

Sandwell

Personal Details:

Name: Mr Simon Phipps
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Rowley Regis

I represent the Belle Vale ward on Dudley MBC which borders with both Cradley Heath and Old Hill ward and Blackheath ward. The borough boundary along Lodgefield Road is porous and inconsistent. However, this cannot be resolved as part of this boundary review. What can be resolved is the anomalous boundaries that carve up parts of Cradley Heath into different wards and allow for a much more consistent approach to align the Cradley Heath addressed town with the Cradley Heath ward.

I am in support of the proposals by Halesowen Conservative Association that would create two wards, Cradley Heath ward and Blackheath and Old Hill ward. There are a number of advantages that meet the aims of the LGBC in their review.

Firstly, the creation of a Cradley Heath ward would unite the vast majority of areas that currently have a Cradley Heath address under one ward, as opposed to three as it is currently. Large estates, such as those off Waterfall Lane and Station Road, all share Cradley Heath addresses but find themselves in the Blackheath ward. Throughout campaigning in these areas over many years, it has often been noted by residents that they do not understand why they are in Blackheath ward when they live in Cradley Heath.

This change would help to ensure that the identity of the Cradley Heath community is preserved and make for sensible local government given people's addresses will match up with who their local councillors are. This in turn can assist with improving participation to ensure that local residents feel they belong more to the area in which they are represented and have elected members who are able to concentrate on representing Cradley Heath's interests.

The proposed ward boundary between the new Cradley Heath & Blackheath and Old Hill wards would run along clear, straight roads that make for an obvious and sensible boundary. Most of this proposed boundary would not split residences, and allowances can be made to avoid this for the small number that would be split on opposite sides of the road by running the boundary to the rear of properties instead.

The inclusion of the Brook Lane area, where my grandmother lived until she passed away several years ago, would be sensible as it also has Cradley Heath addresses and helps to achieve the electoral equality variances required by the LGBC.

As Old Hill is also split across two different wards as it stands, a new Blackheath and Old Hill ward would allow for all areas of Old Hill to be united under one ward, especially the areas around Cox's Lane that at present are in Rowley ward despite very little connection to the rest of the area there.

In order to achieve acceptable electoral numbers, this would require the inclusion of the Brickhouse estate in the Blackheath and Old Hill ward and loss of the areas around Uplands Avenue and Buckingham Road to other wards more focussed on the Whiteheath or Langley areas.

The Brickhouse estate itself is quite an independent area but it has a greater connection to Old Hill than it does the rest of the Rowley ward, especially considering the close proximity of the estate to Old Hill and Blackheath town centres. Whereas the Uplands Avenue and Buckingham Road estates could easily be integrated with new ward patterns in the Tividale, Langley or Whiteheath areas that I understand is proposed in a submission by Sandwell Conservatives.

In summary, a Cradley Heath centric ward would be a far easier to understand and convenient arrangement for both residents and the local authority. By incorporating the areas of Blackheath ward that actually have Cradley Heath addresses, not only will residents be better represented by councillors representing the interests of Cradley Heath but it would also create new clear boundaries and resolve the anomaly of Old Hill being split unnecessarily between the Rowley and Blackheath wards. Blackheath and Old Hill ward would incorporate all areas that belong to those two towns and link up two smaller towns that would make more sense to pair together as opposed to the existing arrangements.

I hope that you can consider both Halesowen Conservative Association and Sandwell Conservative's representations to create a pattern of wards that reflect the identities of our local towns in Cradley Heath, Blackheath and Old Hill.

Attached Documents:

None attached