

York Liberal Democrats Second Stage Boundary Commission Proposal

We have no comments to make on the wards that do not feature in our comments below. We will not add to the evidence we gave in the first stage for those wards.

However, for the “Heslington and University” ward we would request that it be renamed “Heslington, Hull Road and University” to reflect that there is a large section of the ward that isn’t in Heslington and the University.

Our Comments will be split into 3 sections. Dunnington and Wheldrake, the City’s East and the City’s West.

Dunnington and Wheldrake

We believe that Dunnington and Wheldrake should remain as separate single-member wards.

We recognise that a standalone Wheldrake ward would be slightly above the Commission's preferred electoral variance. However, in this case the benefits to community identity and effective and convenient local government significantly outweigh that limited variance.

The proposed two-member ward would be the largest geographically in the city and would contain eight parish councils. This would be more parish councils than any other ward in York. Each parish council meets regularly, meaning councillors would be required to attend a significant number of meetings simply to maintain engagement with parish councils across the ward. This would reduce the time available for other casework and community responsibilities and would not represent effective and convenient local government.

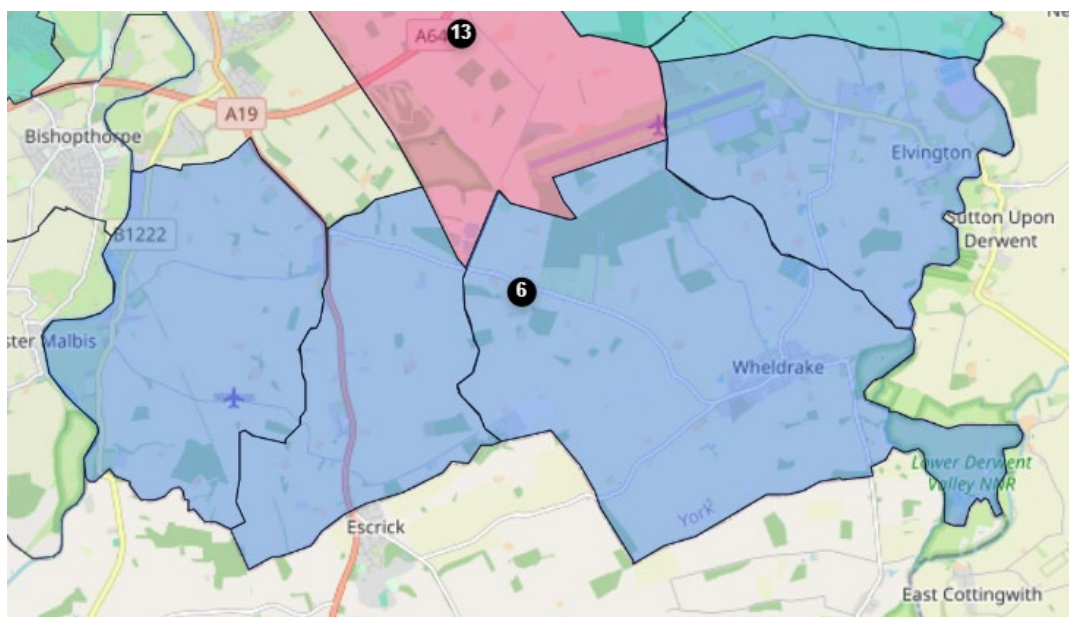
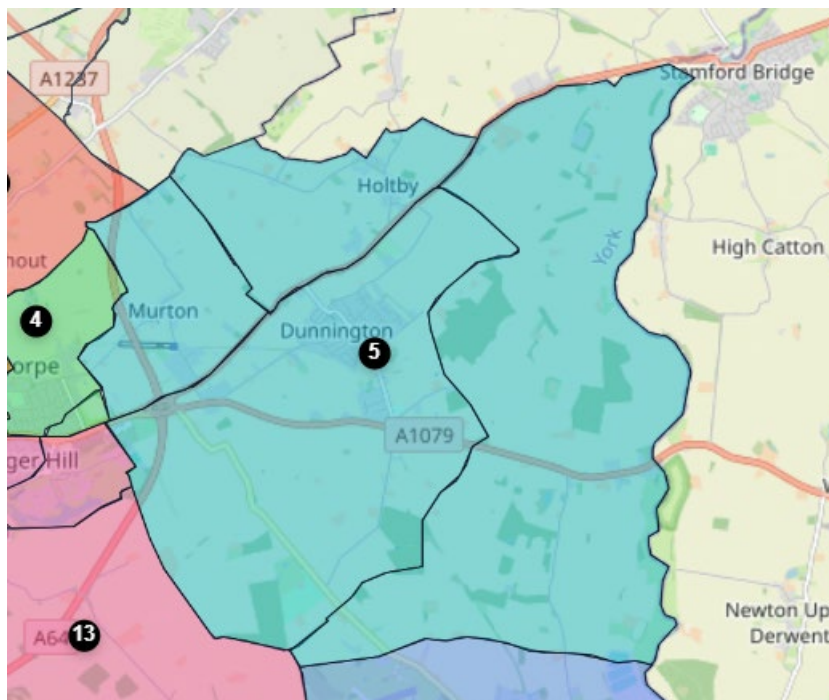
The proposed ward would also bring together communities that have limited interaction with one another and are separated by substantial areas of open countryside. There are no direct transport links connecting the Dunnington villages with the Wheldrake villages.

The Dunnington area forms a coherent community consisting of Dunnington, Murton, Holtby, Kexby and Scoreby. These villages are linked by existing transport routes, including the Number 10, 747 and X46 services, which connect residents to Dunnington and to one another. Dunnington Surgery acts as an important local service hub for the area.

Likewise, Wheldrake, Elvington, Naburn and Deighton form a separate community of interest. Wheldrake and Elvington are linked by the 36 service, while residents also rely on routes including the 18, 42 and 415 to access local services and York city centre. Elvington Surgery provides a distinct local service centre for these communities.

Whilst all of the villages look towards York for employment, shopping and secondary education, there is little evidence that residents of Naburn and Deighton share common community interests with residents of Holtby, Kexby or Murton. The proposed two-member ward would therefore combine two distinct groups of villages that have separate transport networks, separate service centres and limited day-to-day interaction.

By contrast, separate Dunnington and Wheldrake wards would each contain four parish councils, creating a more manageable arrangement for councillors and parish councils alike. This would strengthen local representation, better reflect community identity and deliver more effective and convenient local government.



East of the City:

Tang Hall and Derwenthorpe

We support the principle of creating a Tang Hall and Derwenthorpe ward. However, we strongly oppose the Commission's proposal to divide the Derwenthorpe community between three separate wards.

Derwenthorpe is a single planned community with a population of approximately 900 electors and was entirely developed by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. The development was intentionally designed around walking routes, cycle links and shared green spaces rather than conventional road layouts. The Commission's reliance on road access to justify dividing the estate therefore does not accurately reflect how the community functions.

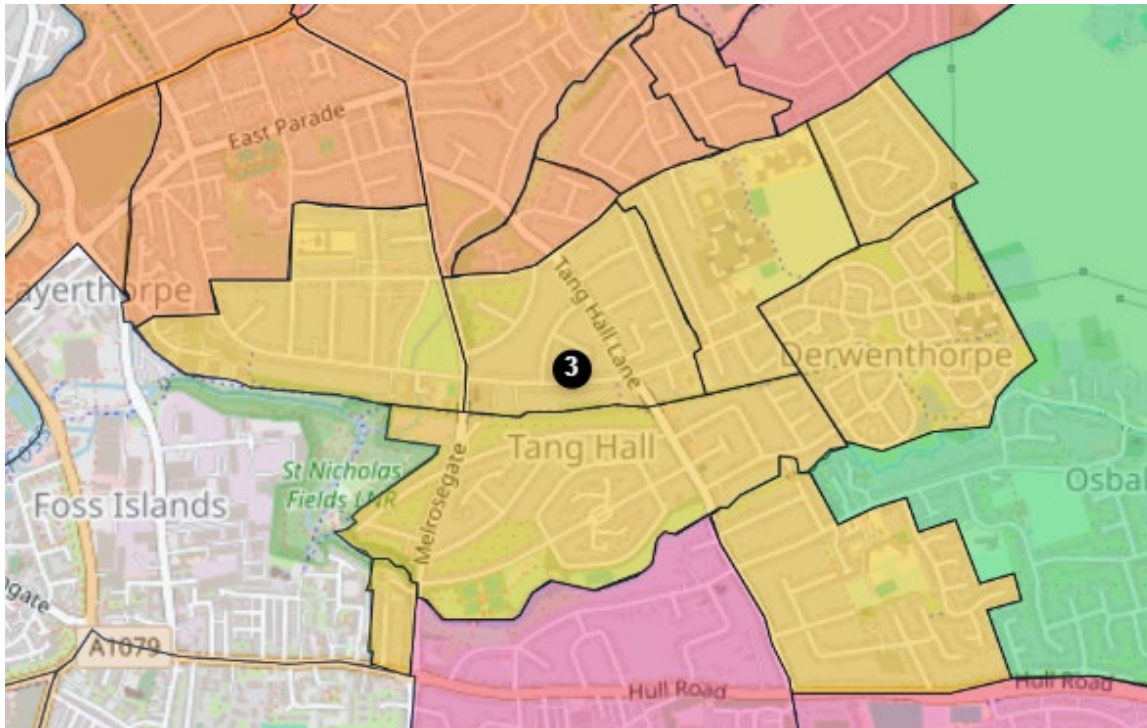
The development operates as a single neighbourhood with a shared identity and common governance arrangements. Residents are represented by the Derwenthorpe Residents Association and work collectively with the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust on matters affecting the development. The estate is served by a single district heating network, which all properties are required to use through obligations contained within property deeds. Residents therefore face common issues relating to the management and operation of this system regardless of which phase of the development they live in.

The roads within Derwenthorpe also remain unadopted and are subject to common management arrangements. These estate-wide issues affect the whole community and require coordinated representation. Dividing Derwenthorpe between three wards would make it more difficult for residents to engage with elected representatives and would undermine effective and convenient local government.

We therefore propose that the entirety of Derwenthorpe should be contained within a single Tang Hall and Derwenthorpe ward.

This proposal also reflects the geography of the area. Derwenthorpe's strongest transport links are with Tang Hall rather than Heworth Without, with the 25 bus connecting the areas. Access to the city centre is primarily via Temple Avenue, Fifth Avenue and Osbaldwick Lane. There is no vehicular access between Derwenthorpe and Heworth Without and little day-to-day interaction between the two communities.

Our proposal creates a coherent ward containing Tang Hall and the entirety of Derwenthorpe and Meadlands. It avoids the unnecessary fragmentation of established communities and better reflects local identity than the Commission's draft recommendations.



Heworth Without

We believe Heworth Without represents a distinct and coherent community which extends beyond the civil parish boundary.

The modern Heworth Without community was expanded through the building of housing north of Stockton Lane during the 1960s and 1970s. Developments including Ashley Park, Elm Park, Elmpark View, Greenfield Park Drive and the surrounding streets were constructed as part of the same period of growth and continue to function as a single community today.

The area is centred on a number of institutions established specifically to serve that post-war expansion. Hempland Primary School and Christ Church were both created to meet the needs of the growing population and continue to serve the wider community. Stockton Lane Preschool, established in 1964 and operating from Christ Church, remains an important facility for local families.

We have confirmation from the Council's Director of Housing that approximately 70% of children living in the area north of Stockton Lane attend Hempland Primary School alongside children living within the Heworth Without parish area. This demonstrates a strong and enduring community identity extending across both the parished and non-parished parts of the ward.

Similarly, Christ Church serves the wider Heworth Without community rather than simply the civil parish. The church parish includes both the Heworth Without parish area and the residential neighbourhoods north of Stockton Lane. It hosts a wide range of community activities including Brownies, Cubs, Guides, parent and toddler groups,

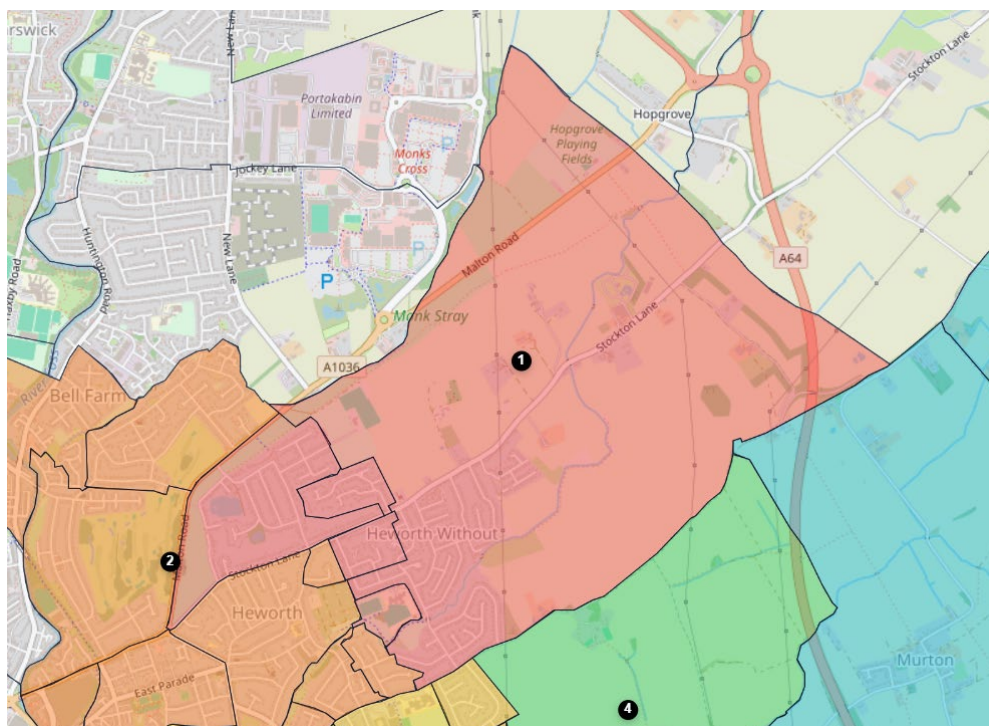
coffee mornings, senior friendship groups and Stockton Lane Preschool. These activities bring together residents from across the wider community and reinforce the area's shared identity.

Heworth Cricket Club on Elmpark Way provides a further focus for community life. The club supports junior and senior cricket, serves local families and provides facilities for wider community activities and events. Together with Hempland Primary School and Christ Church, it forms part of the network of institutions that define the Heworth Without community.

For these reasons we strongly oppose any proposal which separates Greenfield Park Drive from Elmpark Way, Elmpark View and the surrounding Stockton Lane estates. These streets were developed together, share common community facilities and continue to form part of the same neighbourhood. Dividing them between different wards would create an artificial boundary through a long-established community.

To maintain community identity whilst achieving electoral equality, we propose that the entirety of polling district YFA, comprising the residential areas north of Stockton Lane, should be included within Heworth Without ward. The exception should be Hempland Drive, where we agree with both the resident who made a submission and the Commission that properties should be connected to the wider Hempland Avenue area.

This proposal brings together a coherent community centred around shared schools, churches, community facilities and recreational assets. It reflects how residents identify with their area and delivers more effective and convenient local government than the Commission's draft recommendations.



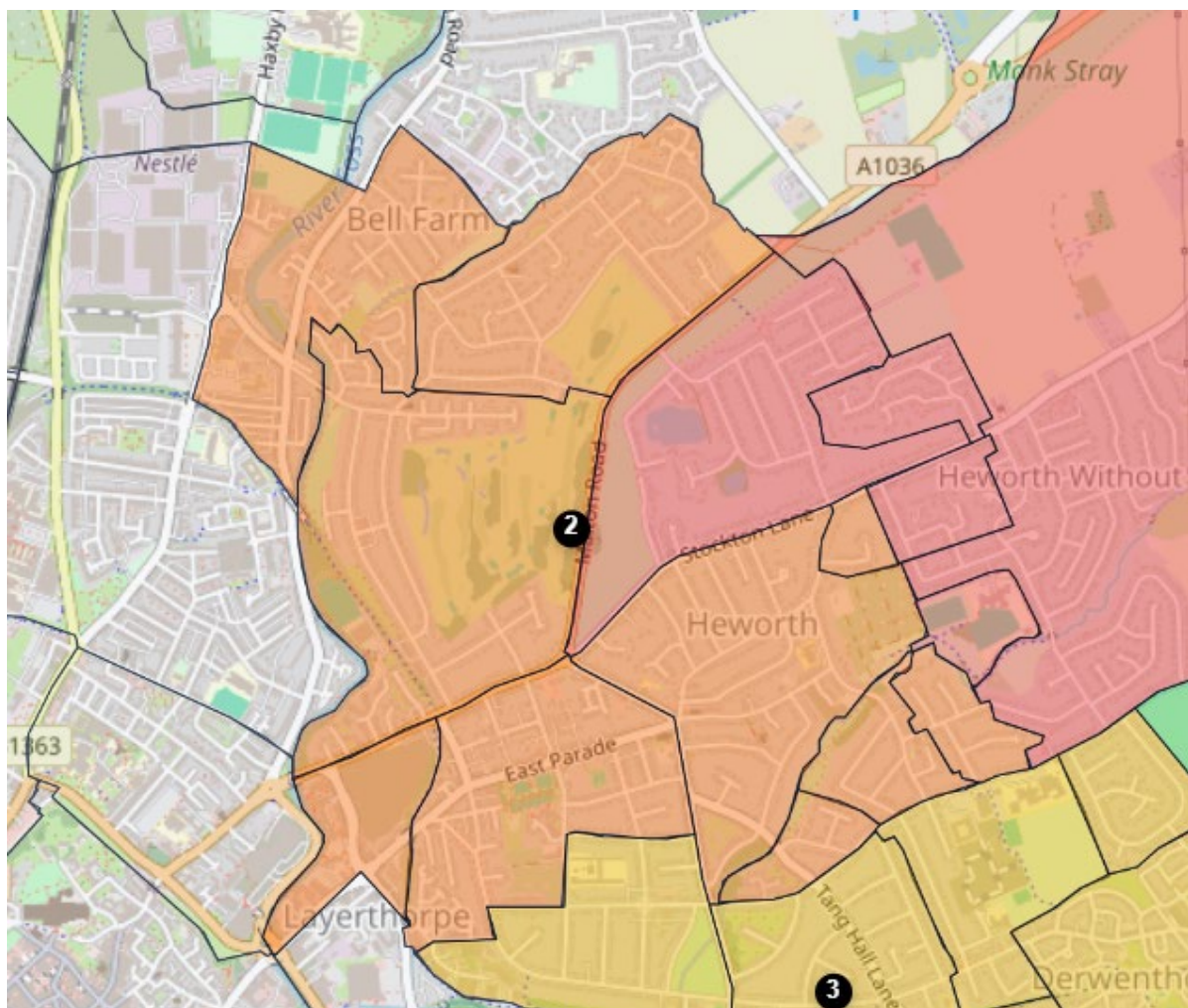
Heworth

Following the inclusion of polling district YFA within Heworth Without, adjustments are required to ensure Heworth remains within the Commission's preferred electoral variance.

We believe the most appropriate solution is for the boundary between Heworth and Tang Hall and Derwenthorpe to follow Bad Bargain Lane, with the residential area north of Bad Bargain Lane remaining within Heworth ward.

Bad Bargain Lane provides a clear and readily identifiable boundary. It follows a longstanding parish boundary that separates the Heworth Without and Osbaldwick communities and continues beyond the Green Belt and parished area into the urban area. It is a boundary that residents can easily recognise on the ground and one which reflects established community identities.

This approach also complements the wider proposals for Tang Hall and Derwenthorpe and Heworth Without. It ensures that established communities remain together whilst maintaining electoral equality across all three wards.



West of the city

Leeman Road

We disagree with the Commission's decision to create a single-member Leeman Road ward.

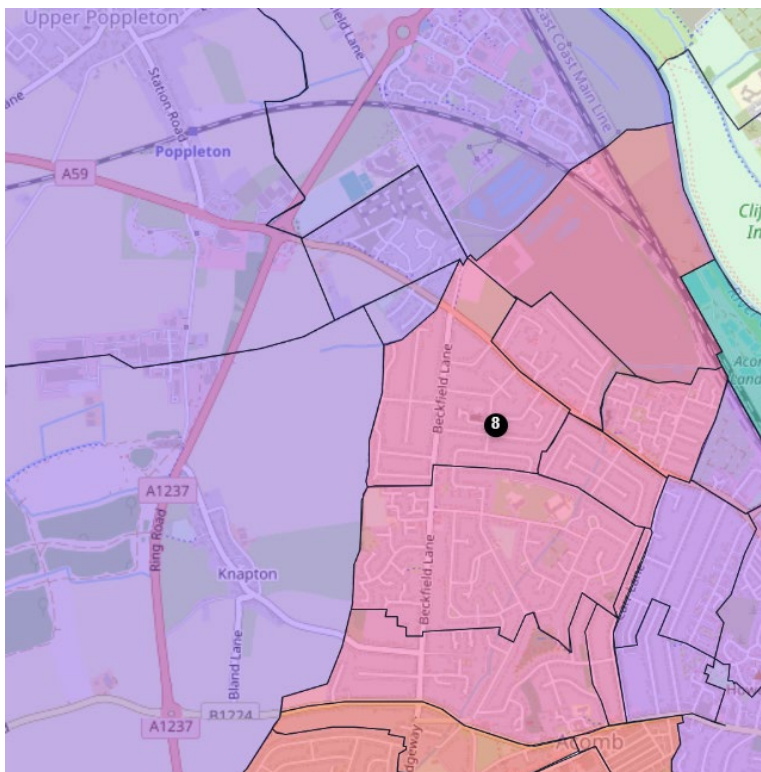
At the commencement of the review period the proposed ward would be approximately 36% below the city average electorate. Whilst the Commission has justified this on the basis of future development at York Central, the ward would remain significantly overrepresented for a considerable period and would only approach electoral equality if the proposed development proceeds in line with current assumptions.

This would mean that, for at least the next two elections, residents of Leeman Road would have substantially greater electoral influence than residents elsewhere in the city. We do not believe this represents effective and convenient local government.

However, recognising the Commission's clear preference for creating a Leeman Road ward, our comments on the remaining wards in the west of the city proceed on the basis that the Commission is unlikely to revisit this decision.

Acomb West

We strongly oppose the Commission's proposal for a three-member Acomb West ward incorporating the Langley Gate community, parts of Rufforth with Knapton parish and the Chapelfields estate.



Langley Gate/parts of Rufforth with Knapton parish

The Commission's proposal would divide both Upper Poppleton parish and Rufforth with Knapton parish in order to transfer parts of those communities into an urban Acomb ward.

We do not believe this reflects community identity.

The Langley Gate development remains closely connected to Poppleton. Residents benefit from direct walking and cycling routes into the village via Station Road and Millfield Lane. Station Road provides a direct connection to Poppleton railway station and the village centre, whilst Millfield Lane provides a high-quality cycle route into the heart of the village. The Number 10 bus service also operates along the boundary of the development and provides links into the wider Poppleton area.

The Commission has suggested that the creation of Langley Gate has altered the historic boundary in this area. We disagree. The existing boundary remains clear and identifiable on the ground and continues to separate the urban area of Acomb from the communities associated with Poppleton and the surrounding parishes.

The educational links are equally important. Families living within Langley Gate remain within the catchment area for Poppleton Ousebank Primary School, reflecting the community's continued relationship with Poppleton rather than Acomb.

In public commentary on these proposals, David Ellis and Westfield Labour have argued that school catchment areas are determined separately from ward boundaries. We agree. However, that is not the argument being made here.

The relevance of school catchment areas is not that ward boundaries automatically determine school admissions. Rather, catchment areas provide important evidence of existing community identity and established patterns of daily life. The Boundary Commission has repeatedly considered school catchments as evidence of community ties throughout this review, including in submissions from those supporting the Commission's proposals elsewhere in the city.

Indeed, those defending the transfer of Langley Gate into Acomb West have simultaneously argued that the development should remain within the Poppleton Ousebank catchment area. That position effectively acknowledges that families in Langley Gate continue to look towards Poppleton for education and community life.

It is therefore difficult to reconcile the argument that Langley Gate forms part of an Acomb community of interest whilst also accepting that its strongest educational links remain with Poppleton. The continued inclusion of Langley Gate within the Poppleton Ousebank catchment area provides further evidence that the development remains closely connected to Poppleton and should remain within Rural West York ward.



The proposal would also create unnecessary complications for parish governance. Both Upper Poppleton and Rufforth with Knapton Parish Councils would be divided by city ward boundaries. The Commission has previously acknowledged that such arrangements can require subsequent parish warding reviews and could have wider implications for local governance arrangements.

We therefore believe that Langley Gate and the affected areas of Rufforth with Knapton parish should remain within Rural West York ward.

Chapelfields

We also oppose the inclusion of Chapelfields within Acomb West ward.

Chapelfields forms part of a distinct community centred around Westfield Primary School and a range of associated community facilities. The estate sits immediately adjacent to Westfield Primary School and has developed strong and longstanding links with the school and the services that operate alongside it.

The school functions as far more than an educational institution. Through its partnership with York High School, the University of York and community organisations, it supports a range of initiatives designed specifically for the Chapelfields community.

These include The Place, located within the Chapelfields estate itself, which provides youth activities, family support, community advice services, food support, adult learning opportunities and wider community programmes. The school also hosts a community hub providing food banks, uniform banks, family learning opportunities and targeted support for local families there.

These facilities have been established specifically to serve the Chapelfields community, run by Westfield Primary School and demonstrate a clear and distinct community identity linked to Westfield rather than Acomb West.

The Commission's proposal would separate Chapelfields from the school, community hub and support services which form the centre of community life for many local

residents. We do not believe this reflects community identity or provides for effective and convenient local government.

Westfield

We believe that a Westfield ward should be retained.

The Commission's proposals divide a number of established communities which currently share schools, community facilities and local services. In particular, we believe that Chapelfields and the communities to the north-west of Hob Moor should remain together within Westfield ward.

Westfield is a distinct community encompassing Chapelfields, Lowfield, the community surrounding Hob Moor Primary School, Foxwood and the wider Westfield area. Whilst these neighbourhoods each have their own identity, they share common educational provision, community facilities, support services and a similar housing character which distinguishes them from neighbouring wards.

Chapelfields forms an integral part of the wider Westfield community as stated in the section above.

The strongest example of these shared links can be seen in the community surrounding Hob Moor Primary School. Residents of the Kingsway West area, including Kingsthorpe, Kingswood Grove, Stuart Road and the surrounding streets, together with residents of Lady Hamilton Gardens, Mattison Way, Stones Close, Eastlands Avenue and the southern side of Hamilton Drive, form part of a coherent community centred around the school. The Hob Moor Primary School catchment area extends across these streets and provides a strong indicator of community identity and daily interaction.

The Commission has rightly considered school catchment areas elsewhere in this review as evidence of community ties and we believe the same principle should apply here.

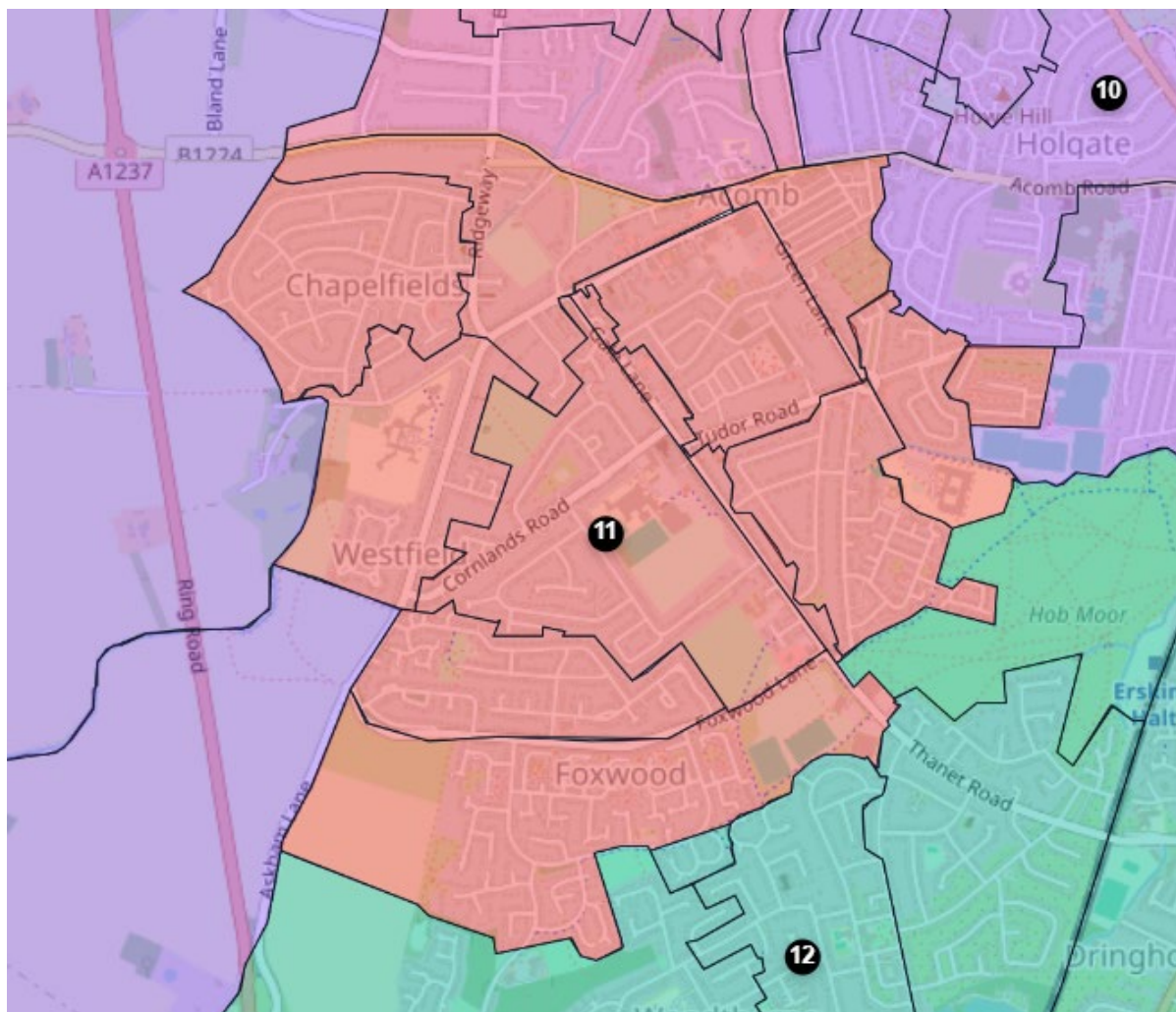
These neighbourhoods also share a similar housing character. The areas surrounding Hob Moor Primary School, Chapelfields, Lowfield, Westfield and Foxwood are largely products of twentieth-century suburban expansion and estate development. They are characterised by post-war family housing, council-built estates, modern infill developments and lower-density suburban layouts with shared green spaces and community facilities.

By contrast, much of Holgate developed during the Victorian railway era and is characterised by higher-density terraced housing, historic urban streetscapes and a pattern of development more closely associated with the communities surrounding the city centre and railway corridor. The communities surrounding Hob Moor Primary School therefore share stronger physical, social and community characteristics with Westfield than with Holgate.

The Commission's proposals would divide these communities despite there being no clear physical feature separating them from the wider Westfield area.

Westfield also benefits from a range of targeted community services and support programmes which have been developed in response to local need. These include community hubs, family support services, youth provision, ward funding, welfare support programmes and community outreach projects. Many of these services operate across the wider Westfield community and are focused on Chapelfields, Lowfield, Westfield and the communities surrounding Hob Moor Primary School.

We therefore propose that a Westfield ward is retained, incorporating Lady Hamilton Gardens, Mattison Way, Stones Close, Eastlands Avenue and the properties on the southern side of Hamilton Drive. This would create a ward that more accurately reflects the established community centred around Hob Moor Primary School and would align the ward boundary with the school's catchment area. In doing so, it would better reflect established patterns of community interaction and ensure that residents who share common educational, recreational and community facilities are represented within the same ward.



Holgate

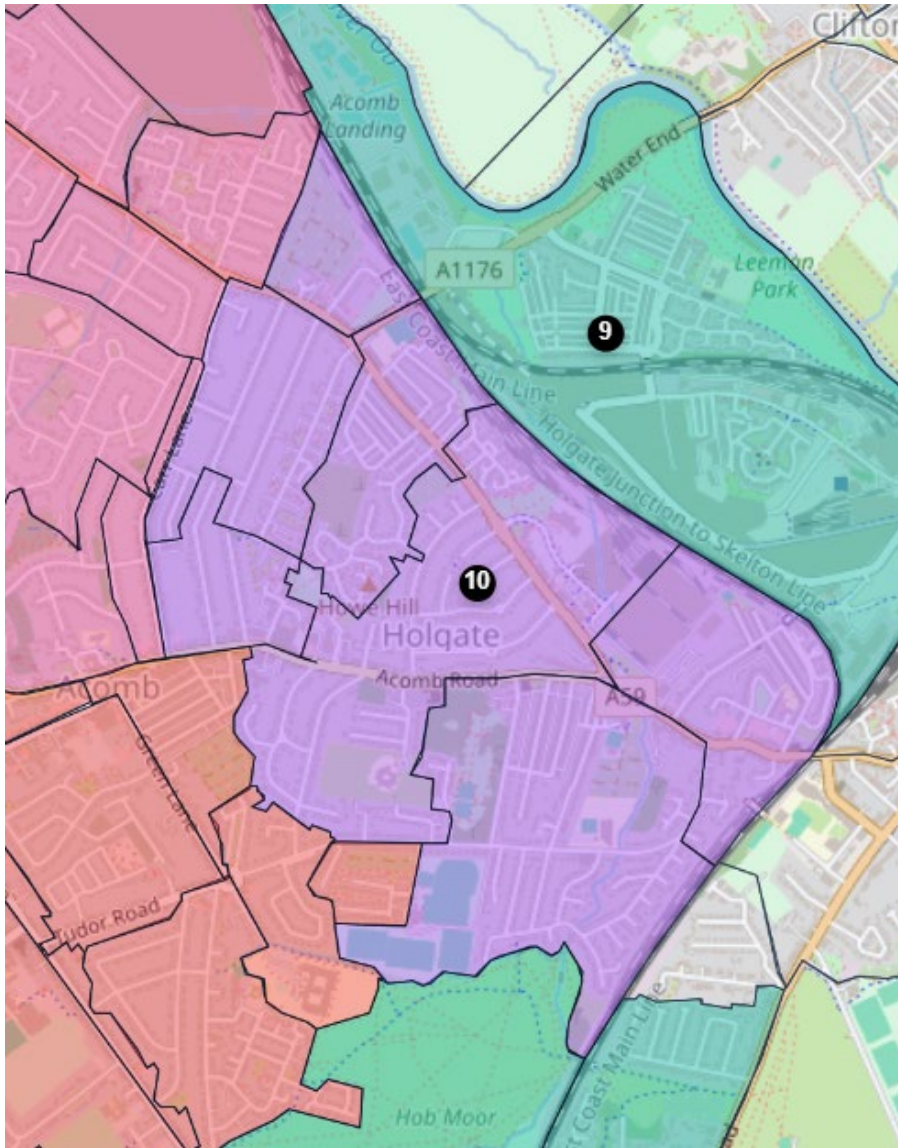
If the commission's decision to create a Leeman Road ward is confirmed and if a coherent Westfield ward is reinstated, consequential changes to Holgate are necessary to maintain electoral equality.

We therefore propose that Lady Hamilton Gardens, Mattison Way, Stones Close, Eastlands Avenue and the properties on the southern side of Hamilton Drive up to York Sports Club should be transferred into Westfield ward.

As set out above, these streets share stronger community links with the area surrounding Hob Moor Primary School, Kingsway West, Chapelfields and the wider Westfield community than with the remainder of Holgate. Their strongest educational links are focused on Hob Moor Primary School and they form part of the same post-war suburban neighbourhood extending westwards from the school.

The transfer of these streets would create a clearer and more coherent boundary between the two wards whilst ensuring acceptable levels of electoral equality. It would also allow Holgate ward to retain a stronger focus on the communities centred around Holgate itself, Acomb Road, Poppleton Road and the neighbourhoods closer to the city centre.

We therefore believe this represents a better reflection of community identity and interests than the Commission's draft recommendations.



Dringhouses and Woodthorpe

We disagree with the Commission's proposals for the Dringhouses and Westfield, Woodthorpe and Westthorpe wards.

The Commission has relied heavily upon the East Coast Main Line as a ward boundary. However, the railway line does not reflect the reality of how local communities function and is not recognised locally as a meaningful community boundary.

Residents on both sides of the railway share common services, facilities and institutions. The GP surgery on Moorcroft Road serves residents from across the area and provides a shared focus for healthcare provision. Similarly, Tesco Extra on Tadcaster Road functions as the principal shopping destination for residents from both Dringhouses and Woodthorpe.

Educational links also cross the railway line. The catchment areas for local primary schools do not follow the railway boundary and instead reflect the wider interconnected nature of the community. For example, the catchment area for Dringhouses Primary School extends west of the railway to include streets such as Eason Road, Moor Grove and The Pastures. This demonstrates that the railway is not regarded locally as a meaningful community boundary.

The same is true of one of the area's oldest community institutions. The ecclesiastical parish of St Edward the Confessor Church, which has served Dringhouses since the nineteenth century, extends significantly beyond the railway line to include communities on both sides. The parish contains over 6,100 residents and is therefore a long-established recognition of the extent of the Dringhouses community.

Importantly, St Edward's is not simply a place of worship. It is a major community hub, hosting toddler groups, youth clubs, Scouts and Guides, fitness classes, coffee mornings, community lunches, social groups, support services and seasonal community events. These activities bring together residents from across the parish and further demonstrate that the railway does not divide separate this community in practice.

We also believe that Teal Drive and Wenham Road should be reunited with the remainder of the surrounding residential estate within Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward. These properties form part of the same housing development as neighbouring streets, are within the Woodthorpe Primary School catchment area and share the same local facilities, services and community identity.

Reuniting Teal Drive and Wenham Road with the wider estate would create a more coherent ward pattern and, importantly, would bring the ward within the Commission's preferred electoral tolerance.

Taken together, the evidence from healthcare, education, shopping and the parish boundaries of St Edward's Church all point to the same conclusion: the East Coast Main Line is not a meaningful community boundary. We therefore believe that Dringhouses and Woodthorpe should remain united within a single ward and that the proposed railway boundary should be amended accordingly.

