

Rushcliffe Borough Council

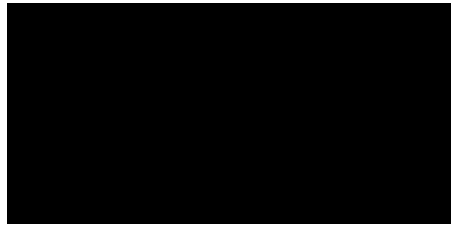
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Comment text:

In response to the draft recommendations I believe that they are undemocratic as they could potentially disenfranchise a large number of voters in West Bridgford. 3 member wards are not democratic as the tendency is for a single party to win all seats . To get best representation we should have single member wards or proportional representation in multi member wards. The draft proposals appear to be based on making the numbers work for expected voters per ward rather than utilising the natural boundaries and community links to complete this exercise. in particular the new Trent Bridge ward breaks up the existing coherent ward and adds part to the distinct (in community and geographical terms) Lady Bay community. The rest is then added to Abbey ward. I believe the objectives can be better achieved by moving part of Abbey ward into Lady Bay and part of Musters ward moving to make up the subsequent shortfall in Abbey ward whilst keeping Abbey Lady Bay and Trent as two member wards. In addition a number of the other wards (Edwalton, Gamston and Compton Acres) can easily be made single member wards and hence increasing voter representation. More details of all my proposals are included in the attached file Note these proposals were also passed to the local Labour group in response to their request for comments

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1639237469_Boundary+Review+proposal+West+Bridgford+my+submission.docx

Proposal

In general I believe that the electors are best served by single councillor wards and that multi councillor wards increasingly disenfranchise some electors the larger the wards get. For example, It is not uncommon for multi-councillor wards to return multiple councillors from the same party, when in fact a significant number of electors in that ward may well have returned a different councillor if they voted in a single councillor wards. In addition the larger a ward is the more likely it is to include significantly different communities who may then feel they are not properly represented by their councillors. Therefore the creation of the two new three councillor wards in West Bridgford may well disenfranchise a significant number of electors, for the reasons stated previously, and should be rejected in favour of single and at most two councillor wards.

Therefore I propose

- 1) Split Compton Acres as defined in the recommendations into two single councillor wards along Rugby Road/ Acorn Gardens. The northern part of the proposed ward is predominately the part of the ward running either side of Wilford Lane (including the Rivermead flats). There is a strong case for those properties (due to the age and style of the properties along with their community links) to have separate representation from Compton acres which dates from the 1980s. Looking at the existing polling wards, that would make CAB1 and CAB2 one (the northern ward) and CAB3 as the other. This would leave wards of size 2009 and 2229 based on the predicted electors in 2027. This compromise better serves, overall, the existing electorate.
- 2) Split Edwalton (as proposed by the Commission) into two single councillor wards along the old railway (part of which is footpath and part private land) which currently runs through alongside the east side of Rushcliffe school, continues over Melton Road and alongside the golf course. This is a natural barrier between (most of) old Edwalton and the new housing on either side of the Melton Road. The new housing does not look to old Edwalton village for services as they have Aldi, Costa Coffee, other shops and a new Primary school on their doorstep so there is no reason for them to go into Edwalton village. The old village already has it's own school, shops (store, post office, cafe) at the junction of Wellin Lane and Earlswood drive. Additionally the planned pedestrian access from the new estate to Musters Road would make it less likely that residents of the new estate would use Edwalton village for services as many would be better served by shops on Boundary road in Musters Ward. So old and new parts of Edwalton will be distinct communities making it even more logical for there to be two single councillor wards as opposed to a single two councillor ward.
- 3) Whilst Compton Acres parish council favours a two councillor ward, there is simple delineation along the existing boundary between Gamston North and South with electors of 1892 and 1932 respectively which would preserve one councillor wards and reflects current boundary excepting the Commission's proposed alterations.

This leaves the more northern part of West Bridgford with the additional need to reduce number of councillors by one to meet the commission's overall target of 2400 electors per councillor. Currently we have

Ward	Councillors	Current Electors	Forecast Electors (2027)
Abbey	2	4552	4605
Lady Bay	2	3913	3992
Lutterell	2	4292	4438
Musters	2	3553	3732
Trent Bridge	2	4472	4768

The Commission's solution is to reduce Lutterell to a one councillor ward, merge Lady Bay, Trent Bridge and Abbey together to create two three councillor wards and increase size of Musters to increase number of electors toward desired average for a two councillor ward.

As previously stated three councillor wards will reduce democratic accountability considerably. The proposed new boundaries also preserves some anomalies in terms of community identity in Musters ward and lumps dissimilar areas of West Bridgford from existing Trent Bridge and Lady Bay wards together.

In my view it would make sense to generally keep the existing wards as far as we are able and preserve them either as one or two councillor wards. Given the existing situation that they are all two councillor wards it is easier to work with these existing wards than try to create new single wards which would break up some existing community identities so reluctantly I suggest adjusting the current wards rather than completely redrawing them. Based on predicted elector numbers and geography (see next para) it would make more sense (than the Commission's proposal) to reduce Musters ward to a single councillor ward and adjust boundaries of the other wards to bring them closer to the required electoral size.

The proposed solution by the Commission apparently splits up Trent Bridge in order to increase the size of existing Lady Bay and Abbey Wards. In particular the creation of the new expanded Trent Bridge ward makes absolutely no sense as there is no existing community or geographical links between the two communities and destroys the existing unique Lady Bay community identity.

There is an obvious boundary in West Bridgford which has apparently not been taken into account by the Commission and that is the Green line footpath which runs along an old railway line that ran through West Bridgford decades ago. This is now a community managed nature reserve and footpath and would appear to have been missed completely in the virtual review of West Bridgford. The Green line splits Musters ward into two parts with the east and west sides having little in common with each other in terms of community links and service usage with the east side in particular having far more in common with the existing Abbey and Trent Bridge wards being adjacent to the shops, cafes and bars along Melton Road with easy links to West Bridgford Town Centre. The west side of Musters Ward links more closely to Asda and the shops opposite ASDA on Loughborough road.

In order to cater for the reduction in councillors needed and based on this natural boundary my proposal is to split the existing Musters ward into four areas (as follows) and move these to the most relevant adjacent ward.

1)The area north of Eton road and Devonshire Road, which includes the following Kingston, Hampton , Wordsworth and Musters Road north of Kingston/Devonshire.

2) The area east of the Green Line north of Devonshire and Carnarvon Road, which includes Cromford, Haddon and Melton Road north of Devonshire.

3) The area east of the Green Line and south of Devonshire and Carnarvon , which includes Taunton, Exeter, St Helens, Willoughby, Mellors, Ludlow Hill ,Wenlock, Whitcliffe, Covedale, Stokesay and Mowbray Gardens

4) Everything else

My estimate is that the four areas would be approx. 160, 90, 660 and 2600 electors respectively (based on predicted elector figures) in size.

The first area should be added to the existing Lutterell ward to bring it up to nearer the required average and community wise most of these roads (especially the more northern) have more in common with the existing Lutterell roads.

The second area should be added to the existing Trent Bridge Ward as clearly they are geographically adjacent and share far more in common (shops along Melton Road in particular) with the adjacent Trent Bridge ward than the housing on the west side of the Green Line, this would then bring Trent Bridge up to just over the required number of electors.

The third should be added to Abbey ward, bringing it up by about 500 to well over the average for the area but this can be compensated for by giving up an area in the north of Abbey ward to Lady Bay as described later.

And fourth and remaining area becomes the new single councillor Musters Ward. This leaves the existing Lady Bay ward being too small as it stands by about 900 electors and Abbey being too big by over 500 electors. There moving part of existing Abbey Ward would lead to both wards being near the ideal number of electors.

The obvious way to achieve this is to expand Lady Bay by moving the roads east of Albert Road and north of Davies Road from Trent Bridge ward and Abbey ward into Lady Bay. These include Florence, Priory, Violet, Cyril and northern part of Davies Road. Both Albert and Davies roads are clear dividing lines geographically and community wide as the area bounded by them has far more in common with Lady Bay then Trent Bridge or Abbey.

This area is about 500 electors , which if added to Lady Bay will give it about 4500 electors , reduce Abbey (as adjusted previously) down to about 5000 electors and Trent Bridge to about 4500. This means they are all electorally viable, keep most of the existing communities together and additionally keep 2 councillor wards.

This leaves us with new wards as follows

Ward	Councillors	Forecast Electors (2027)
Abbey	2	5000
Lady Bay	2	4500
Lutterell	2	4600
Musters	1	2600
Trent Bridge	2	4500

There are opportunities for further small changes but I believe that the expansion of Lady Bay as proposed and split of Musters ward are the most obvious solutions to keep at most two councillor wards and preserve and enhance existing community ties.

The split of Musters ward is obvious if you know or visit the area, with the two halves being quite different in terms of character and affinity with local facilities. This allows the other changes outlined to cater for a necessary increase in size of Lady Bay with adjacent roads to the area over the canal and Radcliffe Road.