

Derby City Council

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Comment text:

A submission on behalf of Councillor Mick Barker, Councillor Matthew Eyre and Councillor Robin Wood – Derby City Councillors for the Oakwood Ward As Councillors for the Oakwood Ward of Derby City Council, we outline below our thoughts on your draft proposals regarding the Oakwood Ward Boundary. As you may recall, we previously supported the boundaries of Oakwood Ward remaining as they are, aside from a minor change on the A608 where we, alongside colleagues, supported a row of houses being considered to move to the Derwent Ward. However, we understood that compromises would be made and changes to the Oakwood Ward may be necessary, and your draft proposals show that changes to the Oakwood Ward are proposed. As such, we outline our thoughts on your draft proposals, which we have unanimously decided to support in full. First, we would like to express our appreciation for your acknowledging contributions from our residents at the initial consultation stage and drawing a boundary which keeps the 'Western Oakwood' area within the Oakwood Ward. The suggestion that this area be removed from the Oakwood Ward and placed into another ward, be that 'Breadsall Hilltop' or any other ward, evoked significant upset and anger amongst our residents, a response we appreciate being noted in your report, as residents who have contacted us since publication of your report felt they were listened to. The damage to our community cohesion and the confusion around 'how do I live in Oakwood but not Oakwood Ward' that a boundary line in this area could have caused would have been incredibly significant. Your report listed a number of reasons this was deemed unsuitable, including the houses facing away from each other and being built decades apart. There are dozens more reasons we could list, including our belief that 'Oakwood Chef' and 'Oakwood Cars' should remain in Oakwood Ward alongside 'Oakwood Community Centre' and 'Oakwood Fish Bar,' but we feel our point has already been fully explained. We are grateful that this split is not in your draft proposals and hope it will also be absent from your final proposals. Given your highlighting of the time at which houses were built, we thus understand the reasoning behind Red Row's Dale Acre Way Estate at the new Bishops Drive/Mansfield Road Roundabout being proposed to join Oakwood Ward. We are in support of this boundary change, made possible by 'Breadsall Hilltop' becoming a two-member ward rather than the current three-member 'Derwent Ward,' as the properties on this newly built estate are identical to 'Western Oakwood' properties and the new properties at the Lime Tree Court Estate, constructed in 2018, which is part of the existing Oakwood Ward. As we discuss the potential for a 'Breadsall Hilltop' electoral ward, which you have decided ought to be a two-councillor ward, as Chaddesden West and Chaddesden East would be, whilst Oakwood and Spondon remain three-councillor electoral wards, we feel obligated to comment on the loss of the 'OK5' Electoral District around the Matlock Road area. As Ward Councillors, we are naturally saddened to see this district leave Oakwood. As a Councillor Team, we have always sought to ensure this area of Oakwood, which does not have Oakwood postal addresses, is included in our ward and receives the same attention and effort as other districts which do have Oakwood postal addresses. However, we acknowledge the sensibility behind this district being the district to vacate our ward and be located in the 'Breadsall Hilltop' Ward. For a variety of reasons, including but not limited to postal addresses and a transient population, the 'OK5' area has never developed a strong Oakwood community identity in the way that other nearby areas, which ironically are not currently in the Oakwood Ward, have done. Tideswell Road, Shirley Road, Youlgreave Close and Winster Road are so geographically and demographically different to the majority of the 'Oakwood Neighbourhood Estate' that residents on these streets realising and understanding that they are in the same electoral ward as Ramblers Drive, Smalley Drive and Gilderdale Way has always proven incredibly difficult, and near impossible in many cases. As local councillors, we are rarely the first point of contact for residents in this area, with many mistakenly approaching Derwent or Chaddesden Councillors first. This was never aided by the polling station for this district, Saint Philip's Church on Taddington Road, being in the 'Derwent' Ward as opposed to the Oakwood Ward. In contrast, properties in this district are almost

indistinguishable from those on Worcester Crescent, Truro Close, Harrogate Crescent and others in the Derwent and the future 'Breadsall Hilltop' Ward, and residents in this area are more likely to visit 'Sussex Circus' Fish Bar than 'Oakwood Fish Bar,' use 'Sussex Circus' Post Office instead of 'Oakwood Post Office' and use Roe Farm Recreational Ground or Athlone Close POS instead of Oakwood Park. The 'OK5' district is certainly more suitable to join Derwent's 'DW1' and other 'DW' electoral districts in the new 'Breadsall Hilltop' ward, rather than the 'Western Oakwood' (OK1) electoral district, as they adjoin each other and do have an existing community spirit and community bond. Consequently, for the reasons above, we have decided to express our support for these changes as outlined in your draft proposals. Having discussed our thoughts on the loss of the 'OK5' district to the 'Breadsall Hilltop' Ward, we now turn to the additions of Morley Road and the area around the two Cavendish Close Schools, which already have 'Oakwood' Postal Addresses, into the Oakwood Ward. Prior to the construction of the Oakwood Neighbourhood Estate in the 1980s and 1990s, and the subsequent creation of Oakwood Ward in the 2000s, the drawing of a boundary in this area of the city was comparatively easy as fields existed where houses and residents are now. Subsequently however, the drawing of a boundary line now that the Oakwood conurbation exists is an inherently difficult task and has only been attempted once before. As such, our initial instinct was to support the boundary as it currently is. However, we can again see the inherent logistics in what you have put forward in the draft proposals and the reasoning reinforcing this as detailed in your corresponding report. As a Councillor Team, we again unanimously agree that the boundary in this area is blurred and barely exists outside of maps of Derby City Council wards. Many residents in this area see that the schools are in possession of an Oakwood postal address and thus believe they are in Oakwood; indeed, they serve the children and young people who reside in this area of Oakwood Ward, which is devoid of another school. Many of these same children, and more children living in the wider Oakwood Neighbourhood, potentially more than those living in Chaddesden Ward, will attend Lees Brook Community School, yet they currently must walk fewer than 300 metres outside of the Oakwood ward to do so. Similarly, given the distance from this area to the shopping precincts of Wiltshire Road or Roosevelt Avenue, Oakwood Ward's Danebridge Crescent (Main) Precinct will no doubt be the residential shopping location of choice for residents in this area to use a Post-Office, pick-up dinner or place a bet. Oakwood Ward will be their hub more than the Chaddesden or Derwent Wards will. When considering the size and shape of the properties in this area, there is very little difference between those in the current Chaddesden Ward and those already within the Oakwood Ward. Houses on Copes Way are akin to Oakwood's Bilberry Close or Rymill Drive, houses in the lower fifth of Morley Road are akin to the upper four fifths and houses on Deborah Drive and Oakridge are akin to Santolina Drive and Columbine Close. These similarities are further evidence that these areas are suitable to be placed in the same ward. Properties in the Cavendish Close and lower Morley Road are almost entirely privately owned or privately rented, as is the case for properties already in Oakwood Ward. This is in antithesis with properties in the south of the Chaddesden East ward or Chaddesden West ward, where many properties are social housing or smaller bedsits. As such, we can see the sensibility in the new ward boundary. There is also potential for simplification to the process of tackling issues that have caused, and continue to cause, significant problems for residents in this area. These include, but are not limited to: • The potential for new houses at the Brook Farm Site • The potential for new houses at Acorn Way/Morley Road (land under Erewash Council) • The resurfacing of Morley Road • The future of speed bumps on the lower half of Morley Road • The potential for speed reduction at the upper half of Morley Road • The improvement of the Morley Road/Lime Lane Junction These issues have plagued residents in the South-East of the Oakwood Ward for many years and most of these issues presently require the approval and involvement of six councillors, due to the lower fifth of Morley Road being included in the Chaddesden Ward. Should the entirety of Morley Road join the Oakwood Ward, this would significantly simplify the process and allow for just Oakwood's three councillors to take up and deal with such matters. Consequently, again, we find ourselves unanimously in support of your draft proposals for this area. In conclusion, we again thank yourselves as the Independent Boundary Commission for the time you have taken to create these proposals, which we view as fair, protective of our ward's community identity and coherent to the layout of the North-East of our City. We confirm our unanimous support for your proposals. With kind regards Councillor Mick Barker, Councillor Matthew Eyre and Councillor Robin Wood Councillors for the Oakwood Ward of Derby City Council

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None Uploaded