

Darlington

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

I am writing to share my views on the draft recommendations for Darlington's ward boundaries.

One of the most important things any boundary review should achieve is creating wards that people can easily understand. Residents should be able to look at a map and recognise why particular streets belong together. In several places I think the Commission has achieved this, but there are also parts of the proposals that seem inconsistent.

For example, the draft report explains that Carmel College provides a sensible physical boundary between Hummersknott and Mowden. That strikes me as a logical approach, and I support using clear landmarks wherever possible. If that is the principle being applied, however, I believe it should be followed through by including Broadmeadows and Clare Avenue within Mowden. It would produce a neater and more coherent boundary that residents could readily identify with.

By contrast, I cannot see the justification for extending Mowden to include Pierremont Gardens and Woodlands Terrace. Those roads do not share the same character as Mowden and there is little to suggest they naturally belong within the ward. Their housing is very different, consisting largely of substantial Victorian properties which are more likely to be converted into flats and apartments, bringing different pressures on parking and local infrastructure. Families there are also more likely to have links with Abbey School than Mowden School. Taking all of that together, I do not think those streets have enough in common with Mowden for the proposed boundary to make sense.

That is why I found it easier to understand the recommendation relating to Thornbury Rise and the section of Carmel Road North. Those streets

already sit alongside roads with established connections to Mowden, so there is a clear logic behind their inclusion. The same reasoning simply does not apply elsewhere.

I would also encourage the Commission to give greater weight to the importance of Darlington town centre when reaching its final decisions. Although I appreciate that the electorate may not support a town centre ward on its own, the surrounding residential areas have a close relationship with it. Communities around Southend Avenue and Abbey Road experience many of the same issues as the town centre itself, including traffic, parking, residents' permit schemes and maintaining a thriving local economy. Those shared interests should be recognised when deciding where ward boundaries are drawn.

Overall, I support much of what is proposed, but I believe a few changes would make the final recommendations more consistent and better reflect local communities.

In particular, I would ask the Commission to:

- Reconsider the inclusion of Pierremont Gardens and Woodlands Terrace within the proposed Mowden ward, as those streets have little in common with Mowden and their inclusion does not appear to reflect the realities of the area.
- Include Broadmeadows and Clare Avenue within Mowden so that the boundary follows Carmel College in a more consistent and logical way.
- Take greater account of the relationship between the town centre and neighbouring communities, particularly around Southend Avenue and Abbey Road, when finalising the new ward boundaries.

Attached Documents:

None attached