

Dudley Borough Council

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name:

Comment text:

I have lived in Halesowen South for over 20 years and am not politically-affiliated. Using the projected figures for 2028, the five south-eastern wards need an additional 1,398 electors to bring their average up to those for the Borough as a whole. I am not able to comment as to how the western boundary of Cradley and Wollescote should be re-drawn to achieve this. However, 1,148 electors need to be transferred east from that ward (as it is itself short of 250 electors from the average). From these, Hayley Green & Cradley would need an additional 969 electors, Halesowen South 209 and Halesowen North 314; and Belle Vale needs reducing by 344. There are offices and industrial estates scattered throughout, so one cannot say that there is any particular focus for places of work. Primary schools are relatively evenly distributed, but two high schools and Halesowen College are in the centre of Halesowen, and a third High School is in Halesowen North. The main town centre is in Halesowen, (with a smaller centre in Cradley), which also has the leisure centre and sports clubs and the largest Church, in Little Cornbow (1,000 worshippers). There are another leisure centre and another high school, just to the north in Sandwell MBC, where the conurbation does of course continue despite the borough boundary. There is therefore a strong sense of belonging to Halesowen as one community at least as far as the brow of the hill which drops west toward Cradley. Subdivision of Halesowen into wards must therefore look more at geographic features than social ones. These are foremost in the mind when establishing distinct sub-communities (and for navigation, including for jogging and cycling). The main East-West arterial route from Birmingham to Stourbridge runs midway through the wards and is the natural dividing line between Halesowen North and Halesowen South, Belle Vale and Hayley Green, and Cradley and Cradley South (at which point it has become the southern brow of a hill falling steeply to the north. The road to Hagley splits off in Halesowen town centre and a large housing development took place in the triangle of land between the two in the 20th century, going west to the open farmland between Halesowen and Stourbridge. Topographically, the land falls steeply from the west down to Halesowen (to a valley between the Halesowen South and Belle Vale Wards and its extension though the middle of Halesowen South), though remaining high at the northern end of the Belle Vale Ward, then rises steeply again. The climb continues along the Hagley Road, but the Stourbridge Road dips after Hawne down to the Belle Vale valley, before climbing steeply again to Cradley, the brow of the hill being at the southern end of the current division between the Belle Vale and Cradley & Wollescote Wards. Hence one can say that Halesowen is best subdivided north-south by the road down Mucklow Hill and on to Stourbridge, and east-west by the two main valleys. These are broadly where the current Ward boundaries fall, only the boundaries in the middle seeming to follow no particular pattern, apparently having been drawn to balance the numbers in the Wards. The question arises therefore as to how to make small adjustments to the current Ward boundaries to make the variance from the average number of voters more equal. The boundary between Halesowen North and Halesowen South needs to remain along the main road, and that between Halesowen South and Hayley Green should not be changed, as the house numbers on Hagley Road are renumbered from that point). Logically the north-eastern triangle of Belle Vale would pass into Halesowen North, as it is on that side of Haden Hill Road (the main road north to Old Hill and Dudley), though there could be a partial adjustment just to Lodgefield Road if this gives a closer fit to the 314 extra electors needing to be added to Halesowen North. At the west, the Tanfield estate, which lies in the triangle to the south of Stourbridge Road, could be transferred from Cradley & Wollescote to Hayley Green and Cradley South, if not the entire polling district of T04, as I can see no particular reason for including T04 (and even T07) in Wollescote rather than Hayley Green. There could be an adjustment at the northern end of the boundary between O01 and T03 (which seems random) so that not too many electors are transferred east from Cradley and Wollescote. All the roads out of R01 and R02 actually lead towards Belle Vale, rather than Hayley Green (or even Cradley), so those could be transferred to that Ward. The main balancing change would then be to

the southern boundary of Belle Vale. Again, this is random, seemingly for adjusting elector numbers in the past. In the main it cuts through the large housing estate referred to above. The estate is naturally divisible into four by the four roads which meet in a cross at the roundabout at the southern top of Alexandra Road, which coincidentally falls at the brow between Huntingtree Road and Highfields Lane. The Halesowen South numbers could be increased by taking the south-eastern corner (or the eastern part of it, say along Andrew Road, Chapel Street and Cross Street, if this gives a better fit), leaving the rest of the Southern portion (south of Huntingtree Rad and Highfields Lane) for Hayley Green and then the two northern portions for Belle Vale (towards which the north-western portion falls anyway). If the elector numbers need further adjustment for a better fit, then the line could be adjusted slightly as it has been at present, though this would be at a loss of clarity on boundaries.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded