

Milton Keynes

Personal Details:

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

Comment text:

Related subject: Most of it

Hello. I served as a ward Councillor from 2010-2021, representing the Linford South then Campbell Park & Old Woughton wards, but am now writing simply as an interested observer. I don't have the space to put a complete proposal together but wanted to share some reflections from my time on the Council and knowledge of the communities around MK. I hope this is in some way useful.

1. Within our grid system, neighbouring estates generally relate well to each other and are used to being grouped into wards. However on the edge we have settled communities, notably Wolverton, Newport Pagnell, Olney, & Bletchley. These historic communities have their own identity and I would seek to preserve these in ward boundaries wherever possible. I'd certainly seek to improve the awkward split of Newport Pagnell which has resulted in wards with competing rather than complementary parts.
2. Parishes are important partners to the city council and many are significant service providers in their own right. You can't go far wrong by respecting parish boundaries when forming ward boundaries, and I'm especially mindful that Great Linford parish is currently split across 6 city wards which they found difficult to work with Councillors effectively.
3. Relations to Central Milton Keynes are very important. In the Campbell Park and Old Woughton ward, I often found that the middle of the ward - directly connecting to the city centre - had very different views on issues such as parking, planning and transport compared to the northern and southern edges, which were both further away from the centre. Wards containing areas with similar connectivity to Central Milton Keynes are likely to be more coherent.
4. While it was a privilege to serve all the areas within, the current Campbell Park and Old Woughton ward was just too long, thin and diverse to be a coherent ward. However the southern, older villages (Woolstone, Old Woughton, and Simpson) did form a strong bond through the shared

ward and that grouping is worth preserving if possible. While I would love to see a reconciliation between the Woughton Community Council and Old Woughton parish areas, I am sure that any proposal to join them together in a ward will be unpopular, no matter how good it looks on the map. I also think that the splitting of Willen Park North and Willen Park South could usefully be undone as these communities are so close to each other.

5. Having wards named "Loughton and Shenley" and "Shenley Brook End" for the past decade has been confusing, especially for estates such as Shenley Lodge - in the Shenley Brook End ward. Note also that Campbell Park parish council no longer contains Campbell Park!

6. The development in the Moulsoe area (polling district MJ) will need particular care. If it's kept within the Olney ward I imagine it will be a peripheral concern to rural councillors based in Olney. This is a strategic development for MK and I understand major extensions to this are being consulted on at present. I would look at bringing it into a Newport Pagnell ward, or a city ward - either connecting to the Willen estate or the Broughton/Brooklands development across Junction 14 of the M1. These are likely to be better fits for what will be a significant expansion of the city.

7. The obvious boundaries tend to be stronger: the West Coast Mainline, the M1, the A5 in its own valley, and dual carriageways such as the H8 and H3 roads.

8. Finally just a personal note that serving large 3-member wards is challenging, especially where wards are hotly contested and split between Councillors from different parties. I could no longer commit the time that the role needed. I know you have a statutory presumption of 3-member wards under elections by thirds. However this hasn't always served us well on the ground, and I would encourage flexibility on this point. If arrangements come forward with a non-uniform pattern but with good electoral equality and reflecting communities, I'd encourage you to take them seriously. Good luck in conducting the review.

Attached Documents:

None attached