

Worcester Constituency Labour Party: Warding arrangements submission for Worcester City Council – Response to Local Government Boundary Commission England Review of Worcester

1. Cathedral Ward

- a) We support the division of the existing Cathedral Ward into two, two-member Wards – City Centre and Fort Royal, as set out in Worcester City Council's submission to the Boundary Commission. This will bring about the electoral equality sought. Two distinct community identities will also be reinforced by creating a City Centre Ward centred around Diglis, Britannia Square and the city centre and a Fort Royal Ward with the strong community identity centred on Wyld's Lane, Stanley Road, Lowesmoor and Shrub Hill and the Woolhope and Bolston area.
- b) We would suggest that the two properties at 21 and 23 Pitchcroft Lane be moved from Cathedral Ward to Arboretum Ward where all other properties in Pitchcroft Lane are located. Streets to the north, south and east of 21 and 23 Pitchcroft Lane are all in Arboretum Ward. Pitchcroft forms the western boundary. This would rectify an anomaly of the last boundary review. It would add 4 electors to the Arboretum total, based on the current electoral register.

2. Warndon and Gorse Hill Wards

Warndon Ward and Gorse Hill Ward are both small in terms of electoral equality, falling short of the required number of electors by -12% and -15% respectively.

We propose merging these two Wards to create a new Ward with three members. This would address the issue of electoral equality, with the new Ward achieving 2725 electors per councillor.

We further believe that the merging of the existing Warndon and Gorse Hill Wards will lead to more effective representation, by reuniting a community split at the last boundary review. We would offer the following evidence for this assertion:

- a) Much of the residential area that comprises Gorse Hill is made up of former local authority housing built as part of the development of Warndon in the 1950s.
- b) People living in these residential areas identify themselves as living in Warndon and not in 'Gorse Hill'. Gorse Hill is not recognised as a place.
- c) Community facilities that serve both of the current Wards include the name Warndon (eg the Warndon Community Hub which is actually located in Gorse Hill Ward)
- d) Residents of both Wards access the main GP practice and Health Centre located in Warndon Ward
- e) Residents from both Wards access the local library and Learning Centre at the Fairfield Centre in Warndon Ward

- f) The combined area is served by four primary schools with some overlap in catchment areas. Gorse Hill primary school became Hollymount academy some years ago, the name reflecting its location on Hollymount Road. Many children living in Gorse Hill Ward attend primary schools located in Warndon, especially Carnforth School and Oasis Academy Warndon (formerly Warndon Infants and Juniors)
- g) The current Gorse Hill Ward includes a significant part of the area local people identify as Tolladine, the area of largely former local authority housing along Tolladine Road. Few living here identify with Gorse Hill as a place and most would describe themselves as living in Tolladine.
- h) The merged Wards would have the same boundaries as the County Council Division
- i) Merging the two Wards to create one three-member Ward, will enable the target of 35 councillors to be achieved, assuming the split of Cathedral Ward into City Centre and Fort Royal Wards goes ahead.

We would change the name of the new Ward to **‘Warndon and Tolladine’** to better reflect the identity of the communities served by the new Ward. This also reflects the way in which agencies organise their services in the area and in particular the ‘Warndon and Tolladine Forum, which brings together agencies (including Worcester City Council) and local residents to identify issues and potential solutions.

3. Other Wards

We are not proposing any changes to the other Wards in Worcester.

Joy Squires
Chair, Worcester Constituency Labour Party
23 July 2022

Worcester City Council

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Comment text:

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