

North Yorkshire

Personal Details:

Name: Martin Pearson

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Dacre Parish Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Hi

Please find attached a letter giving the comments of Dacre Parish Council, particularly in relation to the proposal by North Yorkshire Council.

Please can you acknowledge receipt and confirm that you will include these views within the initial consultation.

If you need anything further please let me know.

Kind regards

Martin

Attached Documents:

- dacre-parish-council---letter-to-lgbce-regarding-the-north-yorkshire-boundary-review-final.pdf

Dacre Parish Council

dacreclerk@gmail.com

2 December 2024

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

Dear Sirs

Dacre Parish Council - Response to consultation on the North Yorkshire boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

I am writing to you on behalf of Dacre Parish Council (the Council) regarding the North Yorkshire boundary review that LGBCE is currently undertaking.

Background

Dacre Parish is one of seven parishes within the North Yorkshire Council division of Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale. Pateley Bridge is regarded as the principal town in Nidderdale and is the centre for many local organisations and service providers. This includes Nidderdale Plus Community Hub (a not-for-profit organisation providing many services to the residents of Nidderdale), Nidderdale Museum and a number of clubs and societies.

The Council recently became aware of a proposal being put forward by North Yorkshire Council (NYC) to LGBCE for a new pattern of divisions for North Yorkshire. This was discussed and agreed at a meeting of the NYC Executive on 19 November 2024.

Concern about the NYC proposal

The Council understands that the proposal being put forward by NYC includes moving a proportion of the parishes currently in the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division into the adjacent Wharfedale division. It is understood that the proposal also includes the splitting of an existing parish (High and Low Bishopside) in order to accommodate its proposed divisions.

It is understood that this option is being considered as solution to a problem outside of the division (in the area formerly covered by Craven District Council).

LGBCE guidance on new proposals

In your published guidance, LGBCE explains that any new proposal should:

- deliver electoral equality: where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the authority;
- as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities; and
- provide for effective and convenient local government.

The Council is concerned that NYC has ignored this guidance and that the proposal it has made fails two of these aims:

Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities

Nidderdale has an identity and community of its own. This is evidenced by the existence of several local organisations and events that focus on the area, including the Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, Nidderdale Arts Partnership, Nidderdale Museum, the Nidd Art Trail, Nidderdale Community Orchestra, Nidderdale Community Choir, Nidderdale Writer's Group and the Nidderdale Society.

The Council believes that the people who live in the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division have very little connection with the adjoining division of Wharfedale, mainly due to the geography of the region (the two divisions are separated by open spaces and hills).

Fundamentally, the Council is of the view that it is wrong to divide a community and that incorporating part of the community (including its principal town) into the Wharfedale division would not reflect the interests and identity of Nidderdale as a community.

Incorporating part of a community into another division for the sole purpose of equalising elector numbers would be contrary to this aim and, based on the briefing hosted by LGBCE on 29 August 2024, is something the Council understands you would actively avoid in formulating your own proposal.

Providing for effective and convenient local government

The NYC Member serving Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale, Andrew Murday, attends almost every meeting of Dacre Parish Council and works hard to help residents of the division. He lives within the division, is part of the community and, as a direct result of this, sees the issues that affect Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale residents first-hand.

The Council finds it difficult to believe that a NYC Member for the Wharfedale division, most likely living in that division, would have knowledge, understanding and experience of Nidderdale parishes sufficient to be able to represent the residents effectively and conveniently.

It is also highly doubtful that members in adjoining divisions would have capacity to represent residents as fully, given the geography of the area. To attend as many meetings and events would be much more difficult logistically if based outside of the area (Wharfedale division would become particularly massive in comparison to most divisions and is connected to Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale by only a handful of rural roads).

Such a proposal would therefore clearly reduce the effectiveness and convenience of local government significantly.

Conclusion

The Council believes that the proposal being put forward by NYC (which includes moving parishes which are currently within the Pateley Bridge & Nidderdale division into another division and splitting a parish) fails to meet two of the three key aims of the review and would be fundamentally flawed. Dividing a community in this way would also be contrary to the approach that LGBCE explained that it takes at the recent online meeting.

For this reason, the Council asks that any proposal by LGBCE retains the existing community of Nidderdale (including its principal town, Pateley Bridge) and avoids a degradation in local representation that would certainly follow if part of the community were to be represented by a member serving the current Wharfedale division.

Next steps

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter.

If you require further information in relation to this matter please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Martin Pearson
Clerk to Dacre Parish Council