

Darlington

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Related subject: College and Blackwell

As a resident of the town centre area, I do not believe that either the current or proposed boundaries for the Blackwell and College areas accurately reflect established community identities and local connections.

Given the challenges currently facing town centres and high streets, effective local representation is more important than ever. As someone who both lives and works in the town centre, I want to be represented by councillors whose primary focus is on the issues affecting our area rather than those of suburban communities with very different priorities and concerns.

Having read the Commission's report, I understand that the town centre alone may not contain sufficient electorate to form a ward in its own right. However, I believe there is a strong case for exploring a ward centred on the town centre and neighbouring communities that share similar characteristics and challenges.

Areas around Abbey Road, Stanhope Park and Southend Avenue have strong links to the town centre through proximity, travel patterns and shared local concerns. Residents in these neighbourhoods experience many of the same issues as those living in the town centre, including parking pressures, traffic congestion during school and shopping hours, and the wider economic health of the town centre itself.

I am therefore disappointed by the proposal to group the town centre with Blackwell. While Blackwell is an important part of Darlington, it has a distinct identity as a suburban community and faces different local issues from those experienced in and around the town centre. In my view,

Blackwell has stronger similarities and community links with neighbouring suburban areas such as Hummersknott than it does with the town centre.

Looking at the existing ward boundaries, I can also understand the logic of including areas such as Greener Drive and South Terrace within a town-centred ward. These neighbourhoods are located very close to the town centre and, like Abbey Road, share many of the same concerns relating to parking, congestion and access to local services.

I therefore respectfully ask the Commission to reconsider its proposals and explore the creation of a ward centred on the town centre, incorporating neighbouring communities around Abbey Road, Stanhope Park and Southend Avenue. I also encourage the Commission to consider alternative arrangements for Blackwell that better reflect its suburban character and established community ties.

I believe such an approach would provide more effective representation and better reflect the communities that exist within this part of Darlington.

Attached Documents:

None attached