

North Tyneside

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Comment text:

Related subject: North Tyneside - Longbenton Ward (Westmoor)

I understand and am very much in agreement with changes being made alongside shifting population spread to maintain fair representation. The LGBCE's proposal for changes to Longbenton ward boundaries appear to be minimal, which I'm quite happy with. I'd like to note that on this occasion, I'm not at all in agreement with North Tyneside Council's proposed alternative. Having requested further clarification from NTC regarding reasoning and justification for their proposed changes (as well as detail on the implications of any changes upon councillors and elections), it appears that their focus is 'community ties'. Whilst I agree that this is an important consideration in determining boundaries, I don't agree that NTC's proposed changes accurately reflect the true community ties which exist across my local area.

In the current mapping and in both proposals, Westmoor is divided across boundaries. Although I understand that this is done on the basis of population distribution, I do feel that Westmoor is a fairly close-knit community, largely supported via the Residents' Association - in an ideal scenario, I'd prefer to see Westmoor remain as a whole within one larger borough. If the split is necessary, I find that the existing (and LGBCE-proposed) divide at the railway line does seem more appropriate than the more complex division proposed by NTC.

The majority of Westmoor is currently grouped with Longbenton, and this is not changed in the LGBCE proposal, but NTC propose that Westmoor is grouped with Camperdown, Burradon, and Annitsford. In my opinion, this is not at all a true representation of community ties in the area. I find that the majority of Westmoor residents have vastly more connections with Killingworth, due to location of shops, schools, and other amenities - for example, those who live in Westmoor often shop at Killingworth Morrisons, send their children to Westmoor Primary School (in Killingworth) or George Stephenson High School, are registered with healthcare practices in Killingworth, and spend leisure time at Killingworth lake. I do not

personally feel that there are any significant ties between Westmoor and Camperdown, Burradon, Dudley, or Annitsford. From where I live specifically, there are no footpaths covering the shortest routes to these areas, making even physical access to these areas more difficult. Again in an ideal scenario, I'd prefer that Westmoor was kept as a whole and grouped with Killingworth, where there are many more ties to both community and amenities. If the choice were between only the LGBCE and NTC proposals, and although I do feel less ties to Longbenton than Killingworth, I would much prefer the LGBCE's proposal which retains much of the existing Longbenton ward.

I also feel that another flaw in NTC's proposal appears to be population distribution. In moving the boundary to comprise Annitsford, Burradon, and Westmoor, there are numerous low-population industrial areas (in Westmoor, Killingworth, Camperdown, and Burradon) included. Obviously I'm not personally familiar with specific population statistics for these areas, but it does appear that this proposed borough must contain a population much smaller than more densely residential areas such as Longbenton or Killingworth.

Although more of an administrative issue, I also feel that the LGBCE proposal may be more effective in ensuring representation, as it would have a presumably very limited effect on polling locations and specific residents' council representatives. I have some concerns that the more significant changes proposed by NTC would require more significant changes to polling stations, councillors, etc. Although in theory this could be dealt with smoothly, it seems logical that such disruption would still have potential to affect some people's understanding, ability, or willingness to vote in local elections, which could be minimised or avoided altogether by a less major change to ward boundaries.

Attached Documents:

None attached