

West Northamptonshire

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Please find attached my response to the Electoral Arrangements for Northampton Town parish wards. With 21 wards, Northampton town council is the largest town council in the country and, as such, needs to be considered as a unique case.
Each of the wards are the equivalent size of many other parishes.
Regards

Attached Documents:

- Response form Trinity ward councillor.docx

Consultation Response – Electoral Arrangements – West Northamptonshire (Northampton Town parish wards)

I am the ward councillor for Trinity ward. I have been the Northampton Borough Councillor for Trinity since 2015 and a Northamptonshire County Councillor for the area since 2017. I know the residents and this area of the town well and since 2021 have been the town councillor for Trinity ward. It is a well-established and settled residential area. Northampton town council consists of 21 wards with settled communities and individual characteristics.

I am very concerned about the changes to the town council ward structure proposed by the Electoral Arrangements, for the following reasons:

- It is proposed that the ward name changes from Trinity to Queen Park. The area of Trinity, is well known and links to the Church of Holy Trinity a Grade 11* listed building designed by Matthew Holding in 1909. It is the centre for the community and gives residents a strong identity.
- The number of electors in the current ward is 3030, this is estimated to increase to 3149, by 2028 so the electorate is stable.
- The proposed Queens Park will have an electorate of 2336, below the average of electors/councillor in the new proposals.
- The proposed Queens Park ward, which will include an area of Trinity, is combining an established residential area, consisting of similar style housing dating from 1880s with part of Semilong ward, an area of newer housing built between 1930 -2010. This area also includes an industrial estate.
- The two areas are bisected by the busy A508 which at present forms a natural boundary. Currently these two areas of Trinity and Semilong are distinct and separate communities with their own social structures and residents' groups.
- It is proposed that the wider area of Trinity would be included in St George, a new ward. This name has no connection with the history of the area apart from the name of a road. St George would include Trinity Avenue and the former named Trinity School. Again, historical connections and a sense of place are destroyed.
- There are a number of significant historical buildings at present associated with Trinity ward: The Racecourse Pavilion, the old Kingsley Girls Grammar School (now Bosworth Independent College), Barratts shoe factory, all Grade11 listed buildings in a conservation area.
- Northampton town council is only two years old. Residents have become part of a large impersonal Unitary authority. Their identity and sense of belonging to a familiar area with a familiar name is important to building community cohesion. The Town council wards remaining as the are would give stability.

For all the above reasons and as the town councillor for Trinity ward I urge you to give careful consideration to these objections.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Jane Birch, Northampton Town Council, Trinity ward.

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