

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Related subject: Knutsford

As much as I submit these views as a member of the public, I was a Knutsford Town Councillor for eight years up to 2019 so have first-hand experience of the governance of the town.

The proposals for Knutsford are awful. They are also clearly promoted by the Tatton Labour Party with their eyes firmly on electoral gain and so are textbook examples of gerrymandering.

Knutsford a compact, coherent settlement such that it does not require division into separate borough electoral wards as Wilmslow, Congleton or Crewe do. Ward boundaries, like constituency boundaries and even county boundaries, might be merely 'lines on a page' but psychologically they are so much more. To divide Knutsford into two unequal wards is contrary to logic or equity. It simply does not make sense.

There is another psychological boundary which affects Knutsford in the railway line. This is more of a physical boundary which reinforces the psychological. It cuts off what is one of the most deprived areas of Cheshire from the town centre and creating a new, separate ward for that area will simply stress this division.

Further, the Town Council and Borough Councillors have worked very hard over the years to try to include and incorporate that area into Knutsford as a whole and to reverse the clear sense of isolation and removal from the heart of the town. Benefits and rewards are being seen as a result of this hard work and investment of many people to the extent that the former Over Ward is probably now far more included and involved

in and has a sense of being part of Knutsford than it ever has. Endorsing these self-serving proposals would undo these years of effort and achievement.

I fail to see what will be achieved by dividing up Knutsford. At present, the three borough ward councillors (one of whom lives in the new proposed North East ward) work together for the whole of Knutsford. There is presently an ongoing issue in relation to proposed housing development next to Longridge which has been subject to a public enquiry. The councillor from the Knutsford Ward who has done most work on this would not have been able to do so if Knutsford were divided as the current proposals it would not be in his 'patch': but the outcome of the enquiry, whatever it is, will have ramifications for the town as a whole. The bigger picture for a town the size of Knutsford is usually a better portrait than smaller cameos which do not show the whole canvas.

I urge the commission to revise its proposals, reject the blatant selfish interest of the Tatton Labour Party and retain the status quo of a one coherent Knutsford.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Attached Documents:

None attached