

City of York Council Electoral Review 2026

To: Review Officer (York), LGBCE, 3 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ

Two of us (husband and wife) both formally object to the draft recommendations concerning the proposed "Fulford & Fishergate" and "Heslington & University" wards. I believe there is a superior alternative that satisfies both mathematical balance and community cohesion.

1. **A two-councillor Fulford & Heslington ward** (restoring the historic, relationship between these parish-related residential areas).
2. **A standalone two-councillor Fishergate ward** (retaining its distinct, compact inner-urban identity).
3. **The reallocation of the University of York campus population** into adjacent urban wards such as Hull Road, which already has significant student population, or a dedicated institutional ward.

Justifications

Community Identity and Interests

- **Incongruous Grouping:** Pairing Heslington village with the University of York campus creates a ward with fundamentally conflicting characters of representation. The university population consists heavily of students who stay for 1-3 years, and therefore have shorter-term, campus-centric priorities. In contrast, Heslington is an established, permanent residential village whose residents focus on longer-term issues like property value, school places, local planning, and lifelong community services.
- **Dilution of Voice:** Merging the two means the long-term planning, parish council, and infrastructure concerns of permanent Heslington residents may be mathematically overwhelmed by a transient student demographic.
- **Historic Ties:** Heslington shares a long-standing, natural, and cohesive suburban relationship with Fulford. Both are historically parish areas dealing with similar outer-York residential issues. Breaking this link fractures a community identity that has historically operated with good civic synergy.

Effective and Convenient Local Government

- **Parish Council Alignment:** A two-councillor Fulford & Heslington ward aligns elected members with two highly active, contiguous Parish Councils. This would allow councillors to focus purely semi-rural, and suburban issues.
- **Divergent Ward Profiles:** The draft proposal forces a three-councillor ward to span from the rural/suburban village of Fulford to the dense, inner-city terraced corridors of Fishergate. These areas share almost no common infrastructure, local school patterns, or community hubs, making effective representation highly fragmented.

Electoral Equality (The Numbers)

- Utilizing two-councillor blocks for both Fulford & Heslington and Fishergate easily allows the Commission to hit the target ratio of approximately 3,542 electors per councillor (roughly 7,084 electors per ward).
- Absorbing the high-density University of York campus into urban neighbours like Hull Road could make electoral sense, as those areas already feature the dense student-housing stock and infrastructure aligned with the university's demographic identity.

I urge the Commission to ensure that the unique, permanent residential identity of Heslington is taken into consideration, and that local democratic representation remains effective for all residents.

Heslington village and the University are friendly neighbours with a good relationship, for which we are grateful. Our suggesting that their joint democratic representation does not make sense in no way implies this relationship is not valued, and is not, even by implication, a criticism of the healthy cooperation and friendly coexistence of the communities.