

Worcestershire

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Dear Sirs

Re Proposed Local Government Boundary Change for Bell Heath, from Clent Hills to Woodvale

I am writing in relation to the proposed boundary change which would affect Bell Heath / Bell End / Madeley Heath, Worcestershire (and referred to collectively in this email as 'Bell Heath').

I confirm that I live in the area effected (living on Chapel Lane, Madeley Heath, DY9 9XJ, a single track country road about 600 yards from The Bell public house and with access on foot to the Clent Hills).

My understanding is that it is proposed to move Bell Heath from Clent Hills (incorporating Belbroughton) into the area called 'Woodvale' (incorporating Catshill and beyond), a name (Woodvale) of which I have never even previously heard or been aware.

May I record at the outset my dismay that this issue has not been raised directly with local residents in Bell Heath, individually or collectively (or even directly with the Parish Council), whether by way of leaflet, letter, email, posters or erection of prominent notices, given that a 'public consultation' process was (according to your website) supposed to have been in gear 'initially' since 16th May 2023 and this stage since 9th January 2024. I in fact learnt of the proposed change through pure inadvertence via our local neighbourhood watch network. A failure to consult

with, or canvass the views of, those likely to be affected by a proposed change of this kind is unfair and unacceptable in a democratic society (and I suspect potentially unlawful).

I have lived on Chapel Lane in Madeley Heath for over 20 years. It is a rural community, with a significant equestrian element, with country lanes and footpaths giving immediate access to the Clent Hills and open countryside. I regard myself as living in an extension of Belbroughton parish (and which name is included in our postal address), joining in with Belbroughton Scarecrow Weekend. Bell Heath has been an integral part of Belbroughton for centuries, as the commonality of their names would suggest (dating back as far as 817AD).

Having consulted the Commission's boundary map, we can see that under the proposals we would move from being part of a rural area (Clent Hills and Belbroughton) to a semi-urban area predominated by Catshill. The two areas are of entirely different character, and with entirely different needs and priorities (for my part those of a rural / equestrian community). There is little if any commonality between them in terms of their "community interests and identities" and no "links" of which I am aware.

The very different, indeed conflicting, needs and priorities of the two areas (rural and semi-urban) is not conducive to "effective and convenient local government" and as it is likely that the greater urban needs would be prioritised, our rural needs would be either poorly addressed or not met at all, rather than "more efficiently discharged" by the proposed change.

In terms of "facilities" all of my key needs are serviced by being part of Belbroughton and where we have always cast our votes on polling day, and where our recreational facilities are located ('the rec'). Any change in schooling resulting from these changes would be highly detrimental to present and future families in Bell Heath:

For all these reasons, please note my interest and objections when considering your recommendations and please keep me apprised (via this email, message or otherwise) of any relevant developments in relation to the proposal.

Yours sincerely

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Attached Documents:

None attached