

County Durham

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Comment text:

Related subject: Spennymoor Division and Tudhoe Division

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Please accept the following additional comments to my earlier submissions to the Local Authority Boundary Commission Review. The earlier

submissions were nos 1006691 and 1007016. I also commented on the Parliamentary Review that also affected Local Authority areas.

I am a County Councillor for Durham County Council and before that was a Sedgefield Borough Councillor. I have represented the Spennymoor Division on the County Council and Sedgefield Borough Council for 8 years. I am Group Leader for the Spennymoor and Tudhoe Independent Group of Councillors on Durham County Council. I am also a Spennymoor Town Councillor representing Spennymoor Division and have been a Town Councillor for 21 years. I have lived in the town for the whole of my life both in Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions, and know both areas very well.

I wish to offer feedback comments to the latest consultation following comments provided by the Joint Administration and Labour Group of Durham County Council and a Councillor on Spennymoor Town Council. The latter Councillor has given personal recommendations that were not shared with Spennymoor County Councillors or at a meeting of the Town Council. Local residents in Spennymoor Division, of which I am one, have also not learnt of some of these recommendations until the latest review and comments were provided to us.

The Boundary Commission have suggested that Binchester and Newfield are included in the enlarged Spennymoor Division and this is acceptable as both of these villages are on a road and bus route to and from Byers Green that falls within Spennymoor Division and would not add significantly to journey time; I cannot say how this would affect workload as these villages were in Coundon Division with a 1 Councillor representation for the Coundon area.

A suggestion from the Labour Group on Durham County Council (DCC) was to include the whole of Coundon Division into Spennymoor Division. Adding the whole of the Coundon Division is not acceptable and would add considerably to journey times and cost of transport; it is not on a direct road system to Spennymoor Division and would add considerably to the workload of a reduced Councillor representation from 3 Councillors to 2 Councillors for Spennymoor Division (latter numbers as suggested by the Joint Administration) of Durham County Council. Another suggestion from the Labour Group on DCC was to add Auckland Park and Grange Hill into the Spennymoor Division that would also not be acceptable given that these latter two areas are closer to Bishop Auckland Division or Shildon Division than they are to Spennymoor Division and also add considerable to workload, journey time and cost onto a reduced County Councillor representation for Spennymoor Division. Auckland Park and Grange Hill are also outside of a main travel route of the Spennymoor Division that could be an issue in winter months adding considerably to journey times.

There has been a suggestion from the Joint Administration that Part BAAHB Merrington should be added to Spennymoor Division. At the last County elections in 2021 the village of Kirk Merrington, North Close and the 5 houses in Vyners Close area were in Ferryhill Division. There has been no new housebuilding in Spennymoor that adds any part of Merrington into the existing Spennymoor Division since the 2017 and 2021 elections. There has been housebuilding in Merrington Lane, that is within Tudhoe Division that has also overflowed into Ferryhill Division boundary that includes Merrington. I have raised concern previously for the Parliamentary Review that streets in the new developments at Merrington Lane, Tudhoe Division were represented in the 2021 election by Ferryhill Councillors and also Tudhoe Division Councillors. This

caused confusion for local residents and County Councillors knowing who their Councillor was. In one case the same street was in both Divisions. I suggested the whole of the Merrington Lane site should be in the Tudhoe Division and I welcome the view of the Boundary Commission that the whole of the Merrington Lane site should be placed in Tudhoe Division as there is a natural separation from this and Ferryhill Division including Kirk Merrington by open Countryside. The whole of the Merrington Lane site would then also be within the currently named Spennymoor and Tudhoe Grange Parish of the Town Council that is currently represented by 6 Town Councillors. There are 2 more sites on Merrington Lane where additional building work is in progress with another brown field area cleared and awaiting an interested developer. This additional housebuilding is making good progress on house building and would ensure that there is electoral equality between both Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions.

It has been recommended by the Boundary Commission that Croxdale and Hett share a closer link with Tudhoe Division than Coxhoe Division. As Croxdale is on a direct road link with Tudhoe this recommendation is supported. Hett is midway between Tudhoe Division and Coxhoe and is not on a direct road route between either of these Divisions and I offer no view on whether this also should become part of Tudhoe Division. Croxdale Parish Council has representation on the Local Authority 'Spennymoor Area Action Partnership'.

Kirk Merrington, North Close and Vyners Close as earlier mentioned are currently in Ferryhill Division but are also in the Kirk Merrington parish area of Spennymoor Town Council.

The Merrington parish area of Spennymoor Town Council, is represented by 1 Town Councillor. The parish area of Kirk Merrington includes North Close and Vyners Close (latter in post code DL167HB) and all joined by the B6288 that is on a direct route towards Merrington Lane (latter in Tudhoe Division). This road passes through Kirk Merrington, North Close and Vyners Close towards Merrington Lane. There is a natural boundary of a large expanse of open countryside between Spennymoor Division and that of North Close, Vyners Close and Merrington Lane, Tudhoe Division. I disagree with the suggestion of the Joint Administration of DCC that part BAAHB Merrington should be placed in Spennymoor Divisions for the reasons stated above.

Additionally, there has been no housebuilding to take any part of Kirk Merrington area into Spennymoor Division so this is another reason why I can not support the suggestion of the Joint Administration to move part of 'BAAHB - Merrington' into Spennymoor Division as both of these areas were represented by Ferryhill County Councillors in the 2017 and 2021 local County Council elections.

I can not support the whole of High Street Spennymoor being placed in Tudhoe Division and consider that the boundary should remain as the Cenotaph that joins Cheapside shops with High Street shops all overseen by the Local Authority Towns Centre and Regeneration Team who work closely with all current County Councillors for both Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions. County Councillors from Spennymoor Division have also used substantial amounts of their Neighbourhood funding in the last six years to support Town Centre regeneration improvements and cultural events for both Divisions. If the whole of the Shopping area was transferred to Tudhoe Division Spennymoor residents and Councillors would be disadvantaged in not having any input into future Town Centre projects or developments that affect all residents of both Tudhoe and

Spennymoor divisions. All residents of both Divisions share the same amenities of doctors, dentists, schools and cultural and leisure facilities of the recent regenerated Market area in centre of High Street as well as the sports facilities offered by Spennymoor Leisure Centre. Spennymoor Division and Tudhoe Division are represented by the same teams of fire and police who have purpose built buildings within both Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions. The High Street is identified by residents as 'Spennymoor Town Centre'; the Leisure Centre is known as 'Spennymoor Leisure Centre' and the Cenotaph is known as Spennymoor Cenotaph; Cheapside shops are identified as being in 'Cheapside', Tudhoe Division. Identifying the whole of the Shopping area as Tudhoe Town Centre, etc would create confusion with local residents who know these two shopping areas as Cheapside and Spennymoor High Street even though they are in two separate Division areas. At the three gateways to the Town Centre (At North Eastern (top of High Street); at corner King Street to Oxford Road and on St Andrews Way at Asda turn in, there are specially commissioned signs with lights behind them that are impressed with the surnames of all households in both Divisions to spell out the name of Spennymoor at each gateway. This signage was commissioned by Sedgefield Borough Council in 2017 and residents in both Divisions were encouraged to check their surname was incorporated in one of these 3 signs, such is the common history between the two Divisions from a heritage of mining community. Both Spennymoor and Tudhoe appear on ancient maps of the Town and residents have a close association with their identified areas, referring to their areas as Tudhoe Village, Tudhoe, Tudhoe Grange, Merrington Lane/Low Spennymoor, Spennymoor, Middlestone Moor, Byers Green, all known names within parish wards of the Town Council. Their long history and local traditions and recognised local community groups and community centres are important to local residents who would not identify themselves as residing in Spennymoor West or Spennymoor East. I can not support any name change and currently named Spennymoor Division and Tudhoe Division should remain.

A recommendation has been put forward by a Town Councillor to move the existing boundary between Ox Close and Deneside into Tudhoe Division. As mentioned in an earlier response to the Boundary Commission there was no discussion with other Town Councillors or County Councillors to support this view as there is an established and existing boundary that is a large expanse of green open space between Deneside and Ox Close where an underground stream runs underneath it. This underground stream flows under Oxford Road, the car park open space of the new Aldi Development off Oxford Road; then runs under the area close to the Cenotaph between Cheapside (Tudhoe Division) and underneath the Leisure Centre towards the A688 dual carriageway. The stream and 'Dene' green open space should be retained as the natural boundary of the two Divisions together with the Cenotaph as they have been since the last review in 2011 when the Local Authority also agreed that this natural Boundary was acceptable. There has been no housebuilding in this area to influence a change from the current boundary between Ox Close and Deneside. On this basis I disagree with the suggestion to move the existing boundary.

The suggestion to place Carr Lane and Carr Street as the boundary between Spennymoor and Tudhoe Division as suggested by a Town Councillor and also by the Joint Administration of DCC when they say BAAFC - Spennymoor 3 should transfer to Tudhoe Division, is not supported by me nor by other Spennymoor Town and County Councillors.

The streets within BAAFC Spennymoor 3 on the DCC register of electors covering 2020-2021 comprise: Mayfields, Newburgh Court, Ox Close Crescent, Rievaulx Court, Troutbeck Close, Wansbeck Close, Winchester Court, Canterbury Close, Cartmel Court, Dunelm Court, Easby Court, Ebberson Court, Gervaulx Court, Glastonberry Close, Jackson Street. I object to the suggested transfer of these streets from Spennymoor

Division to Tudhoe Division. There has been no community consultation with Greenways Estate residents covered by these streets to agree to their transfer to Tudhoe Division. These residents identify as living on Greenways Estate, Spennymoor Division and the current boundary and representation by Spennymoor County Councillor has not created any issues. To have the Greenways Estate split would cause confusion for residents and on this basis I object to the proposals of the boundary change to include these streets suggested by the Joint Administration.

Additionally, the Local Authority and Boundary Commission agreed at the last review that there should be no change to the natural boundary of 'the Dene' between Ox Close and Deneside.

The Town Councillor's suggestions and personal view was to add the streets of **Jackson Street, Shaw Street, Dickens Street, Dundas Street, Villiers Street, Park Parade, North Street, Ox Close, Jubilee Close, James Street, and flats of High Street and Cheapside (all in BAAGA1 - Spennymoor 1 for DCC Register of Electors 2020-2021) together with Westfields, Parkside, Rosedale, Westerdale, Glaisdale, and all other 'mere' and 'dale' streets all listed in BAAGA2 Spennymoor 1A of the DCC electoral register for 2020-2021. Residents have not had any community consultation to support this suggestion and identify themselves as living on the Greenways Estate, in Spennymoor Division and being represented by Spennymoor Division County Councillors. At the last Boundary Commission Review in 2011 the Local Authority supported the view then that there should be no change to the Spennymoor Division boundary that also included the whole of Ox Close as remaining in Spennymoor Division.

The Boundary Commission have advised that they are minded to retain all streets on Greenways Estate including Mayfields within the Spennymoor Division and I can support this and welcome this proposal.

I can not agree with the suggestion that Ox Close and all streets above it, that is all streets up to Carr Street/Carr Lane (i.e. ** Dickens Street, Jackson Street, Shaw Street, North Street, Villiers Street, Dundas Street, Park Parade**) be placed into Tudhoe Division. I believe these streets and Spennymoor High Street should remain in Spennymoor Division. These streets were in Spennymoor Division at the last Boundary Commission Review in 2011 and were supported as such by the Administration of the County Council who agreed at that time not to make any changes to established boundaries and leave the whole of the Greenways Estate and Ox Close and streets above it to Carr Street/Carr Lane, in Spennymoor Division. These streets are identified as being in Spennymoor Division and residents also identify with their Spennymoor Division County Councillors. There are 8 flats on High Street also in Spennymoor Division, as well as 6 flats on Cheapside (currently Tudhoe Division) that are all listed in BAAGA1 Spennymoor 1 as at DCC electoral register for 2020-21). All of these streets are entirely within the Town Council 'Spennymoor' Ward.

It should be noted that on the DCC electoral register for 2017-2018 the whole of these streets were listed in the Register of Electors as all being in BAAGA Spennymoor 1, of the DCC electoral register and all within the Spennymoor Ward of Spennymoor Town Council. In 2020-21 these same streets have been split between BAAGA1 Spennymoor 1 (Carr Street, Jackson Street etc) and BAAGA2 Spennymoor 1A (comprising all 'mere' and 'dale' streets with streets of Westfields, Parkside, Jubilee Close etc. on Greenways Estate, Spennymoor Division also included.

Jubilee Close has one direct road access onto Carr Street/Carr Lane as does Westfields, Parkside, Rosedale, Glaisdale and all other 'mere' and 'dale Roads etc. and all directly lead on to Carr Street/Carr Lane as their natural exit onto Carr Street/Carr Lane. As all of these streets have been within the Spennymoor Ward and Spennymoor Division for many years I believe there is no reason why the streets of Jackson Street, Dundas Street etc as identified by ** should not be relisted back and included in BAAGA Spennymoor 1 as they were in 2017-2018 on the DCC electoral register and for them all to remain in the Spennymoor Division with its natural boundary of the 'Dene' retained.

I disagree with the suggestion made by the Town Councillor to move BAAGA1 Spennymoor 1 (Carr Street, Jackson Street, Ox Close, High Street etc. into Tudhoe Division together with all streets ending in 'mere' and 'dale' on Greenways Estate together with Jubilee Close, Westfields, Parkside etc down to Mayfields being placed in Tudhoe Division, the suggestion being from this Town Councillor that the Road of Carr Street/Carr Lane was the Boundary Division.

I support the view, as do other County Councillors and Town Councillors that the Dene and covered stream running through the middle of the 'Dene' - a large expanse of public open space running the length of Ox Close - the open space crossing the car park of the new Aldi towards the Cenotaph and Leisure Centre and to the boundary of the dual carriageway A688 as being the natural boundary split between Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions. The Dene is also the route of small animals and birds who migrate up and down this grassed large open space down to the Woods opposite to Mayfields and Wood View. There has been no issue identifying this area as Spennymoor Division in the past and being represented by Spennymoor County Councillors who have worked well with local residents.

For many years the polling station for the entire Greenways Estate has been Ox Close Nursery/ Primary School that is accessed from Mayfields and Ox Close street entrances. All residents of Ox Close and streets above it are in close proximity to the Greenways Estate and all streets up to Carr Street/Carr Lane have direct access by road or pathway to Carr Street/Carr Lane and could easily use this polling station as well.

The Deneside and Wood View areas of Tudhoe Division have their natural road exit onto the main road through the Town via Durham Road or via Wood View onto Durham Road that is in Tudhoe Division. This is another reason why Ox Close has a stronger link to the Spennymoor Division than it does to Tudhoe Division. I therefore object to the recommendation to move the Spennymoor Division Boundary and place Ox Close and streets above it up to Carr Street/Carr Lane and the shops and flats on High Street into Tudhoe Division as these streets have closer road transport links to Spennymoor than to Tudhoe Division.

In summary I recommend that

1. The Spennymoor Division and Spennymoor Town Council Ward boundary remains unchanged with the Dene and stream beneath it running through the middle of the Dene and between Ox Close and Deneside is the split of Spennymoor and Tudhoe Divisions.
2. Mayfields and all other streets on Greenways Estate remain in Spennymoor Division.

3. The natural boundary of the Cenotaph and stream under this area is the split between Spennymoor Division (High Street) and Tudhoe Division (Cheapside).
4. Only Binchester and Newfield (Coundon Division) be brought into an enlarged Spennymoor Division.
5. The names of Spennymoor Division and Tudhoe Divisions are retained and the suggestion to rename to Spennymoor West and East is rejected.
6. A suggestion to transfer in BAAHB - Merrington by the Joint Administration is rejected. Spennymoor Division is separated from Merrington by a large expanse of open countryside. Kirk Merrington, North Close and Vyners Close are in Ferryhill Division.
7. All streets and new developments on Merrington Lane be placed in entirety into Tudhoe Division.
8. Kirk Merrington Parish is represented by 1 Spennymoor Town Councillor.

Sincerely

County Councillor Liz Maddison, Spennymoor Division

Town Councillor Liz Maddison,

Spennymoor Ward

Group Leader; Spennymoor & Tudhoe Independent Group on Durham County Council

Attached Documents:

None attached