

Northumberland

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Organisation Name: Choppington Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Related subject: Choppington

as attached

Attached Documents:

- boundary commision 2023 nland divisions v3 submission to proposals.docx

Choppington Parish Council would like to respond to the proposals for the electoral divisions within its own Parish boundaries of Stakeford, Choppington and Sleekburn (part of). Each division has one representative. The Council recognises the reason for reorganisation and the proposals conform to the 3 statutory criteria:

1. Electoral equality
2. Community identities and interest
3. Effective and convenient local government

Proposal to include The Willows and Willowbrook Court in Stakeford Division - supported

Choppington Parish Council supports the proposal to amend the boundary between Stakeford and Sleekburn to include the properties of just over 120 electors in The Willows and Willowbrook Court in the Stakeford division. This area is located within the SE of the Choppington Parish boundaries it is closely associated with Bomarsund and is physically separated from the Sleekburn Division by a visible boundary of the railway line.

Proposal to include River Bank, River Bank East and Milburn Grange in Sleekburn division – not supported

Choppington Parish Council does not support the proposal to bring River Bank, River Bank East and Milburn Grange into the Sleekburn division. This proposal is an arbitrary snatch to increase numbers in the Sleekburn division, but consequently reduces those for the Stakeford division (which is also in need of numbers) and ignores the community identity of those residents with Stakeford. The visible barrier of a railway line is the current boundary between Stakeford and Sleekburn divisions; the proposed boundary line is not so easily identified and splits the established community of Bomarsund within the Stakeford division. The C406 along which these houses sit runs straight into the heart of Bomarsund connecting these communities with the Stakeford division.

In addition, Choppington Parish Council would reiterate proposals made in the first review that the Stakeford division is extended to include the community of West Sleekburn. This would bring the County divisions in line with the Parish boundaries. West Sleekburn shares the name Sleekburn, but it is distanced from the main settlements within the Sleekburn division (East Sleekburn being 2.9km distant from West Sleekburn and the Parish boundary). The Parish Council has long recognised that West Sleekburn is part of the wider community of Stakeford within Choppington Parish Council and the inclusion of this area would reinforce existing community connections

Sleekburn and Existing communities within Bedlington divisions

Although outside of the Parish boundaries, the Parish Council's proposals recognise that the electoral divisions of Bedlington West, Bedlington Central, Bedlington East, and Sleekburn are closely associated with each other and provide an extended community from the North Sea coast to the West of Bedlington. There are a number of proposed and identified housing developments within the Bedlington areas that will increase electoral numbers, the Stakeford division does not have any identified housing development in the

Northumberland local plan and will not have any of that flexibility to increase numbers in the future

Proposal to include Hepscoth Village within the Choppington Electoral Division – not supported

The proposal to include Hepscoth Village within the Choppington Electoral Division ignores the natural boundary of the wide green belt separating Choppington from Hepscoth. The two communities differ in character and do not have close ties or shared facilities.

Proposed amendments between Stakeford and Choppington divisions

The proposal to include amendments to the boundary between Stakeford and Choppington divisions is not opposed. It makes sense to include all of Nelson Road, Wellington Road and Cambridge Road, just to the south of Stakeford Lane, in the Stakeford division. There are several options for the boundary within the Wansbeck Estate which can be tweaked to balance numbers.

General comment.

Choppington Parish Council recognises that to achieve the priorities of boundary review numbers need to be balanced between the four Bedlington divisions (Bedlington West, Bedlington Central, Bedlington East, and Sleekburn. We recognise that this is aided by the close affinity existing between these divisions. This balancing, if supported will then enable the proposals submitted by Choppington Parish Council for the Stakeford and Choppington electoral divisions in satisfaction of your criteria:

1. Electoral equality
2. Community identities and interest
3. Effective and convenient local government