

Darlington

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Comment text:

Related subject: Haughton and Springfield

The wider Haughton and Whinfield area has always felt like a single community to me. There are strong links across the area, and if electoral numbers allowed, I would have preferred to see it remain as one ward. However, with the reduction in the number of councillors, I understand that this is no longer possible.

Because a division has to be made, I believe the Commission has found the most sensible solution. The proposed boundaries keep Haughton Village and Stockton together in the same ward, preserving the heart of the wider Haughton community while creating a separate Springfield ward that can develop its own identity and representation.

I do not believe there is a better alternative. Splitting the area in a different way would inevitably create wards that feel less natural, particularly if they crossed major features such as the River Skerne or the East Coast Main Line, or if they linked communities that have little connection with one another. Those kinds of boundaries might achieve electoral equality, but they would do so at the expense of community identity.

It also makes sense that the larger ward should be the one that extends towards the edge of the town. That is where future housing growth is most likely, making it the logical place to accommodate additional electors without unnecessarily disrupting long established communities.

Overall, I believe the Commission's proposals strike the right balance between electoral equality and recognising the communities that already exist. While no solution is perfect, I think this is the strongest and most practical option available, and I hope it is adopted.

Attached Documents:

None attached