

## Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

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### Comment text:

The Parish Council recognises and accepts the principle and desirability of electoral proportionality. However, the proposed Borough Warding changes will potentially alter the identity of existing communities within the parish reducing the sense of place that the Parish Council has worked steadily to create over many years. The proposed Borough Warding changes will also result in the creation of unworkable parish wards, one being impractically and disproportionately large while three others will be unworkably small, with several parish wards failing to achieve the goal of electoral equality. Consequently, the Parish Council objects to the proposed parish warding arrangements and also to any changes proposed to the current Borough Ward boundaries as they impact upon the civil parish of Hadley and Leegomery. A detailed summary of the Parish Council's objections can be found in the attached response.

### Uploaded Documents:

**[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1652129782\\_Hadley+and+Leegomery+PC+-+Response+to+draft+recommendations+for+Telford+%26+Wrekin+.pdf\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1652129782_Hadley+and+Leegomery+PC+-+Response+to+draft+recommendations+for+Telford+%26+Wrekin+.pdf)**

# Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council

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Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0TL

9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

## **RE: Local Government Boundary Commission for England draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin**

I am instructed to write to you to express the Parish Council's opposition to the draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin affecting the following Borough Ward boundaries:

Apley Castle  
Edgmond & Ercall Magna  
Hadley & Leegomery  
Oakengates & Ketley Bank

### **Apley Castle Borough Ward**

Councillors have raised the following points regarding the potential impact of the draft recommendation to redefine the boundary of the Apley Castle Ward upon local communities:

- The civil parish has long consisted of Hadley, Leegomery, Apley, and Horton. The name of the civil parish was changed from Hadley to Handley and Leegomery less than thirty years ago to reflect the extensive development that had taken place in Leegomery since the 1970s and the current Borough Ward of Hadley and Leegomery recognises the longstanding relationship between the two communities.
- Development in Apley is more recent and is predominantly new private housing of a very different character to the Victorian and Edwardian housing in the older parts of Hadley and the former Council houses that characterise much of the post-war development in Hadley and Leegomery. The demographics reflect the differences between Hadley and Leegomery, which both have pockets of deprivation, and the more affluent area of Apley.
- The proposed Borough Ward of Apley Castle and Leegomery fails to take the differences identified above into account. Its southern boundary will cut across the established community of Leegomery placing the northern part of the community within the new Borough Ward and transferring the southern part of Leegomery to the new Borough Ward of Hadley and Trench Lock.
- The proposed Borough Ward of Apley Castle and Leegomery would result in the Leegomery Parish Ward no longer being within the (Apley Castle and) Leegomery Borough Ward, creating a needlessly confusing situation for residents, public services, and public policy in respect of this area.
- There are strong physical links between Hadley and Leegomery and good connectivity between the two areas. The former branch railway is now a rarely-used freight line with foot-crossings and no longer severs the two areas (unlike the mainline railway between Hadley and Ketley). Residents of Leegomery walk, cycle, and drive each day to Hadley to visit shops, use local services, or attend school.

*Clerk: Jonathan Brumwell*

*Chairman: Councillor Gemma Offland*

- Additionally, the secondary school catchment for Hadley Learning Community is largely the current Hadley and Leegomery Ward while Apley Castle Ward is within the Charlton School catchment. Should the proposed Ward boundary changes be made this will no longer be the case and will also be a potential cause of confusion at local level.
- There are strong social links between Hadley and Leegomery with local sports teams including Sunday League football, bowls clubs based at Hadley Rest Room and Hadley United Services Club, and voluntary groups such as *Hadley 5-O* and *You, Me, and Us*, the latter a recently-formed group that emerged from a Royal Voluntary Service project targeting social isolation and vulnerability amongst older residents in defined areas of deprivation and need within Hadley and Leegomery (but, significantly, not extending to Apley).
- Hadley has long been inclusive and multi-cultural, with local industry – notably GKN Sankey – drawing people from many parts of the world to the make their home within Hadley and Leegomery. This is reflected in the location of most places of worship within the civil parish, which are located close to Hadley Local Centre (Holy Trinity Church, Hadley Methodist Church, Elim Church, Hadley Gurdwara, Mafeking Road Mosque). It is also reflected in the location of Telford West Indian Association, Telford Leisure and Cultural Centre and other facilities serving the different communities within the parish. Most recently this multi-cultural inclusivity is reflected by the number of shops catering for members of the community from Central and Eastern European. The proposed re-drawing of Borough wards risks creating boundaries between these communities and hindering community cohesion.
- The extension of the current Apley Castle Borough Ward to include parts of the current Hadley & Leegomery Borough Ward will result in a proposed seven-member Apley Castle and Leegomery parish ward. This will be representationally disproportionate until all pending development in the area is complete and will present an unwieldy grouping of parish councillors making it more difficult for parish business to be pursued and delivered effectively.

For the above reasons the Parish Council **objects** to the proposed Borough Ward Apley Castle and Leegomery and recommends that the existing Borough Ward of Apley Castle be retained.

### **Edgmond & Ercall Magna Borough Ward**

Councillors have raised the following points regarding the potential impact of the draft recommendation to redefine the boundary of the Edgmond & Ercall Magna Ward upon local communities:

- As identified above, the civil parish has long consisted of Hadley, Leegomery, Apley, and Horton and this is part of the identity of the local community.
- The settlement of Horton is within the urban boundary of Telford & Wrekin and is, therefore, significantly different in terms of development, services, policy, and needs when compared to the remainder of the Edgmond & Ercall Magna Ward which is outside the urban area and is accordingly considered to be rural in character. It would be difficult for the Borough Councillors for a predominantly rural Borough Ward to adequately represent the interests of residents living within the urban area of the Borough.
- The conflict between the competing demands of residents of the existing rural Edgmond & Ercall Magna Ward and residents of Horton currently represented by Ward Members for Hadley and Leegomery is illustrated by the differing responses to the experimental closure of Horton Lane in December 2020. While the majority of Horton residents welcomed the closure as an effective measure to stop the village being used as a rat-run for traffic associated with the neighbouring Hortonwood strategic employment site, residents of Edgmond & Ercall Magna Ward vehemently opposed the closure. It is unlikely that the small number of electors within Horton would have gained the support of Ward Members for the closure had the proposed Ward boundary been in place.
- The proposed changes to the Edgmond & Ercall Magna Borough Ward will result in a single-member parish ward of Horton. This ward will have a disproportionate level of representation on the parish council compared to other proposed single-member parish wards, and the workload for the single member representing the parish ward will also be disproportionate compared to those serving other wards.

### **Hadley & Leegomery Borough Ward**

Councillors have raised the following points regarding the potential impact of the draft recommendation to redefine the boundary of the Hadley & Leegomery Ward upon local communities:

- As identified above, the civil parish has long consisted of Hadley, Leegomery, Apley, and Horton and this is part of the identity of the local community. The civil parish's name was changed from Hadley to Hadley and Leegomery comparatively recently to reflect the close relationship between the two areas and their increasingly shared identity.
- The Borough Ward reflects the close relationship between the Hadley and Leegomery, both of which are old settlements (both mentioned in Domesday Book) that experienced significant development and expansion in the post-war period, the boundary between them becoming at first blurred, then effectively merging, and in recent years becoming near indistinguishable.
- The area north of Hadley and east of the Hurley Brook has historically been known as Hadley Park, Hadley Park House was once the centre of one of the largest estates in this part of Shropshire with lands extending well beyond the settlement of Horton in the north. This is reflected in local road and place names (Hadley Park Road, Hadley Park, Hadley Park Mill). When the corn mill at Hadley Park was converted from wind to water power its sails were removed and artificial battlements installed to create a folly in the landscape. Because of the low-lying nature of its surroundings it became a local landmark, 'Hadley Castle', and that is where the parish ward derives its name from. However, the point here is that the area has always been considered part of Hadley, not Leegomery. Leegomery Methodist Church at the northern end of Hadley Park Road is very much an outlier of Leegomery in this respect.
- Trench Lock was historically linked to Trench and was seen as the boundary of Hadley, this changing with the creation of the Eastern Primary Road (now A442 Queensway). The area was historically industrial and was occupied by foundries, quarries, brickworks, and a gasworks. Although it now finds itself largely in the civil parish of Hadley and Leegomery a significant part of the area remains within the Oakengates and Ketley Bank Borough Ward, this being more of an issue since the former industrial sites have been redeveloped for housing.
- The changes proposed to the Hadley & Leegomery Borough Ward would result in the current three-member Hadley Castle parish ward being reduced to a single-member parish ward and the two-member Trench Lock parish ward also being reduced to a single-member parish ward. This would result in a disproportionate level of representation for these wards at parish level, especially when compared to the single-member parish ward proposed for Horton. The workload for the single parish councillor for these wards would also be disproportionate and would potentially hamper effective working by these members.

For the above reasons, and those stated previously in connection with the proposed changes to the Apley Castle Borough Ward, the Parish Council **objects** to the proposed changes to the boundaries of the Hadley & Leegomery Borough Ward.

### **Oakengates & Ketley Bank Borough Ward**

The Parish Council's concerns relating to the proposed alterations to the current Oakengates & Ketley Bank Borough Ward are as outlined above in connection with the Hadley & Leegomery Borough Ward.

### **Parish Warding Proposals – civil parish of Hadley and Leegomery**

The Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the proposed changes to the existing parish warding arrangements. In particular, the Parish Council is concerned with the following proposals:

- The creation of a seven-member parish ward of Apley Castle and Leegomery will create an unwieldy administrative area within the parish making implementation of policy and delivery of services difficult. The parish ward will be overbearing in size and will inevitably require subdivision at some point in the future, although at the current time it will be electorally disproportionate.
- The creation of single-member parish wards in Horton, Trench Lock, and Hadley Castle will be electorally disproportionate – particularly in the case of Horton – and will result in unsustainable workloads for the single members of the parish council representing those wards.

The Parish Council recognises and accepts the principle and desirability of electoral proportionality. However, the proposed Borough Warding changes will potentially alter the identity of existing communities within the parish reducing the sense of place that the Parish Council has worked steadily to create over many years.

As stated above, the proposed Borough Warding changes will also result in the creation of unworkable parish wards, one being impractically and disproportionately large while three others will be unworkably small, with several parish wards failing to achieve the goal of electoral equality.

Consequently, the Parish Council **objects** to the proposed parish warding arrangements and also to any changes proposed to the current Borough Ward boundaries as they impact upon the civil parish of Hadley and Leegomery.

Yours faithfully

*Jonathan Brumwell*

Clerk to the Council