

## Southampton City Council

### Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:



### Comment text:

Firstly I should congratulate the council on deciding not to increase Council tax in 2022 and freezing the current levels. This is a heartening sign. Clearly while not increasing taxes, the council must be careful not to increase expenditure. We are currently served by 48 councillors who are spread across 16 wards with 3 councillors representing each ward. I do not support the idea of creating a new ward, nor do I support the idea of creating 3 more positions. I believe 48 councillors is already plenty for a city of this size. Using the council's figures the forecast electorate of Southampton will be 183,464. Split across 16 wards, the wards must therefore average 3822 electorate each. That means each councillor will represent an average of 1274 electorate. If we accept that we will never match the number exactly and set a reasonable acceptable error we can move forward. I propose that the size of each councillor's electorate should be within 3% of the average. Thus each ward must not diverge from the average (3844 electorate) by more than 9% either way. Our city has one natural geographical boundary, the River Itchen, it then has a number of parks, open spaces and other features which also make easy boundaries. Our natural boundary the River Itchen divides our city into a smaller Eastern half and a larger Western half. We currently have 6 wards to the East of the River. Five of them lie within the 9% margin, (Bitterne Park, Harefield, Sholing, Woolston and Peartree). Bitterne however exceeds the average by 11%. One small boundary change between Bitterne and Harefield (or Sholing) would solve this and keep all six Eastern wards within the 3% of average population per councillor. I don't have access to the population statistics to know exactly where to move the boundary but absorbing those roads to the North and Northwest of the Bitterne allotments into Bitterne would make a logical starting point and would use Bitterne Road East as a boundary along its full length, rather than just part of it. If that did not provide enough change then the Eastern corner of Harefield could also be adopted by Bitterne making use of the large open spaces in Harefield to form a new boundary, or part of Sholing could be adopted by Bitterne. There are multiple places on the Sholing/Bitterne boundary that could be tidied up. Turning our attention to the larger half of the city, The West of The River Itchen, 15 councillors (5 wards) already lie within 3% of the average electorate (Redbridge, Millbrook, Coxford, Shirley and Portswood. It would seem sensible if possible to keep those as they are (accepting Coxford is approaching its margin). This presents us with two glaring problems. The North of the city, Bassett and Swaythling (and Coxford) is under the quota. Meanwhile the City Centre (Freemantle, Bargate and Bevois have seen an influx in electorate and these three wards are all too large (by population). To move the boundaries among these 5 wards but move as few other boundaries as possible would require the boundaries of either Portswood or Shirley to also move as the two problem areas do not border each other. Clearly Bargate and Freemantle both need to be shrunk in size to close to 3822 electorate each. Then Bevois needs re drawn (and possibly renamed) to pick up the next 3822 electorate. Portswood's East and West boundaries would remain the same but its North and South boundaries would move Southwards to allow both Bassett and Swaythling to enlarge by population. There would be some logic in also making Coxford slightly bigger (from Bassett's boundary) at the same time to avoid the same problem occurring again too soon. This plan would involve the minimum amount of boundary changes, while correcting for the population changes that have occurred over time. It would allow each councillor to represent 1274 electorate (give or take 3%) and will take advantage of many of the existing boundaries. By way of summary a small boundary change for Bitterne would balance out the six wards to the East of the Itchen. Meanwhile something quite drastic does need to happen with the three city centre wards (all above average population) and something must happen with the Northern wards (below average population). There is however no need to create a new ward or employ three more councillors. This city has plenty councillors already.

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded