

City of Wolverhampton Council Conservative Group Response to LGBCE Draft Proposal

The Conservative Group (the Group) is content overall with the proposals brought forward from the LGBCE.

The Group notes that all wards are within the 10% tolerance although express concern that some wards are at the higher end of this tolerance especially, as in the case of Bushbury North, further development is planned and to a lesser extent Graiseley at - 7%. The Group expresses particular concern that Wolverhampton will have a 16%-point difference between the largest and smallest wards and the democratic deficit that this brings.

The Group has concerns regarding the community links within the wards of St Peter's and Heath Town.

The Group feels that the proposed wards of Tettenhall Regis, Tettenhall Wightwick, Merry Hill, Penn and Oxley are well designed.

Below are more detailed views on each of the Wards along with the rationale for the changes proposed by the Conservative Group. The electorate figures detailed are as per the Xpress mapping tool. As these changes are only minor (around a hundred electors at a time) the electorate numbers should be in keeping with the LGBCE's forecast.

Bushbury North

No changes proposed.

The Conservative Group agrees with the proposed Bushbury North ward. The Group is however concerned at the electorate numbers being 9% over the target level, especially as the new draft Black Country Plan envisages over 300 more homes (outside of those in the existing calculations) being built on what is currently green belt land.

Bushbury South and Low Hill

No changes proposed.

The Group feels the moving of the western boundary eastwards from the Stafford Road to the railway line is a sensible move as the railway line is far less easy to cross than the Stafford Road meaning that the area of land moved into Oxley ward would be largely isolated from the rest of the ward, especially by road.

Fallings Park

No changes proposed.

The Group feels that the inclusion of the southern side of Prestwood Road is sensible in bringing both sides of the street together.

Wednesfield North

No changes proposed.

Wednesfield South

Minor change proposed: Barbel Drive from Heath Town into Wednesfield South (edged in red).

Electorate change: +91ⁱ

New electorate per councillor: 3204 (+0.9% target electorate)



The Group feels that Barbel Drive is isolated from the rest of Heath Town by the canal and the community is more likely to look to the nearby Bentley Bridge for retail services due to the close proximity, easy access and greater range of outlets. Furthermore, for residents of this area to access the rest of Heath Town ward they have to go through Wednesfield South ward due to no direct connection. Due to impassable boundary of the canal the Barbel Drive area is almost an exclave with Wednesfield South.

Barbel Drive is predominantly made up of detached and semi-detached housing (with some limited 3 storey apartment buildings) giving the area a far more suburban feel more in keeping with Wednesfield rather than the more inner city make-up of the rest of Heath Town that has high rise blocks and longer lower rise buildings along with older council built housing.

Heath Town

Minor change proposed: Barbel Drive area from Heath Town into Wednesfield South (marked red in the two maps under Wednesfield South above).

Electorate change: -90ⁱ

New electorate per councillor: 3128 (-1.5% target electorate)

See description and rationale of move above in Wednesfield South.

East Park

No changes proposed.

Bilston North

No changes proposed.

Bilston East

No boundary changes proposed.

As per our submission in the previous stage the Group feels a more appropriate name would be Bilston South as the ward is to the south of Bilston North and Bilston town centre, and not to the east, indeed some of the ward (including the ever growing Bilston Urban Village) is actually south-west of Bilston North (and the town centre).

Ettingshall

No changes proposed.

Spring Vale

No changes proposed.

The Group welcomes the inclusion of the Overfield Drive area into the ward. As an area of a suburban nature composed largely of detached houses we feel its inclusion in the Spring Vale ward rather than Ettingshall ward, which is composed of a far denser mix of housing, makes more sense.

Blakenhall

No changes proposed.

Graiseley

No changes proposed.

The minor change of incorporating residents on the southern part of Coalway Road into the ward seems sensible in bringing residents on the southern part of Coalway Road into the same ward as their northern neighbours.

Penn

No changes proposed.

The Conservative Group agrees with the proposed Penn ward.

The changes proposed by the LGBCE seem sensible in bringing residents on the southern part of Coalway Road into the same ward as their northern neighbours.

There is an argument that the transfer of the north western part of the existing Penn ward to Blakenhall is in the main not needed, but the ward as a whole retains its strong community links – the central Penn Road bonding the ward together rather than splitting it.

Merry Hill

No changes proposed.

Park

No changes proposed.

St Peters

Minor changes proposed: Area around Leverton Rise, Oxley Avenue and The Downs area moved from Oxley into St Peters (marked red in the two maps under Oxley below).

Electorate change: +125

New electorate per councillor: 3130 (-1.4% target electorate)

See description and rationale of move below in Oxley.

Tettenhall Wightwick

No changes proposed.

The Conservative Group agrees with the proposed Tettenhall Wightwick ward.

The ward (together with the Tettenhall Regis ward) keeps together the well-defined Tettenhall community (including the Wightwick and Tettenhall Wood sub-areas) and the well-connected Finchfield, Castlecroft and Compton areas.

Tettenhall Regis

No changes proposed.

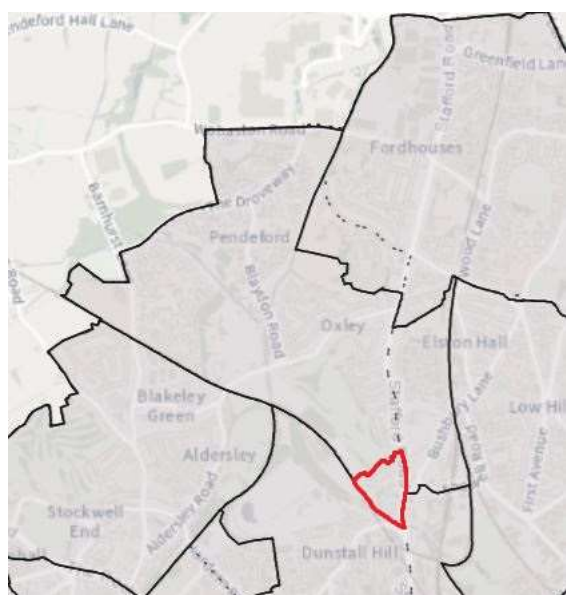
As per the submissions from most respondents and the LGBCE's write up the boundaries of the ward are well defined. The ward (together with the Tettenhall Wightwick ward) keeps together the well-defined Tettenhall community (Claregate and Palmers Cross).

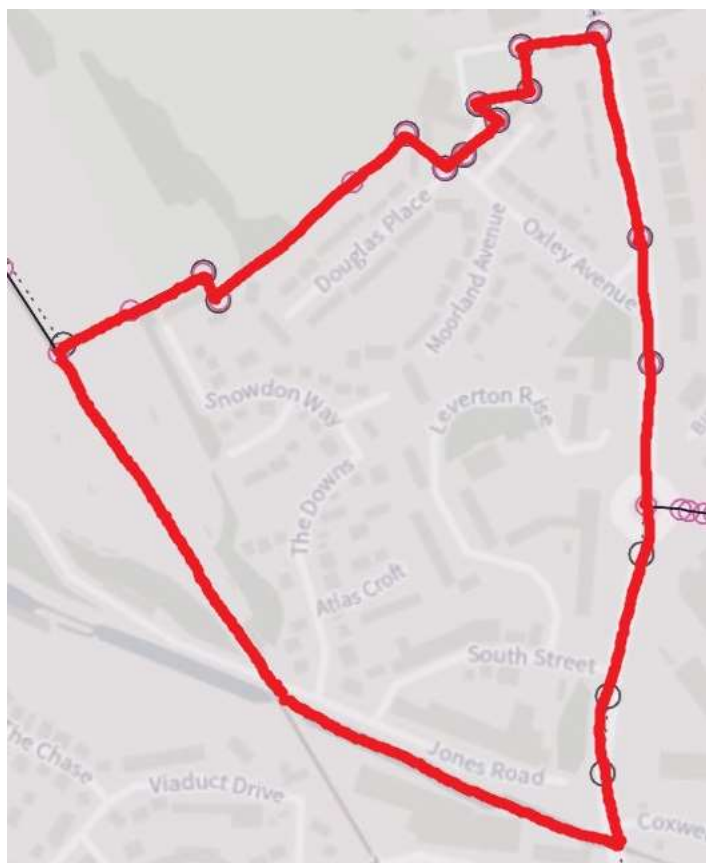
Oxley

Minor changes proposed: Area around Leverton Rise, Oxley Avenue and The Downs area moved from Oxley into St Peters (marked red in below two maps).

Electorate change: -125

New electorate per councillor: 3197 (+0.7 target electorate)





The Conservative Group largely agrees with the proposed Oxley ward. Overall the ward is well defined bringing together a number of different smaller communities that have much in common.

The Group suggests moving the southern tip of the ward (between the golf course, railway line and Stafford Road, as edged in red above) into St Peters. This would not only bring both Oxley and St Peter's closer to the electoral target, but will better reflect the direction in which residents look with the city centre being closer to these residents than the heart of the Oxley ward.

With better access to the city centre residents are more likely to access services such as the closer central library or Whitmore Reans library (both in St Peter's), rather than the more distant Pendeford library or alternatively the large Asda in the city centre which is a mile away rather than the Morrisons which is two miles away (albeit there is a smaller sized Aldi in Oxley around 0.7 miles away). Furthermore, the main recreational and local open spaces links are via the canal and crossing points over to Dunstall Park and the Gorsebrook Road area.

Should this area remain within the Oxley ward, the Conservative Group suggests that the LGBCE consider moving the Science Park area (using the railway line and canal as boundaries for a neater boundary).

Lastly, the Conservative Group welcome the Akron gate community being included within the Oxley ward. With the main access to the estate being off the Stafford road

residents of this area will look east rather than west. It is likely that few residents of Akron gate will visit the Bushbury South and Low Hill ward due to physical barriers (primarily the railway line) and a greater array of services to their east (Stafford Road shops and bus routes). For residents of Akron Gate seeking to travel by private or public transport they would need to do so through Oxley and so its inclusion within Oxley from a transportation is sensible.

In addition, residents of the rest of Oxley will look to the Aldi, the Gatehouse, the Pavillion and the park for shopping and socialising alike. Furthermore, historically much of the Oxley community evolved as a residential area accompanying the former GoodYear factory that previously stood in this area.

ⁱ Civica mapping tool shows a gain in Wednesfield South of 91, but a loss off only 90 for Heath Town