

Sandwell

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Organisation Name: Tipton Civic Society (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Related subject: Tipton

The Tipton Civic Society objects to the creation of a new ward called Hill Top and Ocker Hill because these two districts have quite separate geographical and community identities.

Hill Top is part of the town of West Bromwich and Ocker Hill is part of the town of Tipton. Furthermore, these two districts are separated by the valley of the River Tame (the ancient boundary between Tipton and West Bromwich) which has no vehicular or even pedestrian crossing points within the proposed ward boundary. Almost 30 years ago this separation was reinforced by the construction of the Black Country New Road which followed the line of the valley, but did not provide any cross-valley routes.

The proposed ward boundary therefore fails on all the criteria set out by the Boundary Commission in seeking a "good pattern of wards".

This proposed ward has no transport links (not even pedestrian!); it has no interlinked community groups; it has no interlinked facilities and it has no identifiable natural boundaries. In fact the two districts can be defined more easily by their firm physical and social separation rather than any kind of linkage.

This once again illustrates a wider malaise with the issue of ward boundaries and community identity which has long concerned the Tipton Civic Society. The town of Tipton, as defined by the DY4 postcode boundary, is now proposed to be split across six Council wards, only two of which are wholly within Tipton.

About 15 years ago we made representation about the creation of the new Oldbury ward, which subsumed the large swathe of Tipton to the east of the A461. Consequently, hundreds of Tiptonians now live within a ward with the name of a town almost two miles from Tipton. A Hill Top and Ocker Hill ward would be just as illogical and insensitive.

We understand that wards must be revised over time to reflect a balance of elector numbers but this should be done in a way that enhances

community identity and sense of place.

Ironically the Boundary Commission`s Summary Report elequently expresses the importance of this identity in its "good pattern" aspirations, but sadly in the case of Tipton, it has singularly failed to follow its own advice.

May we urge you therefore, to re-examine this ill-informed proposal for a Hill Top and Ocker Hill ward.

Attached Documents:

None attached