

Newcastle upon Tyne

Personal Details:

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

Comment text:

Related subject: Jesmond

I wish to object to the proposed Jesmond Ward boundary as it does not include all of Jesmond.

In summary, Jesmond Vale/South Jesmond/The Minories, whatever you wish to call it, is and has always been part of Jesmond, and has no connection, either physically, topographically or perceptually, with Sandyford or Shieldfield, to which the proposed changes would attach it – my reasons for objecting are elaborated in more detail below.

The area formerly known as The Minories and now commonly referred to as Jesmond Vale or South Jesmond has been part of the community of Jesmond since its development in the late 19th century. The houses were built on part of Jesmond Park and consequently the area was originally called the Jesmond Park Estate. This area is bounded by the roads Churchill Gardens, Lansdowne Gardens, Northumberland Gardens, Selborne Gardens, Rosebery Place, Rosebery Crescent, the A1058 and Jesmond Dene Road.

Reading the Boundary Commission proposals, the conclusions seem to rely on a “virtual tour” of the area and submissions made by local councillors. Firstly it should be noted that none of the local councillors live in this part of Jesmond and a virtual tour of the area does not represent a very reliable picture of this community.

This area should remain part of the Jesmond ward for the following reasons:

- All of our services that we can easily walk and cycle to are within the wider Jesmond ward - doctors, dentists, opticians, supermarkets and local shops.
- A meaningful analysis of the topography of the area would show that in terms of walking and cycling there are very limited accessible routes connecting us to Ouseburn and Shieldfield. The only direct step access is up and down a very steep bank and on poorly maintained routes.
- In the 1980s when the A1058 Cradlewell bypass was constructed the new road was specifically built in a tunnel to reduce the separation of Jesmond Vale from the rest of Jesmond.

Probably the most pertinent reason why Jesmond Vale should be included in the wider Jesmond ward came to light from the recent experiences of the East Jesmond Low Traffic Neighbourhood (EJLTN) experiment. This imposed a vehicle barrier across the lower part of Jesmond. It had a direct and negative effect on numerous residents in Jesmond including those of us who live in Jesmond Vale.

Access to services by sustainable modes is a luxury allowed to some, but elderly and infirm people who can't cycle or walk very far quickly felt isolated. This isolation was made acute by severing the direct vehicular connection to our Jesmond services, mainly found in the Osborne Road/Acorn Road area, and exacerbated by the poor choice of alternative routes for residents. The scheme was eventually removed because of the negative effect on residents.

This failed experiment that led to widespread community concern highlighted the importance of ward boundaries reflecting community boundaries. The current ward boundaries mean that part of "wider Jesmond" is in North Jesmond ward and a smaller part in South Jesmond ward. South Jesmond ward consists mainly of Sandyford and parts of Shieldfield. The majority of this community were not concerned about the impact of the EJLTN as it had no direct effect on their community.

All of this meant that the North Jesmond ward councillors were fully engaged in the EJLTN debate and fully represented the residents' concerns. In contrast because the majority of the South Jesmond ward is not in Jesmond and was not directly affected by the LTN our South Jesmond ward councillors did little to represent the views of Jesmond Vale residents because their seats do not depend on voters in Jesmond Vale.

I therefore contend that if ward boundaries are supposed to reflect communities our local representation would be more responsive to our community if Jesmond Vale were included in the Jesmond ward. This would reflect the community as it is rather than creating artificial boundaries that would simply serve to continue the separation of Jesmond Vale from wider Jesmond.

Attached Documents:

None attached