

Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Dawley Hamlets Parish Council

Comment text:

My name is David Hopkins and I am a Parish Councillor in Dawley Hamlets Parish Council in Telford & Wrekin. I have provided a detailed submission for the Boundary Commission Review for Telford & Wrekin in the attached file. I hope you find it interesting and useful. I am more than happy for you to contact me for any clarification or further information if you wish. Please note. I have included Dawley Hamlets Parish Council under 'Organisation Name' in the box below. I have ensured all Parish Councillors are fully informed and have received a copy of my submission. I am making this submission as a Parish Councillor although I must stress that I am not representing or trying to represent the Parish Council. Cllr. David Hopkins. 22nd March 2022.

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1647976805_Ward+Boundaries+LGBC+submission+2022+PDF.pdf

Boundary Commission Review of Telford & Wrekin ward boundaries. 2021/2022

Submission by Councillor David Hopkins, Dawley Hamlets Parish Council.

I am making this submission as a Parish Councillor for the Dawley Hamlets ward of Dawley Hamlets Parish. My comments do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of other members of the Parish Council.

I am also a resident in Horsehay and I have lived here for the last 42 years.

I am particularly concerned by the present proposals for the suggested Horsehay & Lightmoor and Dawley and Aqueduct areas. I am basing my comments on the information from the Boundary Commission which can be found here:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/shropshire/telford-and-wrekin>

I would like to draw attention to the following:

Telford & Wrekin's submission to the LGBCE (August 2021)

On page 17, section 14 'Horsehay & Lightmoor' the Council provides the following statement: *'Part of the rationale for requesting a review of electoral arrangements was to enable the Council to provide better community identity, more efficient and effective local government and better democratic representation for these areas.'*

The next statement referring to *'a seat to the South of the Frame Lane area'* should have caused immediate questioning as that would result in virtually all of Horsehay being excluded from the ward that carried its name. The Council's rationale was therefore disconnected from its proposal.

Local Government Boundary Commission's policy statement included in their draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin. (November 2021)

Page 6.

4. When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5. Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

I have taken these policy statements as the rationale for my proposals.

My concerns are:

* The creation of a proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward which has hardly any of Horsehay within it. Horsehay Village and its village hall, Horsehay Pool, the old historic Horsehay Works, Horsehay Steam Trust, Horsehay Common and Horsehay Village golf course and clubhouse would all be incorporated into Dawley & Aqueduct ward instead.

* The absorption of virtually all of the closely linked Horsehay, Spring Village and Doseley communities into the proposed Dawley and Aqueduct ward.

- * A ward boundary that runs down the middle of Woodhouse Lane and Frame Lane and splits the community between two wards and a proposed boundary that splits the growing community at Doseley between two wards.
- * The decision to include the development at Lawley gate, on the edge of Horsehay Common, into the Lawley ward.
- * The division of Horsehay Village Golf Course (with no residents) between 3 wards. None of them are Horsehay & Lightmoor.
- * An unnecessary and uneven 3:1 Councillor split between the proposed Dawley & Aqueduct and Horsehay & Lightmoor wards.
- * Future complications and a possible resultant mismatch with our Parish boundaries.

My understanding of the rationale for the electoral wards is based on the LGBC version above.

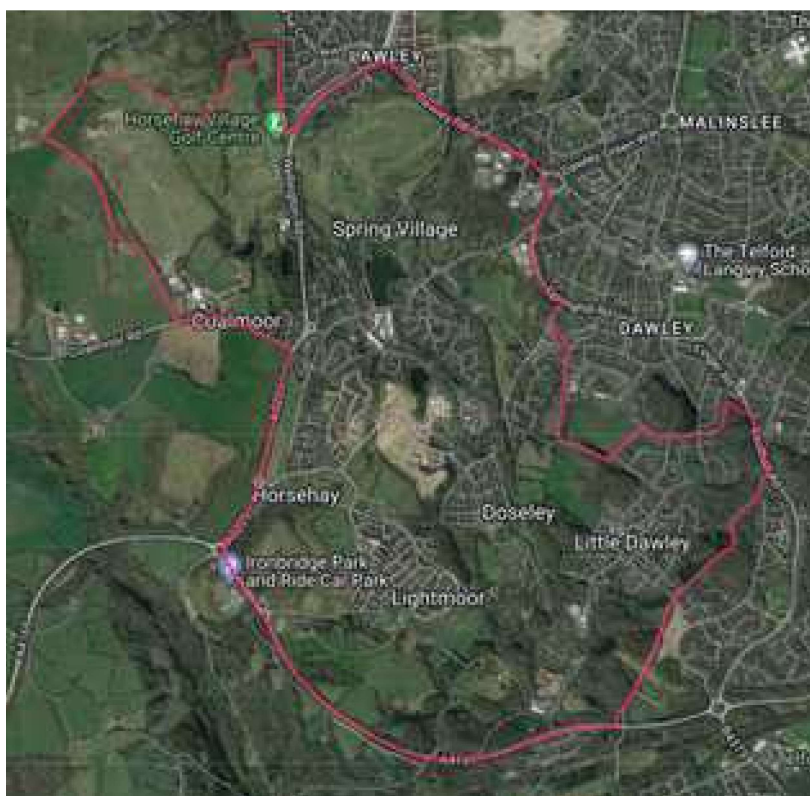
- ensure fair and equal representation for the electorate
- recognise and maintain the identity and integrity of communities
- facilitate local democracy at all levels.

The present proposals fail significantly on the second objective and I believe they would have an adverse effect on the third. The first objective has been achieved by proposing a somewhat unexplained 3:1 split with the two wards. I consider the logical alternative is to alter the boundaries to create an even split of two councillors each for the two wards. Critically, the altered boundaries can also take account of communities and reinstate the second objective. They will also have a beneficial effect on the third objective. My proposals which follow also improve the first objective. I consider my approach to be in accord with the point 5 in the policy statements by the LGBC above.

Apart from anything else, a ward with two councillors, where it is feasible, should be a better option than having a ward with only one councillor.

I have drafted a proposed alteration to the boundary which can be seen here:

<https://www.scribblemaps.com/maps/view/Ward-boundary-proposal-1/z5doUUIp9M>



The link is an interactive map. The map shown here is a screenshot.

The link below is for the interactive map showing my proposals with the current proposed boundaries along with my proposal for an alteration in the Ladygrove area. I have also included a screenshot of this map.

<https://www.scribblemaps.com/maps/view/Ward-boundary-proposal-2/YXjmeBcsrC>



The **red boundary** is my proposal for the revised Horsehay & Lightmoor Ward. I would suggest renaming it 'Dawley Hamlets & Lightmoor'

The **blue boundaries** show the existing proposals for Dawley & Aqueduct and Horsehay & Lightmoor Wards as well as the connections to the surrounding wards.

The **green boundary** shows an area at the top of Lawley Bank, including Ladygrove School, which could be transferred from the Dawley & Aqueduct Ward to the Lawley Ward in order to improve the level of variance. It is an area that does have natural connections with Lawley and is separated from Dawley by arterial roads.

These are some of the relevant points:

* Wherever possible I have drawn all the boundaries along major roads, green boundaries or following routes that don't have housing on both sides.

* I have incorporated as far as possible whole communities - Little Dawley, Horsehay, Doseley, Spring Village, Pool Hill and Lawley gate.

* The electorate included within my proposed boundary are all those within the proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward, a proportion of those within the proposed Dawley & Aqueduct ward, 78 from the proposed Lawley ward and possibly 2 from the Little Wenlock & Wrockwardine ward.

* I have drawn my proposed boundary based on the forecast electorate numbers to create two wards with basically equal electorate numbers. (See numbers below.)

* I have included all of Horsehay golf course so that it would be all within one ward. There are no residents so it doesn't affect the numbers.

* I have proposed an adjustment of the Lawley/Dawley & Aqueduct boundary in the Ladygrove area to improve equal representation for the electorate.

* I have rationalised the outdated boundaries in some places by following arterial roads, eg: A5223 between Jiggers roundabout and Horsehay, A5223 and Dawley Road at Lawley, A4169 Queensway at Lightmoor.

The numbers currently provided with the relevant proposed wards are:

Area	Councillors	Electorate	Forecast Electorate	Cllr. Ratio	Variance
Dawley & Aqueduct	3	8062	8567	1:2855	+4.85%
Horsehay & Lightmoor	1	1959	2843	1:2843	+4.41%
Lawley	3	5002	8263	1:2754	+1.13%
Little Wenlock & W.wdine	1	2101	2516	1:2516	-7.61%

My informed calculations with the numbers from my altered boundaries would result in the following changes from the present proposals:

Dawley & Aqueduct:	-2657	One less councillor
Horsehay & Lightmoor:	+2737	One more councillor
Lawley:	- 78	
Little Wenlock & W.wdine:	- 2	

These would result in the following forecast electorate and Councillor to electorate ratios (with adjusted Councillor numbers):

Area	Councillors	Forecast Electorate	Cllr. Ratio	Variance
Dawley & Aqueduct	2	5910	1:2955	+8.52%
Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	5580	1:2790	+2.46%
Lawley	3	8185	1:2728	+0.18%
Little Wenlock & W.wdine	1	2514	1:2514	-7.68%

Please note: I have only shown the forecast electorate figures in this and the following chart.

The higher ratio for the proposed Dawley & Aqueduct ward could be easily reduced by redrawing the boundary in the Ladygrove area. Moving the area contained within the boundary of Old Office Road, the footpath to the East of the school, Dawley Green Way and Dawley Road/Heath Hill from the Dawley and Aqueduct ward to the Lawley ward would transfer approx 300 electors. This is the area with the green boundary on my map. The resulting figures would then look like this:

Area	Councillors	Forecast Electorate	Cllr. Ratio	Variance
Dawley & Aqueduct	2	5610	1:2805	+3.01%
Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	5580	1:2790	+2.46%

Lawley	3	8485	1:2828	+3.86%
Little Wenlock & W.wdine	1	2514	1:2514	-7.68%

These changes also result in an overall improvement of 1% in the level of variance in the four wards.

There would be a need to rename the currently proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward. In order to maintain parity for the various communities I hope my previous suggestion of Dawley Hamlets & Lightmoor Ward is suitable.

Further Considerations:

There is very little development that I am aware of within the proposed transition areas therefore the forecast numbers should not be affected.

During discussions with my Councillor colleagues two other aspects were mentioned that I would like to respond to.

Alterations to the boundaries will have a knock on effect on other wards.

The alterations I am proposing are essentially within the area of the two associated wards, Dawley & Aqueduct and Horsehay & Lightmoor. It is essentially a rebalancing of a 3:1 split to a 2:2 split. The inclusion of the Lawley Gate development is partly in order to have a rationalised boundary but also to recognise the wishes of local residents who have already expressed a desire to be included with Horsehay.

The change with the area around Ladygrove seems logical to me based on the second and third objectives and certainly helps to improve the level of variance in the wards.

The changes with boundaries along main roads and round the Horsehay Village Golf Course do not affect electoral numbers and should have administrative benefits.

One Councillor wards are not unusual and are acceptable.

I have looked at the arrangement for one, two and three councillor wards in the Telford & Wrekin Borough. My conclusion is that one councillor wards are used when there is a clear and logical reason for them. The examples I would give are:

- where a sparsely populated area is involved, usually on the periphery of the Borough. Examples: Little Wenlock & Wrockwardine, Church Aston & Lilleshall.
- where there is a noticeably 'contained' area. Example: Brookside.
- where there is a linked group of wards who can work in a collegiate way. Example: the proposed four wards in Newport.

I would also like to draw attention to where there are proposals to join together single councillor wards to make two councillor wards. Examples: Shawburch & Dothill, Haygate & Park, Arleston & College.

I hope my contribution to the Boundary Commission review is helpful and informative. My main ambition is to make proposals that will meet the three objectives and ultimately be seen as positive and sensible. Proposals for changes that will benefit the residents and will help to retain the identity and character of an area that I know well, care about and have lived in for many years.

David Hopkins March 22nd 2022.