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LGBCE,
PO Box 133,
Blyth,
NE24 9FE

Proposed Boundary Review for Consett North

5th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my strong disagreement with the proposed boundary review for Consett North, as outlined by the Boundary Commission. While I understand the need for periodic revisions to electoral divisions, I believe that the proposed changes fail to adequately represent the interests and needs of the local community. I urge you to reconsider the proposed boundaries based on the following factors:

1. The Importance of Consett's Center: The centre of Consett is a vibrant hub that encompasses numerous essential services and facilities, such as main retail and night-life businesses, the theatre, leisure centre, the only bank, bus and taxi services, as well as the secondary school for the area. This central area deserves a representative in its own right to ensure that the unique needs and concerns of this vital community are effectively addressed.
2. Retaining a Cohesive Consett North Division: The existing Consett North Division, even after the removal of Blackhill as proposed, provides a compact and sensible area with a sufficient number of voters to warrant a dedicated representative. This is especially true if the part of Consett on the opposite side of Front Street and Sherburn Terrace is included. By preserving this division, the townspeople can benefit from having a single councillor focused solely on their interests, fostering better representation.

1. The Concept of Consett Central Division: Introducing a new Consett Central Division would resonate more effectively with the voters, particularly if it encompasses the residents of Consett East polling district who live between Sherburn Terrace and Front Street. It has long been a source of confusion and disconnection for these residents to be unable to relate to councillors from the other side of these central roads. By including them in a unified division, their town centre issues, such as parking, late-night drinking, and litter, can be addressed cohesively, as these problems transcend arbitrary boundaries.
2. Maintaining Community Pride and Identity: Residents of Consett and Leadgate possess a strong sense of local pride and community identity. By lumping Leadgate and Medomsley into a new Consett North division, you risk diluting the unique character and individual needs of these separate communities. Leadgate has its own distinct cultural, sporting, and commercial life, exemplified by organisations like Leadgate History Society, Leadgate Cricket Club, Leadgate Salvation Army, and Leadgate Gleemen. It is crucial to respect and preserve the integrity of these communities by ensuring that their representation remains separate.
3. Effective Representation and Specialised Focus: The proposed Consett North division is too diverse for councillors to adequately address the differing needs of the area. A dedicated councillor for Consett North could concentrate on the specific town centre needs in a new Consett Central Division. Simultaneously, another councillor could focus on the issues faced by outlying communities, particularly in terms of transport. This division of responsibilities would facilitate better governance and more focused attention to the unique challenges faced by each area.
4. Unique Town Centre Problems: Town centre problems differ fundamentally from those of the surrounding areas and necessitate a dedicated approach. Issues such as parking, late-night drinking, and litter require specific strategies tailored to the town centre's unique circumstances. By lumping these matters together with the concerns of the surrounding areas, you risk diluting the effectiveness of addressing these problems and compromising the quality of life for those residing in the town centre.

In conclusion, I urge the Boundary Commission to reconsider the proposed boundary review for Consett North. It is essential to ensure that the centre of Consett has its representative, retain a cohesive Consett North division, address the concerns of the residents in Consett East polling district, respect the separate identities of Leadgate and Medomsley, and allow for effective representation and specialised focus. By taking these factors into account, we can uphold the integrity of the local community and enhance the quality of governance for the benefit of all residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to a reconsideration of the proposed boundary changes that reflect the best interests of the Consett community.

Yours sincerely,

