

Stevenage Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Please see attached document from [REDACTED] Aldock Road, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] regarding the Old Town boundaries. Thank you.

Uploaded Documents:

Download ([https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1657886000 Stevenage+boundaries Aldock+Road.pdf](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1657886000%20Stevenage+boundaries+Aldock+Road.pdf))

Dear Sir/Madame,

We would like to please raise our concern over the draft proposal of new ward boundaries in Stevenage, particularly for the Old Town and Pin Green areas. We live in Aldock Road, which currently falls within the Old Town ward. From the proposal, we will soon fall under Pin Green and we disagree for the following reasons:

- We understand that the changes are only supposed to impact the electoral register. However, Aldock Road is physically and geographically located within and is closer to the Old Town than it is to Pin Green. Our voting decision should have an impact to our local area where we live, socialise, work and shop. We use a lot of services in the Old Town and none in Pin Green.
- Our concern is that the changes will initially only affect the electoral register which will remove our ability to democratically vote on local issues to us, but in the long run will also affect property value as well as school and GP catchment areas. We bought this property as our first property together after many years of hard work. We choose the Old Town location because of all the benefits of living within the Old Town boundaries. We loved the idea of being part of a community, while still living close to the Station and to all the facilities (e.g. cinema, shops) Stevenage offers. People have been nice and welcoming and we have built up a nice network in the local area. We all shared the love for the Old Town in many occasions, including supporting the Old Town Live day. We voted for our representatives recently in local elections to be able to make effective decisions for the future of the Old Town. As the Old Town is a highly sought-after location, we paid a high premium price for our property, and we don't want to see this fall with the move to the Pin Green ward. Average prices for the Old Town area stand at £346k compared to Pin Green area at £320k. Unfortunately, we had to pay more than £346k for our property due to its desired location (the Old Town). In return, however, we can enjoy a sense of community, be at walking distance to all the services (restaurants, bakery, dentist, GP, supermarket, garage) the Old Town offers and we have enjoyed supporting these local businesses in our day-to-day life.
- There is no GP surgery in Pin Green and for people like me or some others that don't drive, being walking distance to the GP is an important requirement. If we move to Pin Green ward, there is a possibility that we will lose our catchment for the GP, dentist and other local services in the long run and if not we will surely be deprioritised as not part of the Old Town boundaries anymore. This is unacceptable.
- There is also a physical and geographical issue. Aldock Road and the roads surrounding and up to Almond Hill Cemetery are geographically located within the Old Town boundaries and this should not change. You just need to walk around the area to realise this. The buildings within the Old Town boundaries are historical and predate the New Town Act. There is also a huge uphill walk past the Cemetery and then a busy main road (Grace Way) dividing these two physically separated parts of Stevenage. The walk to Pin Green area is uphill, then you need to cross the busy Grace Way Lane to move into Pin Green. The shops in Pin Green are even further away, so it will be a long and uphill walk. This makes it difficult for people with little mobility to reach it by foot and it must be taken into account. Yes, you might say that

there is a footpath/cyclepath but these are poorly lit and we never felt safe when walking the dog as we do in the Old Town.

We assume that changing the area of a ward is at first an electoral purpose but in the long run the idea is to create a community sense and to join schools, GP and other public services. However, Pin Green is already an area of Stevenage which lacks most services. Adding >1000 people to this ward just to balance out electoral numbers won't solve these issues and will lead to an even bigger price drop of properties and to more pressure to the almost inexistent services this area has to offer. It sounds to us that the only benefit will be for balancing electorate registers and voters rather than for its residents. People should be entitled to vote and make changes to the area they live and spend most time in, which for us is the Old Town, not to an area it is far to reach, lacks services and none of us ventures to because there isn't much there.

If you look at the current boundaries of the Old Town (not the proposed ones), they are in our opinion correct and should not be changed as they take into account houses built before the New Town Act. They also take into account our territory, with the Almond Hill Cemetery at the eastern border of the Old Town all the way to Sish Lane on the South. The proposed boundaries are unacceptable as they are a zig zag between smaller roads instead of using physical boundaries and bigger roads (Grace Way) as limits.

As Aldock Road residents, we live in the Old Town, we feel part of the Old Town and we want to stay in this ward and vote for representatives in the Old Town, because of where we live and spend our time and money. Hence, the current Old Town boundaries at least on the eastern side (Grace Way/Sish Lane) are in our opinion correct and these should not be changed.

Kind regards,

[Redacted Signature]

