

Kirklees

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Comment text:

Related subject: 'Ashbrow' Huddersfield North and Huddersfield Central

Here are my personal views on the proposed Kirklees Boundary changes in respect of Huddersfield, and in particular Ashbrow Ward. I appreciate the Boundary Commission's need to balance numbers of voters between wards, but I feel sure that balance can be achieved without these disruptive changes.

I have lived in Ashbrow for 20 years. I disagree with a number of the points made in the report and would propose instead that the ward is left essentially as it is.

On point 41 – The proposed Huddersfield Central ward does not unite communities; it separates them. It separates established communities in Ashbrow, and places them in a strange proposed new ward. I come back to this below.

On point 42 – contrary to the view that the proposed Huddersfield North ward changes 'reflect communities (sic) identities and interests', they don't: they lose that identity. The well-established communities of Ashbrow include Fixby, Bradley, Deighton, Sheepridge, Fartown and the section down to Leeds Road. Everyone knows they are in 'Ashbrow' and there are many community groups which span the whole area, from Fixby to Fartown and Deighton. For example, all the schools, the churches and volunteer groups bring together children and adults from different incomes and backgrounds while also offering help to families needing childcare, food support. There are linked opportunities for sports, environmental work and social get-togethers. This will be much harder to co-ordinate if that sense of community and ward-wide organisation disappears.

41 & 42 There is no rationale given for the boundary and electoral balance of 'Huddersfield Central'. It appears to gather together many disadvantaged communities - which is not the same as 'identities'. This is counter to the wish to 'promote effective and convenient local government'. It would place a disproportionate burden on councillors who would represent such a ward. Whereas Ashbrow is a well understood and organised balance of larger housing, council housing and ex-council housing, The proposed Huddersfield Central is not balanced, which would not promote effective local government. There needs to be a mix.

The Chestnut Centre, now at the very edge of the proposed ward, is part of Deighton and caters for the residents of Bradley, Deighton, Fartown and Riddings with strong links to North Huddersfield Trust School. It benefits from having councillors who have an overall view of Ashbrow and its multiple needs. These linked areas would now be placed in 'Huddersfield Central' and 'Huddersfield East' wards which would disrupt essential services to an area in which many people are struggling. Deighton sits more naturally where it is than in the proposed 'Huddersfield East' ward. Ironically, North Huddersfield Trust School is not part of the proposed Huddersfield North ward. Logically, and organically, it should be.

I cannot see a rationale given anywhere for including the Birchenccliffe area into Ashbrow/Huddersfield North It is not an identifiable boundary. It surely associates itself with Lindley? One can travel around Ashbrow on public transport, but not to Birchenccliffe. It's a classic, 'You can't get there from here...' It is completely separated from Ashbrow by the golf club. I don't know anyone who understands it. If it has been proposed for political reasons, that is plain wrong.

More generally.

I don't see any logic at all for the strange lump of Golcar (which is in Colne Valley constituency) inserted into Huddersfield town centre. The areas in Huddersfield would be better placed in the communities they are adjacent to.

Finally – the names.

In Huddersfield, we have managed to avoid the soulless points-of-compass naming. These are real communities with names that mean something to the residents. I propose we keep them.

Attached Documents:

None attached