

Swindon

Personal Details:

Name: Mr David Renard

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Organisation Name: Swindon Conservatives (Political groups)

Comment text:

Related subject: All

In attached letter.

Attached Documents:

- consultationresponsefinal.docx



21 August 2024

Brendan Connell-French
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Dear Brendan

Swindon Borough Boundary Proposals

Following the publication of the LGBCE proposals for the ward boundaries in 2026, I have consulted with colleagues and the comments below represent the collective view of the Conservative Council Group, the Swindon Conservative Federation comprising North and South Swindon and the East Wiltshire Conservative Association and MP.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for giving fair consideration to the proposals we submitted and for including so many of them in the consultation. We appreciate how much time and effort everyone puts in with so many complexities and competing options.

Turning to the specifics of the proposals, as you saw in our original submission, we sought to avoid 1 member wards, so there was some concern expressed over the inclusion of 3 single member wards in the draft. From the practical point of view of serving our local residents, it is helpful for there to be at least one other ward colleague to deal with constituents' case work when one member is unavailable or the seat is vacant. We appreciate that this issue is not within the parameters of the review but we wanted to express the point in our response.

We debated the railway line issue as a dividing line as we had originally proposed a 'Railway Village' ward which went across the line. Upon reflection, we accept that your proposal is more sensible from both a community and numbers perspective so we support that important element of the recommendations. We did look at some areas where we thought that moving some roads to gain a greater sense of 'community' would make more sense and these are articulated below.

Central Swindon North

We accept that the Penhill & Pinehurst and Gorse Hill wards work from both a numbers and community perspective so are content subject to our overarching concern about one member wards, above. With the Rodbourne Cheney ward, our view is that it works very well as it is at present both from numbers and community perspectives, so we did work on an alternative to retain it 'as is' but the impact it has

on the neighbouring wards mean that they do not work, particularly from a numbers perspective. Therefore, we accept all the proposals having registered our concerns.

South Swindon

Given our consideration of the railway line issue, above, we agree that these five wards are coherent and accept them as tabled.

East Swindon

We agree with the proposals for the Covingham & Nythe and Badbury Park, Eldene and Liden wards. In respect of the two Stratton wards, we looked at whether some roads would be better located in the other ward as access to them is from the other ward, hence, we were seeking to improve the sense of community in each ward. Unfortunately, we could not make the numbers work within the required tolerances, so with some concern, we have decided to accept the recommended boundaries.

West Swindon

These two wards are as we proposed so are content with the recommendations.

Haydon Wick

These two wards are as we proposed so are content with the recommendations.

St Andrews

These two wards are as we proposed so are content with the recommendations.

Rural North

We agree with the Highworth proposal as this is in line with our submission. We accept that the Blunsdon and South Marston communities have separate identities but would have preferred them to make up one 2 member ward. However, we will agree with the recommendation subject to the concerns stated above.

Rural South

These two wards are as we proposed so are content with the recommendations.

Ward Names

We support all the recommendations as tabled as residents will be able to clearly identify with them.

Parish Proposals

We are not commenting on any of the proposals concerning the parishes.

Conclusions

Having considered all the recommendations and discussed various ways to improve them, we have concluded that the principles of the boundary review and the numerical criteria do not permit any viable changes. Therefore, we are not making any suggestions for changing any of the ward boundaries from those in the recommendations out for consultation.

The unanimous view of all those consulted in the local 'Conservative family', is that we support the consultation proposals of the LGBCE in their entirety.

Yours sincerely

David Renard

Deputy Chairman Political
Swindon Conservative Federation

cc: Cllr Gary Sumner, Leader Swindon Conservative Council Group
Vinay Manro, Chairman Swindon Federation
Tim Swinyard, DCP East Wiltshire Constituency Association