

Submission to the Boundary Commission for England third period of consultation: **North East**

In general the revised proposals published in October are to be welcomed. They are a significant improvement on the commission's initial proposals published in 2011.

In the rural areas of Northumberland and Durham the revised proposals much better reflect local geography and community ties. The retention of the wards of Rothbury, Ponteland East, Haltwhistle, South Tynedale and Deerness in their existing constituencies better meets the statutory criteria and significantly reduces disruption. The recommendation to not create a Consett & Barnard Castle constituency stretching as far as Haltwhistle will be welcomed by all three major parliamentary parties as well as people in the local communities.

Retaining (with the assistant commissioners' recommended changes) the constituencies of Hexham, North West Durham, North Durham and Bishop Auckland, as well as City of Durham and Easington constituencies is welcomed and supported. Including Trimdon in Easington and Blackhalls in Hartlepool enables the revised proposals to better reflect local links in these constituencies than the initial proposals did.

The use of the name "Berwick, Alnwick and Morpeth" for the proposed enlarged Berwick constituency is supported for the reasons given by the assistant commissioners. As mentioned above, the revised proposals for the Western boundary of the constituency are welcomed and supported (and are consistent with the party's submission last year).

In the south of the region, we welcome the revised proposals placing all of Billingham in the same constituency, and similarly for Marske. It is welcome that the revised proposals include the whole of Darlington Unitary Authority in a constituency coterminous with the local authority. The inclusion of Yarm in a Stockton South constituency reflects local ties better than the initial proposals, and the revised proposals for the Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland areas maintain local ties, meet statutory criteria and minimise disruption much better than the initial proposals.

In the urban area of Tyne and Wear we recognize that there are a wide variety of possible configurations of constituencies, and that the commission has a difficult task in weighing the competing factors. We support the assistant commissioners' decision to uphold the principle of not having a cross-Tyne constituency linking metropolitan wards from both sides of the river. In other respects we consider the revised proposals arrangements within Tyne and Wear to be sub-optimal, and stand by our views expressed in our submission last year.

We also have reservations over the revised proposals for the boundary of the Berwick, Alnwick and Morpeth constituency with the Blyth & Ashington constituency, but again recognise that the commission has to balance a range of factors. We do however positively welcome the assistant commissioners' support for the retention of Lynemouth within the Berwick, Alnwick & Morpeth

constituency - it would be perverse, needlessly disruptive and contrary to the arguments in the rest of the revised proposals for the enlarged constituency to lose this part of the current Berwick constituency.

*North East of England Liberal Democrats
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