

North Yorkshire

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Organisation Name: Pateley Bridge Town Council (PBTC), also known as High and Low Bishopside Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Pateley Bridge Town Council
Second Response to Consultation on New Division Boundaries in North Yorkshire
9th October 2025

Pateley Bridge Town Council (PBTC), also known as High and Low Bishopside Parish Council, remains strongly opposed to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC)'s proposal to merge the current Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale Moors Division into the 'Wharfedale' division. This new division attempts to combine two distinct communities, geographically separated by a large upland area and connected only by the B6265. PBTC argues that such a merger fails to respect the unique historical, geographical, and social identity of Nidderdale, undermining effective representation and community cohesion.

PBTC emphasises the following points:

1. Dividing High and Low Bishopside Parish: The proposed boundary changes would divide our parish, placing Pateley Bridge in the Wharfedale Division while assigning Glasshouses and Wilsill to the Nidderdale Division. This fragmentation undermines cohesive local governance, forcing our Parish Council to coordinate with two separate NYC councillors. Such a split would lead to disjointed representation, complicate decision-making, and dilute our parish's unified voice in addressing community concerns.
2. Distinct Identities: Nidderdale and Wharfedale are separate communities with distinct historical ties, governance traditions, and practical affiliations. Nidderdale has always been associated with Harrogate, while Wharfedale aligns with Skipton, reflecting different service and cultural centres.
3. Geographical Challenges: The significant distance (approximately 30 miles and 1.5 hour's drive) between key settlements like Buckden

(Wharfedale) and Middlesmoor (Nidderdale) makes it impractical for one councillor to effectively represent both areas and highlights the distinct separation of the communities.

4. Community and Cultural Cohesion: Nidderdale is a close-knit community with shared institutions, such as Nidderdale High School, Nidderdale Agricultural Society, and numerous other community organisations. Dividing the valley would weaken these bonds and dilute its unique identity.

5. Diverging Administrative Frameworks: Upper Nidderdale lies within the Nidderdale National Landscape, while Wharfedale falls under the Yorkshire Dales National Park, each governed by distinct priorities and planning authorities.

6. Contradiction to Boundary Review Principles: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBC) outlines three criteria for boundary changes: electoral equality, reflecting local community identities, and enabling effective governance. PBTC asserts that the proposal meets only the first criterion while violating the other two.

7. Inadequacy of the B6265 as a Connecting Route: The only road linking the proposed communities is the B6265, a minor and upland route that cannot be regarded as a sufficient or reliable connection. The B6265 is frequently impacted by adverse weather conditions, rendering it unreliable in winter months and unsuitable as the primary route connecting these communities all year round. This further demonstrates that the proposed merger is poorly designed and disregards practical realities of rural connectivity.

8. Loss of Shared Community Values with Neighbouring Parishes: The historical parishes of Nidderdale, which include High and Low Bishopside, Beverley, and Upper Nidderdale, have consistently maintained profound geographical and social associations with adjacent parishes such as Dacre, Darley and Menwith, Thornthwaite with Padside, and Thruscross. These enduring interconnections have evolved through centuries of shared customs, mutual economic interests, and coordinated responses to regional challenges. Nidderdale represents a distinctive geographical and sociocultural region, and its identity is most accurately reflected through an administrative boundary that encompasses all contiguous parishes, thereby sustaining cohesive community values and unified governance.

PBTC advocates for retaining the historic Nidderdale Division, encompassing all parishes within the River Nidd valley, to preserve community identity and ensure effective local governance. The council also highlights widespread local opposition to the proposal, as evidenced by criticism in the media and among neighbouring parish councils.

This proposal risks fragmenting a historically unified community, and PBTC urges the LGBC to reconsider, prioritising community integrity over numerical convenience.

PBTC calls upon the Commission to prioritise community, integrity, practical realities and the sustainability of rural services over arbitrary numerical targets.

Attached Documents:

- [pbtc-response-to-boundary-commission-consultation---october-2025.pdf](#)

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