

Cheshire East

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Bromley Farm Community Development Trust (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Please find attached a response to the consultation from Bromley Farm Community Development Trust

Attached Documents:

- ward-boundary-review---cheshire-east-council---congleton.doc



31 03 2024

Dear Sirs

I am responding to the review of the Cheshire East Borough Council ward boundaries consultation.

Bromley Farm Community Development Trust is the well established residents group representing the Bromley Farm neighbourhood in Congleton for over 21 years. We cover around 1400 homes and run Bromley Farm Community Centre offering youth clubs, youth projects, run several older people's groups, improve the local environment and generally improve the health and well-being of residents in partnership with a range of other organisations. I am the current community lead for this group and area and been involved for nearly 20 years.

The Bromley Farm neighbourhood forms a significant part of the current Congleton East Ward which is one of two wards in Congleton for Cheshire East.

We have read the Cheshire East Council reports relating to the review of ward boundaries. As their proposals make clear, they wish to retain the current arrangements of two three member wards with some changes on the outer edges of these wards and moving slightly some of the areas where the current wards meet. We think these alterations make sense.

I have been heavily involved in community work for the last 15 years and at a similar time the current warding arrangements for Congleton were created. I was instrumental in delivering a neighbourhood project that provided a traffic free path from Buglawton through to Mossley via Bromley Farm woods and community centre working with East Ward councillors. Both these areas are also key neighbourhoods in Congleton East Ward.

At a similar time the row of shops closed in Bromley Farm, so Hightown in Mossley has become an important local service centre for shopping and other services and offers a post office, general convenience store, off licence, chip shop, pharmacy two public houses and other important services for Bromley Farm residents as well as Mossley residents too. The Co-op on Bromley Farm is also used regularly by Buglawton residents.

The Beartown buses serve Mossley, Buglawton and Bromley Farm due to demographics with the west ward served mainly by town to town buses.

Bromley Farm has a long standing strong alignment and natural geographical and social connection with Buglawton and many children go to Buglawton Primary school, but several now go to Havannah and Mossley schools too.

Bromley Farm now has strong social links and connections with Mossley which 15+ years ago was not the case with significant social tension and unrest. Having Bromley Farm with Mossley in the current east ward has had a positive impact on breaking down social boundaries in the last 15 years or so. The current arrangements are well known and defined.

There was a desire from some in Mossley to close convenient access between Bromley Farm to the railway station and Mossley area. This is now equally enjoyed by all.

Bromley Farm has successfully used Bromley Farm Community Centre and Play Park to breakdown social class divide with these valuable facilities now equally used by Bromley Farm, Mossley and Buglawton residents further demonstrating community cohesion.

All the groups, clubs, projects and events delivered from the community centre and park are now open to everyone with use of some of these now around 50% from Mossley.

Aspiration has been raised significantly on Bromley Farm from 20 years ago. The closer connection with Mossley through having the Congleton East Ward containing both areas has greatly assisted this. Health improvements have been stark and the life expectancy gap between Bromley Farm and Mossley has been reduced drastically.

Congleton East Ward and Congleton West Ward have worked extremely well since they were created 15 + years ago. In my experience they have worked well for councillors with the wards represented effectively and most importantly for residents.

There is a clear easily identifiable demarcation between the two wards that are predominantly of a similar urban size based on geography and population giving them a distinct identity.

The River Dane is an excellent natural geographical boundary between the current and proposed wardings that match well with the town council boundaries.

The Mountbatten Way dual carriageway is an excellent man made east ward and west ward boundary with the A527 Park Lane the main road from Mossley, A54 Moor Street the main road from Buglawton and Bromley Road the main estate road from Bromley Farm all intersecting at Mountbatten Way.

I understand that proposals were considered to create three wards in Congleton and put Bromley Farm with Lower Heath. Bromley Farm has no connection at all with the Lower Heath area of the town, this makes no sense. These two distinct areas of the town do not relate with each other at all.

They also from a practical ward work perspective have worked really well. There is no justification at all to split the wards differently, as doing so would weaken current strong identity and create unnecessary division again. The two wards are very well established and recognised by the residents. They also align well with the local neighbourhood policing model which works for Cheshire police too. This would be change for change sake, would create unhelpful and unnecessary community separation, achieving no benefit for anyone, especially residents.

I understand that the retention of two wards will ensure electoral equality and return a predicted variance of ratio of between 0 and 1% from the borough average.

I ask you to support the warding proposals for Congleton as recommended by Cheshire East Council which will support Bromley Farm Community Development Trust to continue its work to improve social cohesion, strengthen community identity and allow effective and convenient local government.

Yours faithfully,

Glen Williams

Chairman, Bromley Farm Community Development Trust