

From: Fiona Hill <Fiona.Hill@hertfordshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 January 2023 21:56
To: reviews
Subject: SUBMISSION TO THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Categories: Submissions, Harry

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE REVIEW OFFICER (NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE) - LGBCE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I welcome the opportunity to submit a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on the proposed new boundaries for Council wards in North Hertfordshire.

I appreciate the difficult balance in complying with the statutory criteria (electoral equality, delivering effective local governance and representing the interests and identities of local communities), against a logical, sensible and workable system, at any one point in time. I do not believe, as a general approach, that the Boundary Commission should be looking to automatically raise the number of ward councillors. I believe it will be a considerable period of time before the housing numbers, in many wards, increase significantly enough to justify this.

I **strongly object** to the LGBCE's proposals regarding Baldock and the proposed Ashwell and Weston ward. The developments outside Baldock are an extension of the urban area and will be completely different in character and demographic from the rural areas of Bygrave. It is not possible that the development to the East of Baldock could be considered similar in outlook or nature to the rest of Bygrave. The issues from residents will be completely different and the community will look to Baldock and not to the rural areas of the parish of Bygrave. The number of electors from the new development will eventually be far more than the electors in Bygrave. The proposed large ward would lead to lack of representation of urban residents, who would be separated from their community in Baldock. It would also be detrimental to rural residents, as the population of the new ward would be concentrated in the new developments of Baldock, in areas of Bygrave and Clothall parishes. The ward will be dominated by residents who will identify as being from Baldock. The proposed Ashwell and Weston ward, with 11 separate parish areas to represent, is too large to be convenient or effective.

The LGBCE says that the alternative proposed by the District Council is not feasible since it would involve the creation of parish wards that would have an insufficient electorate in 2024. The Council has stated why this is not the case and its view is that the challenge of having small parish wards should be navigated, not accommodated and the goal of achieving good governance in parishes should not diminish governance at District level, a view with which I agree.

Creation of a ward in Clothall Parish would not be necessary, as there is no Parish Council in Clothall.

The proposed warding arrangements in Letchworth are broadly acceptable and make sense, other than to request that the twelve electors in the area north of Wilbury Road, between the Pix Brook and Stotfold Road, be moved from Grange to Wilbury, where there are stronger and more logical links.

I have concerns with separating the developments of GA1 and GA2 from Great Ashby, which should be together to increase community identities, but can see the difficulties with electoral variance, due to the ward patterns elsewhere in the district.

With regard to the names of the proposed new wards, I believe the names proposed by the Boundary Commission are, on balance, acceptable with the exceptions of retaining the name Arbury, after taking into account the points above regarding the Baldock/proposed Ashwell and Weston Ward; Langley, Preston and Walden, which should be

named Hitchwood, as the former name for the area and Offley and Pirton which should be named Offa, again, the former name for the area.

I should be grateful if you would include and take into account the points I have raised, as my personal submission, in the formal consultation process.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona Hill

Fiona Hill (Mrs.)
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