

# North Yorkshire

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley

Please find attached a dossier in response to the consultation, submitted by Rudby Parish Council.

## Attached Documents:

- local-government-boundary-commission---v2.1.docx

# North Yorkshire Council Boundary Review

## Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation by Rudby Parish Council

Rudby Parish Council is a civil grouped parish covering four electoral districts:

Electoral District	2024 Electorate	Predicted 2030 Electorate
RNDB: Hutton Rudby	1,350	1,408
RNDC: Middleton on Leven	67	66
RNDD: Rudby	270	275
RNDF: Skutterskelfe	93	96
<b>Rudby Parish Council Total</b>	<b>1,780</b>	<b>1,845</b>

ELECTION MAPS

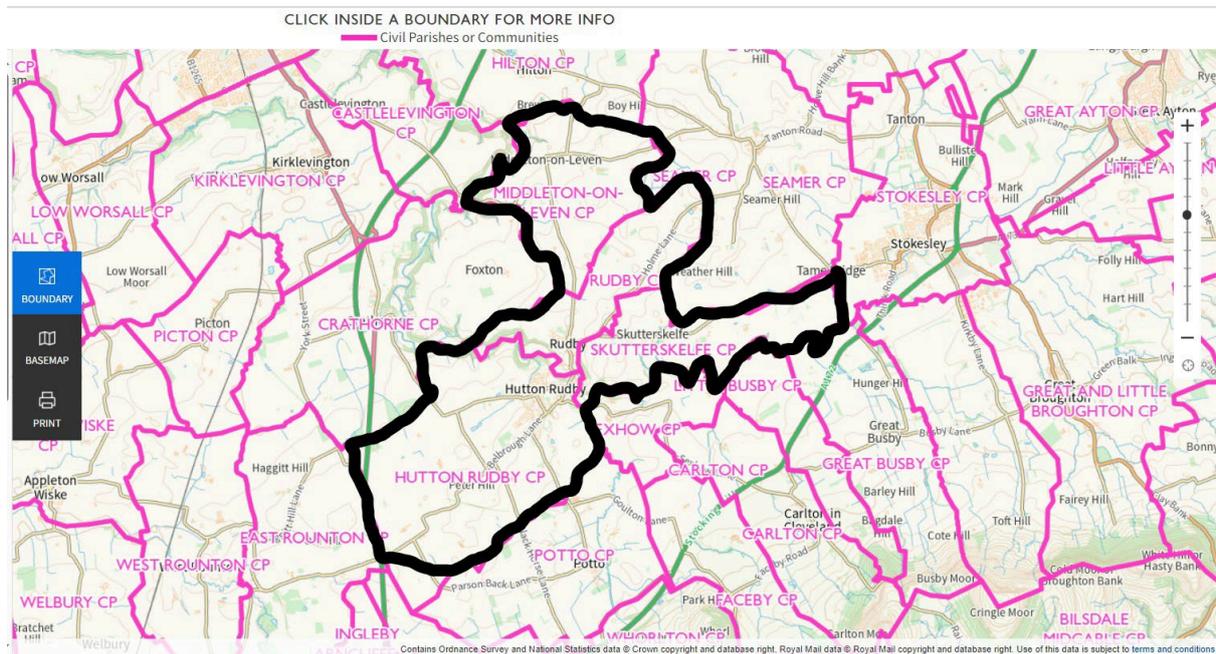


Figure 1: Rudby Parish Council Boundaries

The polling station for all four polling districts of Rudby Parish Council is Hutton Rudby Village Hall. This polling station is also used by the small adjacent electoral district of RNDE: Sexhow which lies immediately to the south. Slightly confusingly, the name “Rudby Parish” is used to refer both to the Parish Council as a whole, and to the constituent polling district RNDD.

The parished area has a population of approximately 2,200 residents. It currently has 1,780 registered electors, predicted to increase to 1,845 by 2030. For the purposes of the boundary review, Rudby Parish Council submits that the 4 electoral districts which make up the parished area of Rudby Parish Council should be treated as single unit respecting the organisational arrangement of the lowest tier of local government and the community identity.

### Current North Yorkshire Divisional Arrangements for Rudby Parish

Rudby Grouped Parish (1780 electors) provides 35% of the 5,086 electors for the current North Yorkshire Council division of Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley.

The division covers a large rural area with many villages and has many parish councils. It is reasonably well served internally by road connections both North to South and East to West.

It is logistically practical for a division councillor with their own transport to cover the area, however, there is very little public transport available in the area. There is a scheduled but infrequent service with 3-4 buses per day in each direction between Northallerton and Stokesley which has stops in most of the larger villages in the division.

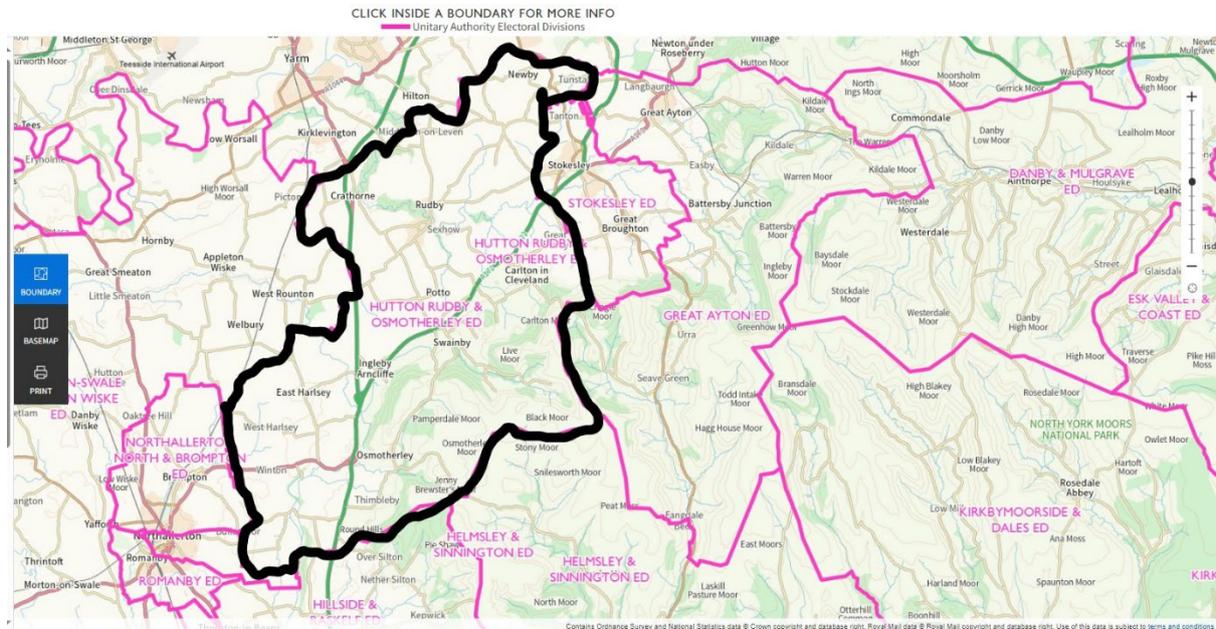


Figure 2: Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley Division

The southern part of the division includes a string of villages on the northern escarpment of the North York Moors some of which lie within the National Park. Most of the rest of the division lies within the Leven Valley and is outside of the National Park. In the south west of the division, there is another parished area (the Osmotherley Group) consisting of several electoral districts.

At 5.2% below the current North Yorkshire average of 5,364 electors per division (90 divisions) Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley is slightly undersized but well within the 10% tolerance of the average. Retaining the existing boundaries would result in a division with a current electorate 6.2% below the current average of 5,424 electors for the proposed 89 division arrangement i.e. still within the 10% tolerance. These figures do not include the allowance for population growth.

The projected population growth for the existing division at 4% approaches NYC's assumption of a 7% average growth rate across the authority. It is suspected that the published figures do not include 50 homes in Hutton Rudby which were granted approval in October.

As such, it appears that there is no direct need to adjust the Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley divisional boundaries to bring its electorate into the target range. From Rudby Parish Council's perspective, "no change" would be an entirely acceptable outcome because it would keep all our community within one division which is the outcome we seek to achieve by this submission.

However, Rudby Parish Council does recognise that it is likely that boundary adjustments will be needed to resolve under-sizing of other divisions in the vicinity.

## The boundaries of our Local Community Identity

Rudby/Hutton Rudby is the largest village in the area between Stokesley and Northallerton and functions as a single identifiable community. The extended community includes the rural hinterland of the village and residents of nearby areas outside Rudby Parish who come to the village to use the school, the churches, the shop and other service facilities located here.



Figure 3: Location of Hutton Rudby/Rudby Village

About 85% of Rudby Parish Group residents live within the large “service village” formed by the linked settlements of Hutton Rudby and Rudby (with parts of Skutterskelfe) which lie on opposite banks of the River Leven. The steep sided river valley is a strong geographical feature between the two parts of the village, but at the closest approach there is only 90m of separation.

It is forecast that the Hutton Rudby/Rudby village settlement area (as defined in planning policy) which includes parts of Skutterskelfe will have 12 dwellings in Skutterskelfe parish by 2030. At this time the village will contain about 25% of the electorate of Skutterskelfe.

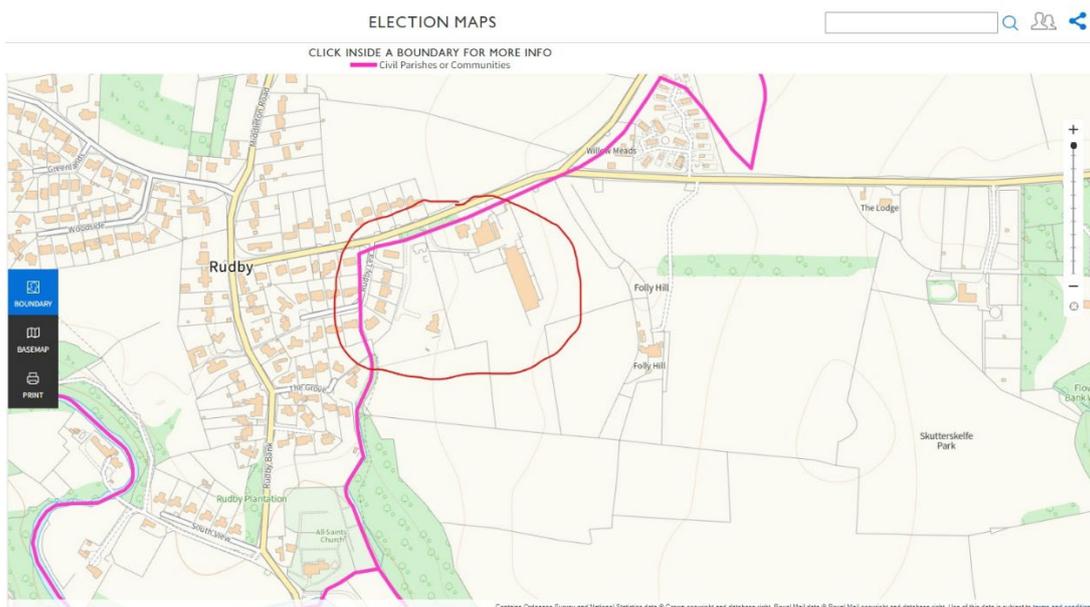


Figure 4: Rudby / Skutterskelfe boundary within the village area

Rudby Parish Council's opinion is that there is no legitimate case for a divisional boundary which separates Hutton Rudby from Rudby, or Rudby from Skutterskelfe. Residents on one side of the street in Rudby Lea are in Rudby Parish and those on the other are in Skutterskelfe.

Services for local residents provided by the village include:

- Primary school serving all the Rudby Parish area and some adjacent villages/parishes
- Doctors surgery
- Village shop incorporating post office counter and petrol station.
- Barber/hairdresser and a beauty salon
- 3 Pubs
- Church of England Parish Church
- Methodist Chapel with Community Hub & Cafe
- Village Hall hosting a variety of clubs and activities, co-located with the Tennis Club and Bowls club
- Church Hall hosting a variety of club's activities
- Cricket Club
- Sports/recreation area
- Children's play areas
- Burial ground (managed by the Parish Council)

The catchment of these services and facilities collectively defines the footprint of an extended community around the village. Our connections are generally stronger with communities to the west and south of our parished area (which are served by our village school) than with those to the east (which look more towards Stokesley). The area to the north of Rudby Parish Council falls outside the North Yorkshire Council boundary.

The village school catchment is particularly important in terms of developing community ties. It consists of the four Rudby Parish electoral districts, plus the small districts of Crathorne (RNDA: 126 electors) and Sexhow (RNDE: 13 electors). Note that RNDE is not part of the Rudby Parish group, although NYC's submission suggests that it is. Following the closure of Ingleby Arncliffe primary school in recent years, Hutton Rudby School is a popular choice for parents living in electoral districts to the south of the parish which are out of the catchment area.

## Physical Geography and Historic Local Authority Boundaries

Local government boundaries in this part of North Yorkshire have always been strongly influenced by the physical geography. The plateau of the North York Moors to the East and South has a low population density and has limited connectivity by road with the more densely populated Leven Valley.

Echoes of the ancient Langbaurch Wappentake can be seen in the boundary alignments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Stokesley Rural District (created 1894).

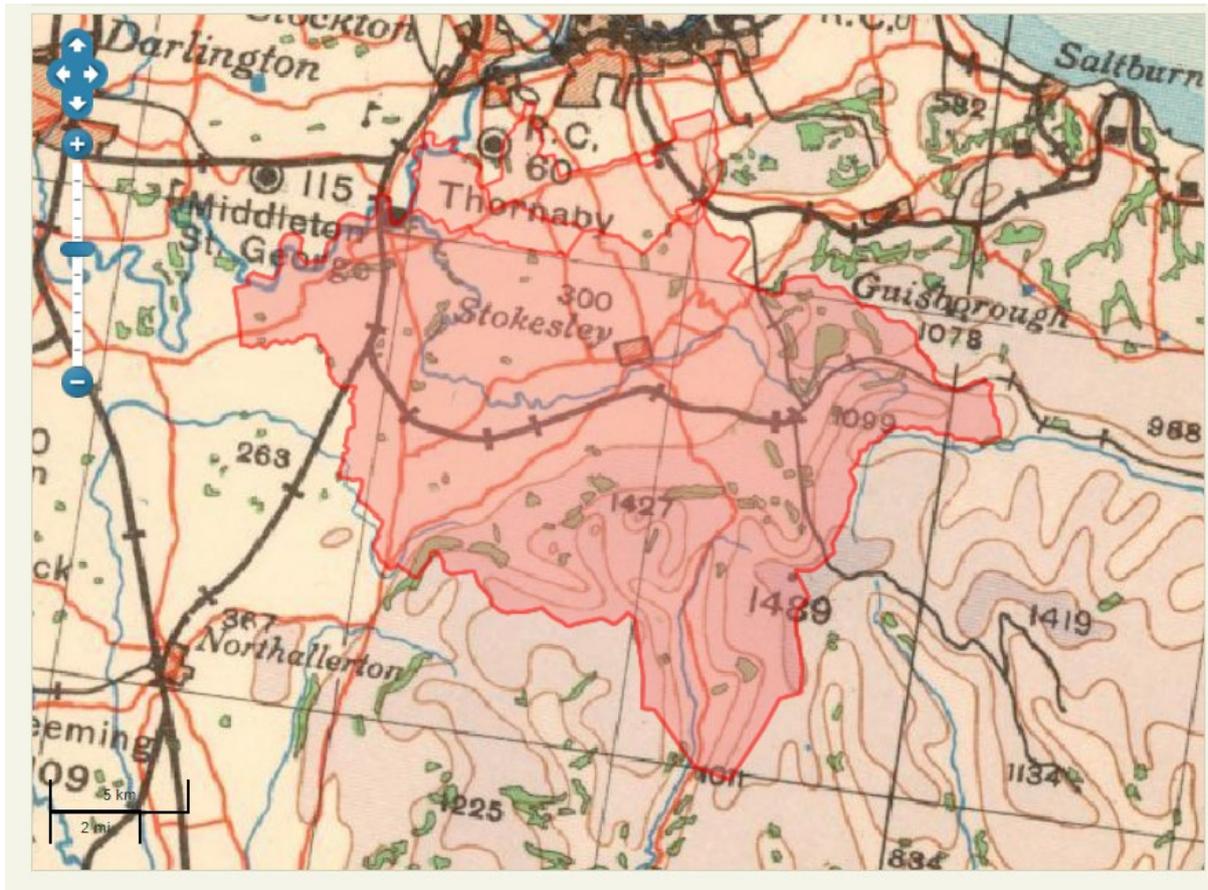


Figure 5: Stokesley Rural District

Within Hambleton District Council, “Stokesley and villages” continued to be recognised as a useful organisational sub-unit for service provision and administrative reasons. It corresponded roughly with the areas currently covered by a local group of 3 divisions and part of a 4th division:

- Great Ayton Division
- Stokesley Division
- Most of Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley Division
- Eastern parts of the Morton on Swale and Appleton Wiske Division

Communities within this “local group” are typically more strongly connected with each other than they are with communities outside the boundaries of the old Stokesley Rural District. Rudby Parish Council recommends that the boundary commission should give this historic context reasonable weight when choosing new boundary alignments.

These local divisions lie entirely within the new Richmond and Northallerton constituency which has boundaries which are co-terminus with the northern, eastern, and most of the southern boundary of this local group of divisions.

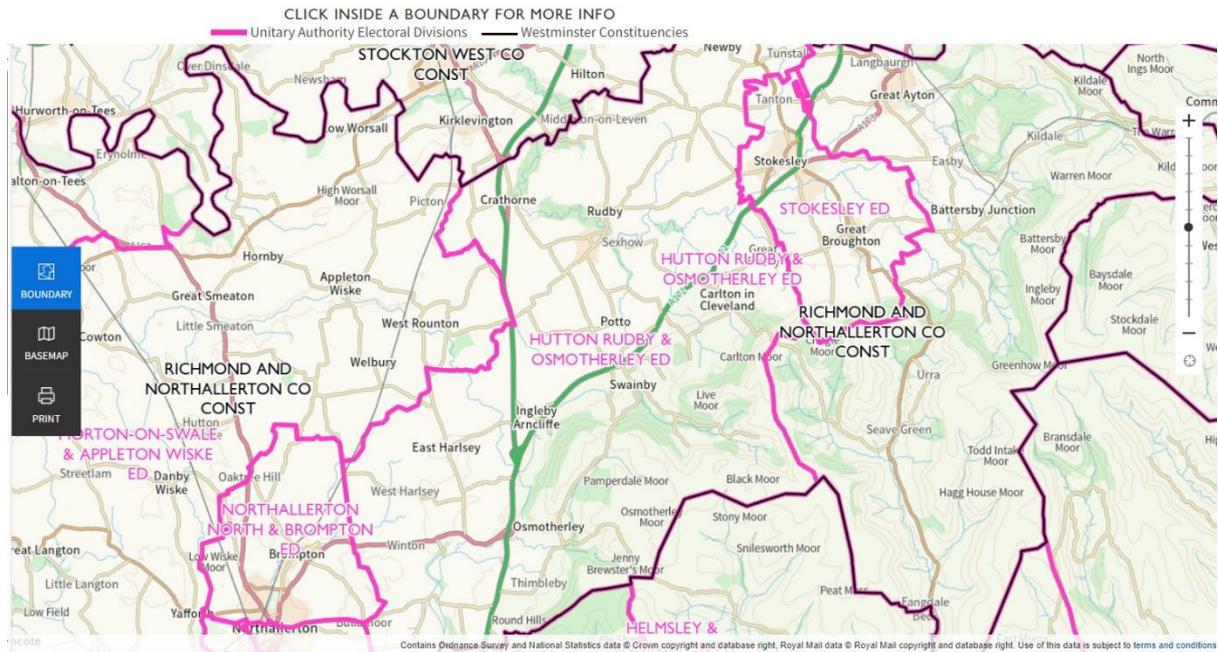


Figure 6: Relationship between divisional boundaries and Westminster boundaries

### Resolving the under-sizing of the local electorate.

It is noted that when considered as a local sub-group Great Ayton division (4,522 electors), Stokesley division (5,131 electors) and Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley division (5,086 electors) are collectively 9.4% undersized which is only just within the 10% tolerance. Individually Stokesley and Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley divisions are comfortably within the tolerance, but Great Ayton Division (16.6% below the average of 5,424) has a significant shortfall. It is anticipated this will drive the need for realignment of divisional boundaries in the local group.

For the reasons set out above, the obvious option for resolving the shortfall in Great Ayton is to realign its boundaries with Stokesley or Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley divisions.

Transferring Great & Little Broughton electoral district (RNMA: 865 electors in 2024) from Stokesley division, or transferring Seamer (RNDG: 504 electors in 2024) and Newby districts (RNDH: 176 electors in 2024) from Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley are two of the numerically viable options for resolving the Great Ayton shortfall.

Unfortunately, neither Stokesley or Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley have “spare” electors which leaves two options for balancing the numbers: either Great Ayton goes south or east into the North York Moors, breaching the natural organisational and community identity boundaries but removing the need for consequential changes to Stokesley or Hutton & Osmotherley divisions; or Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley extends to the west into Morton and Swale & Appleton Wiske division so that it can release electors to either Stokesley or Great Ayton division. Rudby Parish Council favours the latter.

Rudby Parish Council's opinion is that bringing sufficient electors in from electoral districts to the west provides several numerically acceptable options which respect the integrity of all the important community identity boundaries within the current Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley, Stokesley and Great Ayton divisional areas.

The parishes and villages of the electoral districts to the west (between the A19 and A167) are rural communities broadly similar in character to the parishes and villages which make up the existing Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley division. Integrating these component parts would create a reasonably homogeneous division which is preferable for the divisional councillor's workload.

We do not favour any specific option with regards to the positioning of boundaries for Great Ayton or Stokesley provided that the option chosen maintains the integrity of the four Rudby Parish Group electoral districts as a contiguous community unit within the same division.

It is our opinion that as a general rule (unless exceptional circumstances apply), divisional boundaries should not split up the component parts of parish groups like the Rudby Parish Group into two or more divisions. Respecting the parish group structures is consistent with giving appropriate weight to the statutory criteria of keeping communities together.

A further strong reason for keeping grouped parishes together is that splitting them across divisions would inevitably create additional workload for North Yorkshire councillors because two (or more) NYC councillors would need to maintain a relationship with one Parish Council and attend their meetings. It is our opinion that there are no exceptional circumstances which would justify splitting up the Rudby Parish Group.

## North Yorkshire Council's Proposal

North Yorkshire Council's Draft proposal (extract copied below) was published in the papers for their Executive meeting held on 19 November 2024.

NYC Proposed Hutton Rudby & Appleton Wiske Division	5899	NYC Proposed Stokesley Division	5788
Richmond AC RNDA - Crathorne	133	Richmond AC RNDG - Seamer	517
Richmond AC RNDB - Rudby (Hutton Rudby)	1408	Richmond AC RNDH - Newby	183
Richmond AC RNDD - Rudby (Rudby)	275	Richmond AC RNDC - Rudby (Middleton-on-Leven)	66
Richmond AC RNDE - Rudby (Sexhow)	15	Richmond AC RNDF - Rudby (Skutterskelfe)	96
Richmond AC RNDM - East Harlsey	230	Richmond AC RNDI - Carlton	239
Richmond AC RNDN - Ingleby Arncliffe	301	Richmond AC RNDJ - Faceby	171
Richmond AC RNDO - Osmotherley Area (Kirby Sigston)	78	Richmond AC RNMC - Stokesley	4430
Richmond AC RNDP - Osmotherley Area (Sowerby-under-Cotcliffe)	37	Richmond AC RNDK - Great Busby	68
Richmond AC RNDQ - Osmotherley Area (Osmotherley)	509	Richmond AC RNDL - Little Busby	18
Richmond AC RNDR - Osmotherley Area (Ellerbeck)	44		
Richmond AC RNDS - Osmotherley Area (Thimbleby)	47		
Richmond AC RNDT - Osmotherley Area (West Harlsey)	31		
Richmond AC RNDU - Osmotherley Area (Winton Stank & Hallikeld)	55		
Richmond AC RNDV - Potto	256		
Richmond AC RNFF - Rounton (East Rounton)	82		
Richmond AC RNFG - Rounton (West Rounton)	164		
Richmond AC RNFQ - Welbury	226		
Richmond AC RNFA - Appleton Wiske	410		
Richmond AC RNFB - Picton	105		
Richmond AC RNFO - Worsall (High Worsall)	28		
Richmond AC RNFJ - Girsby	37		
Richmond AC RNFP - Worsall (Low Worsall)	252		
Richmond AC RNFI - Deighton	87		
Richmond AC RNFN - Over Dinsdale	58		
Richmond AC RNFD - Birkby	29		
Richmond AC RNFL - Hutton Bonville	61		
Richmond AC RNDW - Whorlton	508		
Richmond AC RNFH - Smeatons with Hornby (Great Smeaton)	173		
Richmond AC RNFK - Smeatons with Hornby (Hornby)	222		
Richmond AC RNFM - Smeatons with Hornby (Little Smeaton)	38		

Their draft proposal broadly follows Rudby Parish Council's favoured strategy of retaining the existing northern, eastern and western "external boundaries" of the local group of divisions and achieving roughly equal sizes by bringing in voters from the west. We note that North Yorkshire Council's proposal, retains the integrity of the Osmotherley group of parishes, and of the Smeatons with Hornby group.

***Inexplicably they have not proposed retaining the integrity of the Rudby Parish group. For this reason (and this reason alone), Rudby Parish Council strongly objects to North Yorkshire Council's proposed arrangements for our area.***

We would be able to support the North Yorkshire Council proposal if it was subject to a minor amendment where RNDC's 66 voters and RNDF's 96 voters were transferred out of NYC's proposed Stokesley division and into NYC's proposed Hutton Rudby and Appleton Wiske division. With this amendment Stokesley division would have 5,626 voters, while Hutton Rudby & Appleton Wiske would have 6,061 voters, both within the target range of 5,237 to 6,401 voters.

As a market town, it is likely that over the long term Stokesley would see higher population growth rates than the adjacent rural areas so an arrangement of boundaries where Stokesley division is a little bit lower in the target range and Hutton Rudby and Appleton Wiske is a little bit higher is likely to be more durable. In essence our proposed amendment to NYC's proposal simply requires that a little more weight is given to the community identity criteria and a little less weight is given to the equal sized divisions criteria. It is also a more effective and convenient arrangement for local government at both unitary and parish level.

## Recommendations

For the reasons set out above, Rudby Parish Council recommends that:

1. The four electoral districts of Rudby Parish Council are kept within the same division. This is our principal recommendation. Recommendations 2, 3, and 4 are our proposals on how this can be achieved in a way which satisfies all the statutory criteria.
2. Some electoral districts which are not part of Rudby Parish but are currently in the eastern part of Hutton Rudby & Osmotherley division should be transferred out so that the shortfall in numbers in Great Ayton can be resolved.
3. As a consequence of recommendation 2, the electors needed to form a new division are found by combining the majority of Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley division with electoral districts to the west (which were originally part of Stokesley Rural District). This would create a new division which has an electorate within the target range.
4. If the Local Boundary Commission is minded to generally support North Yorkshire Council's proposals, an amendment to that proposal should be made so that it preserves the integrity of the Rudby Parish group. The amendment we propose is that RNDC – Middleton on Leven and RNDF – Skutterskelfe are removed from NYC's proposed Stokesley division and added to NYC's proposed Hutton Rudby and Appleton Wiske Division. This arrangement would be compliant with all three statutory criteria, whereas North Yorkshire Council's proposal is non-compliant by failing to give sufficient weight to the community identity criteria.
5. Hutton Rudby would be the largest village in our (or North Yorkshire Council's) proposed new division with the Rudby Parish Council districts providing about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the divisional electorate. The importance of Hutton Rudby should continue to be reflected in the new divisional name. North Yorkshire Council's proposed "Hutton Rudby and Appleton Wiske" is an acceptable name. A potential alternative name would be Hutton Rudby, Osmotherley and Appleton Wiske.