

Gateshead

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Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: Ward Boundary lines to Ryton

I disagree with the proposal to move Barmoor residents from the ward of Ryton to the ward of Crawcrook.

The area has been a strong part of Ryton since 1863 with many key local amenities and community organisations such as Ryton Cricket Club, Ryton Rugby Club and Ryton Scout hut being found within the area. Ryton Infant School, Ryton Junior School and Thorp Academy all fall within the Barmoor area. The residents of Barmoor are members and volunteers of these clubs and identify as residents of Ryton. We do not identify as residents of Crawcrook. The new ward boundary retains all of the amenities mentioned within the Ryton ward but excludes the houses of Barmoor that surround it. We are able to contribute to the community of Ryton but we cannot vote and influence the area.

Part of the need for the increase in size of the ward is due to a large number of new houses. The ward boundary is able to encompass new houses and residents that have yet to contribute to the local community in place of those who have been in Ryton for many years and residents who actively contribute to the local community of Ryton. Within my street we have governors of the local school in Ryton, members of the local community group Brighten Ryton and residents who have put money into saving the local community pub of Ryton. We identify clearly and contribute positively to the community of Ryton and not Crawcrook.

As a community we feel that we have not been sufficiently consulted on the proposals when they were at local council level. I found out about the proposals on Sun 31st March and was shocked to hear that this had been planned since August 2023. Our local councillors admit there has not been adequate communication about the potential changes. If we had known about this as residents we would have suggested alternatives

earlier in the consultation process. The feeling within the local community is so strong that over 40 residents attended a meeting with 24hrs notice. Amendments to the ward structure should be considered due to the lack of communication with local residents.

The application from Gateshead council states that Ryton and Crawcrook are seen as a continuous community. This contradicts planning policy from council itself which states there is a clear buffer of green belt land between Ryton and Crawcrook. If the new ward boundary comes in to place then this buffer is lost. Perhaps that is their intention to be able to build on more green belt? The welcome to Ryton signs are to the west of the entrance to our street. Our street falls within Ryton and we identify as residents of Ryton.

We understand that the ward currently has 287 projected extra residents. We suggest that this is solved in one of three ways:

1. Maintain Barmoor within the current ward. I believe this would put the population at 114%. This could be supported by having an additional councillor for the area.
2. Remove Stella Hall estate to the east of the ward to be part of Blaydon Ward. Geographically this makes more sense as the estate is not attached to Ryton and is closer in distance to Blaydon. This would remove 375 voters.
3. Split the Ryton, Crookhill and Stella Ward in 2 to form a Ryton east and Ryton west ward. I believe this would put the wards at 90% capacity.

Our concerns as a community are that if ward boundary changes go ahead what this means for other future decisions in the council. Currently we are told that ward boundaries do not contribute to planning but as mentioned previously this has been proven to not be the case. Currently ward boundaries are used as the edge of some school catchment areas within the borough. In the case of Ryton then residents could be excluded from attending a school they live within 2 minutes walking distance to have to attend one over 15 minutes walk away. It could also impact pupil allocation and staff redundancy.

In conclusion, I do not support the removal of Barmoor from Ryton Ward.

Attached Documents:

None attached