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Sent: 02 August 2022 04:15
To: reviews
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission to Cannock Chase initial consultation - Cannock Chase CLP and Labour Group
Attachments: Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Labour District Councillors response to the Cannock Chase boundary review - 01.08.2022.pdf; Labour Group Boundary Review Submission - district wards.kmz; Labour Group Boundary Review Submission - parish wards.kmz
Categories: [REDACTED]

Good morning,

Please find attached a joint submission to the initial consultation of the Cannock Chase electoral review from the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and the Labour group of councillors on Cannock Chase District Council. I apologise profusely that this submission is coming to you late. I have had a bit of a nightmare pulling together last-minute feedback and thoughts whilst also volunteering at the Commonwealth Games. Hopefully our submission is the better for this and will still be accepted as part of the initial consultation.

I have also attached some .kmz shape files. One includes our twelve proposed wards for Cannock Chase District Council and the other contains an attempt at some parish-level wards for Hednesford Town Council, Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council and Rugeley Town Council. You can view interactive versions the [district-level wards](#) and the [parish-level wards](#) on Google My Maps as well.

Please let me know if you have any queries regarding our submission or if you have any trouble with the files or links to our maps. We look forward to participating further in the next stage of the review later this year.

Many thanks,

Councillor Josh Newbury



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Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Cannock Chase District Council Labour Group

Joint submission to the initial consultation for the boundary review of Cannock Chase

Monday 1st August 2022

Introduction

This submission to the boundary review of the Cannock Chase District is made jointly by the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party ('the CLP') and the group of Labour and Labour and Co-operative councillors on Cannock Chase District Council ('the group'). In drafting this submission, the CLP and group sought the views of councillors, previous election candidates and regular party members to ensure it reflects opinion and local knowledge from across the district.

Alongside this written submission, we have prepared maps of both our [district-level](#) and [parish-level](#) proposals using Google My Maps. We have also provided the Boundary Commission with the shape files (in .kmz format).

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the group took part in the District Council's cross-party Boundary Review Working Group. They were pleased to see a great deal of common ground and consensus, particularly between the Labour and Conservative groups, reflecting similar thoughts on community boundaries and the most sensible proposals within the constraints of the review's parameters. This submission is broadly similar to that of the District Council, albeit with slightly different proposals within the Cannock area, which are detailed below, and a full set of proposals for the Rugeley and Brereton area which is absent from the Council's submission.

At the beginning of this review, the group expressed a strong preference for the retention of the system of electing 'by thirds' as opposed to 'all-out' elections every four years. Our rationale for this was set out in our submission regarding council size and we are pleased that the Boundary Commission concurred with our suggestion of 36 councillors. We feel that a uniform pattern of twelve three-member wards would serve the district best going forward and we understand from past reviews that this is the generally preferred position of the Boundary Commission when a council will elect by thirds.

Whilst a mixture of wards of different sizes can ensure good representation of smaller communities, we feel that this benefit is outweighed by the fact that voters in three-member wards are able to vote more frequently than those in two-member wards. This system can also be confusing to voters who may not understand why a district council election is being held but they are not able to vote.

We understand that one political party in the district is advocating for 36 single-member wards. Again, whilst small wards can have benefits, we feel that there are significant drawbacks to this system, for example where a ward is vacant those residents are left without any representation on the council. Additionally, single-member wards would make the system of electing by thirds essentially redundant as all residents would only be able to elect their district councillor once

every four years. Whilst this may be the preference of some political parties, a change to all-out elections can only be made by a resolution of full council. If this was going to happen, it ought to have been done well in advance of this review commencing but no such decision was taken, or even proposed.

We will begin the explanation of our submission at the southern end of the district and move northwards.

Explanation of district ward proposals

Norton Canes

Boundary

We propose that the boundary of the Norton Canes ward should remain as it is currently, coterminous with the Norton Canes parish.

Ward name

We suggest that the ward name remains 'Norton Canes' as this reflects the name of the ward's principal settlement and that of the coterminous parish. There is strong association with the name throughout the ward with all residents feeling that they are part of Norton Canes. There are small hamlets south of the A5 at Little Wyrley and west of Brownhills West along Commonsides (an extension of Albutts Road) but these form part of the Norton Canes parish.

Commentary

Norton Canes is a geographically discrete village within the district with its own identity and strong sense of community. There are clear areas of separation between neighbouring towns and villages, namely Heath Hayes, Burntwood and Brownhills, and residents are keen for these to be maintained. Many of the amenities and services required by a community are available within Norton Canes village itself, such as two primary schools, a secondary school, a medical centre with three general practice surgeries, a community centre with numerous local groups, a library, two churches and several pubs. There is a small but well used commercial area around the junction of Burntwood Road and Brownhills Road, known locally as 'the bridge' for historical reasons. Norton Canes has grown considerably over the last seven years, particularly along its southern edge, but many new residents comment that they feel the village has a welcome sense of community. Locals consider the village to be one community and consequently, no division of the district council ward would make sense to residents or be acceptable on community identity grounds.

There is potential for a new housing development within the Norton Canes ward that would effectively be an extension to Heath Hayes as opposed to Norton Canes. The site in question is bounded by Cannock Road / Lichfield Road (the A5190) to the north, Newlands Lane to the west and south, and Newlands Brook to the east. It has been suggested that this area should therefore be removed from the Norton Canes ward at this review. However, we would argue that development of the District Council's Local Plan is not yet at the stage where there is certainty over whether this housing development will go ahead in the next Local Plan period (up until 2036). We therefore believe that the best course of action is to keep the ward boundary as it is and for councillors to request a minor boundary change in the future should a new development commence before the next routine district ward boundary review is due.

The electoral figures provided to the Boundary Commission indicate that Norton Canes is currently the district's largest ward and will grow to 6,799 electors by 2027. This will sit comfortably within the 10% variance afforded and is very close to the 'target figure' of 6,862 electors per ward by 2027, assuming a uniform pattern of twelve three-member wards. Therefore, retaining the current boundaries of Norton Canes would also deliver robust electoral equality.

Heath Hayes and Wimblebury

Boundary

Our proposal for this ward matches that in the District Council's submission which itself reflected input from our group, amongst others. It is based on the current Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward, albeit enlarged due to that ward being much too small. The southern boundary with Norton Canes remains unchanged.

We propose a minor change to the current boundary between this ward and Hawks Green ward. Currently, a small group of houses that are part of the Meadow Way estate, constructed in the 1980s as part of the wider Hawks Green development, sit in the Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward. We feel that this is confusing and unnecessary and therefore propose that all homes on Meadow Way and Kensington Place be moved into the ward we have named 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green'. We also suggest that houses on Gorsemoor Road built at the same time are also transferred, those being numbers 90 to 100 and 241 to 257.

The northern boundary that cuts across Wimblebury Road remains the same. The eastern boundary of the ward, which currently does not stray far from Wimblebury Road, extends all the way across to the district's eastern boundary.

We propose that the western and north-western boundary of the ward is altered considerably, gaining significant numbers of electors from what is currently the Hednesford South ward. The currently split streets of Keys Park Road, Kings Croft, Watermint Close, Waterlily Close and Sweetbriar Way move into our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, as do Meadowsweet Way and Foxtail Way. The new Taylor Wimpey 'Cherry Blossom' development around Hednesford Town Football Club also moves into the ward, and so does both sides of Hill Street, up to its junction with Keys Park Road.

Ward name

We suggest the name 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury' which reflects the two communities contained within the ward. The current ward name includes 'East' after 'Heath Hayes', possibly to distinguish it from the whole parish. However, we feel that this is confusing given that there is no 'Heath Hayes West' ward, that being Hawks Green. Our sense is that when residents refer to "Heath Hayes", they are typically referring to the older part of the village which predated the Hawks Green development. The Labour representatives on the Council's Boundary Review Working Group raised this point and this was agreed to by other political groups. We are also keen to remove 'points on a compass' names for wards wherever possible as we feel they mean very little to our residents.

Commentary

We make the suggestion of substantial alterations to the boundary with Hednesford South ward partly to ensure electoral equality, but more importantly to address the issue of a very

problematic and confusing boundary between the Heath Hayes & Wimblebury and Hednesford parishes which bisects many cul-de-sacs. The current boundary was clearly drawn long before Keys Park Road, Brickworks Road and the developments off of them were built. By way of an example, on Watermint Close, numbers 5, 17 to 23 and 36 to 56 are in the Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward whilst numbers 1 to 3, 7 to 15 and 2 to 34 are in the Hednesford South ward. This confusing segmentation of residential roads is repeated on Sweetbriar Way, Waterlily Close and Kings Croft. We believe that this straight-line boundary through streets is bad for residents, councillors, election candidates and council staff alike. We therefore strongly urge the Boundary Commission to take heed of the cross-party consensus outlined above which has formed around a solution to rectify this issue.

We believe that most residents of Kings Croft, Watersmead Close, Watermint Close, Waterlily Close, Meadowsweet Way and Foxtail Way would feel part of Wimblebury whilst same is true of Heath Hayes for most residents of Sweetbriar Way. Most children in these areas attend Heath Hayes schools and residents would typically shop on Heath Hayes high street or the Hawks Green district centre. We therefore feel that these roads would fit best within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward.

Whilst moving the eastern boundary of the ward over to the district's eastern boundary does not affect any properties, it ensures several fields where potential future housing developments (which would extend Heath Hayes or Wimblebury) have been mooted by landowners fall within a Heath Hayes ward as opposed to a Hednesford ward. In doing this, the ward boundary is 'future-proofed' to account for potential additions to the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury area.

The addition of the new estate around Keys Park Stadium (home of Hednesford Town Football Club) and Hill Street into Heath Hayes and Wimblebury generated a lot of debate within the Council's working group. Initially, our draft proposals included the estate around the stadium and Hill Street within a Hednesford ward. However, using estimates of elector numbers provided by officers at the Council, it appears that this would leave Heath Hayes and Wimblebury much too small. We therefore agreed with the Conservative group's proposal that these areas should move into this ward. However, we felt that Hill Street should not be divided as was initially suggested and instead, both sides (up to Keys Park Road) should remain in the same ward. This was agreed by the Boundary Review Working Group with the consensus boundaries put forward in the Council's submission.

We agree with the Council's justification for this proposal: that many children living on the development attend Heath Hayes schools and the area has transport links into Cannock as well as Hednesford. As with the other Keys Park Road offshoots, many residents shop in Heath Hayes and Hawks Green. When it comes to Hill Street, we feel that, along with Hednesford Road in Heath Hayes, it forms a continuous route linking Hednesford with Five Ways Island. We would encourage the Boundary Commission's staff to drive along this route to observe this. We feel that many residents of Hill Street would look to Heath Hayes for services and amenities as opposed to Hednesford town centre which is further afield.

We feel that the Council's proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, which we have mirrored, strikes a good balance between incorporating areas which identify with and look to Heath Hayes whilst also ensuring an appropriate number of electors. Whilst it may be on the small side to begin with, a new 400-home development planned east of Wimblebury Road in the near future should add around 720 electors to the ward.

Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green

Boundary

This is another ward whose boundary matches the Council's submission, albeit with a minor change around Eastern Way which does not affect any properties. This ward includes all of the current Hawks Green ward with some additions. We have already explained the addition of homes from Gorsemoor Road, Meadow Way and Kensington Place in the previous section. At the northern boundary, we suggest that all of Keys Close should move into this ward; currently, there is a confusing split between the Hawks Green and Hednesford South wards which, as explained above, needs to be addressed. Similarly, some homes on Sapphire Drive and Turquoise Grove are currently in the Hednesford South ward which is a ridiculous situation given that they sit at a dead end of the Sidon Hill Way estate and are clearly part of the Hawks Green area. Given that the remainder of Keys Close is added to this ward, Farm Close also needs to be added.

The western boundary moves westwards, crossing the railway line, to follow Old Hednesford Road in Cannock down to Lichfield Road and then following this street, but not taking in any of its houses. Therefore, the Pebble Mill Drive estate, The Hills, the Stoney Lea Road estate, Hollies Avenue, Hollyoak Way, Hollies Park Road as well as several industrial estates move into this ward. We have moved the boundary around the junction of Eastern Way and Old Hednesford Road to ensure that this new western section of the ward is contiguous with Hawks Green; it would not be contiguous along Lichfield Road due to houses on both sides of that road being in a different ward.

Ward name

We propose the name 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green' for this ward. Initially, we agreed with the Council's submission of retaining simply 'Hawks Green' as the ward name. Hawks Green has referred to the area now covered by the housing estates built in the 1980s since before it was developed. Whilst further development has taken place since, such as Wrens Croft, Robins Croft and the Newlands Park estate (Pheasant Way and offshoots), these are linked to Hawks Green via Hayes Way and would therefore relate to the name.

Feedback that one of our local councillors has received from residents of the Pebble Mill Drive estate is that they do not want to lose 'Cannock' from the name of the ward they live in. We are therefore putting forward an alternative which would retain the clear link to Cannock as well as to Hawks Green which makes up the bulk of the ward. 'Pebble Mill' refers to the Pebble Mill Drive estate which forms the vast majority of the Cannock side of the proposed ward.

Commentary

We feel that the estates which make up the Hawks Green area have strong links with one another and should therefore be kept together. The main roads of Heath Way and Hayes Way connect estates with one another and with the Hawks Green district centre which includes a large supermarket, restaurants, shops, a pub and a community centre.

As with the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, keeping Hawks Green together necessitates the addition of other nearby areas. We feel that adding the entirety of Keys Close, Sapphire Drive and Turquoise Grove makes complete sense as the current boundaries divide these cul-de-sacs; again, we do not believe that it would be acceptable for this situation to be left unaddressed by this review. In terms of the roads off of Old Hednesford Road, we feel that there are links between this area and Hawks Green. For example, Hawks Green Lane provides a vehicular link, one of the

few roads which crosses the railway line. Hawks Green Industrial Estate lies on the Cannock side of the railway line, as does the Council's 'Hawks Green Depot', half of which has recently been developed into the road named 'The Hills'. A more modern link between the two areas comes with the McArthurGlen West Midlands designer outlet village which lies in the unparished area of Cannock but is clearly visible from the Newlands Park estate on the other side of Eastern Way.

Cannock Longford and Bridgtown

Boundary

This is a slightly enlarged version of the current Cannock South ward. The roads added to the ward are Beech Tree Lane, St Lukes Close, Oakwoods, Ivy Close, Dartmouth Avenue, South Close and the St James estate (St James Road, Maple Crescent, The Willows, Birch Avenue and Elms Drive). Other than this change, the other boundaries, including retaining both sides of Lichfield Road to the south of the designer outlet village, remain the same.

Ward name

The name for this ward has been the subject of some debate, but our suggestion is 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown'. There seems to be wide consensus around the need for the ward name to include Bridgtown as this is a parish in its own right and was a distinct community separate from Cannock until the latter grew substantially. Consequently, residents and businesses in Bridgtown are still very keen to maintain their own identity. There has been criticism of the current 'Cannock South' ward name as this does not give equal status to Bridgtown but instead relegates it to simply an area of Cannock.

As previously mentioned, we would like to see the end of 'points on a compass' ward names as they mean little to our residents, so we are putting forward a suggestion which approximately corresponds the area of Cannock covered by this ward. 'Longford' is a historical name for the area around Longford Road and is still a name used by residents and businesses today; the 'Longford estate' is often referred to by locals. We believe the name Longford is locally identifiable and one of the clearer areas of the Cannock unparished area, along with Rumer Hill (also in this ward) and Chadsmoor. Whilst not all of Longford Road is in this ward, most of it is and the character of the houses north of Oaks Drive and Bideford Way is very different to those south of that junction which lie in this ward. We therefore feel that 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown' is a good fit for the boundaries suggested for this ward.

Alternatives to 'Longford' could include 'Ascot', a nod to the Ascot Drive estate which makes up a significant portion of the ward, and 'Rumer Hill' which refers to a discrete area east of the railway line and south of Lichfield Road. These alternatives were discussed at the Boundary Review Working Group but it was felt that they refer to fairly small areas within the town and therefore may not be appropriate as a name for the wider ward.

Commentary

We feel that this ward would be a good fit on the grounds of community cohesion as its residents have a lot in common. As the ward is geographically compact, residents tend to use the same shops and schools, particularly Bridgtown Primary School and Longford Primary School. The vast majority of residents in the ward are linked with the town centre by either Wolverhampton Road and Avon Road (the A4601) or Walsall Road. We feel that the town centre and Eastern Way (the A460) provide clear delineations which make sense as northern and eastern boundaries.

Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow

Boundary

The southern boundary of this ward follows the route outlined above, generally the existing boundary between the existing Cannock West and Cannock South wards aside from the roads listed above which we suggest are transferred. Most of the town centre remains in the Cannock Longford and Bridgtown ward, with the Market Place and High Green areas in this ward.

The eastern side of the ward, to the north of the town centre, contains all of the areas currently in the Cannock West ward, along with a number of additions. The entirety of Stafford Road (the A34) moves into this ward, rather than stopping at the junction with Westbourne Avenue. The boundary also moves up to the southern side of Cemetery Road, meaning that the Bevan Lee estate, Mulberry Road and Fallowfield, some of Pye Green Road, Broomhill Bank and Ashleigh Croft, the northern side of Old Fallow Road, Old Fallow Avenue and Amelia Court are also added.

Further east, the boundary moves across to Old Hednesford Road, as far as Crab Lane. Therefore, Heath Gap Road and the Walnut Drive estate are also added to this ward. The only difference between our submission for this ward and the Council's submission is the Sankey Road area. Our submission for this ward extends its boundary along Cannock Road and then down Burns Street, meaning that Sankey Road, Smilie Place and Hardie Green are incorporated into this ward; the Council's submission puts this area into the ward to the north (Chadsmoor).

Ward name

As with the Cannock Longford and Bridgtown ward name, there was a considerable amount of discussion over this ward's name, with several ideas being put forward but little consensus reached. Initially, our group suggested 'Cannock Shoal Hill' to the Boundary Review Working Group. 'Shoal Hill' is a reference to the hill and common of the same name just outside of the district's western boundary. The Shoal Hill Tavern in this area is well known and popular with local residents. A Conservative councillor who once lived in the area confirmed that many residents refer to the part of Cannock in the vicinity of Old Penkridge Road, New Penkridge Road and Hatherton Road as 'Shoal Hill'.

However, the difficulty with the 'Shoal Hill' name is that it only refers to that particular part of the ward and so residents in other parts, particularly those on the other side of Stafford Road, may not feel any connection to it. Therefore, we consulted our councillors and members in the Cannock area who suggested 'Old Fallow' as a possible name for the eastern side of the ward. This is another name which was historically associated with the area around Old Fallow Road.

We feel that a combination of these two 'area names' within Cannock would be a good fit for this ward.

Commentary

There is a long-established precedent for a ward within Cannock which straddles the town centre and/or the leisure centre and golf course, which constitute a large green space in the town. The current Cannock West ward does this and so did the former Parkside ward. The latter included both the New Penkridge Road area and the Bevan Lee estate and was seen as coherent due to common links into the town centre and children attending the same secondary school.

We would argue that the electoral figures mean that Cannock will be too small for four three-member wards and too large for three three-member wards without any territory from the Cannock unparished area moving into neighbouring wards. This is why we suggest extending the Hawks Green ward to Old Hednesford Road. We feel that the three Cannock wards in our proposals broadly reflect different areas of the town with which residents identify. Whilst this Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow ward combined several of these, we feel that it is a coherent ward which conforms to the electoral parameters set out for this review.

Chadsmoor

Boundary

The proposed Chadsmoor ward stretches across areas currently split between the existing Cannock North and Cannock East wards. Its southern boundary follows the northern boundary of Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow described above. Its eastern boundary is the railway line. The northern boundary constitutes the existing boundary between the Cannock unparished area and the Hednesford parish. However, we suggest two slight alterations to correct minor issues along the Belt Road boundary. Firstly, we propose moving Apollo Close into this Chadsmoor ward as it is clearly part of the wider 'planets estate' i.e. Mercury Road, Saturn Road, etc. Secondly, we propose ensuring all properties on Festival Mews, a very small cul-de-sac off of Belt Road, fall in the Hednesford Green Heath ward; Festival Mews is currently split between two wards.

Ward name

Unlike the other two Cannock wards, the name for this ward is uncontroversial and has strong recognition amongst the community. The area residents would typically describe as 'Chadsmoor' is covered by this ward. The Chadsmoor name can be seen in a local primary school and a nursery school within this ward, as well as numerous local businesses.

Commentary

Whilst some residents might describe Chadsmoor as the northern end of Cannock, most Chadsmoor residents see it has a distinct community in its own right. It developed separately from either Cannock or Hednesford and consequently, there are many local services and amenities, particularly around the commercial area of Cannock Road (between its junction with Moss Street and Burns Street) which forms a local centre.

We have opted to deviate slightly from the Council's submission by not including the Sankey Road area in this Chadsmoor proposal. There are two main reasons why we have done this. Firstly, the Council's estimates for elector numbers indicated that their proposed boundaries for this ward could potentially be higher than the 10% tolerance either side of 6,862 electors per ward which we are working to. As Chadsmoor is a deprived area, councillors representing the area typically have a higher than average caseload. Therefore, making it the largest ward in the district could exacerbate this and lead to challenges for councillors to manage this workload. Secondly, the feedback we received from our councillors and CLP members was that the Sankey Road area looks more to Cannock than it does to Chadsmoor and it would therefore fit better within a Cannock ward.

The ward boundary we have suggested would also ensure the two-tier form of local government in our county is not confusing for residents given that this ward would be entirely contained within the Chadsmoor county council division. Whilst boundaries between the two will not match exactly,

they would be very similar. There is precedent for this type of similar district wards and county divisions which share the same name in several other two-tier areas, such as Norwich.

Hednesford Green Heath

Boundary

We agree with the Council's proposal for this ward i.e. that aside from the minor changes to Apollo Close and Festival Mews along Belt Road, it should retain its current boundaries.

Ward name

We propose that as this ward would retain its current boundaries, its name should remain 'Hednesford Green Heath'. 'Green Heath' is a name which has long been associated with the western side of the town, as demonstrated by the existence of Green Heath Road. Other alternatives have been suggested, such as 'Hednesford Valley' or 'Pye Green Valley'. Whilst these names do link with the ward, we feel that they refer specifically to the new housing estate constructed on Lamplight Way and offshoots and the open green space adjacent to it which is known locally as 'the Skelly'. We certainly believe that the three Hednesford wards we are proposing should all include 'Hednesford' within their name to reflect the town's distinct identity.

Commentary

We feel that the existing Hednesford Green Heath ward uses clear dividing lines within the town, such as the railway line and Green Heath Road. The cohesiveness of this ward has only increased over time with the large number of new housing developments which have been built in the ward. All of the housing growth in Hednesford over the last decade or so has been concentrated in this ward, meaning that small new communities have sprung within the area. The extent of housing growth in this ward means that despite it currently being a two-member ward, it would warrant three councillors following this review, despite the overall size of the Council being reduced.

Initially, we tried to map some alternatives to the existing boundaries of this ward, but we found they necessitated the division of Bradbury Lane and its offshoots, which seems incongruous and was something our group and members of the CLP felt would not be acceptable to local residents.

Hednesford Pye Green

Boundary

This ward is largely based on the existing Hednesford North ward but with several additions to the southern end of the ward to ensure better electoral equality. We propose that the boundary be extended down to Stafford Lane and also take in the Essex Drive estate plus Kingfisher Drive and Pendle Hill.

We also proposed some minor changes to the boundary over the Hednesford Hills Nature Reserve so that as much of that area is included in the ward featuring its name as possible. It is not possible to remove the entire nature reserve from this ward due to there being homes at the very end of Valley Road.

Ward name

Given that we feel 'Hednesford North' means very little to residents, we would like to see an alternative name for this ward. Given that our proposed boundary extends quite far south within

Hednesford, this would no longer be an appropriate description for the ward in any case. The suggestion we agreed on is 'Hednesford Pye Green'. As with areas like Bridgtown and Chadsmoor, Pye Green has its own identity and its own community centre which houses many local groups as well as Hednesford Town Council. It would therefore be a positive development to have Pye Green included in a ward name. The proposed ward boundaries include both Pye Green Community Centre and the iconic local landmark of Pye Green Tower.

Commentary

A ward based around the key roads of Rugeley Road, Bradbury Lane and Green Heath Road makes sense both geographically and on community cohesion grounds. We therefore feel that minimal change is the best approach when it comes to this ward. Having said that, the current southern boundary of the ward in the area south of Market Street is somewhat confusing, particularly the division of Eskrett Street and Cheviot Rise. The proposal put forward in our submission, and that of the Council, addresses this situation and would provide a more coherent boundary between this ward and the ward immediately to the south.

Given that Green Heath Road separates the older part of Hednesford from newer developments, we have retained this as a clear dividing line. As previously mentioned, we have kept all of Bradbury Lane and the cul-de-sacs off of it together as we feel there is no natural break within this road which could facilitate a division. Additionally, many of the roads on the northern side of Bradbury Lane were built at a similar time, all far earlier than the estates to the south, such as the Corsican Drive estate and the Bond Way estate.

In an initial draft of this ward, we included the entirety of the Brindley Heath parish in this ward as we felt that it would be advantageous both from the perspective of not unnecessarily dividing parishes and also electoral equality. However, other members of the Boundary Review Working Group felt that this placed houses very close to Rugeley into a Hednesford ward. Given that there are relatively few electors in the Brindley Heath parish, we have agreed that the current boundary across Cannock Chase should be retained.

Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley

Boundary

This ward combines much of the existing Hednesford South ward with all of the electors from the existing Rawnsley ward, albeit not all of that ward's land area, as explained in the section on our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward.

As already mentioned, significant numbers of properties have been removed at the ward's southern end with the vast majority going into Heath Hayes and Wimblebury. Therefore, in line with the Council's submission, we propose that the new southern boundary of the ward should be at Lower Road and the Sharon Way estate, with a small row of houses further south on Hill Street and Meadway Close also falling in this ward.

At its western end, the boundary follows the railway line, then a section of the Rising Brook and then down Stafford Lane to the double roundabouts, meaning the Stagborough Way estate stays in this ward. The whole area of Hednesford known as Church Hill (named after the road which passes through it) is also drawn in this ward.

We have included all of the Rawnsley ward, except for the fields to the south of Cannock Wood Road and Sevens Road for reasons set out in the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury section. However, we have chosen not to draw the boundary directly along these roads as this would unintentionally exclude a row of eight or so houses on the edge of Prospect Village. We have therefore drawn the boundary slightly wider around nearby fields in order to encompass these houses and Holly House Farm within this ward.

Ward name

We agree with the Boundary Review Working Group's suggestion of 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley'. 'Hednesford Hills' refers to the nature reserve and raceway which are almost entirely contained within this ward. 'Rawnsley' covers the cluster of villages within the existing ward of the same name. Although only one of these villages is called Rawnsley, it would not be possible to list all of them, so we suggest continued use of 'Rawnsley' to refer to all of them for the purposes of this ward name.

If for any reason the Boundary Commission seems it not possible to use this ward name, we would suggest 'Hednesford Church Hill and Rawnsley' as a 'second choice' alternative.

Commentary

When we first considered a pattern of wards for this part of the district, we determined early on that it would not be appropriate or rational to split up the five villages (Littleworth, Rawnsley, Hazel Slade, Prospect Village and Cannock Wood) which make up the existing Rawnsley ward. Prospect Village and Cannock Wood are geographically separate communities which are linked to the wider Hednesford area by Littleworth Road and Rawnsley Road. The other three villages are largely formed around Littleworth Road and Cannock Wood Street.

Using the Boundary Commission's suggestion of identifying dividing roads and unifying roads, we determined that Littleworth Road is a unifying road for the five villages and for the southern end of Hednesford which is also in this ward. We are therefore proposing a ward which includes the entire length of Littleworth Road, as opposed to seeing it arbitrarily divided between two wards as it is now and as it is in the submissions from other political groups. Littleworth Road forms one continuous development from Hednesford through to the edge of the urban area at Rawnsley and Hazel Slade. We therefore feel it would make sense for it to be unified into one ward for the first time in the Council's history.

The Rugeley and Brereton area

As evidenced by the lack of 'lines on the map' north of the Chase in the Council's submission, there was disagreement between political groups over fundamental points, particularly whether the former Rugeley Power Station site, due to developed into around 1,000 homes, should be drawn into a Rugeley ward or remain in Brereton and Ravenhill ward. There was also disagreement over the extent of change to the existing Western Springs ward which should take place.

We spent considerable time consulting residents and CLP members in Rugeley as this is arguably the most complex area for this boundary review due to the unique circumstances of huge housing growth taking place in the near future. Ultimately, the overwhelming view amongst our CLP members is that the power station site should be added to the Western Springs ward as opposed to remaining within Brereton and Ravenhill for reasons we will explain in detail below.

Brereton and Ravenhill

Boundary

In order to ensure the new development on the power station site does not fall within Brereton and Ravenhill ward, we propose that the area north of the Trent and Mersey Canal is transferred to Western Springs ward. However, there is a small development (Bridgewater Road) which is linked to Armitage Road by The Mossley; we suggest that it would not make any sense for these houses to be removed from Brereton and Ravenhill.

We also propose to add the 'Pear Tree estate' to Brereton and Ravenhill; this estate is made up of the Queensway and all of the streets which link to it. In order to ensure this estate is contiguous with the rest of our proposed Brereton and Ravenhill ward, the boundary travels north up Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane, then down Horse Fair as far as the railway line, then along the railway line until it meets the canal. This means that Devall Close is added into the ward along with the Pear Tree estate.

Beyond the Co-op store on the Queensway, the boundary leaves Hednesford Road and follows a footpath which is situated behind Landor Crescent and goes all the way down to Stile Cop Road which is the ward's southern boundary. However, it is important to note that we have added a small kink in the boundary where it diverts away from this footpath for a short stretch. This is to ensure that a section at the end of Durham Drive is not inadvertently added into this ward.

Ward name

We propose that the ward name should remain unchanged. Our proposed ward still includes both the Brereton and Ravenhill areas. Our feeling is that the addition of the Pear Tree estate need not alter the ward name as the estate has footpath links with Ravenhill. Additionally, the Pear Tree estate, along with the whole of the existing Hagley ward, is included with the Brereton and Ravenhill county council division.

Commentary

Our members in the Rugeley and Brereton area feel that the new community on the power station site will look to Rugeley as opposed to Brereton due to the clear vehicular links (along the A51) and cycleway and footpath links which are planned between the new development and the town centre. Between the new houses and the existing Brereton and Ravenhill settlements there will be the A road, a large industrial estate and the canal. This means it is very unlikely that new residents will access services and amenities in Brereton and Ravenhill; they are instead likely to rely on what is available in Rugeley. On this basis, we feel that it is most appropriate for the power station site to be taken out of this ward and added to Western Springs. Indications from figures provided to us by the Council are that this would also produce a more even split of electors between the three wards we are proposed north of the Chase. Keeping the power station in the Brereton and Ravenhill ward would likely put its electorate towards the top end of the 10% tolerance range by 2027, whereas this would not be the case for the modified Western Springs ward we are proposing.

In terms of adding the Pear Tree estate into this ward, we feel that this would be the most effective way of ensuring electoral equality whilst not compromising community cohesion. There are footpath links between the Pear Tree estate and the rest of the ward and the homes on the Pear Tree estate were built at a similar time and by the same organisation (the Coal Board) as many homes in Ravenhill.

Western Springs

Boundary

Our proposed Western Springs ward, in a nutshell, combines the existing Hagley ward, minus the Pear Tree estate and Devall Close, with the power station site and the areas of the existing Western Springs ward which lie east of Western Springs Road and Wolseley Road.

We have also added in three cul-de-sacs which come directly off of Wolseley Road as this would make much more sense than keeping them in the Etching Hill and the Heath ward as they have no direct vehicular access to the rest of that ward, other than down Wolseley Road. These cul-de-sacs are Richardson Way, Albany Drive and Howell Mews.

Ward name

We propose retaining the 'Western Springs' ward name. Western Springs Road is a strong feature in the town, and we believe that the name carries importance due to Rugeley being twinned with the city of Western Springs in Illinois, USA.

Commentary

Although our proposed Western Springs ward may look like an odd T shape on a map, we believe that this reflects the general layout of the town's main roads which roughly form a T shape, with the town centre being the meeting point of the roads. Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane form a strong north-south link between the town centre and the southern edge of the town. The A51 and Western Springs Road / Wolseley Road form clear east-west routes, linking Rugeley with Stafford and Lichfield.

From our perspective, Rugeley provides a clear example of the difference between dividing roads and unifying roads. We see Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane, which pass through the centre of the existing Hagley ward, as a unifying road for this southern part of Rugeley. The fact that the roads have multiple access points, providing a link for numerous estates of various ages, indicates that they are a unifying feature which we believe should be retained as far as possible. We have therefore drawn as much of the Hagley ward as possible into this Western Springs ward, as opposed to carving it in half along Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane. Although we have had to use a stretch of this main road for the boundary with Brereton and Ravenhill, this affects very few properties. Unlike the Conservative group's proposals, we have kept the Cardigan Avenue and Rutland Avenue estate together with the western side of the Hagley ward.

On the other hand, we view Western Springs Road as a dividing road and therefore feel that it would serve as an effective boundary between the two Rugeley wards we are proposing. From driving down Western Springs Road, or even simply viewing it on a map, it is evident that there are no vehicular access points along a large stretch between the junction with Green Lane and the roundabout where it meets Wolseley Road. Even Plovers Rise, which serves a number of large estates, is directly parallel to Western Springs Road for quite a distance due to a lack of access points. There are a few pedestrian crossings, but one of these is an 'up and over' walkway more akin to a railway crossing which demonstrates what a physical barrier Western Springs Road is. The existing Western Springs ward straddles this long, junctionless section of Western Springs Road which does not make much sense from a community cohesion perspective. We therefore cannot agree with the Conservative proposal to simply add the power station site into the existing Western Springs ward. We feel that a more substantial change is needed, one which recognises Western Springs Road as a physical barrier which would constitute an effective ward boundary.

We also feel that it is very important to keep wards contiguous and as compact as possible i.e. not made up of disjointed parts. One proposal brought forward by the Conservative group, in order to facilitate their proposed Western Springs ward mentioned above, was to combine the western side of the Hagley ward with the existing Etching Hill and the Heath ward. To our CLP members, this would not make sense or promote good local governance because it would not be possible to travel from the Burnthill Lane area and The Birches estate of Hagley ward to the Etching Hill area without either driving through the Western Springs ward, or driving a long way out of Rugeley and coming back in via Slitting Mill. This proposal therefore combines two geographically detached parts of Rugeley which may work in terms of electorate numbers but is not logical on community cohesion grounds. We believe that our proposals strike the right balance between retaining unifying roads as far as possible and using dividing roads elsewhere.

Etching Hill and the Heath

Boundary

Our proposed Etching Hill and the Heath ward includes all of the existing ward of the same name, minus the three cul-de-sacs off of Wolseley Road outlined in the previous section. We have added the area of the existing Western Springs ward which lies west of Western Springs Road into this ward. Slitting Mill remains in this ward, as does the Chase Side ward of Brindley Heath parish.

Ward name

We do not feel that our additions to the existing ward warrant a change of name and we therefore propose that 'Etching Hill and the Heath' remains the ward name.

Commentary

We have already made the point around Western Springs Road being a physical dividing line, which is pertinent to this ward. The only point to add in support of our proposed boundary for this ward relates to Slitting Mill. Feedback we received from our members is that the main route into Rugeley for residents of Slitting Mill is Hagley Road. Currently, this road and its offshoots are in the Western Springs ward, meaning that Slitting Mill is somewhat detached from the rest of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward. In our proposals, we have drawn Slitting Mill and Hagley Road into the same ward which we feel better reflects Slitting Mill's place in Rugeley.

Explanation of parish ward proposals

Due to the complex nature of warding some of the district's larger parishes, we have opted to make an attempt at drawing some parish-level ward boundaries for certain areas as we know the Boundary Commission will have to do this as part of this review.

Hednesford parish

Our thoughts for the Hednesford parish are fairly straight forward. We propose that there should be three parish wards match the parts of the district wards of 'Hednesford Green Heath', 'Hednesford Pye Green' and 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley' which lie within the Hednesford parish boundary. We suggest that they are named 'Green Heath', 'Pye Green' and 'Hednesford Hills' respectively. We would suggest not dropping 'Hednesford' from 'Hednesford Hills' as this is the name of the nature reserve and a ward simply named 'Hills' may not make sense to voters.

In terms of the portions of Hednesford parish which we have suggested should move into the 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury' and 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green' wards for district council purposes, we would propose that they form a new Hednesford Town Council ward named 'Keys Park'. This name refers to the Keys Park Stadium and Keys Park Road which link these areas together.

Brereton and Ravenhill parish

A split within the Brereton and Ravenhill parish would be necessitated if the Boundary Commission accepts the arguments for adding the power station site to some form of Western Springs ward. This is the only division that we would propose, however, as residents in the existing Brereton and Ravenhill community do not wish to be divided into parish wards.

Based on the forecasted electorate of 1,800 on the power station site, we would suggest that the 'Power Station Estate' ward should elect three of the council's thirteen parish councillors and the 'Brereton and Ravenhill' ward should therefore elect ten. We do not have a more eloquent ward name than 'Power Station Estate' at the moment; we would suggest that the developer's marketing name for the estate may be adopted in the future.

Rugeley parish

Given that Rugeley is a very large parish with nineteen town councillors, we would suggest that it should be divided into more wards than simply the three which would be necessitated by our district council ward proposals.

Clearly, a new 'Pear Tree Estate' ward would need to be created with boundary matching the portion of Rugeley parish we are suggesting should move into the Brereton and Ravenhill ward. The estimated electorate we have received from the Council for this area indicates that it should warrant two town councillors.

Within our proposed Western Springs district ward, we propose the creation of two Rugeley Town Council wards: 'Western Springs' and 'Hagley'. The dividing line between these two wards would be Western Springs Road. This means that all of the existing Hagley ward, minus the Pear Tree estate as described previously, would be a separate ward and then the remaining area of Western Springs would also form a parish ward. The estimated figures we were given suggest that our proposed 'Hagley' ward would have three town councillors and the 'Western Springs' ward would have either four or five, depending on the figures compared to the 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill' ward we will come on to.

Within our proposed Etching Hill and the Heath district ward, we proposed three wards for the purposes of town council elections. The first, at the northern end of the ward, would be called 'Springfields' as it would primarily comprise of what locals refer to as the 'Springfields estate' i.e. the cul-de-sacs ringed by Springfields Road, Crabtree Way, Jennie Lee Way, School Road and Plovers Rise. This proposed ward would also include the Forest Hills Primary School and some other estates in the immediate vicinity of the Springfields estate. This ward should be just right for two town councillors.

The bulk of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward would form a parish ward called 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill'. The main roads linking estates within this ward together are Plovers Rise, Crabtree Way, Green Lane and Woodcock Road. 'Green Lane' was chosen for the ward name as it is the

main road through this area. However, we would be happy for a less functional, more interesting name to be used instead. We feel that 'Slitting Mill' should be featured in the ward name as it is a distinct community with its own sense of identity. As previously mentioned, we feel that any parish ward containing Slitting Mill should also contain Hagley Road. This ward would have at least five town councillors, possibly six depending on the exact electoral figures.

Finally, we suggest that the remainder of the Etching Hill and the Heath district ward forms a town council ward simply called 'Etching Hill' in reference to the hill itself, which is located off of Mount Road. Our members felt that the roads we have drawn into this ward have a lot in common as many of them predate the large, sprawling development which makes up much of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward. There is a lot of history to this part of Rugeley and the association with the 'Etching Hill' name goes back very far. Similarly to the 'Springfields' and 'Pear Tree Estate' wards, this ward appears to be a good size for two town councillors.

Below are two tables which provide the 'workings out' for our proposed Rugeley and Brereton parish wards:

Proposed Rugeley Town Council wards				
<i>District council ward</i>	<i>Town council ward</i>	<i>Approximate (current) electors</i>	<i>Number of town councillors</i>	<i>Electors per town councillor</i>
Etching Hill and the Heath	Etching Hill	1,461	2	731
	Springfields	1,557	2	779
	Green Lane with Slitting Mill	3,879	5	776
Western Springs	Western Springs	3,251	5	650
	Hagley	2,008	3	670
Brereton and Ravenhill	Pear Tree Estate	1,307	2	654

Proposed Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council wards				
<i>District council ward</i>	<i>Parish council ward</i>	<i>Approximate (projected) electors</i>	<i>Number of parish councillors</i>	<i>Parish councillors per elector</i>
Western Springs	Power Station Estate	1,800	3	600
Brereton and Ravenhill	Brereton and Ravenhill	5,530	10	553