

North Yorkshire

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Related subject: Sherburn in Elmet and the former District of Selby

Please see my uploaded response to the proposals

Attached Documents:

- north-yorkshire-boundary-review-final-submission.docx

NORTH YORKSHIRE BOUNDARY REVIEW 2024

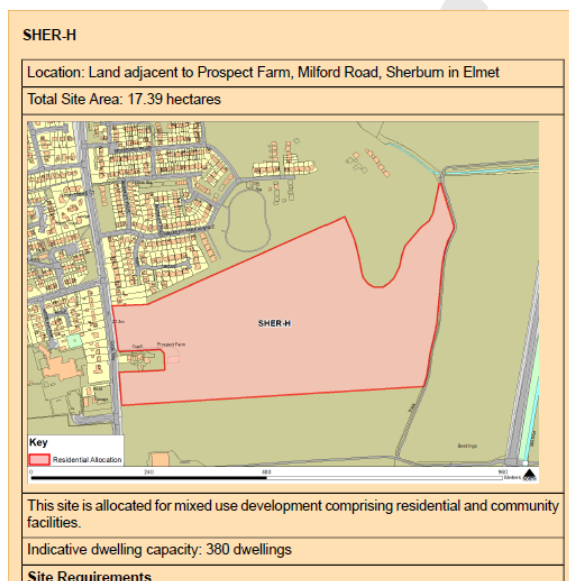
Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) by
Councillor Bob Packham

Introduction

1. I am the North Yorkshire Councillor for the Sherburn in Elmet Division of North Yorkshire Council, a division which includes the whole of the parish of Sherburn in Elmet, the Parish of Huddleston with Newthorpe, and a small part of the village of South Milford (the polling District of South Milford North).
2. The current division is the second largest in North Yorkshire with an electorate in 2023 of 6802, a variance of 26.81% in relation to the average for North Yorkshire divisions of 5364. This is largely the result of considerable housing development over the last 13 years. A recent officer report stated that:

Sherburn in Elmet has seen 1,121 dwellings built in the settlement since the start of the plan period in April 2011 and has a remaining 190 dwellings with approval, giving a total of 1,311 dwellings. This significantly exceeds the minimum target of 790 dwellings between 2011-2027 which is set out for Sherburn in Elmet by Policy SP5 (of the Selby Core Strategy Local Plan)

3. In addition, included within the Division are a large industrial estate, providing in the region of 10000 jobs, two railway stations, an airfield, and three schools. Planning permission for an additional 2.75 million square feet additional employment floorspace has been granted in the last few years, some of which has been completed but is not yet occupied, and a more recent consent will generate between 1468 and 3790 additional jobs. The submission draft of the Selby District Local Plan allocates a further site for about 380 dwellings south of the town, as shown on the extract below:



4. Excluding the potential development of the allocated site referred to above, projections suggest that the population of the division will, by 2030, include 7267 electors, considerably in excess of the 5813 average for North York divisions based on the Council's submission for 89 councillors from 2027.
5. The Parish of Sherburn in Elmet has historically remained in a single county division since 1974, albeit that division included, until recently, the village of South Milford, and prior to that, Monk Fryston. The proposal to redraw the boundaries of the divisions to include 89 single councillor divisions would make the continuation of Sherburn as a single councillor division as an exception in terms of the number of electors given the first legal requirement of the review which is:

to deliver electoral equality: where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the authority.

6. However, if the Commission maintains its position on councillor numbers and single member divisions it will fail the residents of Sherburn in Elmet in the other requirements to:

reflect the interests and identities of local communities and to provide for effective and convenient local government.

North Yorkshire Council's proposals for Sherburn in Elmet

7. As stated above, currently the division of Sherburn includes the whole of Sherburn parish, divided into two polling districts (Sherburn North and South), the parish of Huddleston and Newthorpe and the South Milford North polling district.
8. In order to ensure that Sherburn Division is closer to the 5813 average and adhering to the single member requirement, the Council propose that South Milford North is included in Monk Fryston and South Milford Division. However, that on its own will not reduce the electorate of the Sherburn Division adequately, since the combined electorate of Sherburn North and South Polling districts is already in well in excess of 6600 electors and is estimated at 7144 by 2030. The suggested solution from North Yorkshire's Executive is that 924 electors in Sherburn North division are placed in the Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton Division, with the outcome that Sherburn will still have an electorate of 6284 by 2030, made up as follows:

SEJB - Sherburn - North 3033
SEJC - Sherburn - South 3187
SEJA - Huddleston with Newthorpe 63

9. This figure fails to take account of the 380-house allocation in the Emerging Local Plan, which is likely to be adopted in 2026. It is possible, however, that a planning permission for all or part of this allocation will be granted in advance of adoption which would significantly increase the electorate even in the reduced division proposed by North Yorkshire Council before 2030.

Implications of the proposals for residents of Sherburn in Elmet Parish

10. It is my view that to split the current division and Parish of Sherburn in Elmet as proposed by North Yorkshire Council is wholly at odds with two of the stated criteria set down in the statements of the Boundary Commission, specifically to:
- Create boundaries that are appropriate and reflect community ties and identities.
 - Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances.
11. It is accepted that a requirement of such reviews is to ensure that each councillor represents a similar number of electors. In this case however, the division of the strong community of Sherburn in Elmet is purely because the Commission appears to have accepted the Council's representation for 89 councillors in single councillor divisions. There is no logical justification for either, particularly the insistence on single councillor wards which is an ideological view of the Council's majority Group and is not reflected across many local authorities in England, including those classed as mainly rural unitary councils.
12. In order to meet these criteria part of the current Town Council area will be placed in another, potentially mainly rural division and have a different North Yorkshire Councillor from the rest of Sherburn.
13. I have sought clarification of the area affected by this proposal. The Council has provided a map (See Appendix A) which identifies those area which will be excluded from the new Sherburn in Elmet division proposed by NYC. Those areas to be included in the Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton Division are above the blue line on the plan. These include:
- A Bishop's Quarter: A development of 150 dwellings (potentially increasing to 187 as a result of an undetermined application) currently under construction.

- B Hodgson's Gate: A recent development of 279 dwellings.
- C Sherburn in Elmet Railway Station and the houses in that area and on Bishopdyke Road.
- D Moor Lane: Approximately 30 detached and semi-detached houses extending to the east along the north side of Moor Lane.

14. I am opposed to this for the following reasons.

15. As indicated, residents of part of the town would have a different North Yorkshire Councillor from the remainder of the town and would be in a large rural division that would also run across parliamentary constituency boundaries. The area would remain in Sherburn Parish, the area covered by Sherburn in Elmet Town Council and in the parliamentary constituency of Selby. That is a recipe for confusion.
16. Convention would dictate that the councillor for the new Sherburn division would be unable to act for those in the part of the town excluded from the Sherburn division and included in Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton, even on issues that relate to Sherburn. Many issues that the divisional councillor deals with relate to impacts on the settlement as a whole and its electorate.
17. Some local facilities on which residents of Sherburn rely will be in the new rural division, for example, Sherburn in Elmet railway station. The importance of such facilities cannot be over emphasised. Sherburn is essentially a commuter settlement. Many residents commute to York from this station and the station also provides an important transport link for workers at the industrial estate. The station has been the subject of extensive lobbying for improvements involving a wide group of local bodies including the Town Council, M.P., residents and employers on the industrial estate, which I have as the current North Yorkshire Councillor helped to co-ordinate. This is a Sherburn issue, of considerable importance in the ambition to greatly improve the public transport for the Town but would be of little interest to the majority of the electorate of Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton, and hence their councillor.
18. Planning applications on the edge of the town may also not be in Sherburn division. The interests of a councillor primarily representing a large rural area may not coincide with those of residents of Sherburn in relation to such applications.
19. Sherburn is a strong community, led by the Town Council and the Sherburn and Villages Community Trust. The Trust is the Community Anchor

Organisation for the area stretching from Sherburn south to include South Milford, Monk Fryston, Hillam and Fairburn. It supports organisations such as Sherburn Visiting Scheme, providing services for the older members of the community; Peter Pan, a nursery for special needs children; and other local voluntary organisations. Those living in the Town strongly identify as Sherburn residents, and the growth of the town has, if anything, strengthened that identity.

20. I do not want to see over 800 of our residents living outside Sherburn division, without representation by a Sherburn in Elmet councillor at North Yorkshire, which I believe will harm community ties and interests. Many of these residents have moved into Sherburn recently (or will do so in the Bishop's Quarter) specifically to become part of the local community and will find themselves excluded from full participation in the democratic process locally, being unable to elect the North Yorkshire Councillor who will specifically represent Sherburn in Elmet.

How can the Boundary Commission address the issue?

21. In my view it is imperative that the Town of Sherburn in Elmet is not arbitrarily divided, with part of the Town being placed into an unrelated rural division.
22. The problem is the result of the straight jacket that North Yorkshire has applied to this review, apparently accepted by the Commission, seeking 89 single councillor divisions, an arrangement devised to address the interests of the rural areas of the county at the expense of the urban areas, where multiple councillor wards provide a better solution for the considerable workload in these areas compared to remote rural villages.
23. The solution proposed by North Yorkshire is the worst of all options. Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton Division is within a different Parliamentary constituency (Wetherby and Easingwold) and the villages in that area have traditionally looked towards Tadcaster as their service centre. Whilst the settlements of Saxton, Barkston Ash, and Church Fenton in the division have some affinity with Sherburn, others, such as Appleton Roebuck, have none and are north of the river Wharfe. By contrast, the villages to the south, particularly South Milford, Monk Fryston and Hillam have looked towards Sherburn as their service centre. This relationship is well illustrated by the membership of such groups as Sherburn and Villages Community Trust (including the volunteer-run library) Sherburn Visiting Scheme (SVS), and the community partnership group, We Are Sherburn (WAS).
24. Whilst the submissions of the Council imply that 89 councillors are adequate for the largest rural unitary in England, councillors in the urban areas of North

Yorkshire, with their workload and committee responsibilities, are reporting that the role represents more than a full-time job in terms of time commitments.

25. Given this, to make Sherburn a single division, and to calculate the number of councillors based on that electorate across the authority would reduce the number of councillors to a level that would further impair the efficient and effective operation of the council, reducing the total number of councillors to around 72.
26. There are, however, options to retain Sherburn in Elmet Parish within a single division, for example:
 - 1) To allow the division to be significantly oversized until the next electoral review.
 - 2) To combine the Parish area with the parishes to the south within the traditional catchment area of the town and create a two-member division.
 - 3) To increase the number of councillors on North Yorkshire Council and deliver Sherburn in Elmet as a two-councillor ward.
27. Clearly these options would have a knock-on effect on the structure of other divisions in the former Selby District, but in my view, this is achievable and would avoid the serious impact on community cohesion of dividing the Town. As already explained, residents of the villages to the south are already heavily involved in the wider Sherburn community. The spreadsheet, accessible via the link at paragraph 36, below, illustrates how my options 1 and 2, above, can achieve both the required number of councillors proposed by NYC and still ensure the whole of the Sherburn in Elmet Town Council area is retained in a single division.
28. Geographical logic and community cohesion is best achieved by Option B on the spreadsheet, for a two-member division combining the parishes of Sherburn in Elmet, Huddleston with Newthorpe, South Milford. Monk Fryston, Hillam, and Fairburn, providing a geographically compact division with a clear service centre and community identity.
29. The relevant figure for each constituent part of the division would be:

Parish/Part Parish	2024 Electorate	Estimated 2030 electorate (incl. housing growth)
Sherburn in Elmet North	3709	3957
Sherburn in Elmet South	2986	3187
Huddleston and Newthorpe	59	63
South Milford North	57	60
South Milford South	2037	2093
Monk Fryston	810	824
Hillam	552	622
Fairburn	678	698
Burton Salmon Main	343	356
Totals	11231	11860

30. Based on the average for North Yorkshire councillors of 5813 electors by 2030, this delivers an electorate of 5930 per councillor for a two-member division

31. Option C of the spreadsheet provides an alternative to Option B by proposing single-member divisions in the former Selby District as far as possible.

The benefits of this proposal

32. The proposal for single-member divisions is not based on any relevant evidence. Many councils have divisions and wards with more than one councillor. For example, Leeds City Council has 99 councillors and thirty-three divisions. Prior to reorganisation in 2023 Selby District Council had several divisions with more than a single councillor, including Sherburn in Elmet, where there were three District councillors elected to a single division, including the whole of the parish.

33. There was no confusion, but many benefits. During the final term of the Council the three district councillors were from different political parties but worked together to achieve considerable investment and benefits to the Town. Despite the high level of casework, residents benefited from the fact that there

was continuous cover over holiday periods and the elected councillors could offer a range of expertise to deal with issues arising.

34. Sherburn is a demanding town for a councillor, unique in North Yorkshire. The reasons for this are:

- A rapidly growing population between 2010 and 2024 of 40%, with continuing population growth as a result of additional housing development currently under construction.
- The largest industrial area in North Yorkshire, currently employing 10000 people, many from outside the Town and likely to grow by several thousand by 2030.
- A need to consider the planning, service and infrastructure provision associated with applications for planning permission for large-scale development.
- Extensive commuting both in and out of the town.
- Two railway stations. (In addition to Sherburn in Elmet, South Milford station (on the Leeds to Selby line) is also within the parish.
- A large number of houses that are still in the ownership of North Yorkshire Council and hence generating a workload for councillors.

35. Despite the considerable issues associated with that growth, the community has been strengthened with the integration of the new residents, and positive community action and cohesion led by individual councillors, the Town Council, and the numerous voluntary groups and trusts working together.

36. Any proposal that divides the Parish between separate council divisions would inevitably impact on strong community ties and identities and be at odds with local needs and circumstances.

37. The spreadsheet link below, which I reproduce with the permission of the Vice-Chair of Sherburn in Elmet Town Council, Councillor Alex Tant-Brown, sets out in detail three options to avoid the division of our community. Option A of the spreadsheet corresponds to my option 1 set out above at paragraph 26, whilst two suggested options address my option 2 (Options B and C on the spreadsheet). I have included this to illustrate that other options are feasible without the need to divide Sherburn in Elmet Parish between the new divisions. I appreciate that there are other options in addition to these.



3 options for Selby
divisions NYC.xlsx

38. I ask the Commission to reject the proposals of North Yorkshire Council to divide our community and to propose instead an outcome which will retain our community unity and cohesion.

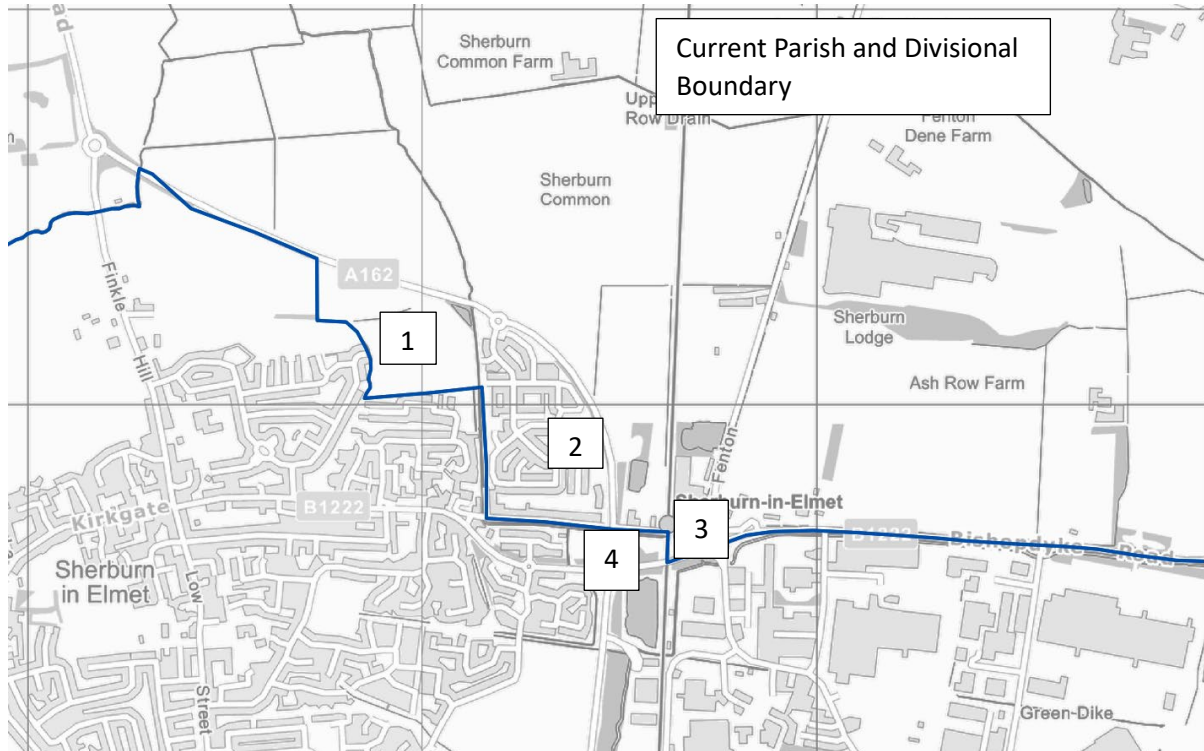
39. If the number of councillors is to be reduced to 89, the solutions set out above will achieve these aims as far as possible given that constraint. Alternatively, increasing the number of proposed councillors and generally accepting multi-councillor divisions would enable greater flexibility in the drawing of divisional boundaries, reflecting community identity and providing an opportunity to develop a more effective and efficient council.

North Yorkshire Councillor Bob Packham – Sherburn in Elmet Division

5/12/2024

APPENDIX A

North Yorkshire proposals (blue line) for the boundary between Sherburn in Elmet and Appleton Roebuck and Church Fenton Division



- 1 Bishop's Quarter: A development of 150 dwellings (potentially increasing to 187 as a result of an undetermined application) currently under construction.
- 2 Hodgson's Gate: A recent development of 279 dwellings.
- 3 Sherburn in Elmet Railway Station.
- 4 Moor Lane Approximately 30 detached and semi-detached houses extending to the east along the north side of Moor Lane.