

Sunderland

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Comment text:

Related subject: Washington

Having had the time to review the most recent February 2024 proposals for Washington I think that there are fundamental flaws that have led to the current proposals.

In the rationale for the proposals The Boundary Commission make several references to residents feedback, however having read the 5 PDFs for Washington residents none of this correlates with the statements The Boundary Commission have stated in their report as coming from residents and perhaps formed their decisions upon.

Namely:

"The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats were generally supportive of our draft recommendations but proposed renaming the wards to include the local villages rather than using compass points ('Washington Central', Washington East', etc.).

This was supported by a number of residents, one of whom remarked that what was currently Washington East would become Washington West, which could cause confusion"

This was not raised by residents but simply a query within the Conservative Party submission, thus I am unable to find any evidence that this was raised by residents directly! The submission for the Conservative Party was composed by their leader who is not a resident of Washington

"Two other residents commented that our proposed Washington South ward included an area not considered to be part of Washington, on the other side of the River Wear, with one agreeing with the Conservatives' proposal to rename it Riverside".

This was stated in the Sunderland Conservative and Wearside Liberal Democrats political submissions but there is no evidence that this came directly from individual residents. Again both responses were composed by their respective leaders who are not residents of Washington.

"Another resident noted that 'Central' is usually taken to refer to the Sunderland Central constituency and should therefore not be used to name a

Washington ward"

This was not from a resident, this was stated in the Conservative Party submission where no reference was made to this coming from a resident. On this basis I think the statements about what residents have said are misleading and should be retracted.

It is also bitterly disappointing that The Boundary Commission favour the proposals of The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Neither have an elected representative or presence within the Washington area which is very evident reading their proposals as a Washington resident. The proposals completely disregard the history and heritage of the local area and is naïve in assumptions about the current neighbourhoods and community.

For the area where I live, currently Washington Central, omitting Columbia and Washington Village from the proposed ward name of "Barmston and Sulgrave" or omitting Glebe or Lambton from the proposed "Biddick and Albany Ward" oversteps the deep-rooted history of the local area. In the same way that the Conservatives highlighted moving compass points to be confusing this new ward name would be completely confusing too, and shows a lack of respect for the unique identities of Columbia, Washington Village, Lambton and Glebe.

From speaking with family, neighbours, friends and work colleagues from the Washington area they all unanimously are in favour of Washington wards retaining compass points. On this basis I would strongly support keeping the compass points. This is the only viable option that I can see to avoid omitting some village names and the history attached to each of these, given The Boundary Commission want to keep ward names short.

I have good faith in the current elected members and am confident in their ability to engage with residents prior to 2026 when the changes come into place to employ a range of ways to communicate new compass point names to residents, rather than spend time trying to explain why The Boundary Commission decided on ward names and their rationale for omitting specific villages from these names, and the apparent prioritising of one village name over another without any seeming logic.

Attached Documents:

None attached