

Kirklees

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Comment text:

See Attached

Attached Documents:

- 0000489_202404251126.pdf



Dear commissioners,

I write this as comment on your draft suggestions about ward boundaries in Kirklees.

1. May I first outline some qualification to write with knowledge on the subject

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I have lived in this house since 1981.

From 1984 I served as a councillor on Kirklees Council until I retired for health reasons eight years ago. I have served all the Ashbrow ward and all of the former wards Birkby and Deighton. I have chaired most committees of the Council when it was a committee system and have been deputy council leader and the mayor of Kirklees. For many years I was vice chair of West Yorkshire Police Authority.

So I have the most intimate knowledge of all Huddersfield north eastern areas and its people.

Indeed I am the only person to represent all of this area to Kirklees Council.

2. The area of Birchcliffe is remote from obvious nearby settlements and has always had its major link to Lindley, including the schooling provided in Lindley ward. It has no connection at all with the Fixby are and I believe its population would prefer to stay as they are.

3. While representing all of the three wards, I knew them as a mix of socio-economic population, mostly with the southernmost of each ward being the poorer and with the most problems. My councillor workbook for each ward area was

a) Birkby - 50% Birkby and 45% Fartown.

b) Deighton - 65% Sheepridge including Deighton, 35% Fartown.

c) Ashbrow - 45% Sheepridge including Deighton, 20% Bradley, 35% Fartown.

The calls upon me to help in Fixby was always tiny and almost all were to do with a request for a planning approval.

4. you may notice I refer to an area I call 'Sheepridge including Deighton'. This is because local families of several generations tell me that the Deighton area is a settlement within Sheepridge, the first development in this area. I have not done the years of research needed to verify this but that is what the residents of many generations think so it would be a sacrilege to them for a ward boundary to split these communities.

5. At times when I was dealing with the worst of conditions, including much crime, domestic abuse, drugs and poor housing, I could hear some of my rural colleagues worrying about the affect of shadows from wind turbines damaging the horses!

I know that this, though true, is an extreme example of the differing needs of wards but it is a lesson on how severe the difference can be in serving wards of such variance.

6. Thus I see great disadvantage in placing a large area of deprivation in one ward with the same number of elected representatives to speak on their behalf. This would inevitably be the effect of the creation of a Huddersfield town ward. Indeed when I represented the Deighton ward, of the areas I have dealt with, two of them contained groups of what I would call slums and they are both within your town centre ward proposal.

7. There seems to be no gain for the residents within your town centre proposal, any population variance can be dealt with in a much less unsettling manner and lead to the much more balanced needs of the population as we have now with current boundaries albeit with minor amendment to account for population shift.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]