

Northumberland

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Comment text:

Related subject: Widdrington Station and Ponteland

I have a couple of comments on communities which are split in the draft recommendations, with suggestions for alternatives in those areas.

1. Widdrington Station

The community of Widdrington Station is split in the draft recommendations. It is possible to avoid this by rearranging the proposed Longhirst, Longhorsley and Druridge Bay wards as follows:

- Widdrington division. The whole parish of Widdrington Station & Stobswood combined with the parishes of Widdrington Village, Longhirst and Ulgham and the Tritlington parish ward of Tritlington & West Chevington. The estimated 2028 electorate would be 3627.
- Felton & Druridge Bay division. The parishes of Felton, Thirston, East Chevington and Togston, and the West Chevington parish ward of Tritlington & West Chevington. The estimated 2028 electorate would be 4117.
- Longhorsley division. The parishes of Brinkburn, Hartburn, Hebron, Hesleyhurst, Longhorsley, Meldon, Mitford, Netherwitton and Nunnykirk. The estimated 2028 electorate would be 3745.

Effectively this unites Widdrington Station and Widdrington Village in an equivalent to the proposed Longhirst division. It then replaces those areas in the proposed Druridge Bay division with the inland area around Felton and Thirston, and transfers Hebron parish to Longhorsley division to ensure reasonable electoral equality.

2. Ponteland

The town of Ponteland is divided into four divisions in both the current arrangements and the draft proposals. All four divisions contain substantial areas outside the town, meaning that in spite of its size there is no division wholly within Ponteland, and a large number of rural parishes are lumped in with Ponteland for their representation.

With a council size of 69, the parish of Ponteland's theoretical entitlement under the estimated 2028 electorate is 2.57 councillors. The parish already contains some more rural communities, so the main built up area will be a bit less than this. Therefore it should be possible to have two divisions wholly contained in Ponteland and one division entirely composed of the rural parishes outside the town, with only one division, instead of four, combining both.

I suggest a division containing the parishes of Belsay, Capheaton, Stannington and Whalton, together with the four parishes of Bavington, Kirkwhelpington, Rothley and Wallington Demesne, which are proposed for inclusion in the Bellingham division, but are not particularly close to Bellingham and form a natural group around the A696 with Belsay and Capheaton. This would have an estimated 2028 electorate of 3821, and could be called Stannington & Belsay division.

I then suggest moving the two parishes of Matfen and Wallington into the proposed Humshaugh division, and the two parishes of Birtley and Wark (much closer to Bellingham than the parishes mentioned in the previous paragraph) into Bellingham division. This gives 2028 electorates of Humshaugh 3533 and Bellingham 3725.

Ponteland, Stamfordham and Heddon on the Wall combined have an estimated 2028 electorate of 12012, so can be divided into three divisions each with an electorate around 4000. I don't have detailed electorate figures for different areas of Ponteland so won't give exact boundaries, but suggest a division covering Heddon on the Wall and Stamfordham, together with the rural western parts of Ponteland parish (Medburn, Dissington, Higham Dykes, Milbourne) and enough of the west of the town for electoral equality; this would be called Ponteland West & Heddon. The rest of the town can then be divided into Ponteland North, covering the original centre of the town around the A696, and Ponteland South, including Darras Hall, divisions.

Attached Documents:

None attached