

Stratford on Avon District Council

Personal Details:

Name: Cllr Christopher Kettle
E-mail: chris.kettle@stratford-dc.gov.uk
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name:

Comment text:

Dear Sirs Local Boundary Commission Review - Stratford on Avon District Bishop's Itchington, Fenny Compton and Napton Ward The proposed new two member ward covering the at least the villages of Bishop's Itchington, Napton, Fenny Compton and Shotteswell is geographically very extensive. As the crow flies, the proposed ward will measure 16 kilometre from West to East and 19 kilometres from North to South. It will incorporate 14 distinct settlements and the area would be approximately 130 square kilometres, being about 13% of the total area of the District. Although warding arrangement are required to rationalise electoral numbers, one ward, out of 35 proposed new wards, of such a significant area will present a significant burden on Councillors and does not take into account the social and demographic variances across the area. Further the District Council's Core Strategy identifies 63 local service villages ('LSVs'), rural settlements above a certain size. Seven of those listed are in this ward, or more than 10% of LSVs. In addition to the LSVs a further 70 smaller settlements are recognised within the District of which 10% are in the proposed two member ward. There is no linkage geographic, commercial, political or cultural linkage between Bishops Itchington in the West and Napton and Shuckburgh in the East or between Shotteswell, Farnborough and Warmington on the Cotswold Escarpment and Bishops Itchington or Lower Shuckburgh on the flat claylands of the Feldon Vale. The focus of the proposed ward can be split into three distinct areas which are diametrically opposite with Bishops Itchington looking towards Leamington Spa, Shotteswell, Farnborough and Warmington towards Banbury and Napton and Shuckborough towards Daventry. There is no synergy between the areas in any respect. Such a large two member ward will also present logistical challenges to ward councillors. Whilst not every parish will have monthly meetings, Councillors, in a two member ward, particularly if they represent different parties will want to attend each and every parish meeting. Given there are approximately 4 working weeks in each month, and meetings rarely take place on a Friday, Councillors will have to commit potentially to attending 14 meeting a month out of 16 or 18 evenings a month which is an intolerable burden. This may well preclude them attending evening District Council meetings, such as planning or training meetings or having any mid-week social life. The areas will require Councillors to expend considerable personal time and financial cost both attending meetings and case visits. In addition there is one specific example where the methodology used to draw new boundaries has produced, at best, unhelpful results. Burton Dassett Parish Council represents four different settlements, being Burton Dassett itself, Northend, Knightcote and Temple Herdwycke. The proposed boundaries split the area covered by the Parish Council, with both new wards being two member wards. There would be four District Councillors attending all Parish Council meetings. The local knowledge that councillors build up about their wards will be diluted by the sheer scale of the ward area. Within an urban area there may well be a reasonable justification for two or even three member wards where the issues for that urban area may will be shared with most residents of that larger ward. In the countryside, rural settlements rarely share the same issues with their neighbouring settlements and contrarily may compete with each other. Knowing the unique features of each settlement and understanding the intricacies of local feelings is an essential part of the ward member's role. Delivering 14 settlements to two ward members will act against the interests of proper and effective representation. The comments in your proposal for this ward as follows are appropriate: "We acknowledge that our proposed ward is geographically large and combines relatively distant areas. We are therefore particularly interested in local views on our recommendations for this area, including proposals for single-councillor wards that would both reflect local communities and ensure good electoral equality." I do not believe it will deliver the service required to local communities and should be broken down into two single member, and significantly, smaller wards. Yours sincerely Cllr Christopher Kettle

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded