

Northumberland County Council

Personal Details:

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Postcode:

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

I love where I live in the semi-rural, coastal fringe of the Alnwick ward but I very much feel a 'citizen of Alnwick'. For elderly residents the many activities in the villages of Alnmouth and Lesbury are widely used. However, most of the residents of Alnmouth and Lesbury (including my wife and I) visit Alnwick several times a week or even more often. We visit Alnwick for some essential purposes such as shopping or access to Health Services but also to make use of the many excellent social, cultural and recreational offerings. We are fortunate also to have several social and cultural activities in the village hall as well as sporting activity for young people and adults such as the highly successful cricket club. The offering of such activities complements those in Alnwick which in many cases surpasses the local offering. However, it is a two-way street. For example, the Alnmouth and Lesbury cricket club attracts players from far and wide. The only adult table tennis club in the Alnwick district is in Lesbury, and it attracts players from the surrounding communities as well as from the centre of Alnwick. Residents of the town of Alnwick also make frequent visits to Alnmouth to enjoy the beach or engage in sports such as fishing or sailing. I would see it as a retrograde step if the boundary was re-drawn as proposed by NCC on an arbitrary basis of uniformity across the county. The dual representation in the Alnwick ward works so well that I wonder if it might not be a very good idea to merge some more urban wards into larger ones with dual representatives (I appreciate that this would not work for some of the large more remote wards). It is bordering on the absurd to split a cohesive community like Alnwick and separate half of the residents from the business centre and social heart of Alnwick. That will be particularly acute for those residents of Alnwick who live close to the proposed boundary that will bisect the town. I'm not sure what falls within the scope of the boundary commission review or what considerations can be taken into account. However, I note that when the commission was last asked (in 2011) to review the ward boundaries in Northumberland, it concluded that the two-councillor representation of Alnwick was the 'best balance between reflecting community identities and interests and providing convenient local government' and it 'avoided the arbitrary split of Alnwick Town'. It was stated that the commission did not wish to divide a seemingly cohesive urban community. I would respectfully submit that nothing has changed. The arrangement has continued to work well for the ward, and nothing should be done to destabilise the cohesion of the constituency. Alnwick should be seen as an exemplar of mature, collaborative representation (devoid of party politics) where two councillors from different parties work constructively for the benefit of the entire community. I cannot see any logical reason to expect that splitting Alnwick into two will have any beneficial impact on the quality of life of the residents or Council decision making. We would all benefit if the current Alnwick model were adopted elsewhere.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded