

# Oxfordshire

## Personal Details:

**Name:** Mr Mark Hassall

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**Organisation Name:** Local Government Authority (Representative of parish/town council)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Parish wards of Banbury, Oxon

As the only tier of local government with a specific requirement to exclusively represent this area and enhance our residents access to democracy. Banbury Town Council (BTC) request the Commission take into account community identities formed through historic relevance, transport infrastructure, amenity provision and centres of community cohesion.

### Historic

The response of the Town Council highlights the historic areas of the town, based on the ancient hamlets of the Town, particularly Calthorpe, Grimsbury, Easington, Hardwick and Ruscote. This radial formation has proved enduring and resilient, evolving from the Banbury Cross which provides a cultural and historic centre point for the Town. The preservation of community identities forms an important legacy, built upon since the Domesday book, for current and future generations to confidently embrace the proposed expansion of the town within the Bodicote and Drayton areas and outline planning permission in Adderbury.

### Transport

Accessibility for residents to poll stations forms an important pillar of democracy. The Town Council maintains the view that ward divisions should enable multi-tier voting by residence at a single polling station. Accessibility for residents should seek to avoid obvious current or planning impediments to access of polling stations, such as principal arterial roads, canals and major national rail lines (as is the case in the LGBC proposals for Calthorpe and Grimsbury changes), in line with the recommendations from OCC. The CDC proposals also address this deficit in the LGBC recommendations in the case of the Calthorpe & Easington ward reverting to the historic boundary of the Oxford Road. Where possible,

BTC seek to support residents ability to choose how to access polling stations, either walking, cycling, private vehicle or public transport. This choice should not be unduly influenced by any known deficit in current provision of public transport and should consider geographic practicalities.

#### Amenity provision and centres of community

Places of worship and shopping areas form centres of gravity for communities, and are recognised as important community infrastructure assets. These centre can enhance a sense of place and help foster secure community inter-connections. Opinions are shared and views aired in these locations, and they also often serve as the polling station infrastructure. The Calthorpe medieval manor being a historic centre and Chatsworth Drive shops, served by distinct bus routes that predominantly serve that ward area and attending St John the Baptist church. Grimsbury is bound by the River Cherwell and principal rail services with a single bridge access between current and planned residential areas, served by St Leonards Church and the shopping area of the Middleton Road. Ruscote looks to St Pauls, Woodgreen Leisure Centre and Orchard Way shops and the library, as does Bretch Hill. Easington community and the Poets corner area, historically the administrative centre of the Bishop of Lincoln, attend St Hughs church, use Queensway shopping and use a separate bus service from its neighbouring area of Ruscote.

The original OCC recommendations had the support of all three tiers of local government from across the political spectrum. Whilst subsequently containing minor amendments, Banbury Town Council supports the OCC revised recommendations in its alignment of our aim in supporting democratic representation and reflects our advocacy on behalf of Banbury communities.

## Attached Documents:

*None attached*