

PROPOSED BOUNDARY REVIEW WHICH COULD DIVIDE DERWENTHORPE

SUMMARY

We are opposed to the proposal which might divide Derwenthorpe into three different electoral wards. We believe that overall it would have an adverse effect on the continuing development and community cohesion of our estate.

REASONS FOR OUR OPPOSITION

1. Since its beginnings in 2012 Derwenthorpe has developed from empty fields and scrubland into a carefully planned, vibrant and diverse community. The estate won local and national awards for its architectural design and community involvement.
2. From the earliest days of the estate there has been a Derwenthorpe Residents' Association (DRA) involving active residents from across the estate.
3. Decisions about estate matters are made by the Derwenthorpe Governing Group (DGG). This is run jointly by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) and elected representatives from the estate. Joseph Rowntree has a management role across the entire estate with the participation of representatives elected from residents.
4. The Derwenthorpe Residents Association has a committee which has been elected by estate residents. All estate residents are able to attend meetings, to ask questions and raise issues for debate.
5. There are many activities which have been devised by and for estate residents e.g. Parent and Toddler groups, a gardening group, a film club, a wildlife group and a monthly coffee morning which is frequently attended by over 30 residents. There is a community newsletter which is produced 6 times a year. It is delivered to every household on the estate and to neighbouring areas to encourage their attendance at activities on the estate. We fear that if the estate is split up many of the developments to which many residents have contributed, and of which they are rightly proud, may cease to exist or become less effective when spread over two or three electoral wards.
6. Over the years there have been several door-to-door surveys carried out by estate residents to determine the individual and collective needs of the local households. On one occasion almost 50% of the estate was surveyed.
7. There were a number of meetings with the Director of Adult Social Services and senior representatives of the local NHS agencies where the current and future social care and health needs were presented and discussed with actual figures gathered from the community.
8. There are a considerable number of older people and people with disabilities living on Derwenthorpe. The survey identified their location and gained knowledge of their current and anticipated future needs.
9. A number of surveys have also been carried out into the needs of the estate by departments from York University at the request of the DRA.
10. During lockdown in 2020 a What's App group, Derwent Chatter was set up for community residents. This shares advice on a wide range of topics such as

building matters, local events and their planning, gardening and so on. Over 200 households have signed up to the group.

11. Derwenthorpe is one of the more diverse areas in the York district. 40% of the households are tenancies of JRHT, many of which have residents with disabilities and special social care needs. These tenancies are deliberately distributed amongst the entire estate in order to encourage community cohesion and development.
12. The Super Sustainable Centre (SSC) is an asset for the whole of Derwenthorpe. It provides a communal heating system for virtually all the estate. Events are held there most days and evenings.
13. The estate was designed so that there were no through roads. Whilst this was confusing at first, especially to taxi drivers, it is now regarded as an asset. It adds to the quality of life on the estate and reinforces Derwenthorpe's distinct identity.

SUMMARY

In our view, if Derwenthorpe is split into different electoral wards it may be difficult to maintain community cohesion. Derwenthorpe was created as a distinct area and in our opinion has been very successful in setting up a distinct community giving people a strong sense of identity and belonging. It seems likely that, if the estate had councillors from different wards they may not see Derwenthorpe as a single entity. Thus when developing local policies they may split our community. We wish Derwenthorpe to remain in a single local authority ward so we can continue along our journey of community development.

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