

Darlington

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Comment text:

Related subject: College Ward

I strongly oppose the proposal to expand College Ward to incorporate parts of Park West, Park East, and the town centre. This reorganisation would be a significant mistake for several reasons.

College Ward already faces a substantial and distinct set of challenges — traffic management, pressure on school places, and the ongoing needs associated with QE Sixth Form College. These are issues that require focused, specialist attention from elected councillors who understand the ward's character and priorities. Absorbing additional schools, the retail core, and the town centre into the same ward would create an unmanageable and contradictory caseload, pulling councillors in fundamentally different directions.

The ward also serves a community with a particular residential identity. Residents in what is widely regarded as one of the more settled and affluent parts of the town would find themselves sharing representation with the town centre, which carries a substantially different — and by its nature much larger — set of demands: antisocial behaviour, footfall management, commercial licensing, and transient populations. This imbalance is inherently unfair to both communities. Neither would receive the quality of representation they deserve.

There is also the question of electoral equality and effective representation. Larger, more complex wards place disproportionate burdens on councillors, which inevitably means that some constituents — often quieter residential ones — are deprioritised in favour of more urgent or visible town centre concerns. A ward should be coherent and manageable, not simply convenient on a map.

My recommendation is that the town centre be redrawn within its own clearly defined boundary. This would allow dedicated representation focused on its regeneration, commercial health, and the specific challenges of an urban core. College Ward, meanwhile, should retain boundaries that reflect its existing community character and allow councillors to continue serving residents effectively.

Attached Documents:

None attached