

North Yorkshire

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Comment text:

As per attached document

Attached Documents:

- boundary-review-response-june-2025.docx

RICHMOND TOWN COUNCIL



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Review Officer (North Yorkshire)
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Dear Sirs

NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL – RESPONSE FROM RICHMOND TOWN COUNCIL

Richmond Town Council would first of all like to thank the Boundary Commission for the opportunity to respond, having met in full session on Monday 2nd June to discuss the draft proposals.

Richmond Town has had a long history of representing all of the residents of the Parish of Richmond. We have connections with surrounding parishes which look to Richmond as their service centre. Richmond is very much an urban centre surrounded by both rural and deeply rural parishes. It is logical therefore, to keep all of Richmond together – as per your second consideration. Richmond Town Council were therefore concerned to read the opening statement (Page 32/para 132) that **‘The town of Richmond is too large, in terms of electorate, to be represented by a single-councillor division. Therefore, part of the town must be included in an adjacent division alongside some rural parishes’**.

This is certainly not the considered view of Richmond Town Council – the town has been served well and effectively by a single North Yorkshire Councillor.

The Town Council is mindful of the remit of the Boundary Commission and the three main considerations :

- **Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents**
- **Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity**
- **Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government**

‘Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations’

On this basis, Richmond Town Council are strongly of the opinion that the recommendation of the Liberal Democrats is flawed – the proposal to move 1000 residents from the North Ward to the North Richmondshire area totally contradicts the consideration of **reflecting community identity**. The map provided shows the area to be ‘transferred’ as the residents of Gilling Road and all those north of Beechfield Road – all these residents are strongly

rooted in Richmond Town and it is insensible to believe they would have any synergy with the North Richmondshire ward. The North Ward residents are physically connected to all areas of Richmond town whereas between them and the proposed 'move' to North Richmondshire there are nearly 3 miles of farmland, a golf course and a Georgian Country house which is grade 1 listed (therefore no building development).

The comment in the Liberal Democrats submission that **'the solution better serves residents as it respects existing community connections and use of amenities and uses existing boundaries such as rivers and key roads and natural boundaries'** fails to respect the strong community connection North ward has to the town of Richmond and the second proposal that the parish of St Martins move into Richmond ignores the physical barriers of the River Swale which is a natural boundary between Richmond and the parish.

With regard to the criteria of 'providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government', the Liberal Democrat proposal which the Boundary Commission are considering will mean that in effect two North Yorkshire Councillors will be serving the geographical entity of Richmond Town which will cause problems when it comes to the next North Yorkshire Council elections as it will mean those in North Ward will have to be distinguished from the rest of Richmond for voting papers. Also if these proposals take effect before the next North Yorkshire elections, those residents in North Ward being moved will not have voted for the Councillor serving North Richmondshire. Residents of North Ward deserve to be served by a North Yorkshire Councillor who is focused purely on Richmond town, not villages to the north which have entirely different needs. It will also mean for Richmond Town Council that we will require the presence of two North Yorkshire Councillors at our full Council Meetings to reply to questions related to North Yorkshire Council.

To summarise, it is the view of Richmond Town Council that it is much more sensible to maintain the community of Richmond. The Town is heavily urbanised and has very little space for new build development, therefore, the population of Richmond Town is likely to remain static for many years. Economically, Richmond will be better served by North Yorkshire Council if it remains a single division. Splitting the Town will simply lead to confusion with a sizeable portion of our population left wondering, what, if anything, they have in common with the rural parishes with which they are being forced to group.

The Town Council notes the comment in the Commission draft report that **'We plan to visit North Yorkshire in person once the consultation on our draft recommendations has ended, to allow us to focus on the areas where we receive strong evidence and feedback'**.

Richmond Town Council would welcome an opportunity to meet with a Boundary Commission representative to see first hand the issues we are concerned about and to focus on what is best for the town.

During our full session meeting on 2nd June we also discussed an order of preference should the criteria of equalising the number of electors be your sole purpose. Should this be the case then our preferred option would be to create a new arrangement for North Ward taking all properties north of Cutpurse Estate and Conan Drive (around 1000 electors). But this does still leave approximately 856 electors currently in North Ward who then need to be accommodated into another ward. Historically, North Yorkshire Council have not advocated the splitting of wards.

It is worth noting that the Town Council were **appalled** to read the submission from North Yorkshire Council as to how the town of Richmond should be divided:

'The Council proposed that most of Richmond be combined with the parishes of Aske and Gilling with Hartforth & Sedbury to form a Richmond & Gilling West division. Meanwhile the eastern part of the town would be grouped with several adjoining parishes in a Richmond East & Scotch Corner division'.

In effect, this proposal would totally destroy the community identity of Richmond Town and would fragment local cohesion. We note that the Boundary Commission have chosen not to proceed with the North Yorkshire Council submission which seems highly sensible and we totally agree with this. The school campus areas should remain in the Richmond division.

We note that a recent press report states that North Yorkshire Council are concerned that the Boundary Commission draft report 'differs significantly from what the authority had suggested' and are set to submit a fresh list. If that new submission proposes similar changes to Richmond as advanced in their first submission, there will be strong opposition to such a proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Carl Tate
Mayor of Richmond