

Bradford

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Comment text:

To whom this may concern,

This is a submission from myself as a ward councillor focusing on Tong Ward.

I understand, it has been agreed that Bradford will retain 90 councillors which means the existing mean ward sizes are the goal for redrawing.

Size

- Tong Ward is currently 3% of the bench mark for an equal ward which suggests that it is currently the right size.
- There are currently two housing developments of c. 100 houses being built at the moment (both in Bierley) which will increase the number of electors in the ward.
- In the Emerging Local Plan, Tong Ward is highlighted as being an area of potential significant housing growth (Holmewood Extension) which will further increase the population in the ward. This is however potentially quite a few years off (if it ever happens!)

Boundary

- There are currently seven distinct areas of the ward Tong Village, Westgate Hill / Denbrook, Holmewood, Bierley, Tong Street, Woodlands (part of Oakenshaw) and Sutton.

- o Tong Village is located to the far East of the ward in the Tong & Fulneck Valley and is very distinct from the other communities of the ward.
- o Westgate Hill / Denbrook is an area of middle income dwellings around the A650 and to the East of Holmewood. Whilst it is often included with Holmewood for the purposes of Council services and data, it is very different and the communities rarely interact. Pit Hill Park / Holme Lane act as a very define boundary. It is also included within the Bierley & Tong MSOA rather than Holmewood.
- o Holmewood is a large council estate of c. 2500 houses to the North of Tong Street. It is culturally a very distinct community. It has a large Irish Traveller community and is made up of a significant number of social housing dwellings
- o Tong Street is the area around Tong Street (A650) which is the main road out of the South East of Bradford. Due to the urban design of both Holmewood and Bierley, it is not well connected to either estate and the communities are different – there are more terraces and private owned and rented here than other parts of the ward.
- o Bierley is another large former council estate to the South West of Tong Street. It is different from Holmewood and there is a certain rivalry between the two estates. They however share many of the same issues and Bierley also has a large settled traveller community.
- o Sutton – The Sutton estate to the North of Holmewood is right on the boundary with Leeds and the community in Tyersal. Sutton is a bit on its own in the sense that it has connections with Tyersal and Holmewood but at the same time is very distinct. In the past this was outside of the ward and included with the community in Swain Green. It is particularly politically disengaged, which I feel is due to being switched between wards in the past and being right on the fringe of the boundary between Leeds and Bradford and internally Bradford South and Bradford East. Personally, I feel it would be best for this community to remain within Tong Ward.
- o Woodlands (Oakenshaw) – The village of Oakenshaw is split between two Bradford wards (Wyke and Tong) and a Kirklees Ward (Cleckheaton). It is very distinct from the rest of Tong Ward to the point that many residents don't recognise the label. Whilst I enjoy the community spirit, in Woodlands, I could see the benefits for the community if they were reunited with the rest of Oakenshaw in Wyke Ward. I would suggest that if that was the case, Euroways Estate would also be moved into Wyke.

- Personally, I feel that Tong Ward is right as it is. Size wise it is the right size and all of the communities do connect. It would be a mistake to divide the ward up with only Tong Street acting as a suitable marker. Both Bierley and Holmewood are more connected to each other than other surrounding areas. Rooley Lane, Cutler Heights does act as a community divider (much more so than Tong Street).
- There are community connectors along Tong Street – the shops, St. Columba's Church and School and Knowles Park – there are however no cultural connections between the communities north of Rooley Lane / Cutler Heights.
- As I wrote earlier, the only part of the ward which could be moved out would be Woodlands and Euroways (to a ward to the West) but I think this should only be considered if there is an intention to reduce the size of Tong Ward. The M606 acts as a very distinct and simple boundary.
- In terms of making the ward bigger or taking parts of other wards, there are not many community connection on the other side of Rooley Lane or Cutler Heights Lane. The ribbon industrial developments act as a community barrier. The only area where there are soft connections would be the part of Bowling and Barkerend Ward around Fenby Avenue (known locally as Fenby Triangle).

The nature of being a councillor in Tong

Bierley and Holmewood take up the vast majority of my time as a councillor for many of the same reasons – housing issues (mostly social housing) and police and crime (the issues are linked with certain families living in both estates). They are both demanding areas time wise but as the issues overlap, there is an element of efficiency dealing with partners.

Ward Name

The ward name is “Tong” but Tong Village is only a very small part of the ward and it is easily the most affluent. Personally, I feel calling the ward “Tong Street” would create a more unifying identity as all residents could relate to this.

I hope this gives a thorough and useful assessment of Tong Ward. As stated, I feel Tong Ward is right as it is but I have suggested potential ways to change the ward both in terms of making it bigger and smaller. I would strongly oppose plans to significantly break up the ward as it would damage the community connections that exist without there being an obvious way to replace them. The communities of Tong are very distinct from those in Wyke (more middle class) and Bowling and Barkerend (which is more ethnically diverse and has more private terraced housing)

Attached Documents:

None attached