

North Yorkshire

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Darley and Menwith Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Dear Sirs

Please find attached a letter from Darley and Menwith Parish Council regarding the North Yorkshire boundary review.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt.

Please let me know if you need anything further in relation to this submission.

Kind regards

Martin

Attached Documents:

- 20241209-letter-to-local-government-boundary-commission-regarding-north-yorkshire-boundary-review.pdf



c/o Clerk to the Council: Martin Pearson, [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED] *E-mail:* clerk@darleyparishcouncil.org.uk

9 December 2024

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

Dear Sirs

Darley and Menwith Parish Council - Response to consultation on the North Yorkshire boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

I am writing to you on behalf of Darley and Menwith Parish Council (the Council) regarding the North Yorkshire boundary review.

Background

Darley and Menwith Parish is one of seven parishes that make up the North Yorkshire Council division of Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale. It is around six miles from Pateley Bridge, the principal town in Nidderdale and centre for many local organisations and service providers. These include Nidderdale Plus Community Hub (a not-for-profit organisation providing many services to the residents of Nidderdale), Nidderdale Museum and a number of clubs and societies.

The Council recently became aware that North Yorkshire Council (NYC) has put forward a proposal to LGBCE for a new pattern of divisions for North Yorkshire (the NYC Proposal) and has a number of serious concerns regarding the proposed divisions.

The Council is also very concerned about the lack of consultation by NYC in formulating and putting forward its proposal to LGBCE (especially as it potentially impacts thousands of NYC electors). The Council intends to write to NYC separately regarding this.

Concerns

The Council understands that the proposal being put forward by NYC (the NYC Proposal) is:

- (i) to move a proportion of the parishes currently in the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division (part of High & Low Bishopside – “Pateley Bridge”, Bewerley, and Upper Nidderdale (Fountains Earth, Stonebeck Down and Stonebeck Up)) into the adjacent Wharfedale division;
- (ii) to form a new Nidderdale division (comprising the parishes of Birstwith, Felliscliffe, Hartwith, Dacre, Darley and Menwith, part of High & Low Bishopside – “Glasshouses and Wilsill”, Thornthwaite with Padsid Thruscross, Clint cum Hamlets, Bishop Thornton, Shaw Mills and Warsill (Bishop Thornton and Warsill)); and
- (iii) to divide an existing parish (High and Low Bishopside) such that Nidderdale’s principal town, Pateley Bridge, would be in the Wharfedale division and not the Nidderdale division.

The Council is concerned that the NYC Proposal fails two of the three statutory criteria that LGBCE has made clear that it should apply, namely that it would not “reflect the interest and identities of local communities” and would not “provide for effective and convenient local government.”

Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities

Nidderdale has an identity and community of its own. This is evidenced by the existence of many local organisations and events that focus on the area (including the annual Nidderdale Show, Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, Nidderdale Arts Partnership, Nidderdale Museum, the Nidd Art Trail, Nidderdale Community Orchestra, Nidderdale Community Choir, Nidderdale Writer's Group, and the Nidderdale Society).

It is also evident in the way that the Council has felt the need to write to LGBCE, even though it is not as affected by the NYC Proposal as other parishes in the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division.

The people who live in the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division have very little connection with the adjoining division of Wharfedale (the geography of the region (the two divisions are separated by open spaces and hills) would make any real connection very difficult).

The Council agrees with LGBCE that it is wrong to divide a community. The Council believes that incorporating part of the community (including its principal town) into the Wharfedale division cannot reflect the interests of Nidderdale as a community.

The NYC Proposal appears to disregard the existence of identity and community to try to manage elector numbers (contrary to LGBCE's rules and, based on the briefing hosted by LGBCE on 29 August 2024, something that LGBCE would actively avoid in formulating its own new proposal).

Providing for effective and convenient local government

The NYC Member serving Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale, Andrew Murday, attends almost every meeting of Darley and Menwith Parish Council and works hard to help residents of the division. He lives within the division, is part of the community and, as a direct result of this, sees the issues that affect Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale residents first-hand.

The Council believes that a NYC Member for the Wharfedale division, most likely living in that division, would not have the knowledge, understanding and experience of Nidderdale parishes sufficient to be able to represent the residents effectively and conveniently.

The geography of the new proposed Wharfedale division would make it almost impossible for a single NYC Member serving the area to attend as many Nidderdale meetings and events, especially if they are based outside of the area (Wharfedale division would become particularly massive geographically compared to most divisions and is connected by only a handful of rural roads).

This means that the NYC Proposal would be expected to reduce the effectiveness and convenience of local government significantly.

Conclusion

The Council believes that the NYC Proposal breaks two of the three key rules of the boundary review and is fundamentally flawed. Dividing a community in this way would be contrary to the approach that LGBCE explained that it takes on the online meeting during the summer.

The Council asks that any proposal by LGBCE retains the existing community of Nidderdale (including its principal town, Pateley Bridge) and avoids a degradation in local representation that would certainly follow if part of the community were to be represented by a member serving a massive Wharfedale division.

Next steps

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter. If you require further information in relation to this matter please contact me.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Martin Pearson
Clerk to Darley and Menwith Parish Council