

Darlington

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Comment text:

Related subject: Whole council area submission

Hi, please find attached the submission on behalf of the Labour Group of Darlington Borough Council.

Regards

Stephen

Attached Documents:

- electoral-review-2027-warding-proposal-labour-group-submission.pdf

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Electoral Review of Darlington Borough Council
Implementation May 2027

Proposed Future Warding Arrangements

Darlington Borough Council Labour Group submission

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1. Councillor numbers

At the first stage of the review it has been agreed that the number of councillors will reduce from 50 to 41, a decrease of 9.

2. Current wards and elector numbers

Currently there are 20 wards, each with either 2 or 3 councillors.

The majority of electors (approximately 84%) live in the urban area of the town of Darlington.

Currently there are 17 wards within the urban area. There are 3 rural wards, namely: Heighington and Coniscliffe, Hurworth and Middleton St George & Sadberge.

The following table details the current wards, showing their variances in 2024, and the estimated variances for 2031.

Name of Ward	No. cllrs	Electorate 2024	Variance 2024	Electorate 2031	Variance 2031
Brinkburn and Faverdale	3	6,091	24%	7,391	12%
Banktop and Lascelles	3	4,548	-8%	4,578	-30%
Cockerton	3	4,673	-5%	4,736	-28%
College	2	3,482	6%	3,491	-20%
Eastbourne	3	4,801	-2%	4,932	-25%
Heighington and Coniscliffe	2	4,195	28%	5,811	32%
Harrowgate Hill	3	4,907	0%	5,502	-16%
Hummersknott	2	3,134	-4%	3,184	-27%
Haughton and Springfield	3	4,813	-2%	4,884	-26%
Hurworth	2	3,563	9%	3,729	-15%
Mowden	2	3,157	-4%	3,180	-28%
Northgate	2	2,656	-19%	2,737	-38%
North Road	3	4,232	-14%	4,296	-35%
Park East	3	4,823	-2%	4,991	-24%
Park West	2	3,660	12%	3,703	-16%
Pierremont	3	4,197	-15%	4,243	-36%
Redhall and Lingfield	2	3,304	1%	3,508	-20%
Middleton St George & Sadberge	3	5,443	11%	8,425	28%
Stephenson	2	3,319	1%	3,291	-25%
Whinfield	2	3,042	-7%	3,337	-24%

The table above, notwithstanding the change in councillor numbers, indicates that there is an imbalance in the percentage variance of electors across the wards. We know too that there are significant house building projections which need to be taken into account in drafting new warding arrangements.

3. Proposed new warding arrangements

3.1. LGBCE guidance

In drafting the proposals we were cognisant of the 3 rules that we need to follow, namely:

- **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – this means ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of people so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area.
- **Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities** – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.
- **Promoting effective and convenient local government** – this means ensuring that the new wards or electoral divisions can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively.

In particular to the LGBCE guidance regarding identities, we have been conscious that the Borough is a mix of a single urban area and rural villages. Whilst the villages see themselves as part of the family that is the Borough, their rurality is a very important part of their identity too.

We have therefore endeavoured to maintain the nature of the rural wards, i.e. where possible to ensure significant new housing development that is effectively an addition to the urban area is included in an urban ward, rather than one of the rural wards. This has not been possible in all instances.

3.2. Predicted elector numbers per councillor

The data supplied to the LGBCE indicates that by 2031 the electorate of the Borough will be 89,949. Given it has been determined that there will be 41 councillors, the average number of electors per councillor should be 2,194.

3.3. Summary of proposed changes

The proposal is for 17 wards, with a mix of 2 and 3 seater wards. The number of rural wards remains unchanged, namely 3.

Name of Ward	No. cllrs	Electorate 2031	Variance 2031
Bank Top and Central	3	7,004	+6%
Branksome and Cockerton West	2	4,606	+5%
Brinkburn and Cockerton East	2	4,148	-5%
College	2	4,409	0%
Faverdale	2	4,251	-3%
Harrowgate Hill	3	6,414	-3%
Haughton le Skerne	3	6,762	+3%
Heighington and Coniscliffe	2	4,215	-4%
Hummersknott	2	4,307	-2%
Hurworth	2	4,244	-3%
Middleton St George and Sadberge	3	6,701	+2%
Mowden	2	4,148	-5%
North Road	2	4,296	-2%
Park	3	6,697	+2%
Pierremont & Northgate	3	6,487	-1%
Tommy Crooks and McMullen	3	6,979	+6%
Whinfield	2	4,281	-2%

3.4. Ward proposals

3.4.1. (a) Bank Top & Central and (b) Tommy Crooks & McMullen

The area bounded to the west by the East Coast mainline, to the south by the Tees Valley branch line, to the east by the A66, and to the north by the East Transport Corridor (B6279), is surrounded by strong boundaries – 2 railway lines, and 2 arterial roads all of which have few crossing points, either road or pedestrian. One road's speed limit is 40mph, the other 60mph; neither have footpaths alongside.

Yarm Road traverses this area, east to west bisecting the north and south into roughly 2 equal halves. Whilst Yarm Road too is an arterial route into Darlington, it has a 30mph speed limit, and has many road and pedestrian crossing points facilitating movement in a north/south direction. In reality Yarm Road is a much softer and more permeable boundary than it appears when looking simply at a map.

Traversing north/south across this area is facilitated, but traversing east/west, other than along Yarm Road, is not easy by vehicle – and in some places deliberately so to prevent rat-runs.

There are many community facilities that residents use whichever side of Yarm Road they live.

School catchment patterns demonstrate social integration across Yarm Road. St Aidan's Church of England Academy catchment (a secondary school, north of Yarm Road) includes families from both sides of Yarm Road, with children who easily travel on foot whichever side of the Yarm Road they live.

Open spaces such as Eastbourne Park, Tommy Crooks Park both of which are south of Yarm Road are used by families for informal play, sport, dog walking, by families from both sides of Yarm Road. They are not perceived as belonging to only those who live south of Yarm Road.

The local shopping centre on Yarm Road, home to an Aldi and Lidl, is used by residents from across the whole area, with residents able to travel by car or on foot.

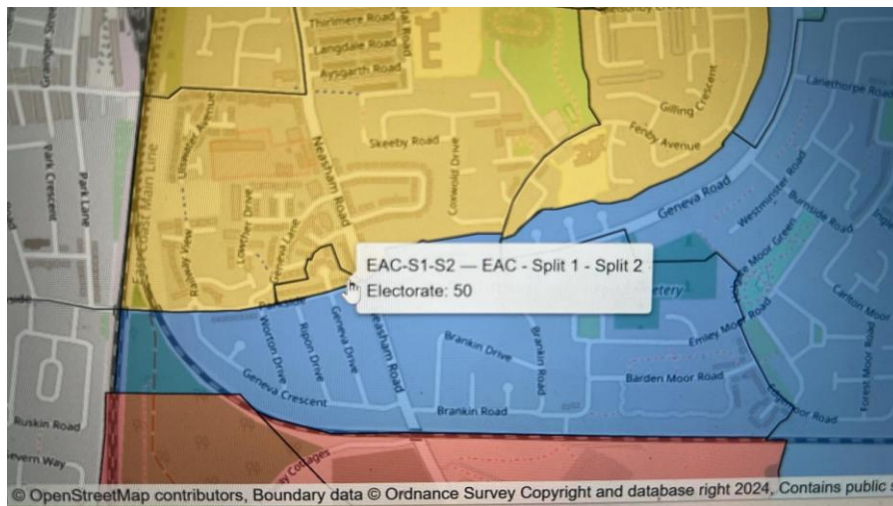
Primary healthcare provision tells the same story. Neasham Road Surgery located south of Yarm Road serves patients drawn all parts of this wider area – again Yarm Road is not a barrier preventing wider access.

The solution suggested for this area is 2 wards, that both cross Yarm Road, one nearer to the town centre and an outer more suburban ward. Both are 3-seater wards. This solution also resolves an issue with the current warding in which 2 existing wards (Stephenson and Red Hall & Lingfield) are spilt across the Eastern Transport Corridor.

3.4.1.1. Modifications proposed

For both proposed wards they are mostly constructed from existing polling districts. There are two exceptions.

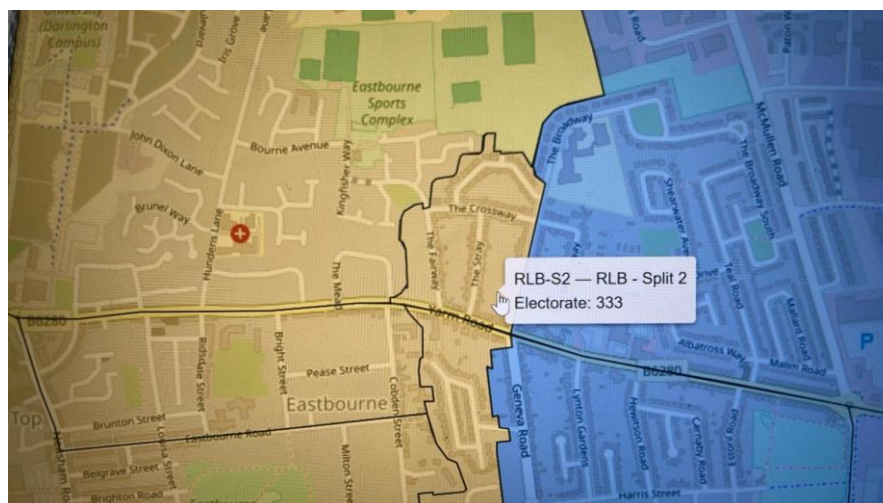
a) Area 1:



The area marked EAC-S1-S2 (taken from the current Eastbourne ward), sets the boundary of the yellow shaded ward to follow wholly along the centre of Parkside. This area includes approximately 50 electors.

This small area is proposed to be moved to help balance the elector numbers across the two wards.

b) Area 2:



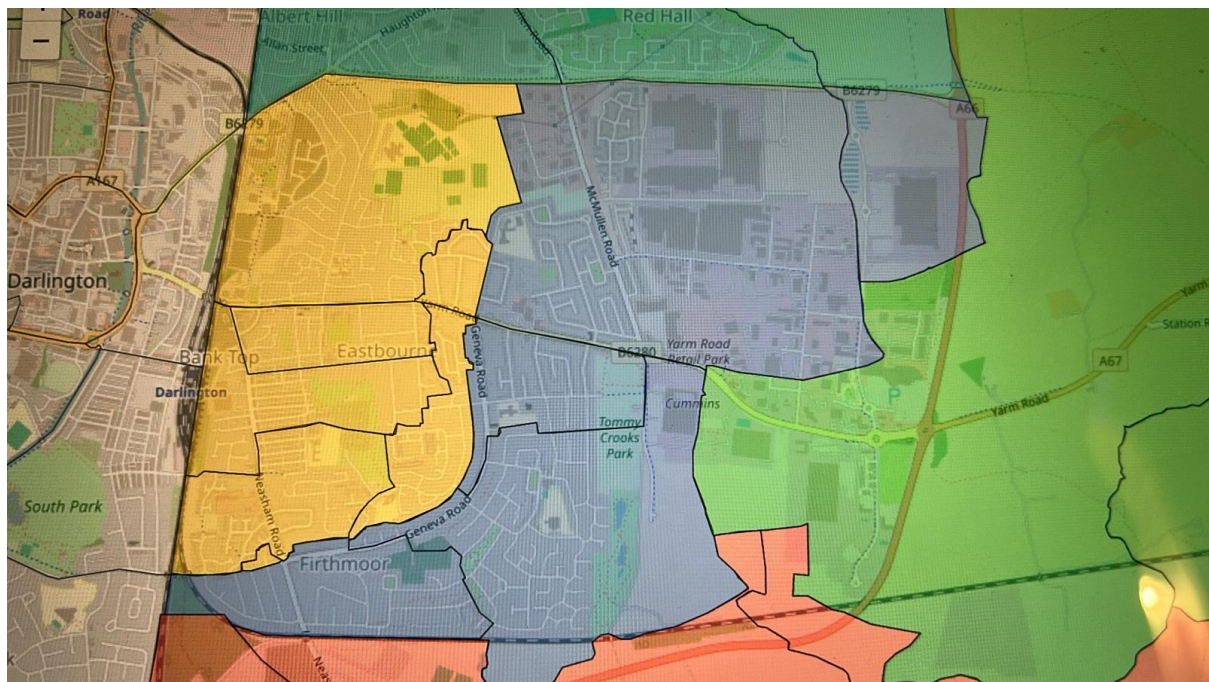
The area marked RLB-S2 (taken from the current Red Hall and Lingfield ward), is created by adding a boundary along the centre of The Broadway from Yarm Road as far as the junction with The Causeway. This area includes approximately 333 electors.

This change creates a better boundary between the two proposed wards, in that it aligns across Yarm Road. It also helps make the variances of the two wards be more equitable.

3.4.1.2. Proposed new Bank Top & Central ward and Tommy Crooks & McMullen ward

The new Bank Top and Central ward is shaded yellow in the map below. This consists of the current polling districts of Bank Top and Lascelles ward; the current polling district STB from Stephenson ward; plus the two amendments described above.

The new Tommy Crooks and McMullen ward is shaded blue in the map below. This consists of the current polling districts of Eastbourne ward; the current polling district RLB from Red Hall and Lingfield ward; less the two amendments; plus part of polling district SMG, which has not electors.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Bank Top and Central	3	7,004	+6%
Tommy Crooks and McMullen	3	6,979	+6%

3.4.2. (a) Branksome & Cockerton West and (b) Brinkburn & Cockerton East

This proposed ward covers overlaps with the current Cockerton ward.

This proposed ward together with ward Brinkburn and Cockerton East, includes the area covering part of Brinkburn and Faverdale (current polling district BFD), the current Cockerton ward, some new development (Hall Farm, to the west of the current Cockerton). In addition two small areas of West Park are included to ensure suitable elector variances.

This is a well-defined area, on the eastern side by Brinkburn Road forming the southern boundary, and the north boundary by the Black Path, which separates the housing with Faverdale industrial estate to the north. At its eastern end the railway branch line is the boundary. This polling district is currently in Brinkburn and Faverdale ward, but in reality has a very weak connection to the rest of that ward.

On the western side of this broader area, the southern boundary is formed by Cocker Beck, and again to north by the Black Path, though this is breached in a couple of places to ensure electoral equality. At the western end the A1(M) forms a very clear physical boundary.

In order to create the best elector variance the two wards are created by creating a boundary that runs down the centre of Stooberdale Avenue (at the north end ensuring that Amiens Close

and Mulheim Close, named after the Towns with whom we are twinned, remain together in the same ward), and at the south end following West Beck. This creates elector variances of 3% and -4%.

There is a preference to have a slightly different boundary, that follows the same division down Stooperdale Avenue, but then instead of following West Beck, follow Cockerton Green (that is, the road of that name) to where it ends at the junction with Woodland Road and West Auckland Road. This results in variances of +7% and -7%. It's accepted that this perhaps too high, but if the LGBCE feel it is appropriate then this would be the preferred boundary.

Residents living closer to the village of Cockerton see the village as part of their identity. If the boundary were to follow Cockerton Green, then the village is then partly in both wards – and conveys the view that the village “belongs” to residents from both west and east. With the proposal to follow West Beck rather than Cockerton Green as the last part of the boundary, whilst that gives us closer elector variance, it signals to the western ward that somehow the village is no longer theirs.

3.4.2.1. Modifications proposed for Branksome & Cockerton West

The map below, shaded in blue, and labelled BFB-S2 consists of:

- in the southern part, a new development, Hall Farm, that more appropriately connects to the current Cockerton ward
- in the northern part housing south of Newton Lane and south of Thomas Sopwith Way needs to be included with the Cockerton wards to ensure a better elector variance

This area is approximately 1,109 electors.

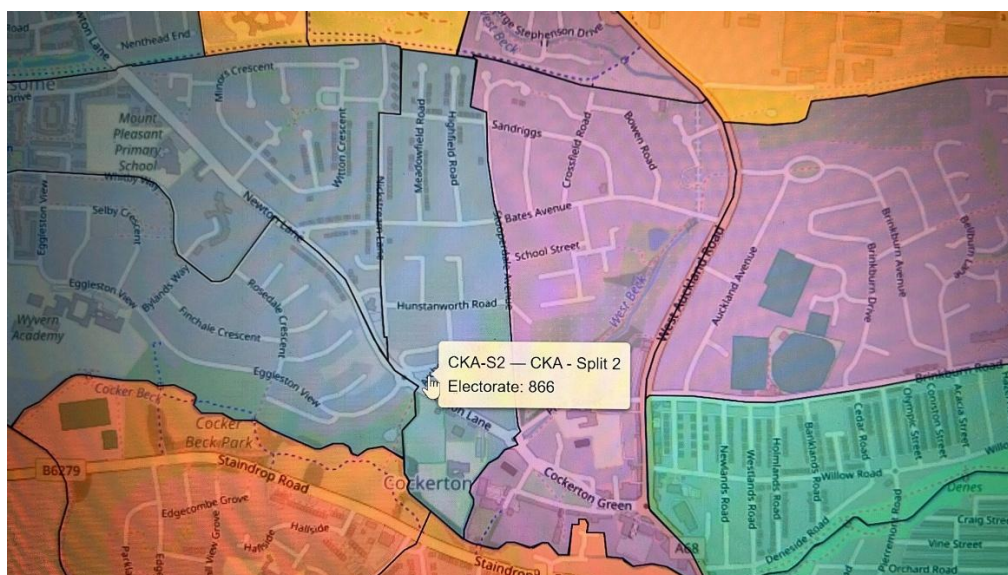
The reason for including Hall Farm is clear – it will sit directly to the west of this ward, with a pinch point at the development's most northerly point that will likely hinder movement north/south.

Including the houses south of Newton Lane and Thomas Sopwith Way, is necessary to balance elector numbers. However there are strong connections between this ward and the houses to the north – Newton Lane itself connects both sides, and Newton Lane is the route to both Cockerton Village and the town centre; it is a natural thoroughfare. There are also footpath links – the Black Path runs west to east across the top of the current Cockerton ward, and provides links between the current Cockerton ward and houses to the north in the current Brinkburn and Faverdale ward.

Footpaths also link the proposed ward to West Park park, which is a shared open space used by residents from this proposed ward, and the ward to the north.

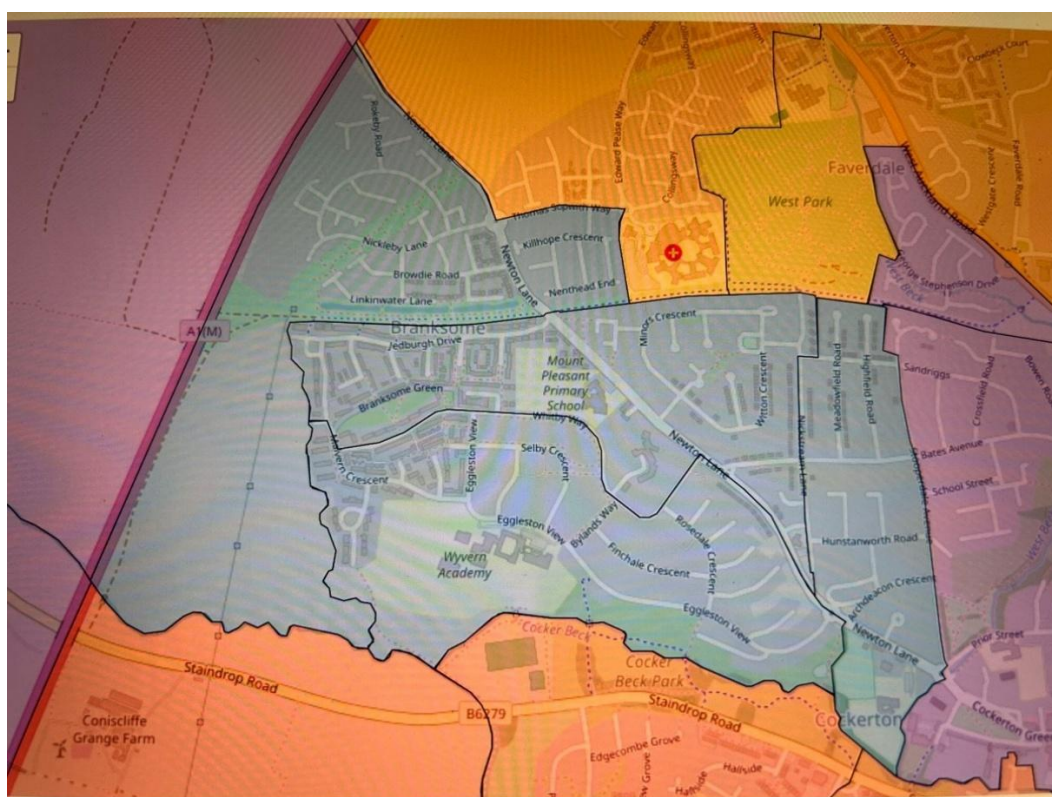
3.4.2.3. Modifications proposed for both wards

As described above, one of the current Cockerton polling districts is to be split – CKA. Shown below in blue, labelled CKA-S2 is the west half of CKA. The western half contains approximately 866, and the eastern half 1,239.



3.4.2.4. Proposed new Branksome and Cockerton West ward

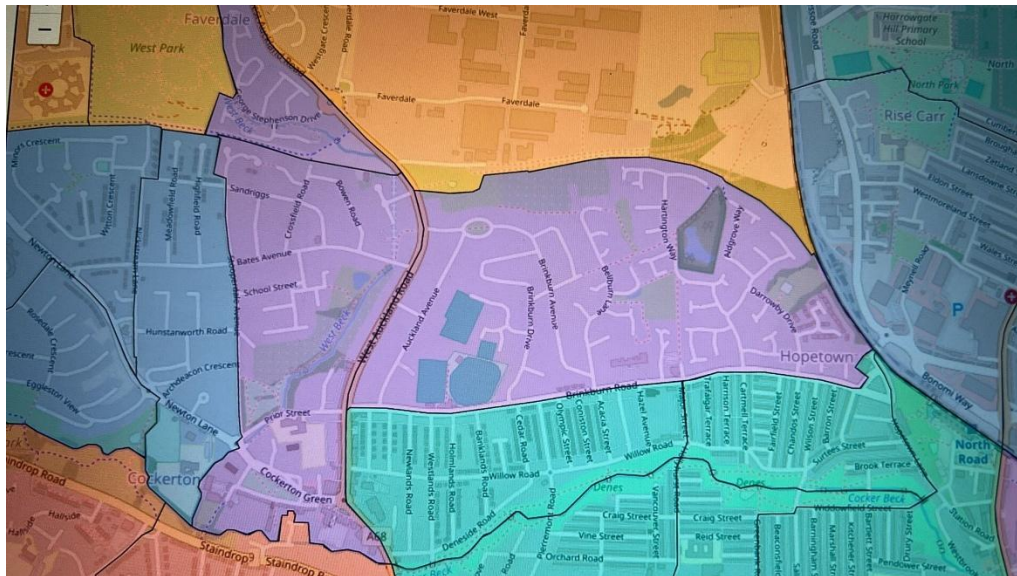
The new ward is shaded blue.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Branksome and Cockerton West	2	4,606	+5%

3.4.2.5. Proposed new Brinkburn and Cockerton East ward

The new ward is shaded purple.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Brinkburn and Cockerton East	2	4,148	-5%

3.4.3. College

College ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -20% by 2031.

3.4.3.1. Modifications proposed

Extending the ward to the south by including polling district PWB, and part of PWC, both from the current Park West ward creates more clearly delineated boundaries for the ward. On each side of the ward there are main arterial routes – Woodland Road, Carmel Road North, Coniscliffe Road, Stanhope Road North & South.

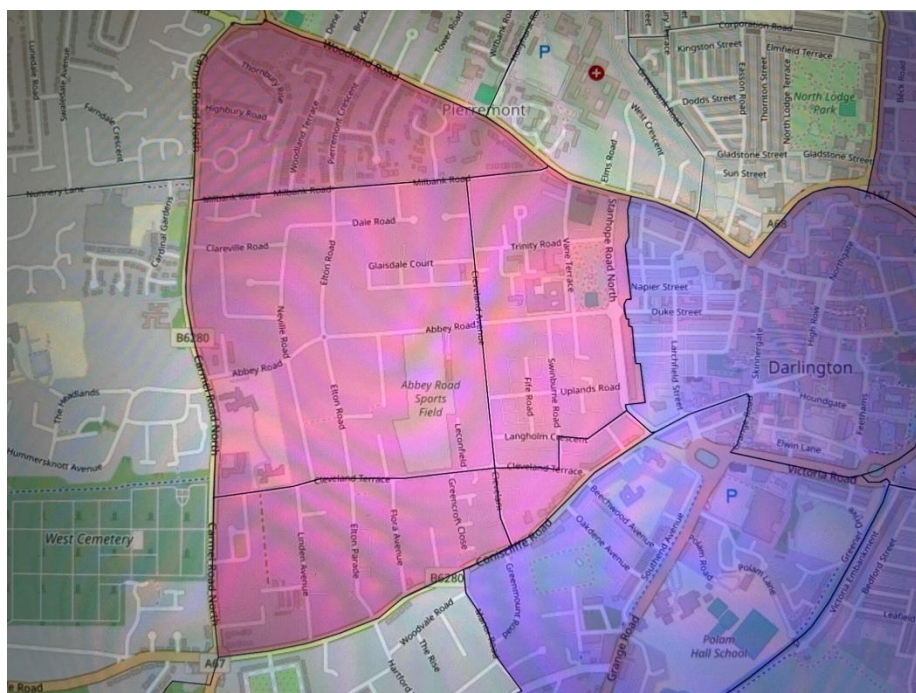
Darlington has an inner ring road that encircles the town centre, however the western section of this was never built. Motorists use Stanhope Road North & South as a substitute for this missing section. Thus, Stanhope Road North & South is a stronger boundary than would initially appear.

The section of PWC that is to be included is created by having a new boundary following the centre line of Coniscliffe Road for the whole of the southern boundary. This removes a messy current boundary, and makes a much clearer and stronger boundary.

This allows the ward to remain as a 2 seater, which in the west end of Darlington is the preferred model.

3.4.3.2. Proposed new College ward

The new ward is shaded pink in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
College	2	4,409	+0%

3.4.4. Faverdale

Brinkburn and Faverdale ward currently has 3 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of +22% by 2031.

Brinkburn and Faverdale previously was a smaller Faverdale ward. Previous growth in housing resulted in the original Faverdale ward expanding to the current Brinkburn and Faverdale ward. Development continues at West Park, and there is further growth with future developments taking place between Rotary Way and Burtree Lane. Once again this ward needs to change significantly to accommodate the growth in housing to its north.

The development between Rotary Way and Burtree Lane, variously referred to as Faverdale or Burtree Garden Village, will link Rotary Way and Burtree Lane with a link road as part of the development, connecting this development to both the existing West Park and Faverdale areas, and secondly link to development taking place alongside the A167 via the eastern section of Burtree Lane.

The small, but growing shopping centre at Westpark, and on Faverdale (the road named Faverdale), will help to embed the growing community to this developing area. West Park Academy primary school is the first choice for families, again helping to strengthen community. As the area grows, facilities at West Park and Faverdale are expanding too, with residents in this traveling less frequently to Cockerton Village, and using more local and convenient facilities.

Part of the current Brinkburn and Faverdale ward (polling district BFD) – the area of housing north of Brinkburn Road – is poorly connected to the rest of the current ward. It has been linked with Brinkburn and Faverdale more for consideration of making wards of an appropriate size, than genuine links to the rest of the ward. This area (BFD) is now fully developed, and a fresh look suggests a better link is once again with Cockerton. It is proposed that this area is removed from Brinkburn and Faverdale, and is linked to Cockerton, as a pair of new wards. This allows this ward to be reformed with a focus to the developments that will take place to north of the current ward.

The name change is significant in that for the proposed ward the Brinkburn connection will disappear.

A small part of south part of West Park needs to be included with the two proposed Cockerton wards to ensure elector variances are not too great.

As with Whinfield and Harrowgate Hill wards it is likely that the northern boundary of this reformed ward will require refinement at the next boundary review.

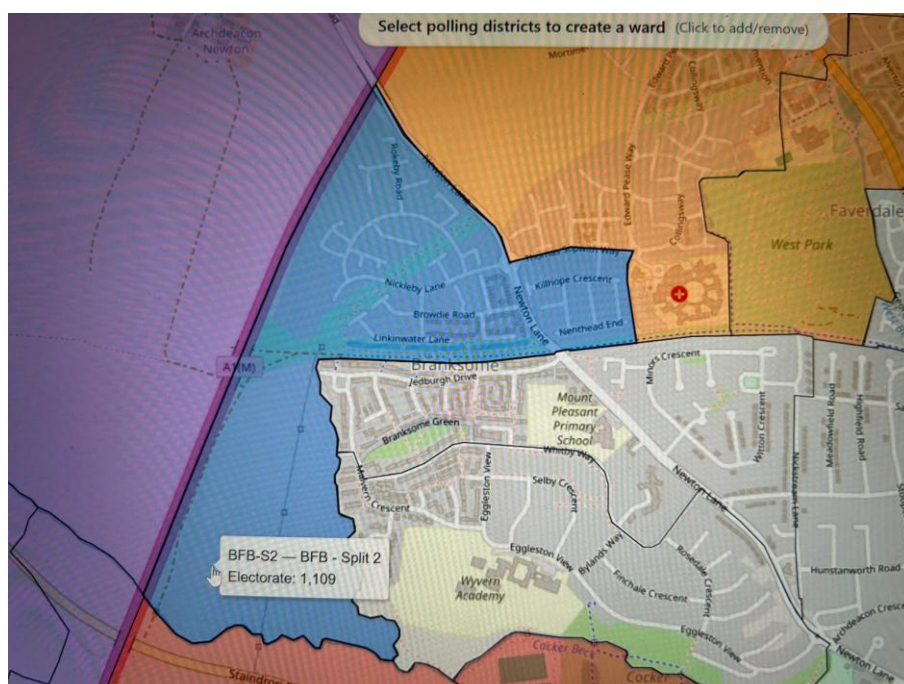
3.4.4.1. Modifications proposed

In addition to removing BFD, two further areas are proposed not to be transferred to the new Faverdale.

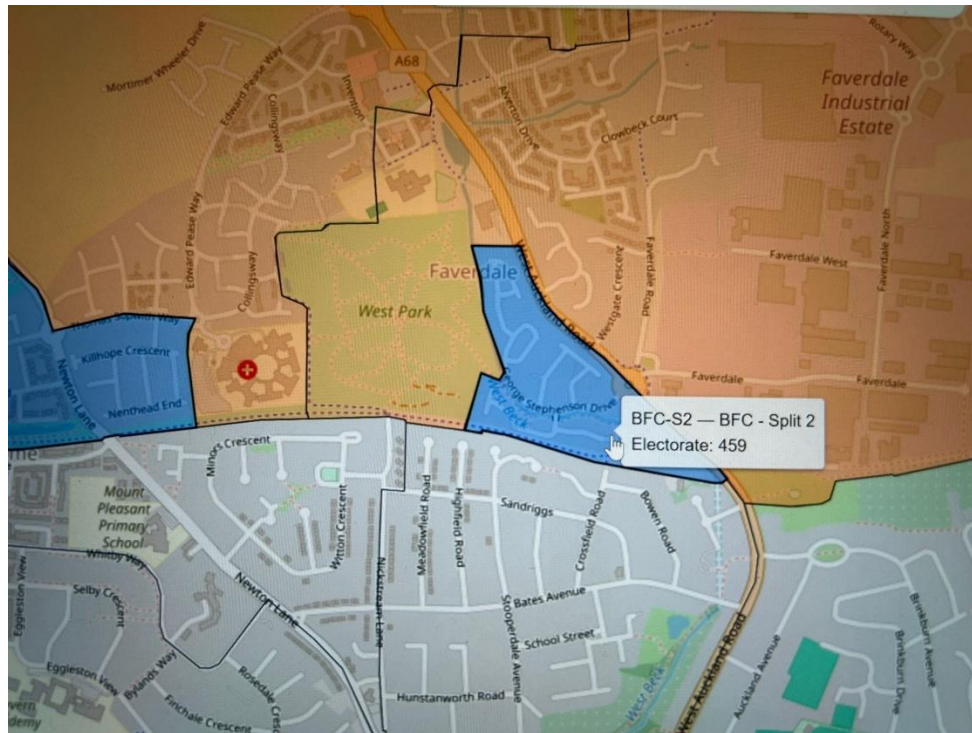
The area shown below, shaded in blue, labelled BFB-S2 and consist of:

- in the southern part, a new development, Hall Farm, that more appropriately connects to the current Cockerton ward
- in the northern part housing almost completely developed south of Newton Lane and south of Thomas Sopwith Way needs to be included with the Cockerton wards to ensure a better elector variance

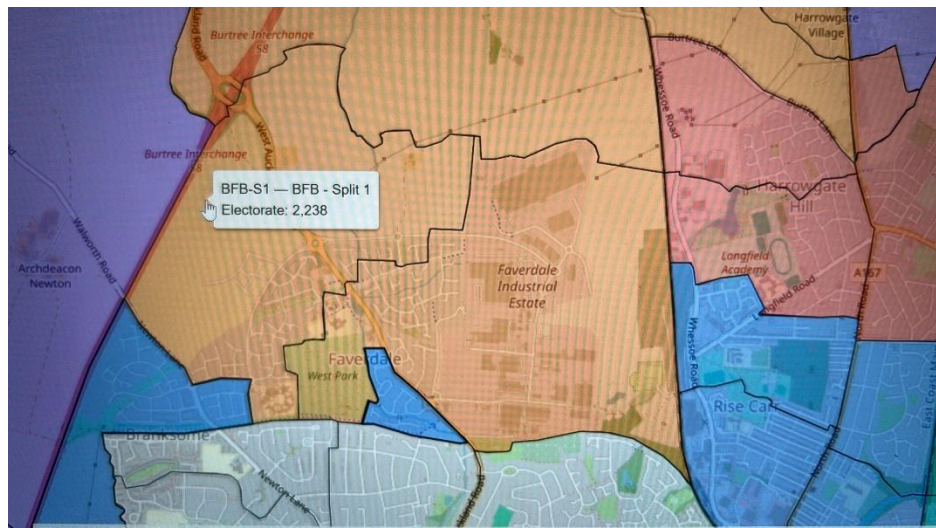
This is approximately 1,109 electors.



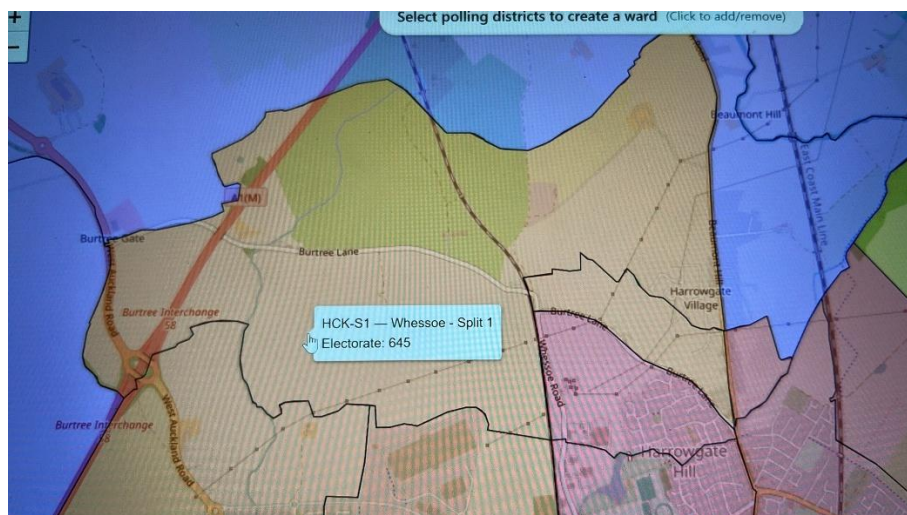
A second area, also shaded blue, labelled BFC-S2, is proposed to be included with the Cockerton wards. This is approximately 459 electors.



The impact of moving the above two areas, leaves the remaining part of BFB, labelled BFB-S1 having approximately 2,238 electors. This includes the growth of West Park Garden Village. And, the area to the east is left with approximately, 1,118 electors.

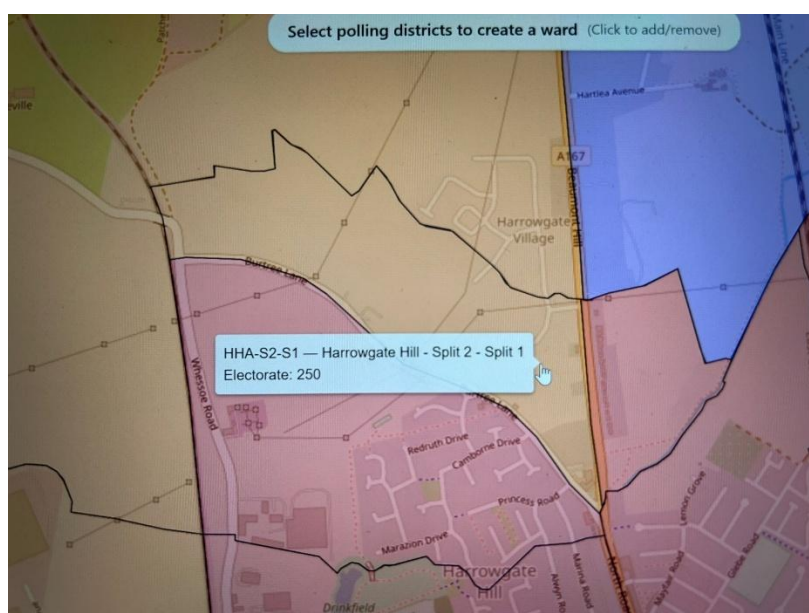


The polling district HCK, part of Heighington and Coniscliffe ward, includes the Burtree development – the area between Rotary Way and Burtree Lane. This polling district is proposed to be spilt with a boundary following the A167. The western section, labelled HCK-S1, with an estimate of 645 electors.



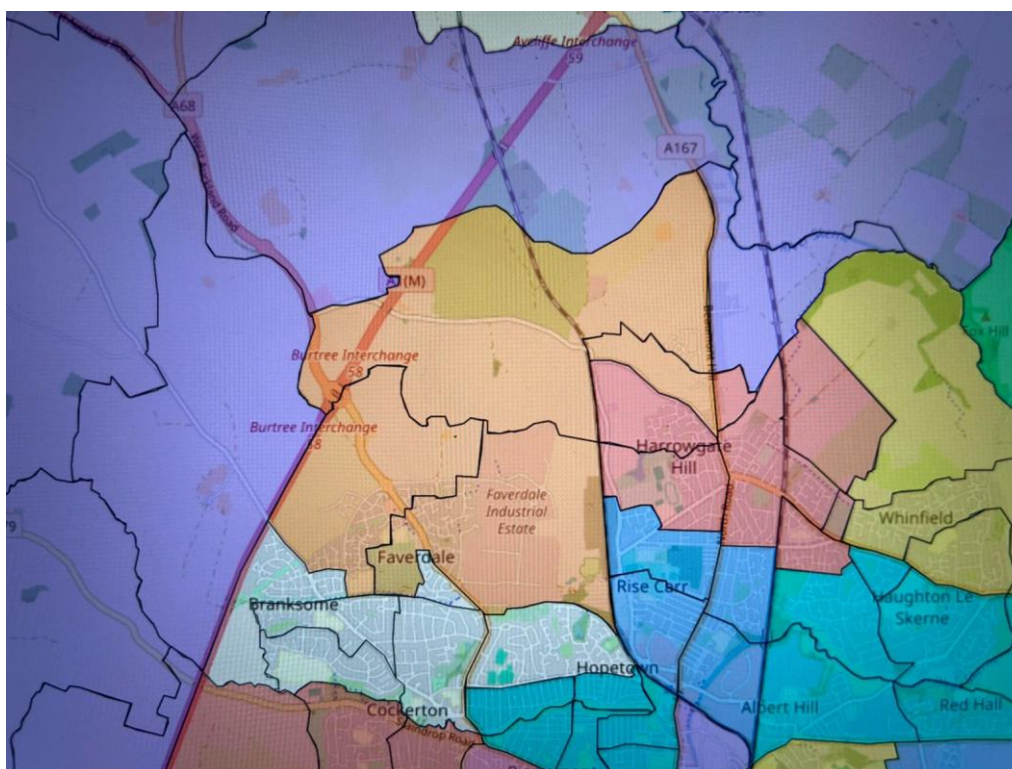
It is proposed to change the northern boundary of HHA to the west of the A167 to be slightly further south to follow the line of Burtree Lane. The small section north of Burtree Lane will move into Faverdale, this is labelled HHA-S2-S1. It is estimated that there are 250 electors in this area. Burtree Lane provides the road link to the rest of the Faverdale ward.

It is recognised that as much of the development is still taking place in the north of this ward, we are yet to fully to understand how changing community facilities and infrastructure will actually shape the new communities – making it difficult to be certain about where best to draw boundaries.



3.4.4.2. Proposed new Faverdale ward

Shown below shaded in orange



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Faverdale	2	4,251	-3%

3.4.5. Harrogate Hill

Harrowgate Hill ward currently has 3 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -16% by 2031.

To the north of the current Harrogate Hill there is planned housing development, and the most obvious solution is to link this to the current Harrogate Hill ward – the development is adjacent to Harrogate Hill and there will be connectivity by road and footpath between the two. New electors will have access to the community facilities within the existing Harrogate Hill ward, and more immediate wider area. Once the new housing is established – perhaps by the time of the next boundary review - it may be that other improved warding arrangements become apparent and practical, but at this stage linking to the existing community is the best option.

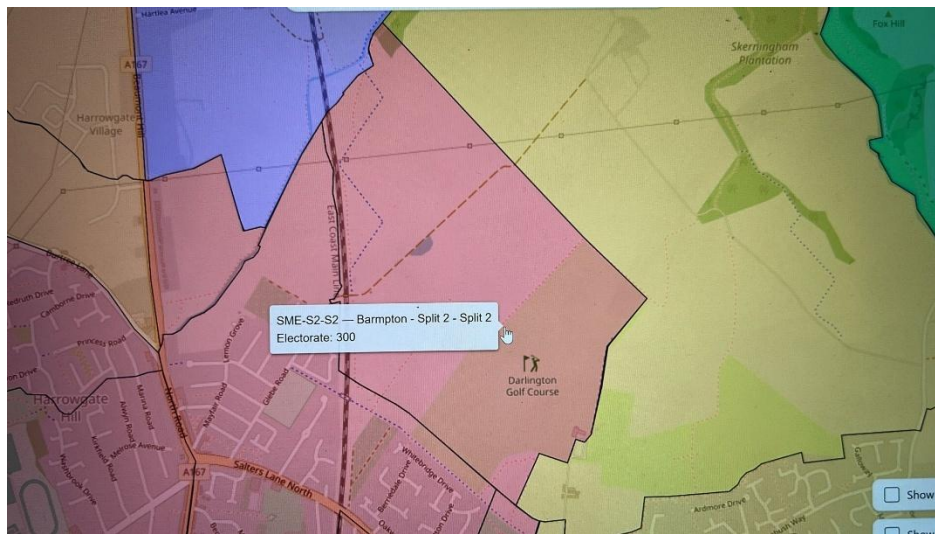
3.4.5.1. Modifications proposed

The polling district SME, part of Middleton St George and Sadberge ward, is proposed to be split:

- the eastern part remaining in Middleton St George and Sadberge ward (64 electors)
- the remaining 959 electors resulting from the Skerningham development will be split between Whinfield and Harrogate Hill

To achieve the best elector variance, approximately 659 should be in the Whinfield part, and 300 in the Harrogate Hill part. However, at this moment it is difficult to draw the boundary with any accuracy to ensure the elector variance is best balanced between the two wards.

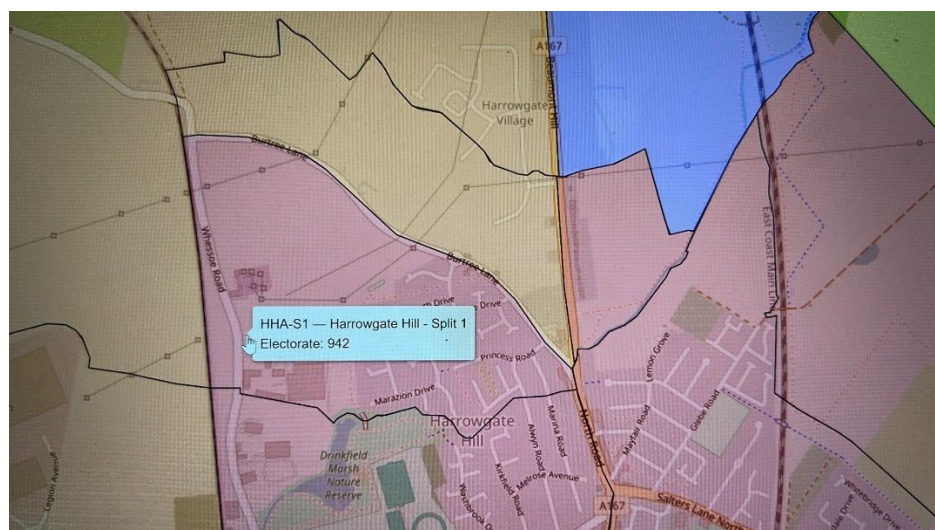
The Harrowgate Hill section is shown below, in red, as SME-S2-S2. The western boundary is the existing SME / HHB boundary. The eastern straight-lined boundary split between Harrowgate Hill and Whinfield is no more than an estimate of where the 300/659 houses will be.



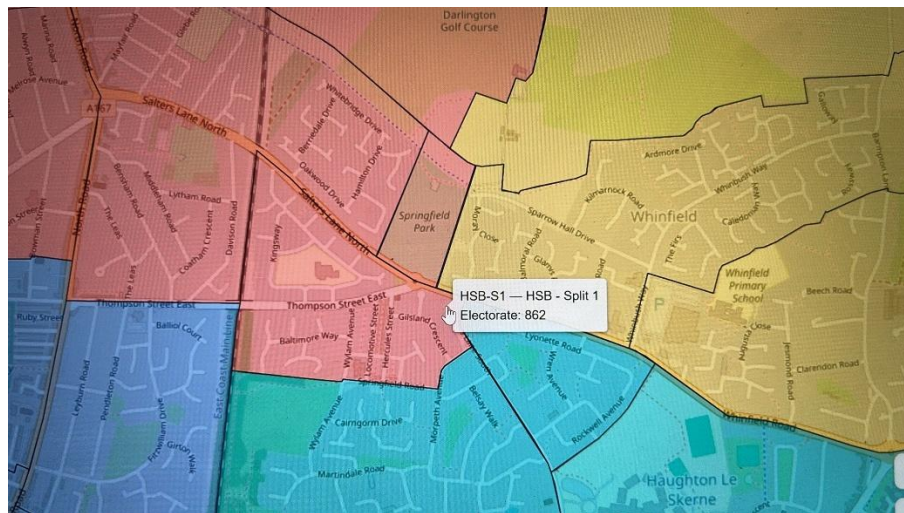
Polling district HHA forms the northern most part of Harrowgate Hill. It falls both sides of the A167, and on western side is both south and north of Burtree Lane. The current boundary is from when there was very much less housing. Now with housing developments that are underway (west of the A167) and further projected building the northern ward boundary does is poorly defined.

It is proposed to change the northern boundary of HHA to the west of the A167 to be slightly further south to follow the line of Burtree Lane. The small section north of Burtree Lane will move into Faverdale. The northern HHA boundary to the east the A167 is proposed to be unchanged – at this point in time it is unclear how this would be better drawn.

The area shown below as HHA-S1, counting existing electors, together with projected South of Burtree Lane, this section is approximately 942 electors. The remaining 500 projected for HHA as a whole, it is assumed there is an equal split between the other two sections of HHA – that is, the section north of Burtree Lane (west of the A167) and the section east of the A167.



A part of the current Haughton and Springfield ward is to be included in the amended Harrowgate Hill ward. Without this transfer the new Haughton le Skerne ward would be too large. The section is shown below, shaded red, and labelled HSB-S1. This is approximately 862 electors. Access to the part of the ward is via Thompsons Street West/East, and Salters Lane North; the latter gives access to the Ashbrooke estate too, to the north of HSB-S1, which remains in Harrowgate Hill.



As a minor change, Springfield Park is moved from Whinfield to Harrowgate Hill, to make the boundary slightly cleaner.

3.4.5.2. Proposed new Harrowgate Hill ward



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Harrowgate Hill	3	6,414	-3%

3.4.6. Haughton le Skerne

Haughton and Springfield ward currently has 3 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -26% by 2031.

The proposed warding for Bank Top & Central and Tommy Crooks & McMullen, provides a good solution for the area between the Eastern Transport Corridor and Whinfield Road, creating a ward focussed around the Skerne river, with strong boundaries forming the ward. This solution also resolves an issue with the current warding in which 2 existing wards (Stephenson and Red Hall & Lingfield) are spilt across the Eastern Transport Corridor.

The proposal brings together most of the current Houghton and Springfield ward, Red Hall estate (polling district RLA), part of the current Stephenson ward (polling district STA), together with the planned development Great Burdon (which will add approximately 440 electors).

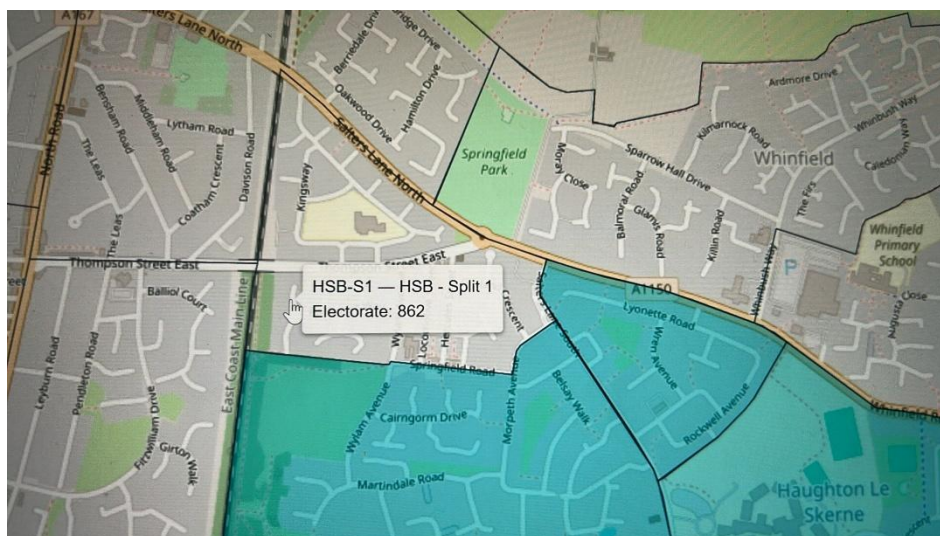
The Skerne river is a recreational focus point of the area, and so it is a better solution that the river is central to a ward, rather than being an artificial administrative boundary between wards.

Haughton Road and Salters Lane South provide strong arterial routes within the ward linking together homes within the ward.

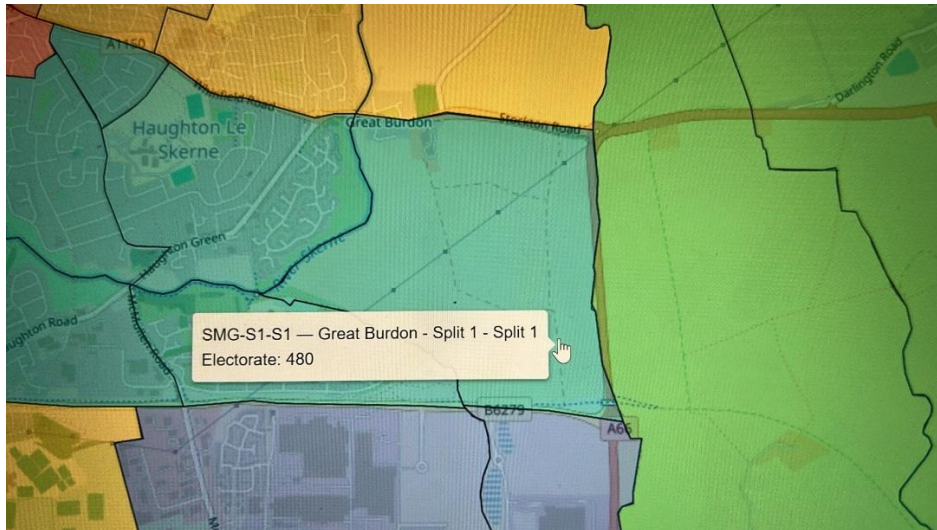
A smaller, but important, factor is that some residents who live in STA are confused over which ward they currently live in. Haughton Road is the main arterial route through the polling district, making them believe they live in Haughton and Springfield ward rather than Stephenson ward.

3.4.6.1. Modifications proposed

The current polling district HSB is to be split along Salters Lane South from the junction with Whinfield Road to the junction with Morpeth Avenue. This allows the part of HSB north of Springfield Road to be moved to the changed Harrowgate Hill this ward. This is necessary to ensure the elector variance is at an acceptable level.

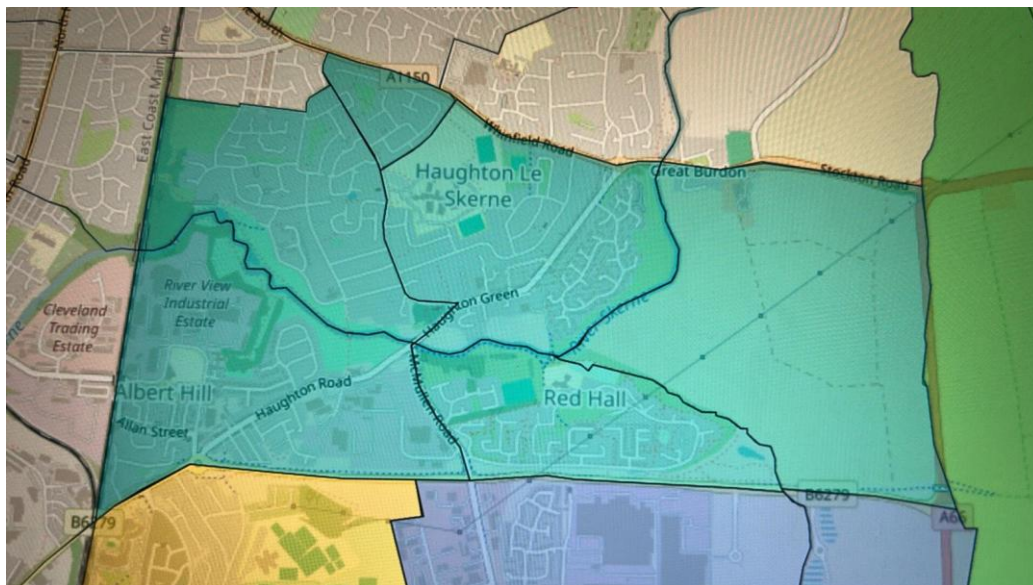


The current polling district SMG is to be moved from Middleton St George & Sadberge ward (maintaining rurality of that ward by placing a significant housing development to the urban area). The section between Stockton Road, the A66 and the Eastern Transport Corridor (B6279) contains the development of Great Burdon, which with the existing electors in the south side of Great Burdon village is approximately 480 electors. This is shown below as SMG-S1-S1.



The part of SMG to the north of this section (that is north of Stockton Road) is proposed to be part of an enlarged Whinfield ward.

3.4.6.2. Proposed new Haughton le Skerne ward



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Haughton le Skerne	3	6,762	+3%

3.4.7. Heighington and Coniscliffe

Heighington and Coniscliffe ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of +28% by 2031.

Some of the housing developments taking place that are on the edge of the urban fringe are located in the rural wards. As stated in the introduction one of the aims is to where possible maintain the rural nature of those wards, by placing significant housing developments within urban wards.

Given the need to manage the predicted large positive variance and a desire to not change the rural nature of the ward, moving projected housing developments into urban wards will address both issues simultaneously.

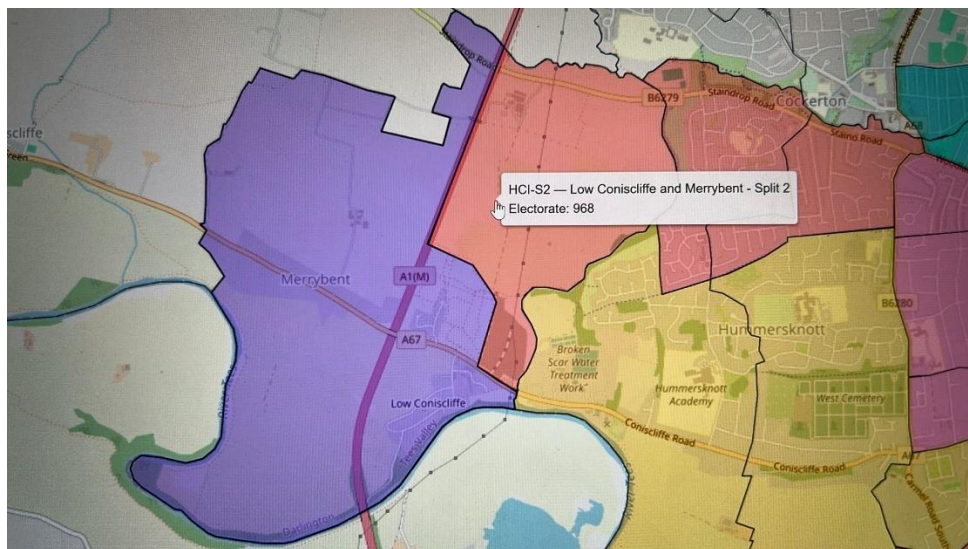
The ward will see major developments in two distinct places – in the south in polling district HCI, and in the north polling district HCK. In the south the solution is obvious as the development is in a well-defined area. In the north this more difficult as there a number of developments, and those developments are not contained within solely the Heighington and Coniscliffe polling district.

3.4.7.1. Modifications proposed

Polling district HCI, shown below, comprised on the west by the purple shaded area, and the section split out, shaded red, and labelled HCI-S2. The development here is Coniscliffe Park North and South, with projected elector number of 968.

A more obvious solution might be to split the polling district by following the A1(M) all the way from north to south of the polling district, which would create a very clear strong boundary. If this were done, there are two small settlements that would also be transferred to an urban ward: the village of Low Coniscliffe, and secondly a modern settlement comprising of 2 streets: Merrybent Drive & Nursery Lane.

Low Coniscliffe village and Merrybent Drive & Nursery Lane are viewed as being rural areas, especially the village of Low Coniscliffe. As noted in the discussion about Mowden ward, there is currently no direct access to Mowden, nor is it necessary to join to Hummersknott in terms of elector variance. Leaving both in the rural ward is the best solution at this point. However at a future review this boundary will need to be reconsidered.



Polling district HCK, as noted, is more complex, and is shaded green below. There are 3 developments that impact this polling district: Faverdale, Berrymead Farm, and Skerningham.

Faverdale is on the western side of HCK (roughly where the label HCK-S1 is on the map below). Its southern boundary will be Rotary way and will therefore be adjacent to the existing Faverdale development, and also to West Park further west. The proposals for the changed Brinkburn and

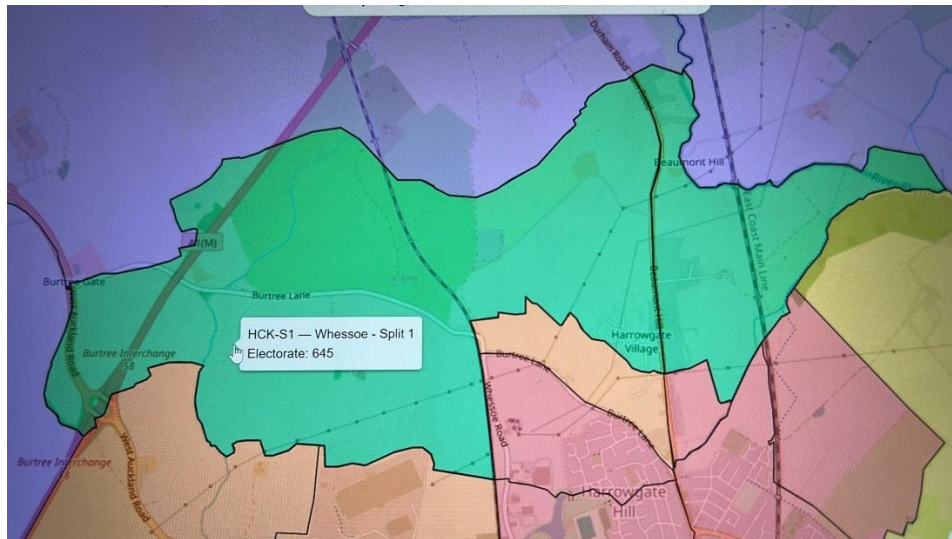
Faverdale ward include expanding further north from its current boundary – i.e. into HCK – to include Faverdale.

The proposal for Harrowgate Hill includes tidying the northern boundary of part of the ward, resulting in some existing and developing housing (Berrymead Farm) to be pushed into HCK. However, changing the Harrowgate Hill boundary is on the assumption that that housing is moved to Faverdale ward, not Heighington and Coniscliffe.

It is proposed to split HCK along the line of the A167. The western side will become part of Faverdale.

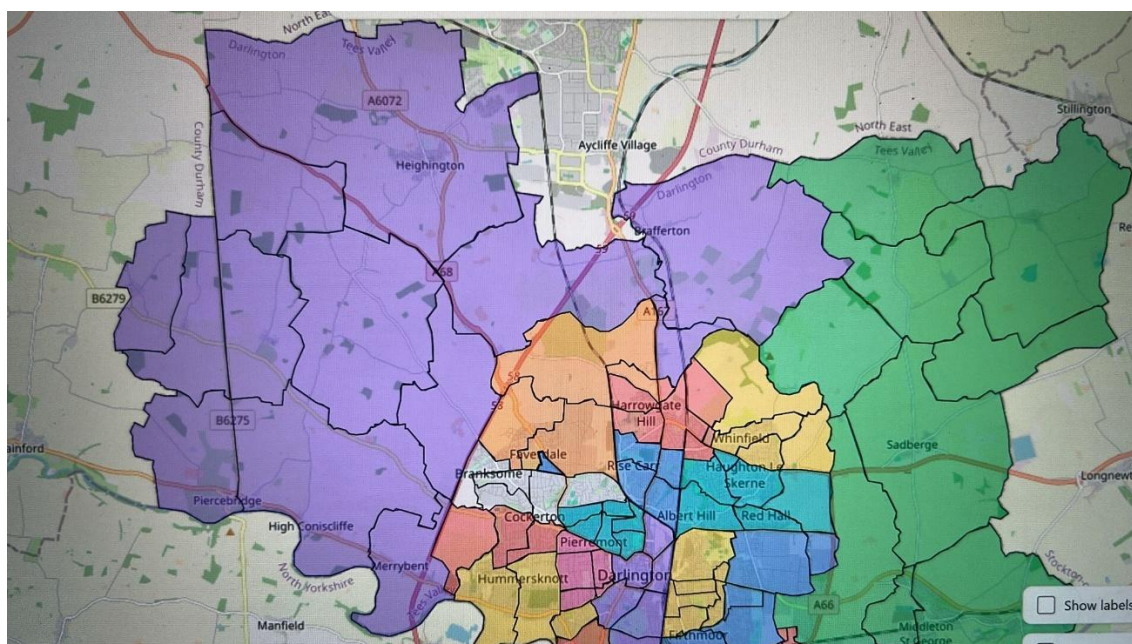
The eastern side, which will contain housing relating to Skerningham, will remain in Heighington and Coniscliffe ward.

This is an area that will need refinement in future when development has settled.



3.4.7.2. Proposed new Heighington and Coniscliffe ward

The ward is the western-most purple shaded area.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Heighington and Coniscliffe	2	4,215	-4%

3.4.8. Hummersknott

Hummersknott ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -27% by 2031.

The proposal is to retain the current Hummersknott ward, and to add to it part of Park West ward. This gives a satisfactory elector variance of -2%. It enables the ward to remain as a 2 seater, which in the west end of Darlington is the preferred model.

The additional area is well connected via both Carmel Road North/South and Coniscliffe Road.

3.4.8.1. Modifications proposed

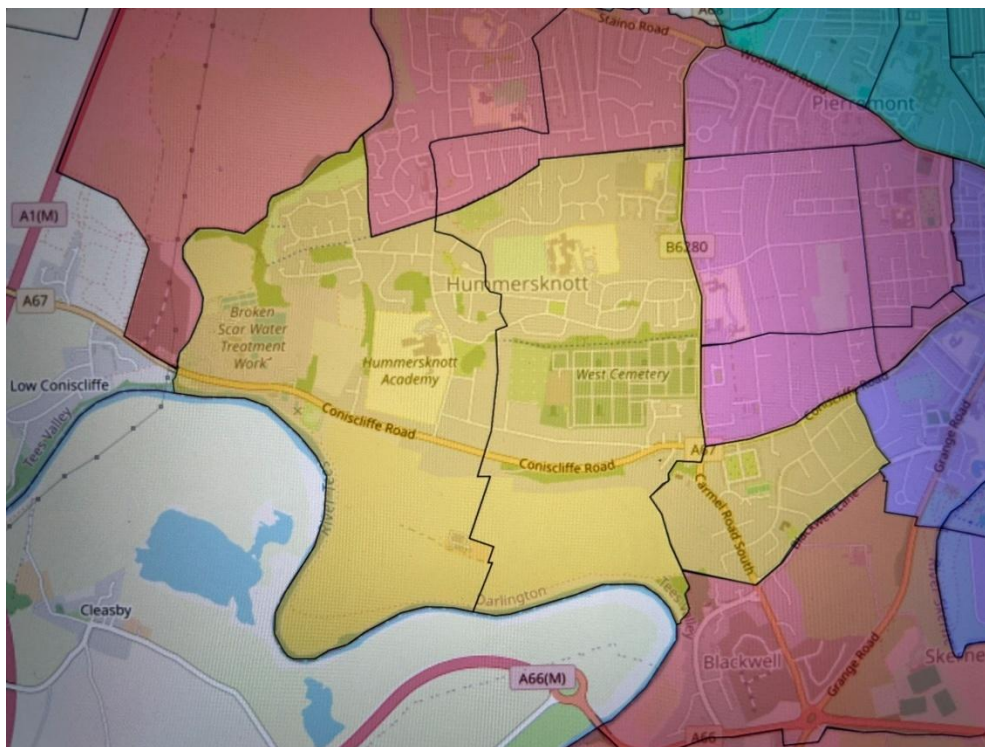
Include part of polling district PWA from current Park West ward. This polling district has been split, starting at the eastern side, along Blackwell lane, and then westwards from the junction with Carmel Road South. The northern part, shaded in yellow, shown below, is to be added to Hummersknott ward. This has an electorate of approximately 1,123.

The southern portion has been included with Hurworth ward.



3.4.8.2. Proposed new Hummersknott ward

The new ward is shaded yellow in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Hummersknott	2	4,307	-2%

3.4.9. Hurworth

Hurworth Ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -15% by 2031.

The southern boundary of Hurworth is the boundary of the Borough, to its east is the boundary with the neighbouring rural ward (Middleton St George & Sadberge), and to the north it is adjacent to the urban area.

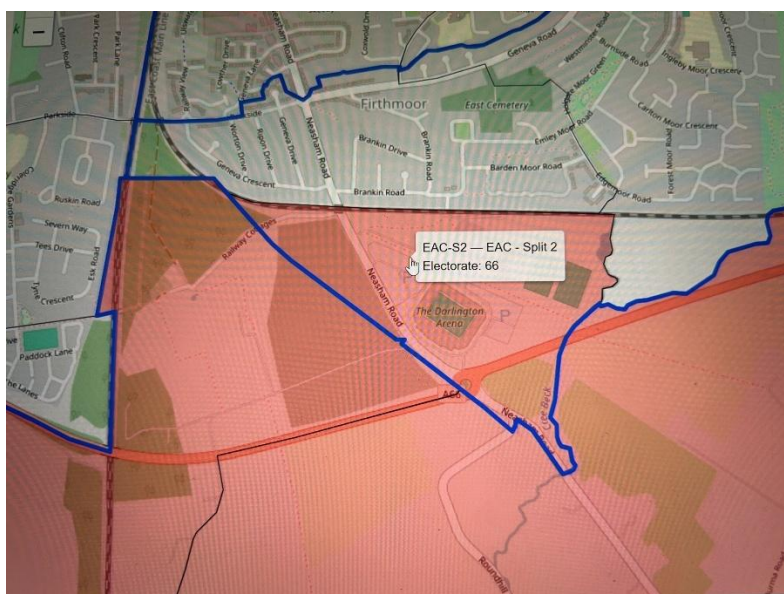
To maintain the rural nature of the ward, the obvious place to expand would be to the east into Middleton St George & Sadberge. Middleton St George & Sadberge is projected to have a variance of +28% by 2031, and so transferring from one to the other would help resolve the imbalance in both.

3.4.9.1. Modifications proposed

a) Area 1:

The area marked PWA-S1 (taken from the current Park West ward), which follows existing ward / polling district boundaries, except to the north where it follows the centre line of Blackwell Lane westwards, and goes almost due west from Carmel Road South to meet an existing ward boundary. This area includes approximately 449 electors.

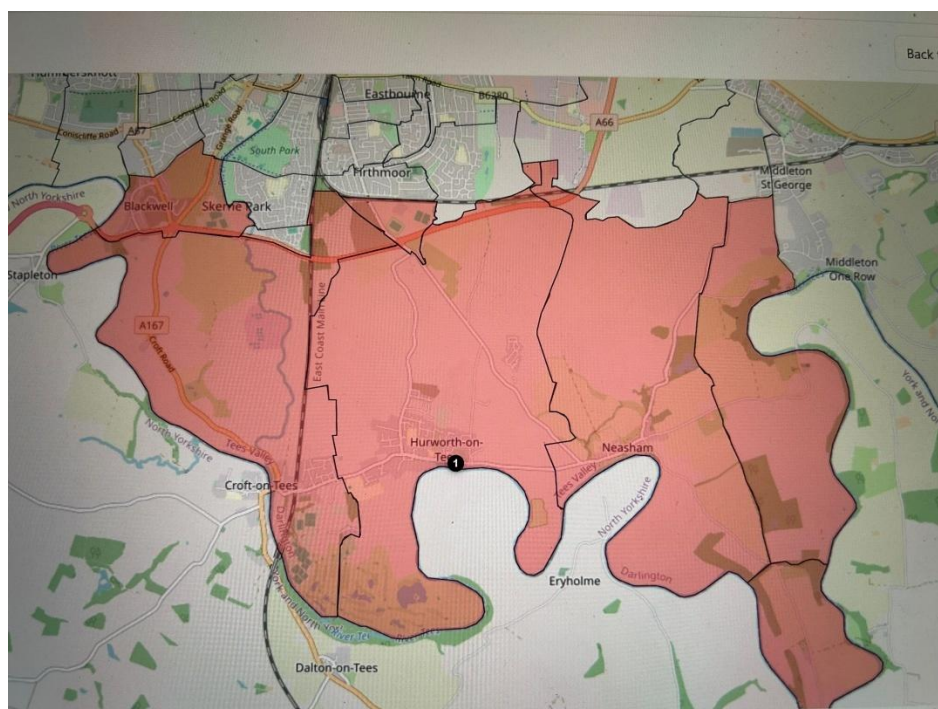
b) Area 2:



The area marked EAC-S2 (taken from the current Eastbourne ward), which follows existing ward boundaries (coloured blue), except to the north where it follows the railway line. This area includes approximately 66 electors.

Snipe Lane housing development is in the open space to the west of Neasham Road. The houses are partly in Hurworth ward and partly in Eastbourne ward, as currently the ward boundary runs diagonally across the open space. Moving EAC-S2 to Hurworth ensures the whole of Snipe Lane development is in Hurworth.

3.4.9.2. Proposed new Hurworth ward



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Hurworth	2	4,244	-3%

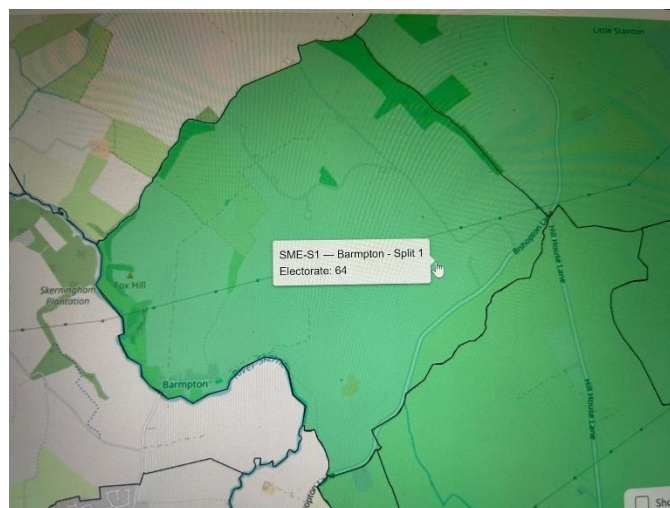
3.4.10. Middleton St George and Sadberge

Middleton St George and Sadberge (MSG) Ward currently has 3 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of +28% by 2031.

3.4.10.1. Modifications proposed

There is significant house building that will take place within two MSG polling districts – SMG (765 electors) and SME (1023 electors). Both will result in housing that is adjacent to the urban area. Given it was indicated in the introduction that we would where possible retain the character of the rural wards, the proposed solution is to remove the whole of SMG and part of SME from MSG ward – both SMG, and a part of SME, contain significant housing development that abuts the urban area.

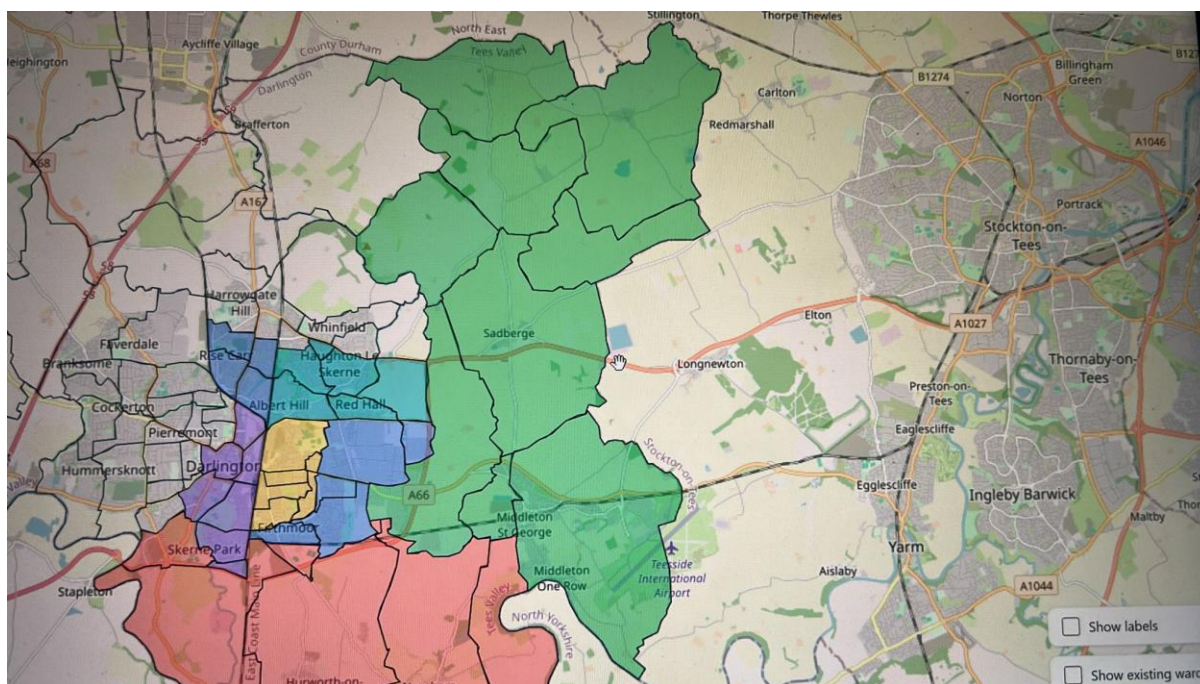
Polling district SME will be split, SME-S1 shown below, with the new boundary on the south west side following the course of the river Skerne. This will leave the village of Barmpton remaining in MSG ward. SME-S1 contains approximately 64 electors. The remaining part of SME has 959 electors from the projected Skerningham development.



In total this removes $765 + 959 = 1724$ electors from MSG ward.

3.4.10.2. Proposed new Middleton St George and Sadberge ward

The new ward is shaded green in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Middleton St George and Sadberge	3	6,701	+2%

3.4.11. Mowden

Mowden ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -28% by 2031.

The proposal is to retain the current Mowden ward, and to add to it the housing development of Coniscliffe Park North and South. This is the area of land to the west of Mowden.

This allows the ward to remain as a 2 seater, which in the west end of Darlington is the preferred model.

3.4.11.1. Modifications proposed

Coniscliffe Park North and South are currently within HCI (Heighington and Coniscliffe ward). The proposal is to remove from HCI *only* the area designated for this development, and leave Low Coniscliffe village and Merrybent Drive & Nursery Lane within the rural ward of Heighington and Coniscliffe).

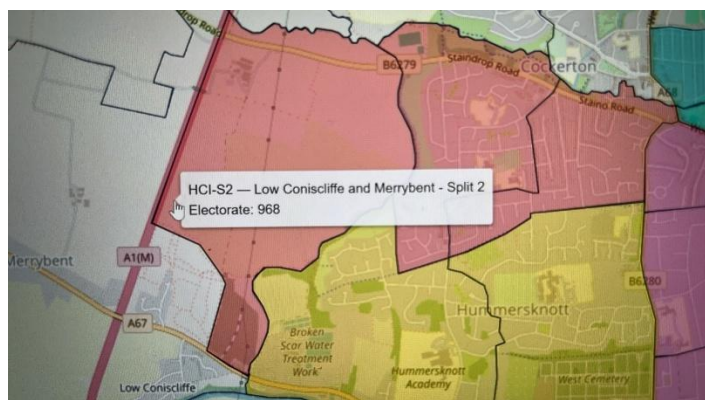
Low Coniscliffe village and Merrybent Drive & Nursery Lane are viewed as being rural, especially the village of Low Coniscliffe. There is no access directly to Mowden currently, and if they were to be added to an urban ward the only practical solution would be Hummersknott – and given that Hummersknott will have sufficient electors, leaving both in the rural ward is the best solution at this point. However at a future review this boundary will need to be reconsidered.

The prediction of elector variance for 2031 is -5%, and given a significant proportion of electors for this modified ward is from houses yet to be built, it was considered if some of the proposed Hummersknott ward could be moved to Mowden. Firstly to note is that for 2031 the variance for

Hummersknott is predicted to be -2%, so to remove any houses would obviously worsen that variance. Secondly, the practical options:

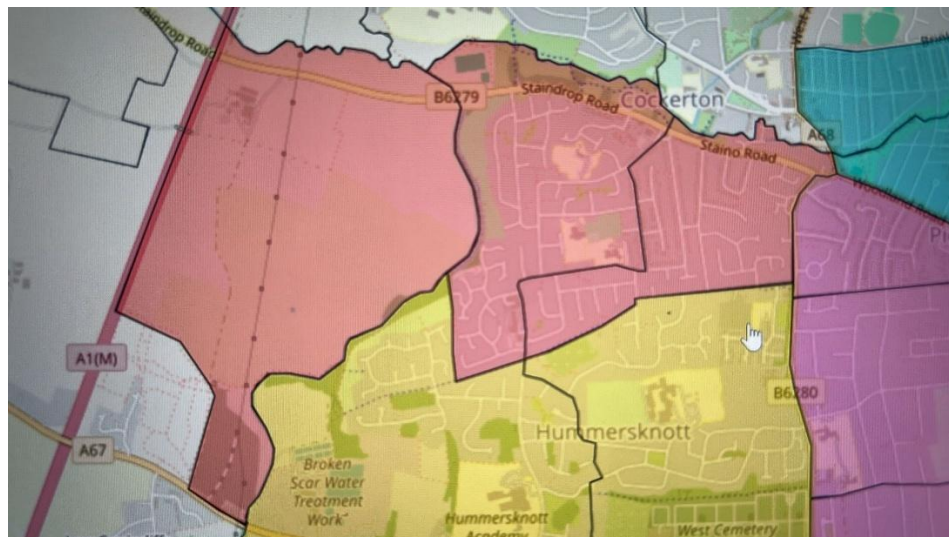
- Tees Grange Avenue, and all streets off, is 523 electors, which is too many electors;
- Cardinal Gardens and Hillclose Avenue/Clare Avenue and associated streets, is 396 electors, so would not be as distorting to the variances, but this would not present as clear a boundary as Nunnery Lane.

Given neither option is a very strong solution neither of these further adjustments of the boundary between Mowden and Hummersknott is proposed.



3.4.11.2. Proposed new Mowden ward

The new ward is shaded red below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Mowden	2	4,296	-5%

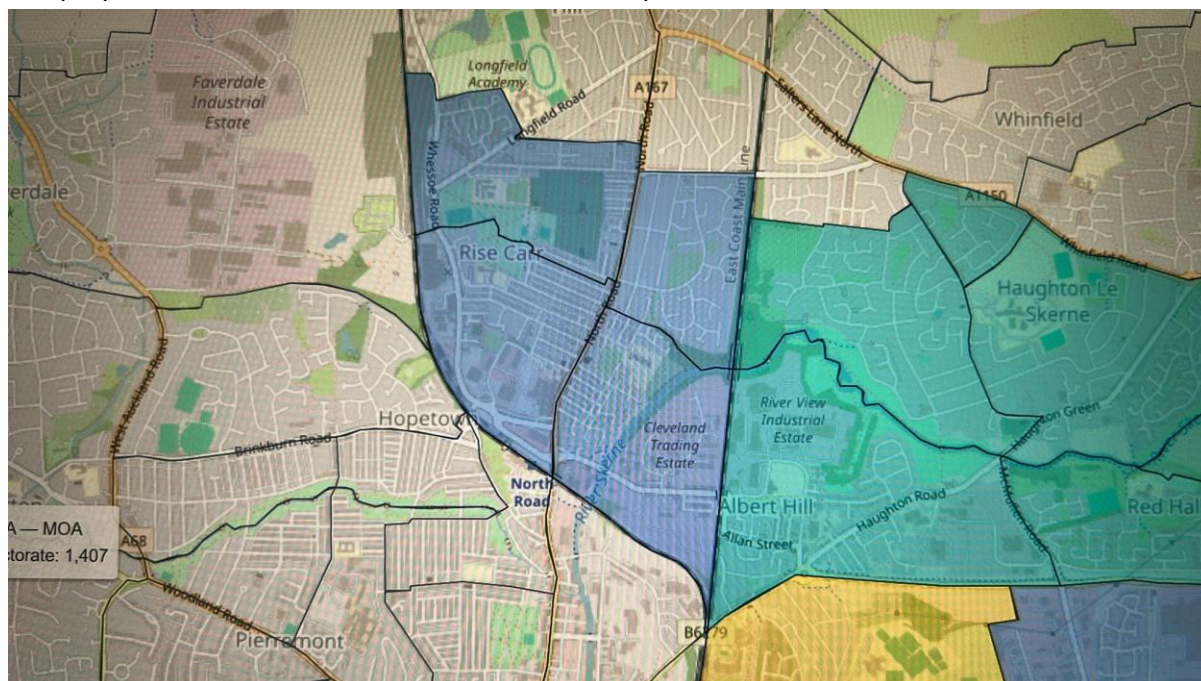
3.4.12. North Road

With no changes required to boundaries the current North Road ward meets new elector per councillor number if it changes from a 3 seater ward to a 2 seater ward.

The ward works well in its current form, and therefore there is no practical reason to alter the boundaries.

3.4.12.1. Proposed North Road ward

The proposed North Road is shaded blue in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
North Road	2	4,296	-2%

3.4.13. Park

Park East ward currently has 3 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -24% by 2031.

3.4.13.1. Modifications proposed

The name of ward will change to Park. The proposed warding does not include a Park West ward.

It is proposed to include polling district NGC (from Northgate ward). Industrial properties dominate this polling district; residential properties are concentrated at the eastern end of East Mount Road where it joins Haughton Road. Residents living here are connected to the proposed Park ward via Haughton Road, and Borough Road as a quieter route. To reach the proposed Pierremont & Northgate ward, by car or on foot, is far less direct. The industrial area is a greater barrier than Haughton Road.

Given the railway lines to the immediate east and north of these houses there are no other practical options in placing this area within a ward.

Note also that including this polling district in Park ward enables better elector variance for Park, Pierremont & Northgate, and indirectly College. Including NGC also suggests the new Park ward works better as a 3 seater ward.

From the current Park West ward *most* of PWC is proposed to be included. The new boundary would follow the centre line of Coniscliffe Road for the whole of the north western boundary.

This change makes a much clearer and stronger boundary, and enables College ward to have a better elector variance.

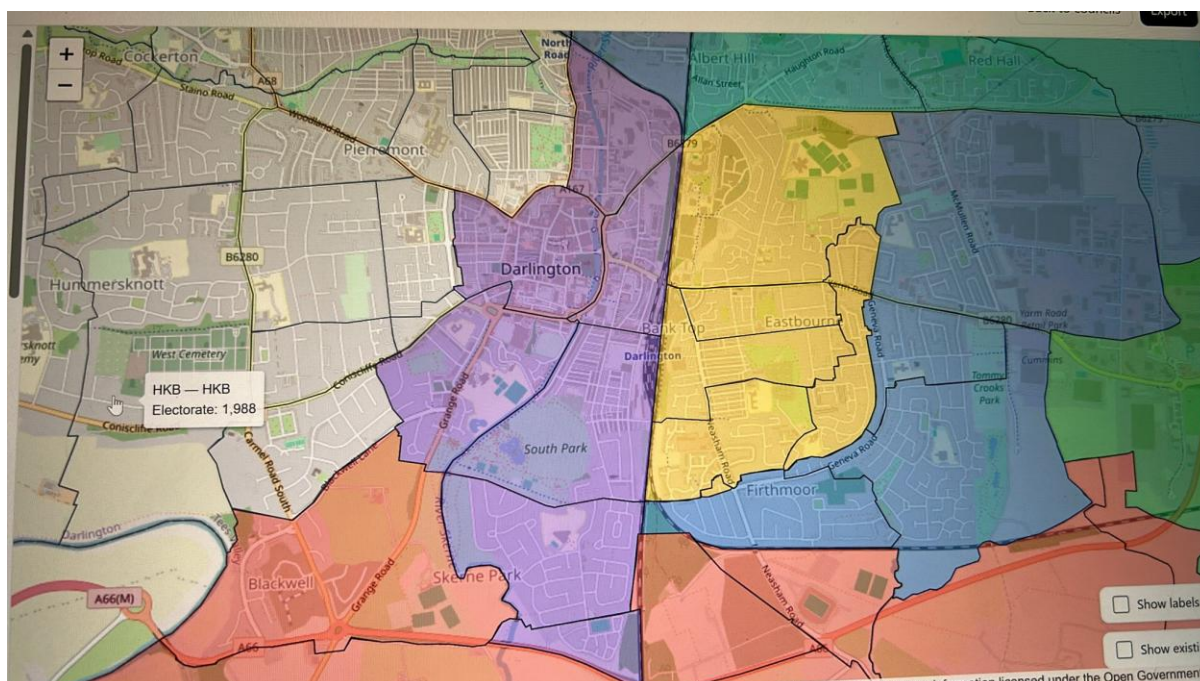
Including that part of PWC reunites a community that was previously together under previous ward boundaries. This can be considered a single community due to:

- proximity to the town centre, South Park and big Sainsbury's (all shared spaces and meeting places for the community);
- the shared attendance of secondary schools (increasingly Polam Hall School is where most children in this single area, from both sides of the river, go to school (and this is in the new ward area), with the second main secondary school being Hummersknot);
- the fact that the front doors on homes on Victoria Embankment face the front doors of the homes on Peverell Walk, the river is not a dividing line but rather a feature in the middle, which unifies them;
- the area on both sides of the river is long established as one neighbourhood – with the relevant local super output areas (Darlington014C and Darlington 014A) covering both sides of the river, indicating an official precedent for this.

It also means that the entire town centre will come under a single ward (including the entirety of the "Imperial Quarter", rather than at the moment a bit of the town centre is in a different ward to the vast majority of the rest of it. This gives greater clarity to councillor representation for the town centre.

3.4.13.2. Proposed new Park ward

The new ward is shaded violet in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Park	3	6,697	+2%

3.4.14. Pierremont & Northgate

Pierremont and Northgate wards in their current form have an elector variance of -15% and -19% respectively. This submission combining the two wards, but in doing so suggests moving the eastern part of current Northgate to the proposed Park ward.

3.4.14.1. Modifications proposed

Combining the current Pierremont ward together with Northgate ward, minus the area being moved to Park ward (polling district NGC), presents an area that is clearly defined and from a community perspective makes a coherent ward.

Firstly the new boundaries are clear, and strong, arterial roads – Woodland Road, West Auckland Road, Brinkburn Road and Northgate – together with a short section of the branch railway line.

Running through the entire length of the ward from west to east is the Denes, a very distinctive linear park. At the eastern side of the ward is North Lodge Park. Both are used for informal recreation, play and dog walking by residents from the surrounding housing.

There are two primary schools – Reid Street and Corporation Road – that take children predominantly from the ward.

3.4.14.2. Proposed new Pierremont & Northgate ward

The new ward is shaded cyan in the map below.



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Pierremont and Northgate	3	6,487	-1%

3.4.15. Whinfield

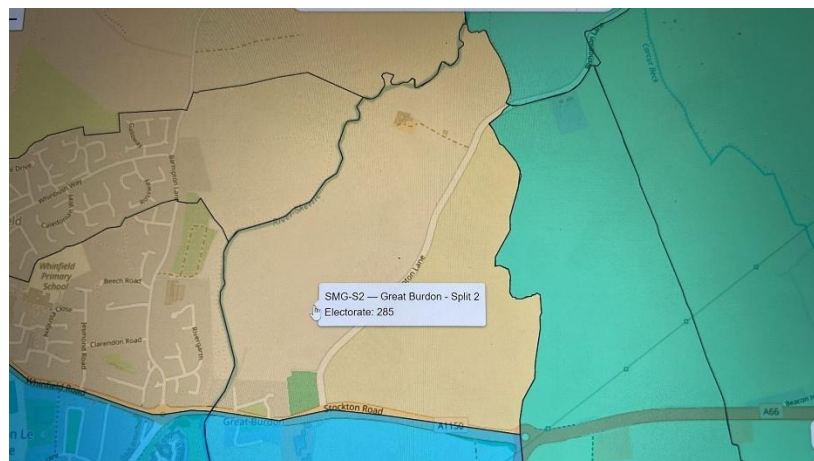
Whinfield ward currently has 2 councillors. Without changes to its boundaries it is predicted to have a variance of -24% by 2031.

To the east and north of the current Whinfield ward there is planned housing development, and the most obvious solution is to link this to the current Whinfield ward – the development is adjacent to Whinfield and there will be connectivity by road and footpath between the two. New electors will have access to the community facilities within the existing Whinfield ward, and more immediate wider area. Once the new housing is established – perhaps by the time of the next boundary review - it may be that other arrangements become apparent and practical, but at this stage linking to the existing community is the best solution.

This increase the number of electors is sufficient to leave Whinfield as a 2 seater ward.

3.4.15.1. Modifications proposed

The part of polling district SMG (shown below as SMG-S2, in yellow), part of Middleton St George and Sadberge ward, that is proposed to be included in Whinfield is the part that is north of Stockton Road. The two sections of SMG, this one north of Stockton Road, and the other south of Stockton Road is projected to grow to 765 electors. In the section dealing with Haughton le Skerne the estimate for the southern section is 480, and so this northern section will be approximately 265 electors.

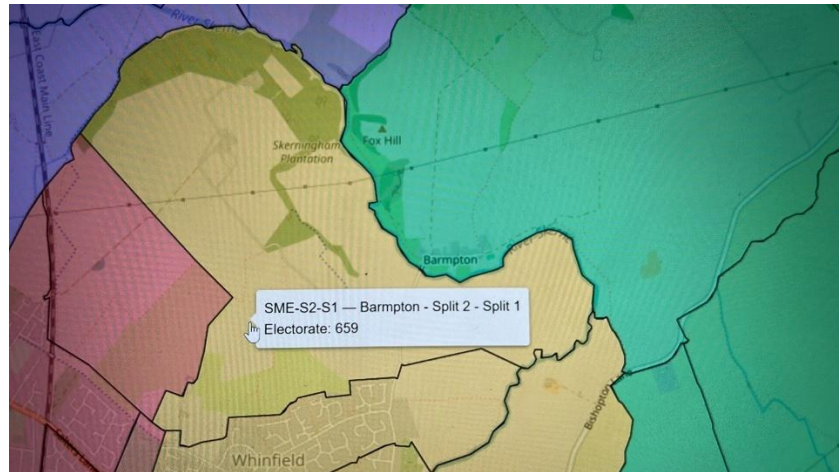


The polling district SME, part of Middleton St George and Sadberge ward, is proposed to be split:

- the eastern part remaining in Middleton St George and Sadberge ward (64 electors)
- the remaining 959 electors resulting from the Skertingham development will be split between Whinfield and Harrowgate Hill

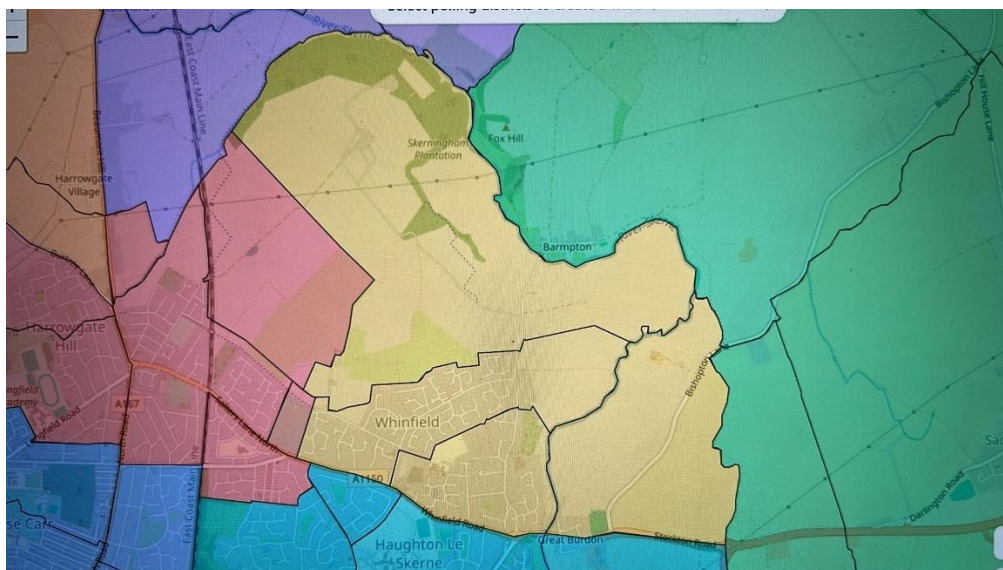
To achieve the best elector variance, approximately 659 should be in the Whinfield part, and 300 in the Harrowgate Hill part. However, at this moment it is difficult to draw the boundary with any accuracy to ensure the elector variance is best balanced between the two wards.

The Whinfield section is shown below, in yellow, as SME-S2-S1. The eastern boundary, as described in the Middleton St George & Sadberge section follows the line of the Skerne. The western straight-lined boundary is no more than an estimate of where the 300/659 houses will be.



As a minor change Springfield Park is moved from Whinfield to Harrowgate Hill, to make the boundary slightly cleaner.

3.4.15.2. Proposed new Whinfield ward



Ward name	Councillors	Electors	Variance
Whinfield	2	4,281	-2%