

Somerset

Personal Details:

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

Comment text:

Related subject: All, though I live in Coker

Somerset has to cut its councillors by 14 or 1 in 8 - from 110 to 96. It currently has 55 divisions, each with 2 councillors. The concept of equalising populations has a flaw. The population of a large urban housing estate are certain to share main concerns about their area. However, Somerset's Dulverton and Exmoor division is more than 30 miles E-W, and people in Porlock will have worries which are somewhat different to those in Dulverton. Divisions in the large towns (Taunton. Bridgwater, Yeovil, Burnham and Frome) have small geographic areas with boundaries that don't altogether match their townscapes. If these were redrawn to reflect recent changes - expansion and centre depopulation - each with one fewer divisions, that would account for 10 of the 14 cut in councillor numbers. In the rural areas, Splitting the current S Petherton and Islemoor division between the adjacent divisions of Crewkerne Martock, Curry Rivel and Ilminster would save a further 2 and would reflect where people in that division actually work and shop etc. I don't feel qualified to make a further suggestion about any rural area further from my home, but the above would satisfy 12 of the 14 reduction required. One further very local point. It would be helpful and logical if the small portion of West Coker's parish which is east of the A3088 (Watercombe Heights and Sampson's Wood) were moved into the Coker division.

Attached Documents:

None attached

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I already submitted some comments in ID:1148651.

Further to my suggestions that some larger central town areas have too many divisions/councillors, the detailed spreadsheet brings out this point. With 110 councillors, each pair has an average of 8122 residents. Projected population growth to 2030 will bring that up to 8496. But if there are to be only 96 councillors, and hence 48 divisions, the average will have to be 9735.

The four Yeovil wards' populations will sum to 30798 - only 7699 each with 4 divisions. Three wards would give each 10266 which is much closer and allows large rural areas such as Exmoor to remain below the average. Bridgwater Frome and Taunton/Monkton need at least some rebalancing.

Attached Documents:

None attached