillors and local residents come together to develop a community plan which helps them to measure their progress in delivering their priorities. Each has a small budget called the Ward Alliance fund.

- 1.2.9 Building new local ward identities would take a significant amount of time and effort and would abandon much of the good work that has been done in this over the past 20 years. Therefore, we urge this only where absolutely necessary.
- 1.2.10 Our response seeks to maintain and improve these embedded identities where possible and minimise unnecessary disruption.

1.3 Summary of Our Proposals

1.3.1 Below is a summary of our proposals, a detailed justification is included in the next section:

- **Proposal 1: The council proposes that the St. Helen's name is more reflective of the entire community of the ward than the Athersley name that is not recognised by the New Lodge and Smithies residents and should therefore be retained.**
- **Proposal 2: The council proposes that the current Dearne North and Dearne South names more fittingly describe the entire communities of these wards and the connections between them than the names proposed by the Commission. We propose that the existing names should be retained.**
- **Proposal 3: The council proposes that Birdwell remains in the Rockingham Ward with the current boundary between Rockingham and Worsbrough retained.**
- **Proposal 4: The council proposes that Worsbrough Common moves from Kingstone to Worsbrough Ward.**
- **Proposal 5: The council proposes that the parts of Keresforth Hill, Shawlands and Pogmoor currently in Dodworth ward move into the Kingstone ward.**
- **Proposal 6: The council proposes to include the parishes of Stainborough and Tankersley in the Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley ward.**

2. Our Response to the Recommendations

2.1 Athersley, Cudworth, Monk Bretton and Royston

- 2.1.1 Barnsley Council is content with the Commission's recommendations for the boundaries of these wards and does not propose any changes.
- 2.1.2 We are happy for the proposed boundary of Athersley ward to include the New Lodge, Athersley North and South estates. We do not agree, with the proposed

name change of the ward to Athersley and propose that the Commission consider retaining the current St. Helen's ward name.

- 2.1.3 The Athersley North and South and New Lodge estates are some of the newer communities of Barnsley. These estates were built in the post war period of the 1940s and 50s and are some of Barnsley's more recent communities with less historic identity. Some of the original residents would have worked at the nearby Wharnccliffe Woodmoor Colliery, however, this closed in 1966 and the residents had to seek other work in the borough as there were no other large employers in the immediate area. As a result the residents have been more transient than other areas of the borough with a weaker community affiliation than some other areas see.
- 2.1.4 The proposed ward contains not just the two Athersley estates but also New Lodge and parts of Smithies. Prior to the previous boundary review in 2003, the council did have an Athersley ward that contained just Athersley North and South. When the New Lodge estate and part of Smithies was added to this ward the council proposed using the St. Helen's name as this name reflected both the Athersley and non-Athersley communities. The Commission at the time agreed.
- 2.1.5 The St. Helen's name is prevalent across this locality, in the name of the local church (the hall of which is an established community hub that is used for many activities including the Athersley Cares over 60s group daily), the local primary school (St Helen's Primary Academy) and three large local roads.

Proposal 1: The council proposes that the St. Helen's name is more reflective of the entire community of the ward than the Athersley name that is not recognised by the New Lodge and Smithies residents and should therefore be retained.

- 2.1.6 As mentioned above, the key aim for Barnsley Council from this review is to unite communities within wards where possible. The council was not able to find a way of including the whole of Carlton within a single ward in its initial submission, but we are pleased that the Commission has found a way to do so in its initial recommendations and we support this recommendation for Monk Bretton Ward.
- 2.1.7 The council submitted only a minor alteration to the boundary for Royston ward and are happy to support the Commission's recommendation to leave this ward unchanged.
- 2.1.8 The Commission has recommended that the West Green area be included in the Cudworth ward, this was included in the council's initial submission and we support this.

2.1.9 Whilst the council does not intend to challenge the Commission's recommended boundary of Cudworth and Monk Bretton wards, we do note that this boundary splits the proposed MU3 development.

2.1.10 The council is aware that the Commission can only consider housing developments that will be delivered up to 2029. However, we would like ward boundaries that will prove robust over a longer period. The MU3 development is projected to deliver over 1300 homes by 2033 and the council maintains concerns that this development has the potential to unbalance the electorates of the affected wards significantly. Under this proposal most of the new homes will be built in the larger Monk Bretton ward rather than the smaller Cudworth Ward.

2.1.11 We request that the Commission takes this into account in its final proposals to ensure that the new boundaries are sufficiently future proof.

2.2 Central and Old Town

2.2.1 The council is pleased that the Commission has agreed with our submission to leave these wards unchanged.

2.2.2 It is unfortunate that the communities around Barnsley town centre do not form easily into wards and as a result both of these wards contain communities that form part of the wider Monk Bretton area. The Pogmoor area is also split between wards.

2.2.3 The council has not been able to find a better warding arrangement for these areas without unacceptable levels of electoral inequality or significant knock-on effects to other areas.

2.2.4 The current wards have been in place for over 20 years and are now quite familiar to the local residents. As we stated in our initial submission, we believe that these arrangements currently work well.

2.2.5 We are happy to support changes to our wards to improve community representation and do so elsewhere in our response. However, we request that where it is not clear that changes will provide significant improvement to community representation that the current arrangements are maintained.

2.2.6 The council believes that there is not a better warding pattern to represent Central and Old Town wards, we support these proposals for the boundaries to be unchanged.

2.3 Darton East and Darton West

- 2.3.1 The council is happy to support the Commission's recommendations to leave these wards unchanged.
- 2.3.2 The council made a proposed alteration to Darton West as an attempt to increase electoral equality taking into account changes elsewhere. As a result of these recommendations these changes aren't necessary and we will not revisit them.
- 2.3.3 As we have stated above, where a better warding pattern to represent the communities is not available, we support maintaining the current arrangements as they are working effectively. This is the case for Darton East and West wards.

2.4 Darfield & Great Houghton and North East

- 2.4.1 The council is happy to support the Commission's recommendations for these wards.
- 2.4.2 In our initial submission, we were conscious that North East is, at present, one of our largest wards. Our attempt to reduce its size involved splitting the community of Great Houghton, a proposal we were not comfortable with, and we are glad the Commission has found an alternative.
- 2.4.3 This proposal unites the communities of Shafton, Brierley and Grimethorpe into North East ward and Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Darfield and Billingley into the Darfield and Great Houghton ward. Retaining each of these communities as a whole is paramount for the council and we strongly support the proposal to not divide any of these settlements.
- 2.4.4 Whilst the alteration of the current arrangements by transferring the Great Houghton parish between the wards isn't ideal (the council is sympathetic to the case that it has greater ties to the North East ward), it retains the parish entirely within a ward and creates what the council hopes will be a sustainable warding pattern for the future.
- 2.4.5 The council will accept the change of name for Darfield ward to Darfield and Great Houghton to acknowledge its inclusion in the new ward.

2.5 Bolton & Goldthorpe Green and Thurnscoe & Goldthorpe North

- 2.5.1 The council is happy to support the recommendation to leave the ward boundaries for these wards unchanged.

- 2.5.2 As we have stated above the current warding arrangements work well and we are happy to allow them to continue to do so.
- 2.5.3 The council does not support the new names proposed by the Commission which leave us somewhat confused.
- 2.5.4 The new names seem to have been chosen based on a single representation largely without evidence. Many local residents we spoke to including the local ward councillors were unable to identify a Goldthorpe Green, which seems to be the name of a small section of the B6098. We do not think this is sufficiently prominent to be included in a ward name.
- 2.5.5 The council has had a Dearne South ward since its inception in 1978, the Dearne Thurnscoe ward was renamed Dearne North in 2003 but the Dearne name has always been present.
- 2.5.6 The Dearne name is part of the identity for residents of both of these wards. They are both situated in the Dearne Valley, the main road connecting them to the rest of the borough is the Dearne Valley Parkway (A635), the main secondary school in the area is the Dearne Academy, the leisure centre serving the community is the Dearnside Leisure Centre, the local theatre is the Dearne Playhouse. It is disingenuous to state that the Dearne name does not fittingly represent the communities.
- 2.5.7 The council has concerns about the inclusion of Goldthorpe in both ward names as it creates some confusion, the local residents do not current identify with Goldthorpe North or South (or Goldthorpe Green as previously mentioned) as it is a small and compact town.

Proposal 2: The council proposes that the current Dearne North and Dearne South names more fittingly describe the entire communities of these wards and the connections between them than the names proposed by the Commission. We propose that the existing names should be retained.

2.6 Hoyland Milton, Wombwell and Stairfoot

- 2.6.1 Barnsley Council welcomes the Commission's recommendation to adopt the boundary for Hoyland Milton and Wombwell ward that we proposed in our submission. We feel that this will maintain good electoral equality without significant effect on any of the local communities.

- 2.6.2 We do not feel that a change in name of either ward is required. The Wombwell ward is entirely made up of the principle town of Wombwell and this name is clearly appropriate and should continue.
- 2.6.3 We also feel that the Hoyland Milton name should be retained. Unfortunately, it is not possible to contain the entire town of Hoyland in a single ward. The Hoyland Milton ward contains part of Hoyland and also the areas of Hemingfield, Jump, Platts Common, Blacker Hill and Elsecar. It is the council's view that including Elsecar in the name of the ward without recognising the other communities is inappropriate.
- 2.6.4 The Milton part of the ward name is based on a deeply significant part of the heritage of the local area, the Milton Ironworks. The Milton Ironworks was built in the 1790s on land belonging to the Earl Fitzwilliam of Wentworth Woodhouse. It was the second ironworks to be built in Elsecar and its furnaces dominated the horizon for over 80 years. At its height, the residents of Hemingfield, Jump, Platts Common, Blacker Hill and Elsecar all worked in the Iron industry.
- 2.6.5 Whilst the Ironworks is no longer present, it is a key part of the history of all these communities and serves as a key unifying identity. This is why the Hoyland Milton name proposed by Barnsley Council in 2003 and accepted by the Commission, is still the best name for this ward.
- 2.6.6 Barnsley Council welcomes the Commission's proposal to leave the Stairfoot ward boundary unchanged (save for the minor amendment relating to Barnsley academy).

2.7 Penistone West

- 2.7.1 Barnsley Council is content to accept the Commission's recommendation for Penistone West ward.
- 2.7.2 The proposal to move the whole of the Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth Parish into Penistone East the council fully supports.
- 2.7.3 We retain concerns around the size of this ward, with a variance of 9% this will remain one of our largest wards. If the electoral of this ward were to increase faster than forecast it would create an issue regarding electoral equality.

2.8 Worsbrough and Kingstone

- 2.8.1 We are proposing alternatives to the Commission recommendations for these wards.

- 2.8.2 The village of Birdwell is one of Barnsley's older communities dating at least back to the 1600s. It is a single, tight knit community that it is not appropriate to split between wards.
- 2.8.3 The council is confused by the Commission's mentions of Birdwell Common. This is a distinction that does not exist on the ground, the local residents do not recognise Birdwell and Birdwell Common, just Birdwell. We understand that some local residents have made this representation to the Commission directly.
- 2.8.4 The identity and connections of Birdwell are to the Hoyland area rather than towards Worsbrough and the Town Centre, therefore we consider that it is much more appropriate to retain Birdwell within the Rockingham Ward. The electorate of Rockingham ward is balanced by the inclusion of Tankersley Parish within the Dodworth ward as we discuss later.

Proposal 3: The council proposes that Birdwell remains in the Rockingham Ward with the current boundary between Rockingham and Worsbrough retained.

- 2.8.5 To retain electoral equality in Worsbrough ward the council is again proposing to include Worsbrough Common in Worsbrough ward. The connections between these communities are clear,
- 2.8.6 Worsbrough is one of the oldest towns in the borough, dating back to the 7th Century. The current town was formed through the merging of the Hamlets of Worsbrough Dale, Worsbrough Bridge, Ward Green and Worsbrough Common into a single town as a result of the success of the area during the industrial revolution spurred by Worsbrough Mill.
- 2.8.7 This review presents an opportunity to correct one of the anomalies of the current warding arrangement where Worsbrough Common is in a separate ward from the rest of Worsbrough. The Council feels that uniting Worsbrough Dale, Worsbrough Bridge, Ward Green and Worsbrough Common into a single ward is the best arrangement for this area and that our proposal is a good vehicle to achieve this.

Proposal 4: The council proposes that Worsbrough Common moves from Kingstone to Worsbrough Ward.

- 2.8.8 To resolve the electoral equality issue for Kingstone ward that is created through the proposal above, the council proposes to include the parts of Keresforth Hill, Shawlands and Pogmoor currently in Dodworth ward into the Kingstone ward.
- 2.8.9 This will create a Kingstone Ward much more reflective of the Kingstone area. Historically the Kingstone area was made up of Longcar, Kingstone Place,

Keresforth and Shawlands, much of this is not presently within the Kingstone ward. Removing Worsbrough Common, that has little in common with the rest of the Kingstone area and replacing it with the remaining parts of Shawlands and Keresforth will mean the whole of the Kingstone area is contained within the ward which will make for a significantly improved ward for local representation than at present.

2.8.10 In order to retain electoral equality for Kingstone ward it will need to retain the half of Pogmoor that is in Dodworth ward. Whilst this is not an ideal arrangement, it represents an improvement on the current position as Pogmoor has more in common with Kingstone than the village of Dodworth which is further away on the far side of the M1.

Proposal 5: The council proposes that the parts of Keresforth Hill, Shawlands and Pogmoor currently in Dodworth ward move into the Kingstone ward.

2.9 Dodworth, Penistone East and Rockingham

2.9.1 The council understands the concerns that the Commission had with our initial proposals for Dodworth and Penistone East ward. However, we note that the Commission's recommendations for these wards were only achievable by splitting Birdwell which the council is not prepared to accept.

2.9.2 Our proposal to resolve this issue is to include the parishes of Stainborough and Tankersley in the Dodworth ward, renaming the ward Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley. The council has discussed this proposal with both Stainborough and Tankersley parish councils. Tankersley parish council has expressed support for the council's proposal and will be contacting the Commission to this effect.

2.9.3 Our proposed Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley ward will create a new rural ward predominantly West of the M1. This will allow the rural character of these areas to be preserved in the ward and will not require rural areas to share councillors with urban areas. Our consultation with local communities has consistently found that the rural character of these areas is very distinct and important to the residents.

2.9.4 This proposal will allow us to retain electoral equality between Penistone East and Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley wards without further splitting any communities.

2.9.5 Our proposal will leave Rockingham ward almost completely unchanged from the current arrangements. The only change we are proposing is to remove the split of the Tankersley parish present in our current boundaries, with the small part of the parish East of the M1 that is currently in Rockingham ward moving to

the new Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley ward so the entire parish can be in the same ward moving forward. This is a request of the parish council that Barnsley Council is happy to support.

Proposal 6: The council proposes to include the parishes of Stainborough and Tankersley in the new Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley ward, creating a new rural ward West of the M1.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Electoral Equality

The table below shows the estimated 2029 electorates of our proposals and their variance. Our proposals demonstrate an acceptable level of electoral equality between wards, improving on the current arrangements and it is the council's view that these proposals achieve the best balance between electoral equality and community representation.

Ward Name	2029 Electorate	Percentage Difference from Mean
Central	8970	-3%
Cudworth	8506	-8%
Darfield and Great Houghton	10162	10%
Darton East	9524	3%
Darton West	8919	-4%
Dearne North	9606	4%
Dearne South	9663	4%
Dodworth, Stainborough and Tankersley	8593	-7%
Hoyland Milton	9869	7%
Kingstone	9038	-2%
Monk Bretton	9924	7%
North East	8589	-7%
Old Town	8791	-5%
Penistone East	8828	-5%
Penistone West	10100	9%
Rockingham	9012	-3%
Royston	8524	-8%
St Helens	8663	-6%
Stairfoot	9308	1%
Wombwell	10016	8%
Worsbrough	9626	4%
Mean	9249	

3.2 Uniting Communities

- 3.2.1 Our proposals succeed in uniting some communities that are divided in our current arrangements and not introducing more divisions.
- 3.2.2 In particular it rectifies the issue regarding the division of Birdwell that the Commission has introduced in its recommendations.
- 3.2.3 The council believes that there is not a better warding pattern available that does not involve further splitting established communities between wards.

3.3 Future Proofing

- 3.3.1 Whilst the council understands that the Commission cannot consider factors that may come into effect beyond 2029, the council does not wish to revisit its boundaries again so soon and would like an arrangement that can be future proofed against future changes to ensure stability. The 2003 boundaries achieved this.
- 3.3.2 The Council's proposals make some allowances for the future changes that may occur to ensure that our proposal are future proofed and achieve better electoral equality than the Commission's recommendations (remove if this is not the case).
- 3.3.3 The Council encourages the Commission to consider these factors when considering submissions to ensure that the ward boundaries can be sustainable for the council in the long term.