

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Please see attached response from Bollington Town Council on the Cheshire East Boundary Review.

Attached Documents:

- btcs-warding-proposals-to-the-lgbc-2024.docx

Bollington Town Councils submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission regarding proposals for changes to Borough Ward Boundaries in preparation for elections in 2027.

Introduction

Summary:

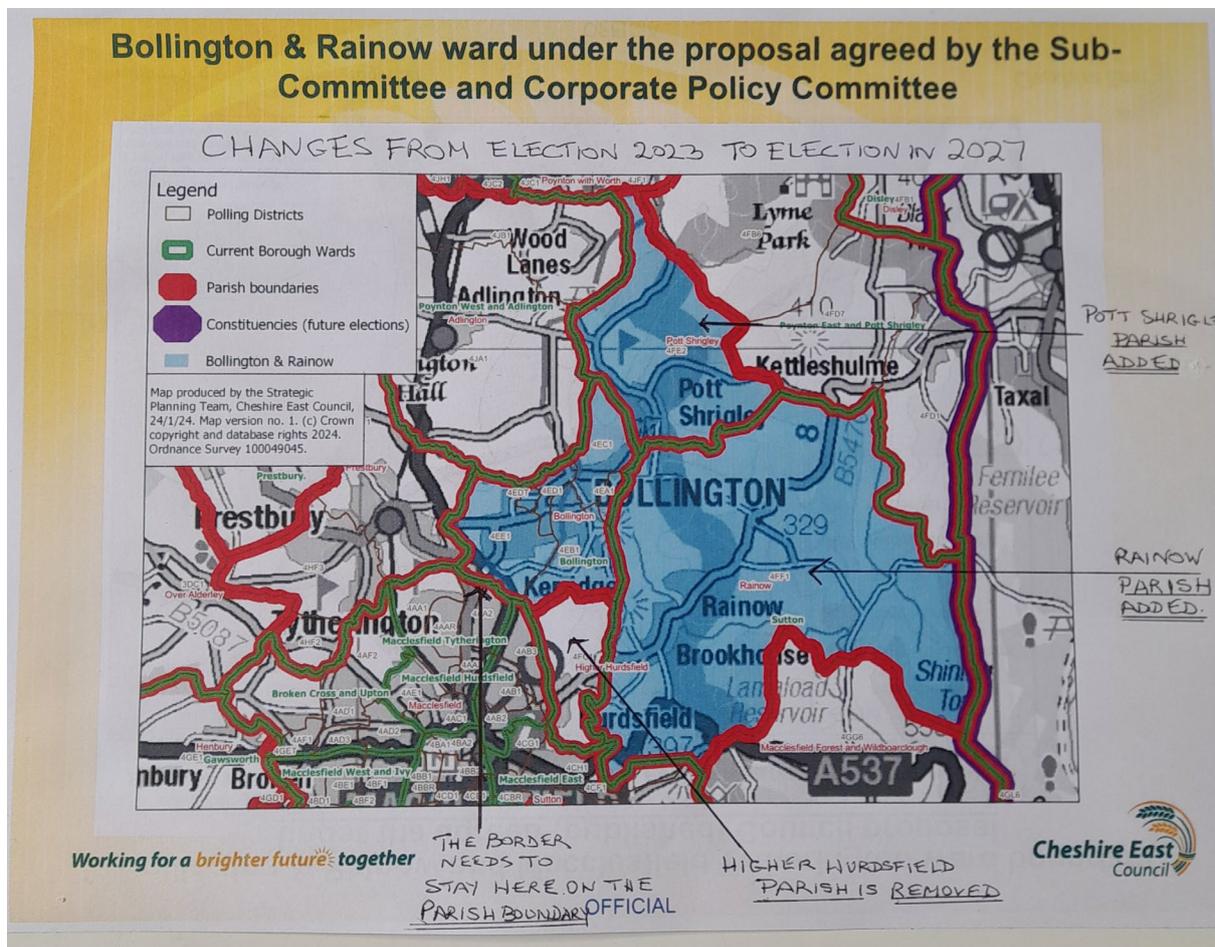
1. Bollington Town Council strongly supports a Borough Ward with 2 Councillors.
2. Bollington Town Council strongly objects to dividing our Parish in any way whatsoever.
3. We recognise that the electoral arithmetic projected to 2030 means our current Ward including the Parish of Higher Hurdfield and Bollington has too many electors for one Councillor and too few for two.
4. Therefore additional electors are needed for our Ward to justify two Councillors.

Summary Conclusion: The new Bollington + Ward for 2027 and beyond will be supported if it fulfils criteria one and two above.

Two councillors representing a Borough Ward including the whole Parish of Bollington.

Bollington Town Council therefore supports in broad terms the proposal from Cheshire East Council to create a Ward from the Parishes of Bollington, Pott Shrigley and Rainow which has the number of electors to support a Ward represented by two Councillors.

The map below indicates Cheshire East Councils new Bollington and Rainow Ward proposal for 2027.



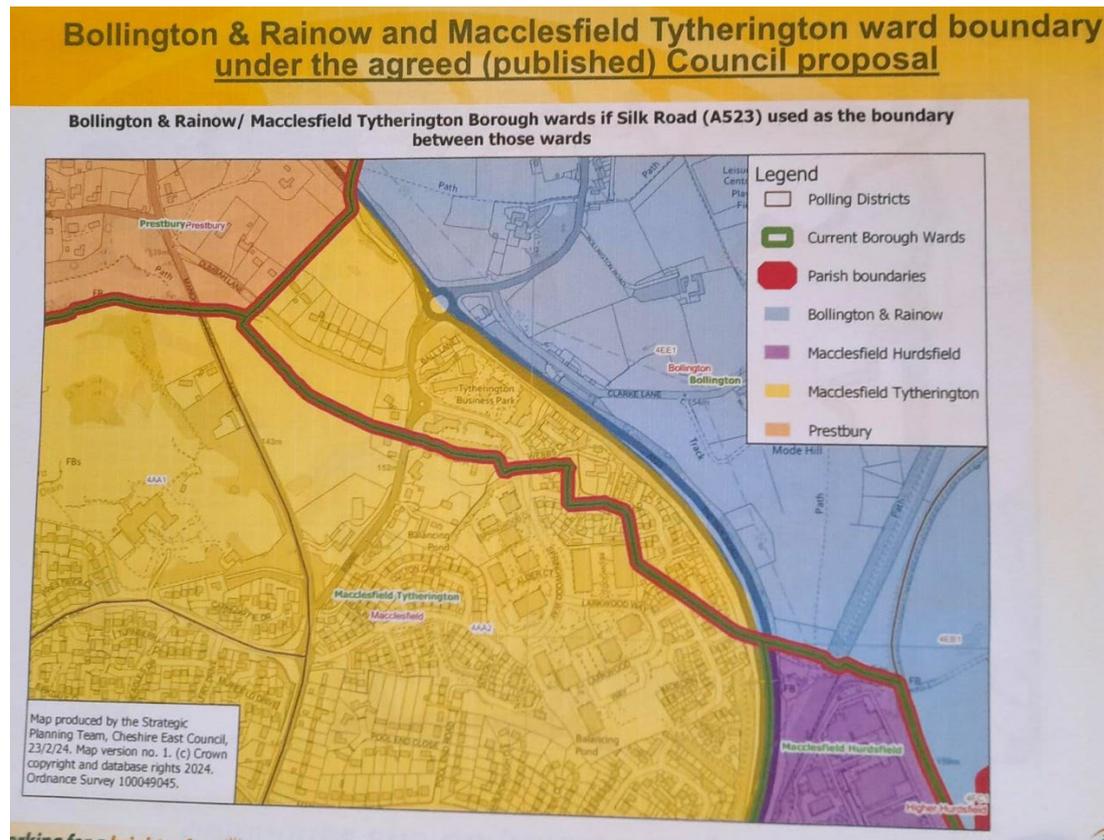
BUT

Bollington Town Council strongly rejects the element of that proposal that uniquely splits off a portion of the Parish of Bollington and Wards that portion of the Parish with the Tytherington Ward in the Parish of Macclesfield.

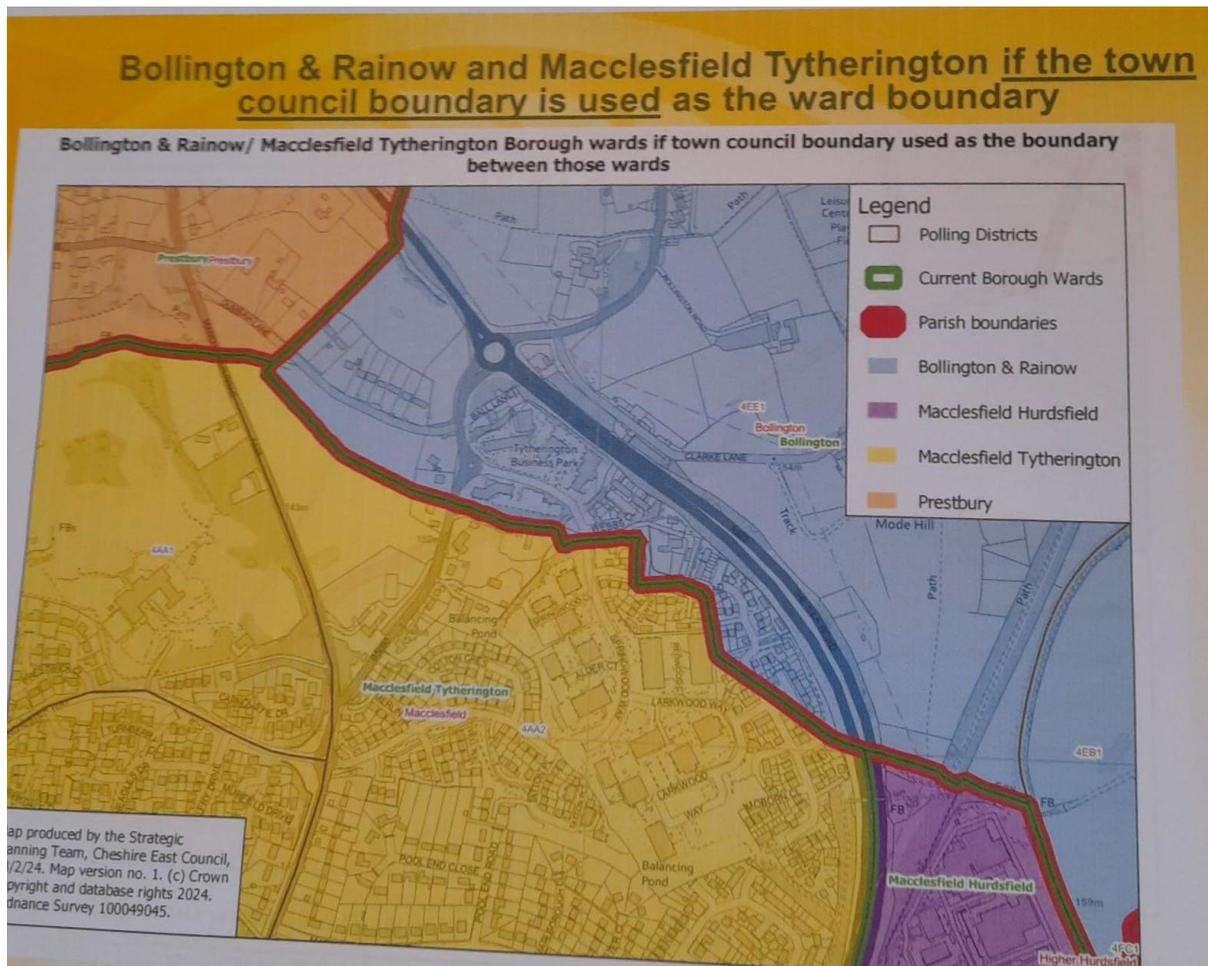
Bollington Town Council sees no need to split the Parish by using the A523 known as the Silk Road as the boundary for the new Ward instead of the current Parish boundary of Bollington as at present. That boundary has proved satisfactory for many years as a Borough Ward boundary.

The Maps below illustrate the adjustment required by the Bollington Town council to make the changes proposed by Cheshire East acceptable.

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The border proposed by Cheshire East excludes all of Bollington Parish below the Silk Road and is an unnecessary change. Bollington Town Council objects to this proposal.



This map illustrates Bollington Town Council’s preferred option where the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward Boundary follows the Bollington Parish Boundary and thus includes the three Parishes.

The reasoning is set out below.

Conditions set by the Local Government Boundary Commission

There are three objectives set out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for the review of the Warding of Cheshire East to achieve.

1. Electoral equality. i.e. Each vote cast should have an equal representative power. In the Cheshire East context this means that each Councillor should be supported by approximately 4,200 electors.
2. Community cohesion i.e. Where possible Ward boundaries should recognise and include communities rather than divide them.
3. Convenience and coherence of Local government i.e. local government arrangements should overlap and fit in with each other rather than confuse the electorate.

Bollington Town Council contends that the proposal by Cheshire East Borough Council to move the Bollington and Rainow Boundary to the A523 (Silk Road) contravenes all three objectives for no good reason.

1. Electoral equality will be worsened as has already been pointed out by reducing the numbers of electors per Councillor further below the average in the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward. With the Silk Road as the boundary the Variance of the ratio from the Borough Average in 2030 will be -8% whereas with the Bollington Parish Boundary as the Ward Boundary it will be -6%.
2. In dividing the Parish of Bollington in two the proposal breaks up an already established community. The Bollington and Rainow Ward will include the whole Parish of Rainow and the whole of the Parish of Pott Shrigley but only part of Bollington Parish.
3. In placing electors in the Parish of Bollington in a Ward that belongs to the huge Parish of Macclesfield the proposal brings confusion to the Local Government arrangements that have been in place for many years and are

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well understood as Bollington Residents will no longer be in the Bollington Ward but will move to the Macclesfield Tytherington Ward while remaining in Bollington Parish.

The Border Issue

Bollington Town Council accepts that the current border situation is less than ideal but contends that the problems that is caused currently are minor and in reality affect two properties only. The issue is set out in the Map below which was used in the Community Governance Review as a suggestion to resolve the issue. Unfortunately, Cheshire East Council ignored this suggestion merely stating it wanted to return to the issue with this Local Government Boundary Review hoping, presumably, community views would be overruled.

The map below shows BTC’s current Parish border in black with the suggested adjustment in red. This border was agreed by Bollington Town Council on the following grounds:

1. It was ‘fair’ to both parishes in that it removed six houses from Bollington Parish and removed 6 houses from Macclesfield Parish.
2. It made the minimal change possible along clear road boundaries and therefore caused minimal community disruption.
3. It protected those residents in older dwellings and in particular the stone cottages of Ball Lane who felt most strongly that they belonged to Bollington. Most of those residents had lived in Bollington for many years prior to the Silk Road being built in 1992.



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Historical Continuity.

Bollington emerged as a vibrant active community due to the industrial revolution and in particular the development of the cotton industry based on water power from the River Dean and its tributaries and then moved to steam power with the coming of the Macclesfield Canal in 1834. An administrative Parish was created in 1895 and extended to take in Kerridge and Bollington Cross in 1900. It has had its current form for the last 70 years.

Cheshire County Council has used the Parish Border as the Ward Border throughout its existence. Cheshire East Council has used the Ward Border since its inception in 2009 and this was accepted by the Local Government Boundary Commission Ward Review in 2009 well after the Silk Road was built.

Its boundaries were debated thoroughly during the last three years and confirmed by the Cheshire East Community Governance Review in 2023.

Bollington Town Council's submission to the Cheshire East Council's Community Governance Review was considered in detail in relation to the border of the Parish reverting to the A327 during the CGR and was accepted and affirmed in 2023.

As the current statement of Cheshire East Council in relation to this issue:

'However, the responses to the Community Governance Review's (CGR) draft recommendations consultation stage revealed evidence of ties between Springwood Way estate residents and the part of Bollington north of the Silk Road.'

There are no reasons given for changing the border of the Ward now that can stand scrutiny.

Bollington Town Council reaffirms the community wishes of 2023 and requests the Local Government Boundary Commission to create a Bollington and Rainow Ward that recognises and maintains the integrity of all three Parishes.

Further Considerations

Local Facilities

Bollington provides the nearest community facilities and services for the Parish residents both north and south of the Silk road as well as for many residents in that remote part of Macclesfield Parish thus strengthening bonds across the Road that Cheshire East wrongly regards as a kind of barrier.

We note them.

Our community there across the Silk Road (which has a pedestrian controlled crossing available) a busy roundabout and a raised walkway carrying the Middlewood Way footpath into Macclesfield over it. If we look seriously at that community all major amenities are within a 5 minute drive or at the outside a 7 minute cycle ride or 10/15 minute walk of the whole Parish:

- a) An NHS Medical centre with further services in our Parish including physiotherapy, mental health therapy, and help with hearing support.
- b) Three varied primary schools all rated as good.
- c) A very welcoming library with many civic services available and lots of activities for children linked to many local primary schools.
- d) An Arts Centre with a varied programme of cultural events including Choirs and Quartets.
- e) A Civic Hall with a variety of activities
- f) A Green Flag standard Recreation Ground with a variety of sporting activities including a very active Cricket Team with splendid new nets
- g) Excellent sporting facilities at Bollington Cross for young footballers.
- h) The Bridgend Drop In social centre with a very welcoming atmosphere and a huge variety of activities from Walking Festivals to free IT advice for older people.
- i) Community based leisure centre with gym and swimming pool offered at modest cost.
- j) 8 pubs of great variety, some serving excellent food, some splendid old style drinking dens.

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- k) Three European restaurants plus two Indian restaurants plus a fish and chip shop and a Chinese/south Asian take away.
- l) Three Excellent cafes one with a wonderful canalside presence.
- m) Two of the best butchers in Cheshire.
- n) Three excellent pie makers and sellers: Ann Belfield's, Heathecote Butchers and Smiths Bakers.
- o) Two modest sized but very well stocked supermarkets plus 2 other general stores.
- p) A wide variety of clubs and societies.
- q) Very varied employment opportunities provided by over three hundred businesses
- r) A historical atmosphere with the Middlewood Way, Macclesfield Canal, repurposed huge mills, a variety of atmospheric 19th century housing.
- s) A Town Hall open 5 days a week welcoming to all residents with easy contact with helpful staff and elected members.
- t) Plus all the ancillary services required for everyday living: A repair garage and MOT centre, plumbers, decorators ,gardeners etc.
- u) A local radio station: Canalside Radio

Whereas all these facilities are miles away in Macclesfield which is the focus of the Tytherington ward within the Macclesfield Parish Council.

The Silk Road as vital Parish Communication rather than 'barrier' to contact.

The current population of our Parish is 7,944 and as a Local Service Centre we provide the following the facilities outlined above. The Parish of Bollington is a spread out community with a concentrated urban area set within the gritstone belt on the very edge of the southern hilly area of England known as the Pennines surrounded by farmland bordering the very large urban Parish of Macclesfield to the south west and the very large rural Parish of Rainow to the North.

Since the building of the Silk Road into the Parish in 1992 we have had excellent road connections with Macclesfield and the main line to London and with the Poynton Bypass created in this century we have excellent connections to Manchester and its Airport which is the major northern world hub airport.

The Silk Road far from being a barrier in our Parish is a vital link and has been provided with perfectly good and safe crossing points to link both parts of our Parish. These are:

- a) The roundabout on the B5090 which enable vehicles, including regular bus services, to cross safely and quickly from north to south linking both parts of our Parish as well as enabling Macclesfield residents living in the Tytherington Ward to access our facilities easily.
- b) The Pedestrian controlled crossing that allows safe crossing for all pedestrians and particularly our secondary school pupils walking to Tytherington Academy back and forth every school day.
- c) The raised crossing which takes the major Green Path, the Middlewood Way (former disused railway line now a bridle path beyond Bollington) safely into Macclesfield.

These crossings make a strong contrast with the provision for the Butley Town settlement that is part of the Prestbury ward just further up the single lane A327 where there is no safe pedestrian crossings and no roundabout. Bollington Town Council fails to understand the logic of linking Butley Town to Prestbury when the A327 acts as a genuine barrier to pedestrian communication and has no easy vehicle access yet finds the Silk road with all its amenities for links within the Parish of Bollington 'a barrier' or 'convenient border'.

Bollington Town Council strongly contends that the suggestion to move the border for the newly proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward from the Bollington Parish Boundary with Macclesfield to the Silk Road is arbitrary, out of line with the stated purposes of the Local Government Boundary Commissions criteria for rewarding, divisive of the Parish for no reason

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whatsoever, misunderstands the nature of the Silk Road and its key importance to the Parish of Bollington as a whole, and offends the sense of community of many residents who wish to remain in the Parish of Bollington.

The Bollington Neighbourhood Plan

The Bollington Neighbourhood Plan adopted after a referendum and accepted by the Local Planning Authority in 2018 and currently being revised takes the whole of the Parish Boundary of Bollington as its designated area including the area threatened by the proposals from Cheshire East to the Local Government Boundary Commission. The change in boundary proposed by Cheshire East threatens the integrity of the plan and the revision designed to take the Plan up to 2040 from 2030 in line with Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Revision. If the proposals for border change from Cheshire East are adopted Bollington and Rainow Ward Councillors will not be able to represent Bollington residents in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan from 2027 as the plans in part of the Parish will be referred to Councillors in the Macclesfield Tytherington Ward. This breaks the continuity and integrity of the Planning Application and consultation process central to residents' concerns. Again, for no recognisable reason. Bollington and Rainow Ward Councillors will have detailed knowledge of the Neighbourhood plan whereas Councillors in the Macclesfield Tytherington Ward will have much less concern and will not be familiar with Neighbourhood plans as Macclesfield Parish does not have one for its own reasons.

General Warding issues: The wider Macclesfield Area

Please note that Bollington Town Council is only commenting on wider area issues because there is strong evidence from debate on Re-Warding issues that the disruption to the Bollington Ward as it is, is linked to what are regarded as necessary changes to the Macclesfield Area as a whole.

We understand that currently our ward which includes the Parishes of Bollington and Higher Hurdsfield will be -15% below the Borough average for electors per Councillor in 2030 which is outside the 10% flexibility allowed by the LGBC. Therefore, we need to increase our electoral size. By proposing removing a section of our Parish from our Ward Cheshire East is worsening our ratio of electors to Councillors albeit by a small amount thus contravening the basic condition of electoral fairness the Local Government Boundary Commission is trying to attain where electors have in so far as is possible equality of representative power when voting.

Cheshire East Council's submission to the LGBC suggests that the Parish of Higher Hurdsfield should be linked with the Macclesfield Hurdsfield Ward that extends beyond the Boundary of Macclesfield Parish Council. This is necessary to supplement numbers in electors of Macclesfield as a whole so two Councillor Wards throughout the Town maybe considered. Bollington Town Council understands this need although overall BTC would prefer Rainow and Pott Shrigley to be added to the existing Bollington Ward including Higher Hurdsfield as this Ward has worked satisfactorily for residents for residents since the inception of Cheshire East in 2009. Its current success is shown in that Higher Hurdsfield Parish council strongly supports remaining in the Bollington Ward.

The Parish Council of Higher Hurdsfield, we understand, has objected to being moved into the Macclesfield Warding Area and wishes to remain with Bollington and Cheshire East Council acknowledges in its report to the LGBC that there is a good working relationship between Higher Hurdsfield and Bollington built up by the cooperative relationships developed by Borough Councillors over the years since 2009 and continued in the present.

Naturally Borough Councillors regret the loss of the necessary relationship between them and in particular Parish Councils and Parish Councillors with whom they have worked to improve conditions for residents.

It does appear that many of the, frankly, disruptive arrangements proposed by Cheshire East Council arise from the need to adjust the number of Councillors in the Macclesfield Area from 12 to 11 due to the need to balance elector numbers with Councillors. This has resulted in a number of proposals coming forward that impact on the Parish of Bollington and the current Cheshire East Council Bollington Ward.

For reasons already set out, Bollington Town Council strongly opposes splitting our Parish between a ward associated with Macclesfield, which would be predominantly urban (Macclesfield Tytherington) and a ward predominantly rural in area (Bollington and Rainow). Bollington Town Council notes that the number of electors involved is not required for any of the arrangements suggested for Macclesfield to succeed in relation to the ratio of electors to Councillors required by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

In fact, we believe the submission from Macclesfield Town Council requires increasing the Bollington Ward beyond the Silk Road. At least this arrangement provides for Bollington Parish to be completely contained within the new Bollington and Rainow Ward proposed for 2027. Bollington Town Council does not reject that proposal in principle.

For the reasons set out above Bollington Town Council prefers the Border to follow the Parish Boundary as this has proved successful from 2009 to the present in Cheshire East as it did before in Cheshire County Council.

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Conclusion

Our proposed new Bollington and Rainow Ward requires the cohesion reflected in the proposed name. This community cohesion comes with Parish Boundaries being respected in Borough Warding arrangements. Bollington Town Council in considering and responding to the proposals from Cheshire East and strongly contends that ensuring the boundary of the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward supports the Local Government Boundary Commissions three principles of Elector/Councillor equality, community recognition and convenience and understanding of local government..

Therefore: Bollington Town Council

1. Regrets the loss of Higher Hurdsfield and would prefer its inclusion in any new Warding arrangements.
2. Accepts the addition of Rainow and Pott Shrigley into a new and expanded Bollington and Rainow Ward.
3. Objects to and resists as strongly as possible the suggestion that the Parish of Bollington should be split in any manner by the creation of a new Bollington and Rainow Ward.
4. In particular Bollington Town Council denies every aspect of Cheshire East proposals and the reasons for them in relation to the change of Ward Boundary from the current Parish boundary to the A523 Silk road .
NB Bollington Town Council accepted in relation to the recent Community Governance Review that a minor change in the south western parish boundary would be acceptable to deal with minor anomalies due to the lack of sensible planning arrangements of the Springwood Estate. This proposed boundary arrangement is detailed in this submission.
Bollington Town Council's recommendations were completely ignored by Cheshire East Council at the time when Adjustments were appropriate.
5. Now the fundamental principle of community cohesion and following existing boundaries should be applied to Warding the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward and the Ward Boundary must follow the Bollington Parish Boundary when the new Ward is established in 2027.

Draft produced by Cllr. K.J.Edwards for Bollington Town Council 15/03/2024