

# ***Thornaby Independent Association***

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## **NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL RESPONSE FROM THORNABY INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION**

Thornaby Independent Association (TIA) wish to strongly object to the draft proposals for the Thornaby Wards. Some of these objections have already been included as part of the main submission from Stockton Borough Council, however we now enlarge upon various points.

Thornaby Independent Association is dedicated entirely to Thornaby, so we limit our comments and concerns to our town as we don't profess to understand how other areas should be 'warded' under this review. We will leave that to those who live there and those who represent those areas.

Thornaby Independent Association currently hold every seat in Thornaby for both town and borough councils. We are the major opposition group within Stockton Borough Council after the 2 main Political parties. We note you only appear to have taken the views of the Conservative Group and 1 member of the public who is in fact an Ingleby Barwick Councillor into consideration; they obviously have a political interest in reducing the number of Councillors within Thornaby and thereby increasing their own. There has been no Conservative representation in any Thornaby ward for over 20 years, so it is difficult to see how they can profess knowledge of the wards and all their individual challenges.

Thornaby on Tees is a Royal Charter Town and a constituent township within the Borough of Stockton on Tees, as such its identity and boundaries are inviolable and demand the same respect as other towns within the borough. Despite recommendations from both TIA and the full Stockton Borough Council decision that ward patterns should follow the existing Thornaby Town Council boundaries established in 1892, you have suggested that an area of Thornaby be annexed into the new Southern Parishes ward. For the sake of clarity, we state again our position that the town boundary runs the length of Low Lane up to the western boundary of Bassleton Beck and this area falls within the Village Ward. The resultant planning

permissions equating to over 500 votes already granted for this area bringing up the numbers required within Thornaby wards to acceptable limits. It should be noted that in the words of The Planning Inspectorate when dealing with an appeal in the area noted that Bassleton Beck valley was “a clear and linear break between Thornaby & Ingleby Barwick”. There are also new planning applications about to come to fruition for further housing within both Satinsby Hill and Village wards which will again increase numbers.

The dividing line between Stainsby Hill & Village should also run straight up Thornaby road and not cross over as shown on your map, properties to the west of Thornaby Road have always been part of Village Ward and have a strong identity with it, they do not belong in Stainsby Hill Ward.

We also object the proposals for moving the boundaries between Village and Mandale & Victoria wards resulting in the loss of a councillor. All existing boundaries between these ward should remain and not be changed. Mandale & Victoria is a ward of high depravation with a transient population who for one reason or another do not appear on the electoral roll; these people who although not registered to vote tend to have the greatest problems and require the greatest level of intervention and support.

Mandale & Victoria Ward has high levels of ethnicity, asylum seekers, poverty, reliance on food banks, drug related crime and myriad social problems demanding huge effort and time on the existing three Councillors. It cannot be compared with other more affluent wards within the borough and it is patently unfair to base the figures solely on registered electors. It has 3 primary schools, 2 secondary Academies, a College, a business park and a huge retail park all within its confines. This area brings lots of challenges and a large caseload for the existing Councillors and the proposed loss of a Councillor would place an overbearing burden on those Councillors who are currently overworked.

In conclusion, it is sincerely hoped that the Local Government Boundary Commission will recognise our deeply felt concerns and respect the status of our proud town identity and boundaries established by Royal Charter.