

York

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Comment text:

Related subject: Southeastern York Ward Boundary Changes

Elvington Parish Council object to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England proposed new electoral arrangements for York, specifically the changes proposed to Southeastern York.

The proposal to merge the Wheldrake Ward with Osbaldwick and Derwent Wards does not achieve any of the benefits the Commission is looking to achieve as it would neither benefit the residents, the City of York Council or the Ward Councillors.

The proposed “Derwent Ward” would be by far the biggest ward in terms of area in York if the changes are ratified, merging 9 different parishes which historically have never had close ties with each other. There are no public transport links between the parishes with the exception of Elvington, Wheldrake and Crockey Hill which share an infrequent bus service and Dunnington & Kexby. According to Google maps it’s a 22-minute journey from one edge of the proposed Ward to the other which is excessive.

It would not be sensible to have 2 Councillors cover such a large area with 9 settlements and be able to understand the issues facing such a diverse and dispersed population.

How would it work, if say we have 2 different Councillors from different parties would they be required to attend each parish council or community meeting. A waste of taxpayers money funding the transport expenses alone. How would Parish Councils and residents know which Councillor to contact to discuss issues? If we were to say those from these parishes contact this councillor and vice versa then what is the point of the

proposed changes

The current Ward Councillor for Wheldrake knows lots of the residents and every road, path and issue and the residents know him, bringing in a second councillor with no knowledge of that part of the Ward would only cause confusion.

On the flip side if you ended up with both councillors being from the same political party and living in the same parish, this might give rise to the residents of the other parishes feeling neglected as unconscious bias towards their local parish would no doubt creep in, keeping the current arrangements with 2 single Councillor Wards would avoid such a situation occurring. We already have a situation where the local MP, North Yorkshire Mayor and Ward Councillor all live in Wheldrake!

We think the proposals are deeply discriminatory to rural areas, who already struggle to get heard in a system dominated by the towns centre wards. It is hard enough to get local residents to understand how local councils work and this new system of having 2 Councillors serving one large area will further remove them from the natural community they serve.

There could also be confusion given that the adjacent ERYC ward is proposed to be called “Derwent Valley” as opposed to the proposal here of a larger “Derwent” ward, leaving things as they currently stand would avoid any perceived confusion.

Finally, no mention of the Langwith new Garden Village has been made, one of the cornerstones of City of York’s recently adopted Local Plan is the development of 3,300 houses over the next 15 year on the Heslington/Wheldrake Ward boundary on the former RAF Elvington base. Based on the ONS figures of 2.4 persons per household in York this is going to add 8,000 people to these Wards for which no account has been made.

Given the above we feel there is no logic to the proposals other than it makes the numbers fit.

Attached Documents:

None attached