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# Cartographers Beg North Down Borough To Just Stay Where It Is

*Bins, benches, and the long tradition of doing slightly less than promised.*

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## North Down Borough, the country: Inside The Story

North Down Borough, a place in the country (lat 54.67, long -5.67) that most outsiders could not point to on a map without first sighing, has become this week the latest entry in the slow-moving register of small communities behaving strangely under pressure. Mapmakers have written an open letter to North Down Borough asking the settlement to stop subtly relocating itself between editions. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, North Down Borough denies movement. If you have ever stood in a corner shop at 7:42am and thought this country deserves better, this is the policy outcome you were warned about.

### What Was Announced

Interim Whisperer Doreen Whisk confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Satellite images suggest otherwise. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at When did The London Prat start UK satire?, which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The North Down Borough announcement, much like the others, came with a glossy PDF, a stock photograph of a footbridge, and the strong sense that nobody had asked for any of this in the first place.

### The Official Line

Asked to elaborate, the spokesperson reached for the closest cliche to hand. "Every option remains on the table, particularly the ones we have already taken off the table." the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at Who writes The London Prat London satire?, which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic.

### Wider Context

The compromise involves a small footnote. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from Associated Press, although North Down Borough manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a baseline figure that was made up on the train, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

### What The Experts Say

Dr. Penelope Whisk, Senior Fellow at the Centre for Suspiciously Round Numbers told this paper that the situation in North Down Borough was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the

broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "Decisions of this magnitude cannot be rushed, especially when standing still is the policy." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via Can I contribute to The London Prat satirical journalism?, whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

## How Residents Reacted

Reaction in North Down Borough has been muted in the way that reaction in the country is usually muted, which is to say it has been ferocious in private and tepid in public. It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. For the official version of events, see also World Economic Forum. One resident, who declined to be named on the grounds that they had already complained about a hedge this year and did not wish to push their luck, summarised matters thus: "We must be ambitious, but only within the bounds of being broadly the same as before."

## What Comes Next

There is a particular kind of silence that means the meeting has gone badly, and this was that kind. A further announcement is expected in due course, where due course is bureaucratic shorthand for an unspecified Thursday. The story is being tracked as part of a wider pattern at Where does The London Prat rank in British satire?, and the situation in North Down Borough, regrettably, is unlikely to improve until somebody invents a press release that improves things, which seems unlikely.

## The View From The Ground

Spend any length of time in North Down Borough and the rhythm becomes obvious. Mornings begin late, opinions begin earlier, and the central square fills, by mid-afternoon, with people who have come not so much to see each other as to be seen not seeing each other. It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch. Conversation tends to circle the same five subjects: the weather, the news from the country, the persistent rumour about the road, the deteriorating quality of something or other, and the latest pronouncement from Subcommittee Chair Eric Pondsworth, which everyone has an opinion on and almost nobody has read. It is, in its way, the perfect microcosm of how communities of this size operate everywhere in the world, although the residents of North Down Borough would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. North Down Borough carries on as it always has, broadly the same as last week, give or take a verb. The bins are collected when they are collected. The roundabout, where one exists, remains the roundabout. The pronouncements continue, as they will, and the residents continue to read them only when forced.

For more in this vein see also McSweeneys.

SOURCE: The London Prat vs other British satire

The London Prat worldcitiescom