



**Boundary Commission for England,
35 Great Smith Street,
London,
SW1P 3BQ**
reviews@bcommengland.x.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Proposed Boundary Changes

I write on behalf of The Ponteland Civic Society in relation to the above proposals. We are an active local Amenity Society with some 80 Members; in brief, we are concerned with the history, landscape and architecture of our area, and we seek to secure, as best we can, the preservation, protection, improvement and sustainable development of all the features of historic or public interest, including open spaces.

We consult with the Town and County Councils on matters of mutual concern, particularly with regard to our Conservation Areas, and have carried out studies of, for example Road Clutter, in co-operation with our Town Council. We are in regular two-way contact with our local MP Guy Opperman relating to the Draft NPPF and other matters of local and national importance.

Under present arrangements Mr. Opperman represents a single line of communication for all matters within the Parish of Ponteland. Under the proposed arrangements, however, only part of the Town and Parish would be represented by Mr. Opperman, MP for Hexham, whilst the remainder would be represented by Mr. Alan Beith, MP for Berwick upon Tweed.

From the point of view of both conserving and developing Ponteland way into the future, it is difficult to conceive of a more unsatisfactory arrangement than this one now proposed. We note that it is also proposed that Rothbury should be part of the new Hexham Constituency. Rothbury, however, has a much closer historical affinity to Alnwick and Berwick than it does to Hexham. It would make much more sense to couple Rothbury with Berwick and keep Ponteland in the Hexham Constituency. In terms of the numbers of Constituents in each area, we understand that this would make very little difference to the overall result. This argument carries particular weight when considering the guidelines to the Commission, which have stated that *existing constituencies should be retained wherever possible*.

It is important also to take note of the transport links which exist between the various parts of existing constituencies and which run largely east-west. The portion of Ponteland moved to Berwick under the proposed changes would find itself relatively isolated.

We would further emphasise that certain important local issues could not be effectively handled with divided representation; for example, consultation for the proposed Ponteland Northern Bypass would be self-evidently more satisfactory if the views of the whole Town were channelled through one MP rather than two.

Yours truly,

Philip Ham
Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society.