

Sunderland

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Sunderland City Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

I am Councillor for Millfield Ward on Sunderland City Council and am writing to support some slight changes to the Commission's proposals in the Millfield and Thornhill areas to ensure better community representation and to make it easier for councillors to represent coherent communities.

I agree with the plans for the Thornhill area to be represented together with Barnes, instead of with Millfield as it is at the moment.

Barnes and Thornhill are neighbouring areas with similar Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing. There are good bus links between them along Durham Road, Chester Road and Barnes Park Road. It is easy to walk from one side of the proposed ward to the other, and there are good cycle links along the cycle path that runs behind Durham Road.

The proposed ward makes sense in terms of community assets and facilities, with all parts of the Barnes, High Barnes, Eden Vale and Thornhill areas sharing the same schools (Richard Avenue, St Mary's, Barnes Infants and Juniors and Thornhill Academy); and shared green spaces like Barnes Park and Burn Park.

I would ask that the Commission makes a slight change to ensure that all of Barnes Park is included in the Barnes and Thornhill Ward, to make sure that one set of councillors are responsible for projects and funding in the park. I would like to see the boundary run along the back of Bede College and to the rear of Shrewsbury Crescent in Humbledon. This would ensure that all people living in Humbledon along Ettrick Grove and Durham Road are included in the Tunstall and Humbledon Ward, reducing confusion for residents.

I would also like the Commission to move streets in Ashbrooke like Alexandra Park, Tunstall Park, Belle Vue Park and Brookside Terrace/Gardens into the Tunstall and Humbledon Ward so they are together with the rest of the community of Ashbrooke.

These streets will not have much in common with the rest of the Barnes and Thornhill Ward, instead sharing community facilities, schools, shops, parks and sports clubs in the rest of Ashbrooke. As such, I feel that they are better suited in the Tunstall and Humbledon Ward. The boundary could run along the edge of Thornhill School grounds and St Mary's RC Primary School grounds, so that streets on the southern side of Throhnholme Road and Dunelm are included with the rest of the Barnes and Thornhill area.

In terms of Millfield, I believe the Commission's proposals make sense with the metro line providing a clear boundary that is easy to understand for residents. This will also end the current situation where Pallion and its main shopping street (St Luke's Terrace) are split between wards. I would like to see all streets in Ford Estate (all those beginning with an 'F', together with the new build streets of Gatton Close, Sapphire Close and Phoenix Road) included in the ward, as these share community centres, schools and shops with the rest of Ford Estate and shouldn't be a minority interest in the Pennywell Ward.

East of the Metro line, I believe a ward based around the city centre together with the East End and Hendon makes sense and follows easily identifiable boundaries. Whilst some of Hendon south of Villette Road will end up in the Grangetown Ward, there is no better or obvious place to divide Hendon and Grangetown. Villette Road is a boundary that will be easy to explain and point out to residents. It also extends on from the boundary running along The Cedars / edge of Backhouse Park.

I believe that Villette Road is the best boundary in this area, and that any other proposals would not be easy to explain or identify to local people. At the moment, councillors work well together to meet the interests of communities on either side of a main road (for example Hendon and St Michael's councillors work together on funding bids and initiatives in Backhouse Park; and Millfield and Pallion councillors work together on issues affecting St Luke's shopping terrace on the border of these two wards). There is no reason to believe that this would not be the case either side of Villette Road in the future, continuing to support community initiatives that span both of the proposed Central and Grangetown Wards.

I believe that the 'Central Ward' name does not make sense (as the centre of Sunderland is cross-river) and will not allow local people to work out which ward they live in. I would like the Commission to follow the system used in most of its other proposals by naming the ward after real, tangible communities in the ward. I therefore think Hendon and Deptford would be a suitable ward name. This reflects communities at either side of the ward. Deptford is a part of the city that local people can identify, is seeing lots of housing developments and with which people in the eastern part of Millfield will have affinity to as it borders the part of Millfield going into this ward.

I would urge the Commission to make these small changes to improve the warding arrangements for the Millfield, city centre and Thornhill areas that I currently represent.

Julia Potts

Liberal Democrat Councillor for Millfield and Thornholme



Attached Documents:

None attached