

North Yorkshire

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Comment text:

Related subject: City of Ripon

I am concerned about the proposals of the Boundary Commission (BC) in respect of the City of Ripon.

Ripon City Council (RCC) parish boundaries

The existing four Wards of Ripon are well-established and should be retained with minor alterations as described below.

Firstly, the development of 390 new homes known as "Fountains Walk", adjacent to West Lane and beyond the current City boundary in the parish of Littlethorpe. It is the considered view of RCC that this development should be included within the boundary of the city for many compelling reasons, viz:

There is no direct road access from the site to Littlethorpe village so that all its traffic will come through the city, principally via South Grange Road or Whitcliffe Lane. The nearest shops, schools, doctors etc. are all within the city. I also hazard a guess that North Yorkshire Council (NYC) will extend the existing Moorside Ward refuse collections into this estate. The postal address will fall under Ripon HG4.

It is therefore logical that this estate, which has no affinity whatsoever with Littlethorpe, should be included within the city boundary and be subject to RCC precept charge to cover the provision of local services. The BC report suggests that Fountains Walk is unlikely to offer a significant number of electors by 2027 and gives this as a reason to dismiss a boundary realignment, no doubt because the site may not be completed and fully occupied by that time. Boundary reviews only take place very infrequently and it is incumbent upon the BC to look to the future and consider that this estate will eventually contain around 1,000 new electors.

Moorside Ward is the most densely populated part of the city and the added weight of Fountains Walk could be compensated by transferring part of the ward into the adjacent Minster Ward, comprising: Knaresborough Road, Gallows Hill, Aismunderby Close, Deep Ghyll, Edens Way & eastern side of Quarry Moor Lane.

North Yorkshire Council Divisions

It is noted that Ripon's population is a little above the recommended numbers for two councillors, and hence the proposals to move bits of the City into rural divisions.

The proposal to hive off a chunk of the city into "Ripon Canal & Ure" is completely unacceptable. This is a very close-knit part of the city with many terraced houses and extends right up to the very centre and splits more than one street down the middle.

It was therefore ironic to read that North Stainley and West Tanfield are considered to have an affinity with Masham when it is blindingly obvious that the proposals in the paragraph above display no affinity whatsoever with the rural area in terms of employment, public transport, agriculture etc.

Despite those comments, proposals to hive off parts of Clothierholme area are dismissed. This part of the City would be much more suitable for realignment than the proposed eastern section as it contains all the military estate where service personnel are very transient and tend not to build up long-term relationships with Ripon. Also the housing can be considered more suburban than urban in the east side. The map shows that the very north-west most section juts out into open country three parts surrounded by Masham & Fountains Division and so appears much more ideal for realignment.

Political Influence

The BC report appears very biased as it would seem that it is all based on the views of the Liberal Democrat party which enjoys seven mentions in the text, and I have to query why the report does not apparently consider the views of any other parties or organisations.

I write as an independent non-party councillor for 22 years on RCC, a former Deputy Mayor and currently Deputy Leader, serving previous spells on the former Harrogate Borough Council & North Yorkshire County Council; all with the primary aim of promoting the best interests of all Ripon's citizens as opposed to the actions of others who are attempting to gerrymander the electoral boundaries to their advantage.

Regards,

Councillor Peter Horton

Attached Documents:

None attached