

Dear Sir/ Madam,

As Leader of South Gloucestershire Council I am writing to express my support for the majority of the Local Government Boundary Commission's proposals in South Gloucestershire. There are four peculiarities however, those being a proposed 3-Member Staple Hill and Mangotsfield ward; the breaking up of Stoke Gifford into a single member Little Stoke ward and 2-member Stoke Gifford ward; the three member Yate North and the issue of Chipping Sodbury and Sodbury Vale Wards. I believe there needs to a rethink in the make-up of these four wards.

Proposed Little Stoke and Stoke Gifford Wards

It seems most sensible to keep the Stoke Gifford ward you propose but reattach it with Little Stoke.

- Little Stoke is part of Stoke Gifford Parish Council and in other areas such as Emersons Green, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England has agreed that, where possible, Parish Councils should be kept complete. Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke in my opinion should therefore be re-joined as it has no impact on electoral quality as a 2-member Stoke Gifford and 1-member Little Stoke would simply become a 3-member Stoke Gifford ward.
- It should be noted that Stoke Gifford Parish Council is based in Little Stoke – this exemplifies Little Stoke to Stoke Gifford Parish and in turn the ward, which the Parish Council is named after.
- Two Primary Schools are within Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke, with their catchment areas being intertwined. St. Michael's Primary School in Ratcliffe Drive and Little Stoke Primary School in Little Stoke Lane. Little Stoke and Stoke Gifford are one community where parents and children meet each other regularly.
- Stoke Gifford Army Cadets meet at Ratcliffe Drive, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8UE with its catchment area covering all of Stoke Gifford, including Little Stoke. This is a further place where people from Stoke Gifford, including Little Stoke, will meet. Additionally, there is only one group of Girl Guides in Stoke Gifford at The Green, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD serving children in Stoke Gifford and the proposed Little Stoke ward.
- There is only one branch of the British Legion - Stoke Gifford Branch. This covers Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke, yet another strong community unifier. There is also only one Remembrance Day service within the Little Stoke/Stoke Gifford area, held at the Cenotaph on North Road, Stoke Gifford.
- The Stoke Gifford Medical Centre is also the only GP surgery within the proposed Stoke Gifford Ward. Many residents from both Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke use this for medical care, demonstrating the very strong connection between Little Stoke and Stoke Gifford.
- The main local supermarket for both Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke residents is the Sainsbury's at Fox Den Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SS. This is a large supermarket and forms part of the Fox Den Road retail centre, featuring stores such as The Range and Argos. As with the other examples above this is an area where Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke residents meet regularly and would do most of their shopping.

- There is also a local newspaper produced called the Stoke Gifford Journal. This delivers news across the current Stoke Gifford ward and would continue to be delivered in a Little Stoke Ward if it were to be separated from Stoke Gifford. So, Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke residents would be receiving the same local news as they do now, being informed of the same local issues and talking to each other about the same local stories. This is because the same local issues affect residents of Stoke Gifford and Little Stoke.

In summary it doesn't seem to make sense to split up an area that has joint identity. Residents go to the same doctors, the same schools, receive the same local news, shop at the same stores, their children attend the same local groups, there is only one local Remembrance service and one British Legion. Little Stoke and Stoke Gifford are one community. Splitting them up would require the Councillor for Little Stoke to work exceptionally closely to the Councillors in Stoke Gifford, because of how similar their issues and concerns are. They might well be fellow Members of Stoke Gifford Parish Council! I would respectfully suggest that the most logical thing to do is to have a 3-member Stoke Gifford ward, particularly as it has no impact on electoral quality, it unifies the Parish and would ensure that residents get the best representation possible. Three member wards are being proposed for Thornbury and Emersons Green.

Proposed Staple Hill and Mangotsfield Ward

Your proposal expands Staple Hill across constituency borders into Mangotsfield Village an area I don't believe has much of a connection to Staple Hill. Staple Hill has strong connections to Downend and looks west rather than East.

I have listed some examples of why I think Staple Hill should remain a 2-member ward separate from Mangotsfield Village.

- Children attend different schools to those in Mangotsfield Village, with children in Staple Hill attending the Staple Hill Primary School and the Tynings Primary School followed by Downend Secondary School. Residents in Mangotsfield Village have their own Primary Schools such as Barley Close Primary School and then go on to Mangotsfield Secondary School. The children of these two distinct areas don't mix. Similarly there are also two different Scout groups – Staple Hill has its own Scout group, just like Mangotsfield has its own too.
- Staple Hill has its own high street which is closely intertwined with Downend high street. For example, there are no duplication of shops. Staple Hill has a Tesco, Downend a Co-Op, banks set-up different branches in the different wards with Downend having banks like Natwest and HSBC. These two communities are closely tied together. They're not linked in the same way to Mangotsfield Village which indeed even has its own Tesco supermarket.
- As a member of the British Legion I am also aware that Mangotsfield Village has its own war memorial at Mangotsfield Green. Staple Hill's can be found in Page Park. Further, Staple Hill

and Mangotsfield have two different Remembrance Day services. This demonstrates how the two communities found in Staple Hill and Mangotsfield Village don't come together.

- I'm aware also that Staple Hill runs lots of community events in Page Park, which are run by the excellent Friends of Page Park - www.friendsofpagepark.co.uk. Whereas residents in Mangotsfield look towards Cleve Rugby Football Club for its community events, primarily in the form of the Mangotsfield Village Festival - www.mangotsfieldfestival.co.uk – but it also hosts other Mangotsfield community events like firework displays. Both areas have their own community focuses where parents and children of Staple Hill mix separately to those in Mangotsfield.
- Perhaps pressingly is that your proposed ward of Staple Hill and Mangotsfield would be served by two Members of Parliament, which can only cause confusion when what residents really need is clarity on who is responsible for what and how do they get issues resolved.

In summary there is no overwhelming argument as to why these two distinct communities should be thrust together. Children go to different schools, residents use different high streets, there are different youth groups such as Scouts to go to, they have different community event focuses and important national days of remembrance are held independently of one another at different war memorials.

It strikes me that residents of Staple Hill would be best served by two Councillors and Mangotsfield Village by one Councillor. They are two separate areas and by doing this, it would mean both have good electoral quality and both get the representation these two distinct areas deserve.

Sodbury Vale and Chipping Sodbury Ward

I feel that an improvement can be made to the Chipping Sodbury and Sodbury Vale wards in combing both wards to create a two member Chipping Sodbury and Vale Ward.

- The joining of the two proposed wards provide good acceptable electoral equality, 5% instead of a variance of 1% for Chipping Sodbury and 8% for Sodbury Vale.
- The surrounding hamlets and villages of Chipping Sodbury town have historical connections with each other as Chipping Sodbury has traditionally served as the local market town to the surrounding area. The historic links and relationship between the town and its rural neighbours is neatly described on the Sodbury Town Council's history pages;

"The town is frequently described as being part of the Cotswolds, although really only the east side of the parish, including Old Sodbury, is strictly in the hills. The Cotswolds escarpment, which runs through Old Sodbury, is here quite low at 300 feet above the Vale of Sodbury whilst it reaches as high as 750 feet at points elsewhere."

- I would ask the Commission to look at the relevant material on the area's history and relationship with each other at <https://www.sodburytowncouncil.gov.uk/history> which provides a comprehensive background to the eastern areas shared history and community.

- Chipping Sodbury Town, Wickwar and the surrounding Costwold Edge villages within both proposed wards have strong links in both physical roads, lanes and public transport.
- Chipping Sodbury Town and Wickwar village are demonstrably linked directly by the aptly named Wickwar and Sodbury road, providing a short journey between the two. Whilst I accept that the Yate Town Council Boundaries marginally intercept the route, we feel this does not detract from the physical connection that both communities undoubtedly share via this historic link road.
- Chipping Sodbury Town is bound with the rural villages via vast network of lanes and roads such as the Horton lane, which then goes into a further network to the north east which runs intertwined to the spinal A46 which centres on the eastern villages.
- Connections from Chipping Sodbury to the east, such as Acton Turville, Badminton, and Old Sodbury are very strong in both the A4040 and the Badminton Road (A432) which runs through Chipping Sodbury town, to the A46 with a linear road link to Acton Turville.
- Wickwar, Chipping Sodbury and Hawkesbury Upton are joined in public transport in the form of the clockwise and counter clockwise 84/85 Buses which serve a route from the villages into the town, and onwards to Yate centre. The route can be found here <https://bustimes.org.uk/services/84-yate-wotton-under-edge-yate> demonstrating Chipping Sodbury as the main centre for the surrounding rural areas.
- As explained in previous submissions I believe Chipping Sodbury High Street to be a central focus to the surrounding villages in terms of grocery shopping at Waitrose located within the town on the Wickwar Road. The unique grade listed high street shares common architecture, particularly in the case of Wickwar village but it is the only high street in the area that offers a range of shops, cafes, restaurants, locksmiths, letting agents, a pharmacy, Police station, and nightlife for the surrounding area and where many residents from the eastern villages seek a shopping experience.
- The main amenities such as Health Care, GP services, Cinema and leisure are provided by Yate Town and as such the dependence of Chipping Sodbury, Wickwar and the Cotswold villages is shared by all communities, whilst it is recognized that Yate Town and the group of towns of villages are distinctly different in their community bond. We feel as such as the commission should recognise the bond in shared in joining the two proposed wards to reflect the pattern which is shown in everyday life.
- Chipping Sodbury Secondary School is the main secondary education available to students in the joined proposed area which, if the commission agreed with our suggestion of joining the proposed ward, would mean that the area of prime responsibility would be co-terminus to the ward boundaries for a new Chipping Sodbury and Vale ward.

- The area of prime responsibility document from the local authority which demonstrated this here;

<http://edocs.southglos.gov.uk/secondaryadmission/pages/secondary-schools-academies-foundation-trust-schools-university-technical-colleges-and-studio-schools-in-south-gloucestershire-and-maps-2/yate-and-chipping-sodbury-consortium-area-of-prime-responsibility/>

“b. Chipping Sodbury School has a First Area of Responsibility for the parishes of Wickwar, Hawkesbury, Horton, Little Sodbury, Acton Turville, Tormarton, part of Dodington parish and Old Sodbury area.”

- The communities of Wickwar, Hakwesbury Upton, Chipping Sodbury and the hamlets share similar concerns and interests in protecting the AONB across the vale area, and retaining the town’s semi-rural identity.
- In the draft proposals the ward patterns would see the green space such as Sodbury common, which is a focus across these communities, split between the wards which we believe is arbitrary.
- Development concerns shared by Chipping Sodbury Residents to the north east, and east off of St Johns Way, Colts Green and to the south are shared by the hamlets residents in Old Sodbury, Little Sodbury and Horton, and with recent speculative developments proposed in Wickwar and Hawkesbury Upton prompting similar concerns.
- I agree that the exterior boundaries of both wards provide strong identifiable boundaries between Chipping Sodbury town to the west separating it from yate town, but feel that as evidenced the current boundaries between the draft Chipping Sodbury ward and Sodbury vale ward are arbitrary and do not reflect Sodbury town as a focus for the villages.
- We feel that the joining of the two proposed wards would improve effective governance for local councillors and the council.
- At present the two single wards proposals separate the town council boundaries for Sodbury Town Council, and we believe from the draft proposals that it is the only town or parish council in which this will take place. We make representation that a continued splitting of the town council would be unjustified in light of the strong bond between Old Sodbury and Chipping Sodbury, and the surround villages.
- I note the concern of the commission in its Boyd Valley proposals in regards to the physical geography and size of the two member ward. The draft proposals for a single member Sodbury Vale ward would be echoed in this concern, as the size would effectively be similar to that of Boyd valley yet it would rely on a single member to represent the area rather than the two in the Boyd Valley ward.

- I feel that the balance in councillor workload would be more effective if the wards were joined.
- At present the single member in Chipping Sodbury would only be responsible for engaging with Sodbury Town Council.
- The Sodbury Vale member however would be responsible for engaging with 7 parish councils including Sodbury Town Council.
- I feel that a two member ward would be able to engage more effectively on a Parish level, and represent a more manageable and fair workload for elected members. This has worked well over many years in the Boyd Valley ward.
- Summary I feel that a two member Chipping Sodbury and Sodbury Vale Ward has good electoral equality and against all of the criteria and guidance that we have provided strong evidence of the community's commonality, strong physical links and an improvement in effective governance.

Yate North and Yate Central

- I acknowledge the commission acceptance of Yate Council's Yate area proposals however we are disappointed with and make representations that we feel the commission has overlooked the unique identities of each area exhibit within the town in following the broad perception of a North/South distinction. We feel this view is a simplistic approach which has led the town centres and Badminton Roads' role and focus within the town diminished, where it is an arterial road for the surrounding neighbourhoods. We feel the draft proposals unnecessarily dismisses identities within the town that residents feel and we are aware of. We feel that our original proposals for Yate Central and Yate North provide good electoral equality, better identifiable boundaries, whilst improving on the draft proposals in its sense of community.
- I do however make an amendment to our proposal in conceding and agreeing with the commission that Rodford Way is a strong boundary to the south of a Yate Central and Dodington Ward and this should be retained as the draft proposals.
- The proposals would retain good electoral equality.
- I believe that the draft proposals have not to take into account the shared identity clearly felt and acknowledged by residents on both sides of Station Road, which unites residents of Station Road itself with those of Cranleigh Court Road, Moorland Road, Longs Drive, as well as Home Orchard and The Glen. I believe these areas all share a common identity as part of

the wider Yate Central community. I am aware of residents of these areas sharing communal concerns with regards to Station Road, its traffic and HGVs presence, as well as interests in local amenities, shops and facilities they all have in common.

- I would strongly suggest that Station Road be thought of as an integral part of Yate Central ward and not a mere boundary border, as this would help reflect the natural connections between the areas surrounding the earlier part of Station Road and the latter.
- The mini roundabout at the top of Church Road along Greenways Road to be a clear boundary feature, along with the top end of Milton Road where it meets the river. There is also a natural boundary here of wood/trees and green infrastructure that goes west to east parallel to Greenways Road, which increase the road's effectiveness as a ward boundary. These would both be natural choices for the new boundary lines as they reflect local features and respect the clear distinction of identities between Yate Central and Yate North. The current proposals which would include the areas surrounding Cranleigh Court Road within the Yate North ward, as I feel this arbitrary inclusion dismisses the importance of the two separate identities, which is acknowledged by local residents on both sides. As it is clearly shown in the pictures of Brinsham signage found in the last page of this submission, Yate North enjoys a unique community feel and identity which is entirely separate to that of residents of Cranleigh Court Road.
- The continuous and arterial route of Badminton Road, Station road, and Kennedy Way are instead focuses of the Yate central community, rather than the partial strong boundary which has been applied. We are concerned that the draft proposals are inconsistent in these roads roles, and we feel our proposals resolve this inconsistency.
- In the draft proposals Station Road is used a dividing boundary up until the B&Q roundabout arbitrarily separating residents living on both sides of the stretch, including residents of station road.
- I feel there is no reasonable or exceptional reasoning as to why the residential roads of Chatterton, Moorland Road and Maybank Road area should be divided against the Longs Drive, Mow Barton and Cranleigh Court Road area particularly as they share two parades of local amenities and shops.
- I am concerned that the designation of the later sections of Station Road are then used as a focus to the very central section of the ward in the case of Home Orchard, and the Glen road areas. This is an inconsistent approach to these arterial roads designation and we feel our proposals resolve this neatly.
- I make representations that of the two main western accesses to the Town, the Bristol road/ B4059 serve as the main and sole access to our proposed North Yate two member ward and make a case that the A432 serves the majority of the Cranleigh Court Road particularly the southern end. I would argue that much of the traffic in this area naturally looks south to

access the North Avon Ring Road (A4174) for onwards commuting to Bristol and the North fringe via Badminton Road.

- This is demonstrated via the main bus routes. My proposed North Yate ward is almost singularly served by the X46 and 46. The Station Road, as a focus for much for the Cranleigh Court road community is served by multiple services such as the 82, X47, 47 and the 46.
- I believe residents of areas such as Longs Drive, Moorland Road, Cranleigh Court Road, Mow Barton and Station Road all share in and benefit from the same local amenities and facilities, such as the parade of shops on Cranleigh Court Road or stores on the western part of Station Road. These can clearly be seen in the pictures we have provided below. These connected areas are seen as separate under the current proposals, however we maintain that they can instead be seen as a natural extension of the other facilities and services found on the Eastern part of Station Road and Kennedy Way, all coming together to form the beating heart of Yate Central, as felt by local residents and visitors alike.
- A marked distinctiveness can also be discerned for Yate North, with local amenities such as the Brimsham Park Pub and shop area, as well as the Wellington Road One Stop Shop all contributing to the shared sense of community Yate North residents feel and are aware of, which sets them apart from Yate Central residents.
- I make representations that our proposals have a stronger more identifiable boundary than the current draft proposals, which do not divide communities such as the case with the proposed station road division. I feel a more appropriate, clear and distinctive boundaries between North Yate, and the Central ward would be at the two points at the top of Cranleigh Court Road, shown in the maps, and that of the top of Church Road at the mini-roundabout. My proposed Boundary for the two wards used Greenways Road effectively as a strong boundary, until it meets the A4059 overhead. The axis of roads is a physically strong separating points between the two wards, and would mean a distinctive ward pattern for Yate North proper.
- I agree with Yate Town Council's and the commission's assessment of the need to ensure unifying North Yate representation. However, I feel that this would best be achieved by a team of two representatives solely focused on the task of ensuring a smooth integration of the new neighbourhoods and community set to emerge, with a strong three member team of town centre representatives, with the Town centre truly as a central focus of the ward. At present, as with the commission's proposals to only partial use Station road a focus, the town centre is only partial the central focus within the ward.
- I feel it would mean an odd warding pattern to have residential areas such as Cranleigh Court road which are physically closer in distance, to be placed in a the north yate ward where areas of the south of the Yate central ward are much further away. The current draft proposals, without good reason, removes the Shopping centre and its facilities as a focal

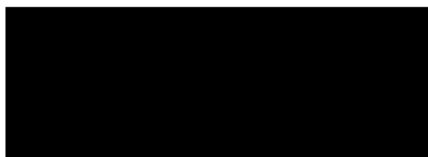
point for the central ward. My proposals would resolve this in placing the town centre right in the middle of the central ward.

Summary

Finally, I strongly believe that the Commission's plans would greatly benefit from my boundary proposals for Yate Central and Yate North. The plans not only retain electoral equality and fairness, but they also respect and mirror the existing boundaries and strong ward identities of our two distinct areas and communities. I believe my proposals allow for better and more effective governance, they reiterate the importance of shared community interests and concerns, and reinforce the idea of the town centre as fully located at the heart of a Yate Central ward, rather than on the edge of a ward.

Overall, I think you have done an excellent job with the local government boundaries that effect Filton and Bradley Stoke. I think it's important to bring communities together which you do in almost all cases within. The only two wards it really breaks communities up are Staple Hill and Mangotsfield, with Staple Hill looking West and Mangotsfield Village looking East and Little Stoke which under the current proposals would see it ripped apart from the Stoke Gifford community unnecessarily when they have such a shared identity.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Matthew Riddle

Leader of South Gloucestershire Council