

York

Personal Details:

Name: Amanda Potts

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Derwenthorpe Governance Group (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Related subject: Derwenthorpe

Hi,

Please find attached the Derwenthorpe Governance Group (DGG) response to the proposed York ward boundaries as they affect our community.

Best wishes

Amanda Potts

Derwenthorpe resident

Chair DGG

Attached Documents:

- ward-consultation-response-v2.docx

I am writing on behalf of the Derwenthorpe Governance Group (DGG), which is a partnership of elected Derwenthorpe residents and senior management from Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT).

Our view is that the proposed splitting of Derwenthorpe into three different wards will unnecessarily and arbitrarily divide up a very distinctive and cohesive, intentionally designed mixed-tenure, eco community. It will also undermine the ability of elected representatives to represent the interests that are specific to this community.

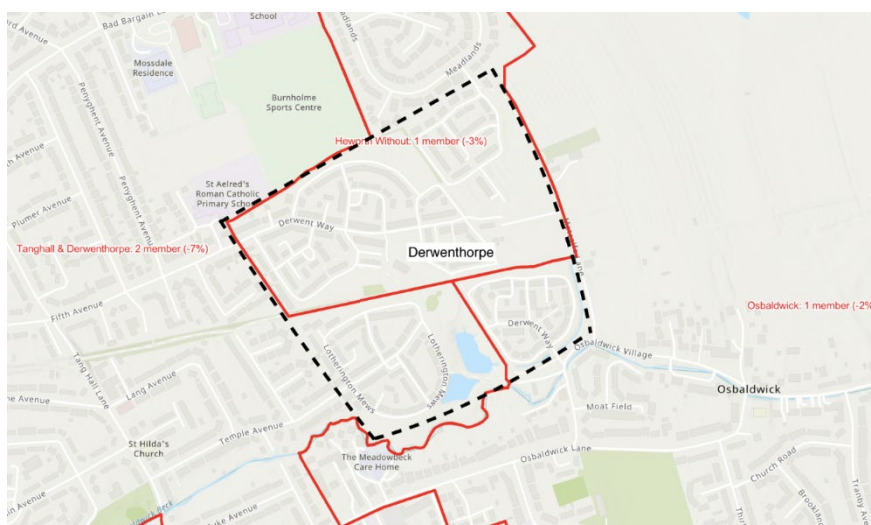
Derwenthorpe Governance Group (DGG)

The purpose of the DGG is to take strategic decisions that will affect the whole estate. We work collaboratively with JRHT, for example on setting our estate charge and the future of our District Heating Network. Our work complements that of our very active Residents Association. To see the DGG Terms of Reference please go to [Derwenthorpe Governing Group \(DGG\) – Derwenthorpe Residents' Association](#)

The DGG has discussed the ward boundary proposals that will affect our community and we **strongly object** to Derwenthorpe being divided.

Derwenthorpe, right from the planning stage has been developed as a mixed tenure community, with its own identity rather than just another housing estate. Although we have four quarters, Derwenthorpe has always been conceived of and is experienced by residents as one community.

This map shows very clearly the effect of the proposed division (red lines) of Derwenthorpe (boundary in broken line).



We believe the proposed ward changes will weaken our community and connection to local political representatives. This will be detrimental to Derwenthorpe and our Local Councillors' ability to represent us.

We understand the need to equalise ward sizes, but believe that Derwenthorpe, which is a distinctive and thriving community should be kept together, whichever ward it is put into.

Background to Derwenthorpe

Derwenthorpe was conceived of and developed as a new eco 'garden village' in the tradition of New Earswick. There were three main priorities:

- An environmentally sustainable development which will not impact adversely on neighbouring communities.
- A strong mixed tenure community with a high quality of life for residents.
- A model which others contemplating edge-of-town extensions may find useful.

More specifically, JRHT wanted to:

- Provide appropriate affordable housing – for families with varying needs and lifestyles in York under JRHT's long-term ownership.
- Ensure that 'future proofing' is factored in.
- Create a sense of place through quality design.
- Provide well managed open space and park land with natural biodiverse habitats and conservation areas, play areas and play opportunities for children and young people of all ages, as an integral part of Derwenthorpe.
- Ensure that Derwenthorpe would have good links to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Ensure sustainability with the environment is central. To include the provision of a district heating system thereby increasing the sustainability potential of the development.
- Provide traffic calming and incentives for reducing dependence on the car.

What makes Derwenthorpe an identifiable community?

Architecture and green spaces

The distinctive (award winning) architecture of our homes is an important factor in unifying us as a clearly defined community. Derwenthorpe is instantly identifiable and the boundaries of our estate are visually incredibly clear.

The estate has lots of beautiful green spaces managed sustainably by JRHT to a Landscape strategy developed in partnership with residents. The SuDS flood defence system and its two ponds are a key feature of the Derwenthorpe landscape. They offer a great habitat for birds and other wildlife, while protecting us and Osbaldwick from flooding.

We are an open community, and our green spaces are enjoyed by our neighbours from Tang Hall, Osbaldwick, Meadlands and further afield, as well as our residents.

Transport

An important feature of Derwenthorpe is that it is designed with people in mind, rather than cars. Along with traffic calming street layouts, it is, by design, not possible to drive across the estate.

We have the 66 Sustrans cycle path running through the estate, and the no 25 bus which serves us directly and other bus routes nearby.

The emphasis on walking and cycling is valued by residents as it contributes to the overall relaxed feel of our community, as well as being safer for all of us, but especially our children who are able to play outside freely.

We note in the draft proposals that you have put a lot of emphasis on road links ...*'we consider it compatible with effective and convenient local government to ensure that, wherever possible, wards should have good internal road links between their constituent communities.'*

We would like to suggest that the emphasis should be on good **access**, via a variety of means, not just roads, which implies car access.

District Heating Network

Phases 1 – 4 are served by our district heating network providing our heating and hot water. The system is fairly unique in the UK and managed by Veolia, overseen by JRHT.

It is hard to see how, under the proposed division of Derwenthorpe into three wards, any of our elected representatives would feel able to represent our interests **as a community** to either Veolia or JRHT.

Community activities

Derwenthorpe Residents Association (DRA) is very active. We have a small community centre within the Super Sustainable Centre (SSC) which also accommodates the District Heating Network plant room and our dedicated internet fibre and cabling.

There are a wide range of community groups and events on Derwenthorpe, including the annual Derwenthorpe Festival. We are aware that the DRA is submitting a residents' feedback to this consultation so will leave them to detail their work.

Resident involvement in decision making

The DGG was set up to implement, in our new context, Joseph Rowntree's much quoted view: *'I do not want to establish communities bearing the stamp of charity but rather of rightly ordered and self-governing communities.'*

DGG is an example of *shared* governance, recognising JRHT's central role and long-term commitment to Derwenthorpe, along with an interest from many residents to exercise real influence on the decisions that will affect Derwenthorpe.

As well as the main group which meets six times a year, we have three Committees/groups made up of residents and JRHT staff reporting to DGG:

- The Finance Committee, which scrutinises our estate charge budget and recommends the annual increases in our estate charge.
- The Landscape Strategy Monitoring group, which works with JRHT gardening team to ensure the estate is maintained appropriately.
- The SSC and Play Park Management group which manages the use of the community centre within the SSC and oversees the locking of the play park.

Summary

In conclusion, our argument is that Derwenthorpe clearly has....'*boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable,*' and to split Derwenthorpe up, as is proposed would be in contradiction to '*the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties.*'