

Sandwell

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Comment text:

Hello,

Please accept Antonia's apologies. Due to a mixup in the office this submission was not sent in for the closing date. New MPs have a significant burden of administrative work, recruitment and office processes to set up, and this was an administrative oversight. I hope you are able to include it in your consideration of the Sandwell review. Many thanks.

best wishes,

Antonia Bance
Labour MP for Tipton, Wednesbury and Coseley

Attached Documents:

- 240930-lgbce-submission-re-sandwell.docx



Antonia Bance MP
Member of Parliament for Tipton, Wednesbury and Coseley
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
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30 September 2024

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Antonia Bance MP submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Review of Sandwell Council's ward boundaries**

I am writing in support of the proposed new ward boundaries put forward by Sandwell Council for the Sandwell wards that fall within my constituency of Tipton and Wednesbury. These are the current wards of Friar Park, Great Bridge, Hateley Heath, Princes End, Tipton Green, Wednesbury North and Wednesbury South.

I would like to begin by pointing out that the proposed new ward map was drawn up by a committee of the council which included all the political groupings on the council, with Conservative and independent representation alongside that of the governing Labour group. The proposed new boundaries were also passed unanimously by the council in their meeting on 17 September 2023. This shows that the proposal from Sandwell Council not only meets the legal requirement of electoral equality but also supports the interests and identities of local communities and ensure effective and convenient local government.

I believe that the changes proposed for these wards are very largely small changes to meet the need for electoral equality, and do not negatively impact the identities of local communities in those areas. I believe that this applies to the changes to the boundary between the current Great Bridge and Greets Green and Lyng Wards, the boundary between the current Tipton Green and Princes End Wards and the boundary between the Friar Park and Hateley Heath Wards. These changes have my support.

I would like to comment further on only two proposed changes. The first is the changed boundary between the existing Wednesbury North and Wednesbury South Wards, with the concomitant proposed name changes, and the change in the boundary between Hateley Heath Ward and West Bromwich Central Ward.

The area of the current Wednesbury South Ward that is proposed to be moved to the new Wednesbury Ward makes sense as it forms the remaining part of Wednesbury town. The proposed new boundaries therefore place all of what would be considered Wednesbury by the local communities within the one ward. I support this as improving the interests and identities of local communities alongside meeting the requirement for electoral equality. It therefore makes sense to rename this proposed new ward as Wednesbury.

It also makes sense for the current Wednesbury South ward to take in the section of Hill Top to its south between the existing boundary and the Black Country New Road (A41). The Black Country New Road A41 and Old Meeting Street (A4196) form natural boundaries. This section, together with

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a part of the Tantany Estate surrounding Oakwood Park and Jesson Playing Fields (proposed to be moved to the Hateley Heath Ward and discussed below) currently form an odd little spur of the West Bromwich Central Ward. I believe the new boundary makes sense as this is an area with as many links to Hill Top as to West Bromwich.

The proposed new name of Hill Top and Ocker Hill Ward for the ward formerly known as Wednesbury South also has my support. It was widely recognised that the former name was no longer appropriate, as all of the area which would be thought of as Wednesbury proper was moved out of the Ward. Indeed, several residents commented that it hadn't been appropriate for some time. A change was therefore required. There are several names used in the area for parts of it with very ill-defined boundaries between them, including Harvill's Hawthorn and Black Lake as well as Hill Top for the areas which form the majority of the Ward, and Leabrook as well as Ocker Hill for the part of the ward bordering Princes End Ward. Following discussion with Councillors, officers and residents of the area it was decided that Hill Top and Ocker Hill provided the best and most widely recognised names for the areas encompassed by the new ward, and that therefore Hill Top and Ocker Hill Ward should be the new proposed name. I agree with this decision.

Finally, the area of the Tantany Estate around Oakwood Park and Jesson Playing Fields is currently part of a small spur of the West Bromwich Central Ward which does not fit with the rest of that ward and was presumably a compromise for the reasons of electoral equality in the previous review in 2004. Moving this section into Hateley Heath Ward where the rest of the Tantany Estate sits is eminently sensible both for reasons of the identity and interests of the local community on that estate, and for the purposes of ensuring effective and convenient local government, and I support it.

I therefore support the current proposed ward map submitted by Sandwell Council for those Sandwell Wards which fall within my constituency.

Best wishes,

