

# Wirral

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**Organisation Name:** Green Party group on Wirral Council (Political groups)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Bromborough, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead & Tranmere, Prenton, Oxtol, Hoylake & Meols, West Kirby & Thurstaston, Heswall

The attached document contains the collective response of the Green Group on Wirral Council to the draft proposals of the Boundary Commission.

It would be helpful to receive confirmation that the file has been successfully received.

## Attached Documents:

- green-group-response-to-draft-proposals.pdf

## **Green Group response to draft proposals**

This is the response of the Green group of 14 councillors to the draft proposals on new ward boundaries.

Other than the comments below we regard the draft proposals as acceptable although the current rigid adherence to 3-member wards means the opportunities for closer alignment with community identity as laid out in our original proposals remain unfulfilled.

We have three specific concerns about the draft proposals:

- The failure to address the division of West Kirby between different wards
- The new proposal to do the same to New Ferry
- The removal of a large part of Tranmere from the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward into Prenton ward.

Our alternative proposals would address all these concerns while meeting the requirement for equality of representation and better reflecting community interests and identities.

### **1. New Ferry**

**We propose redrawing the border so that New Ferry is not split down the middle as currently proposed and the town is fully incorporated into the Rock Ferry ward which should then be renamed Rock Ferry and New Ferry ward.**

New Ferry has a long and proud history as a distinct place that has played a major role in the development of Wirral. This is well chronicled here:

[History of New Ferry](#)

The sense of community has been brought into sharp focus in recent years by the major gas explosion which destroyed buildings and affected many lives:

[New Ferry Explosion](#)

This in turn has prompted a significant regeneration programme and the town has been awarded funds under the Future High Streets scheme to help rebuild the town centre. This has begun with new homes being constructed and a major scheme to upgrade the high street underway and due for completion in early 2027.

It is therefore concerning to see that the town and indeed the high street itself would be split in half by the proposed boundaries, bisecting the main shopping area and running through the new housing scheme i.e. between the hoardings shown in this photograph:



This clearly runs counter to one of the commission's key criteria - to reflect community interests and identities.

A new border needs to be found which includes, as a minimum, all of New Ferry high street/shopping area.

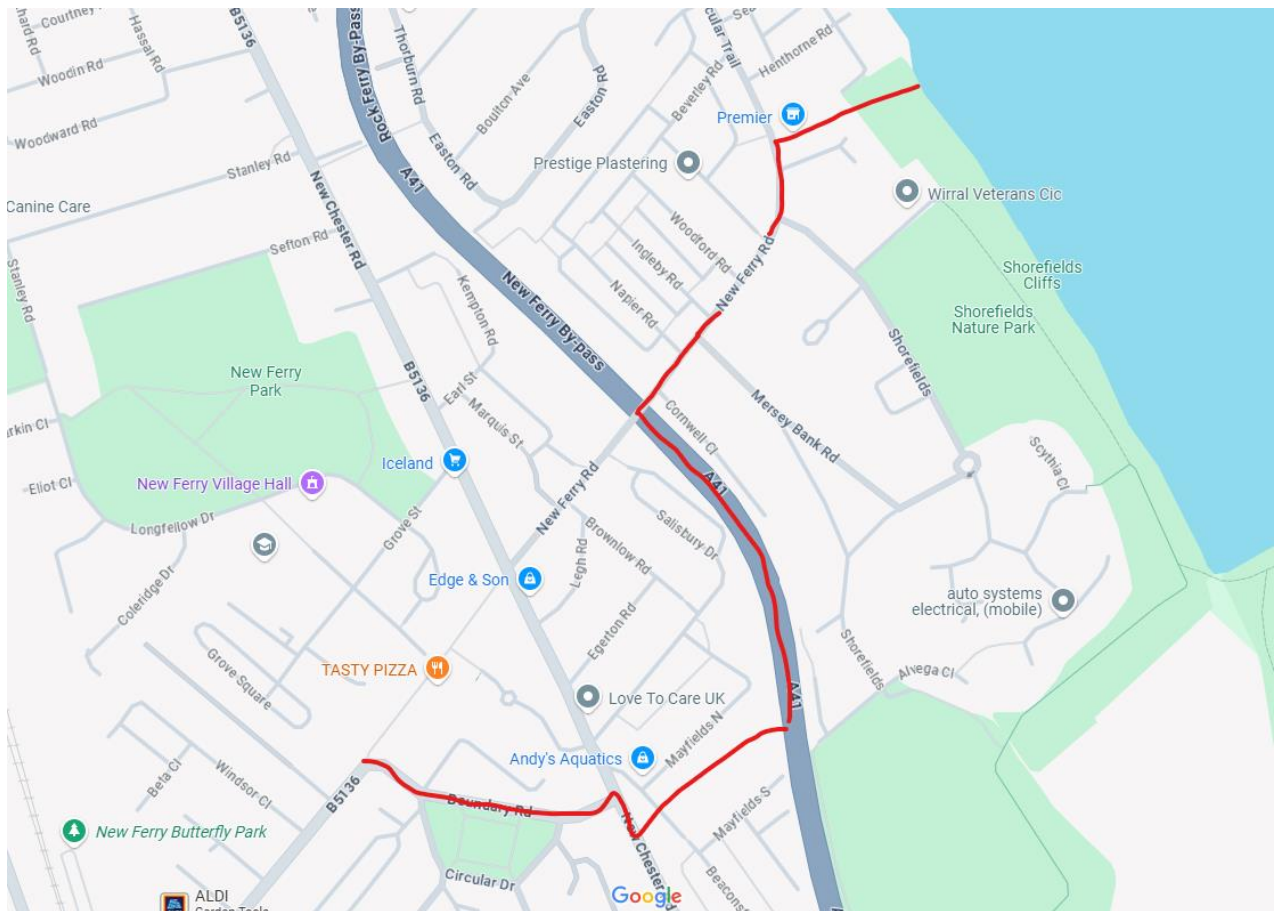
This can easily be achieved by diverging from the draft boundary commission map at Bebington Road/Boundary Road, bisecting Boundary Road to its junction with New Chester Road. The border would then run between Mayfield North and Mayfield South to the New Ferry Bypass. The boundary then turns back along the bypass until it reaches New Ferry Road and follows New Ferry Road before turning north to the river between Clipper View and Riverview.

This option retains the integrity of New Ferry within a single ward and yields acceptable variances for both Bromborough and Rock Ferry wards. The figures provided to us by Democratic Services suggest this would add ~490 electors to the Rock Ferry ward and reduce Bromborough ward by the same amount.

A logical outcome of this ward pattern would be to **rename Rock Ferry ward as Rock Ferry and New Ferry ward.**

Furthermore, it would then be logical to **rename Bromborough ward as Bromborough and Port Sunlight** reflecting the distinct and historic identities of these communities.

**Proposed new boundary between Rock Ferry/New Ferry ward and  
Bromborough/Port Sunlight ward**



## 2. Birkenhead and Tranmere/Prenton/Oxton wards

**Reverse most of the proposal to move a large part of Higher Tranmere into Prenton ward and instead move streets with Oxton postal addresses from the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward into Oxton ward.**

The draft proposals suggest moving a section of the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward into Prenton ward. This helps achieve acceptable variances but clearly runs counter to the requirement to reflect community interests and identities. The streets between Victoria Park and Mersey Park represent the heart of Higher Tranmere. The very first photograph in the Wikipedia page for Tranmere is a view “from Mersey Park to Agnes Road and towards Victoria Park”

[Tranmere, Merseyside - Wikipedia](#)

## Tranmere, Merseyside

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 53°37′8″N 3°02′05″W﻿ / ﻿53.3788°N 3.0205°W﻿ / 53.3788; -3.0205

**Tranmere** is a suburb of [Birkenhead](#), on the [Wirral Peninsula](#), England. Administratively, it is within the [Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward](#) of the [Metropolitan Borough of Wirral](#), in [Merseyside](#). Before [local government reorganisation](#) on 1 April 1974, it was part of the [County Borough](#) of Birkenhead, within the county of [Cheshire](#).

At the [2001 census](#), the population of Tranmere was 11,668.<sup>[3]</sup> By the [2011 census](#) the suburb was combined with the centre of Birkenhead. The population was recorded as 15,879.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

**History** [ [edit](#) ]

**Tranmere**



Looking from Mersey Park to Agnes Road and towards Victoria Park

Several other references from the same source support the historic connection of the area between the parks with the identity of Tranmere:

**Green spaces** [ [edit](#) ]

Two urban parks are located in Tranmere. [Mersey Park](#) to the north and [Victoria Park](#) to the south. Mersey Park hosts one of several annual [Bonfire Night](#) municipal firework displays put on by Wirral Borough Council. Victoria Park contains a community hall at the bottom of Albany Road, a cricket pitch and clubhouse. Victoria Park was originally the gardens of a large property called The Towers, built in the 1860s as a French-style chateau by [Victor Poutz](#),<sup>[28][*page needed*]</sup> a French cotton merchant.

**Landmarks** [ [edit](#) ]

At the top end of Victoria Park stands the Tranmere Cross, a cross fragment with a worn stone base, believed to have originated c. the fifteenth century. The structure is a designated Grade II [listed building](#) that was put on the present site in 1937<sup>[29][30]</sup> and which once marked the entrance to Tranmere on Church Road.

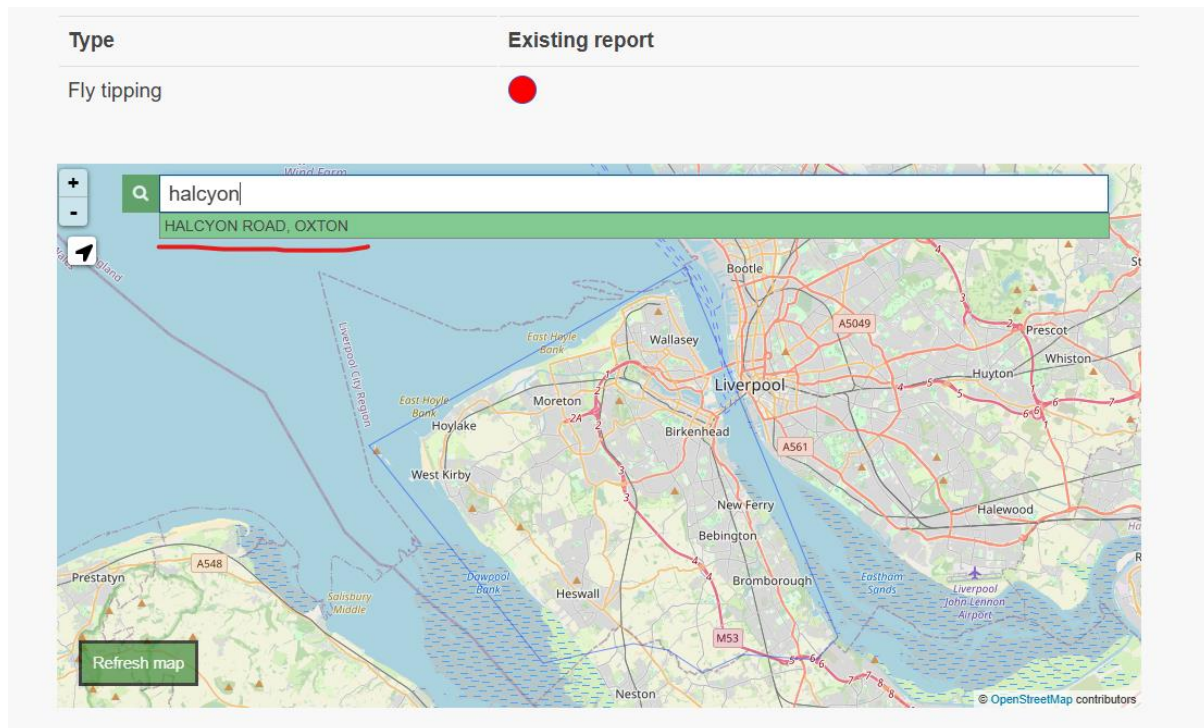
We are surprised that anyone suggested moving the streets between Mersey and Victoria parks from the Tranmere ward to the Prenton ward. Residents would be bemused by such a change.

However, a reasonable case can be made to accept a part of the proposed change and shift the border from **Greenway Road** as it is currently to **Church Road**. In fact, this is probably a more accurate transition line between Tranmere and Prenton. The new proposed border would therefore look as follows (blue line = Church Road):

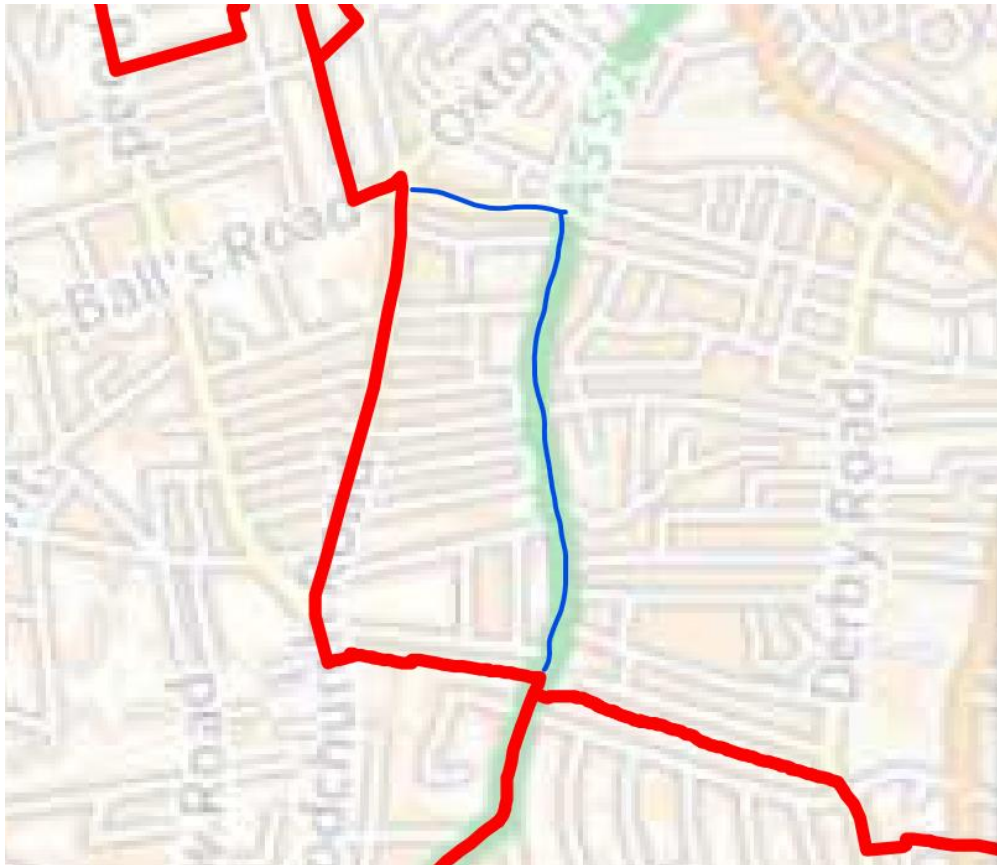




This change on its own would result in unacceptable variances. To address this we propose moving the streets from **Balls Road East to Kingsland Road** from the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward to the Oxton ward. In fact these streets used to be part of the Oxton area ward before a previous boundary change and they have Oxton postal addresses as evidenced by the council's own designation for reporting case work e.g. Halcyon Road as shown below. But the same applies for all the streets in this area.



As a result of this proposed change the ward boundary would look as follows with the new border bisecting Balls Road East and the relevant part of Borough Road as per the blue line below.



Compared with the draft Boundary Commission the cumulative impact of both the above proposals would we believe

- increase the electors in Oxton ward by ~977
- decrease the number of electors in Prenton ward by ~1,037
- marginally increase the number of electors in Birkenhead & Tranmere ward.

All three wards would have variances well within the 10% threshold.



### **3. Hoylake & Meols/West Kirby & Thurstaston/Heswall**

**These three wards all have large negative variances and there is a very unsatisfactory division of West Kirby between two wards. Reducing the combined number of councillors from 9 to 8 would yield much better variances and yield a far neater ward pattern that better reflects local community identities.**

Paragraph 73 of the draft report includes the following:

*“Amongst the other submissions we received, four local residents wrote in support of West Kirby not being divided between wards. However, they did not put forward alternative boundaries that would both achieve this and provide for good electoral equality.”*

Members of the public might reasonably feel that it is down to the commission to address an obvious failure to adhere to community identity especially when it has the convenient option of varying the number of councillors per ward.

Also, both the Green and Liberal Democrat groups put forward proposals that sought to address the splitting of West Kirby between two wards.

We therefore feel there is a strong sentiment against the draft proposals and the commission should address that by providing a ward pattern that avoids the division of West Kirby between two wards.

Moreover, we would point out that there is a clear divergence between wards in West Wirral and other parts of the Borough in terms of variances. The draft proposals yield the following variances:

- Heswall = -5%
- Hoylake & Meols = - 8%
- West Kirby & Thurstaston = -10%

(Other wards in West Wirral also have large negative variances i.e. Pensby & Thingwall = -9%, Moreton West & Saughall Massie = -6%. Only Greasby, Frankby & Irby has a positive variance - +1%).

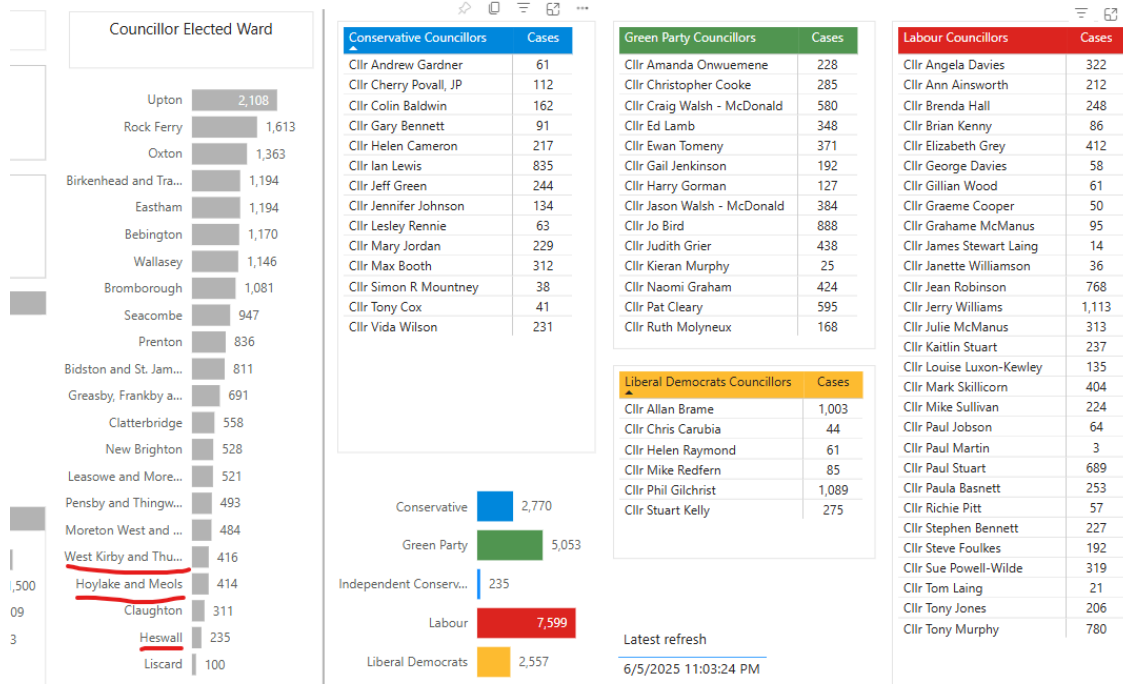
This greatly stretches the “equality of representation” criteria especially when one considers that the affluent areas of West Wirral make less demands on councillors than the deprived wards in East Wirral. This is clearly demonstrated by the council’s own figures for cases reported by councillors on behalf of residents since the last local elections in May 2023 with low figures for wards in West Wirral as highlighted below:

## COUNCILLOR ENQUIRIES ALL Cases

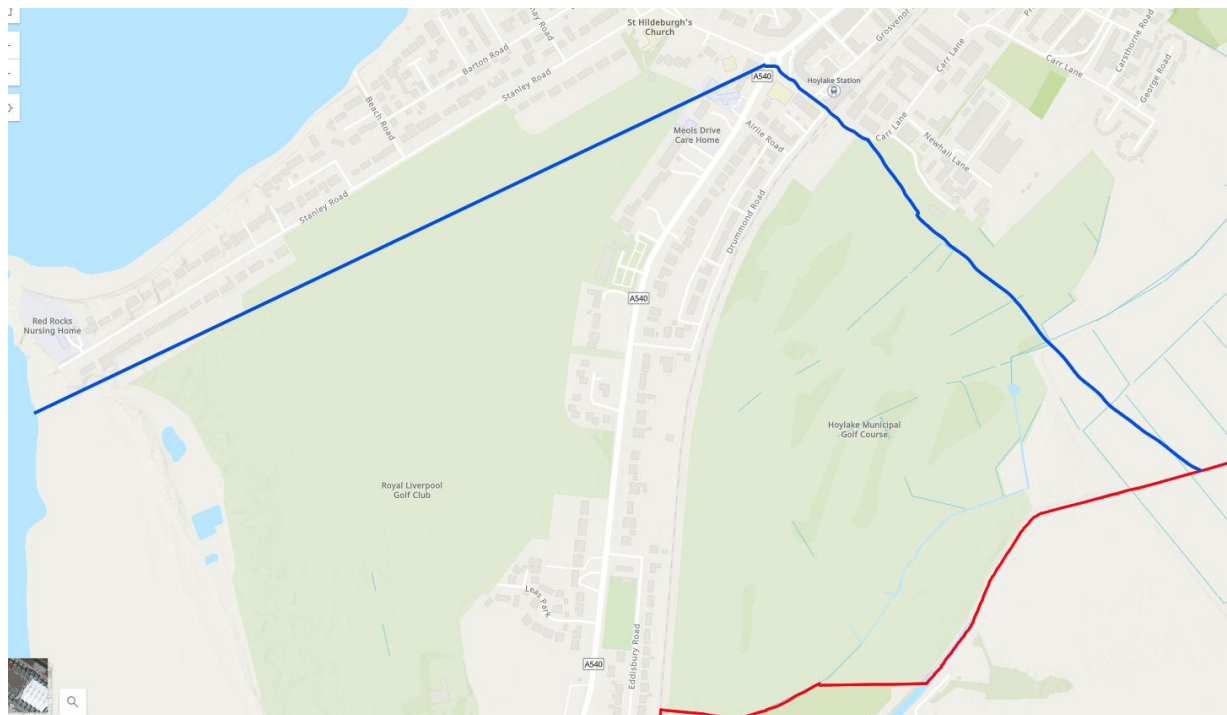
Councillors: ModGov. Cases: Wirral Case Management

5/7/2023 6/3/2025

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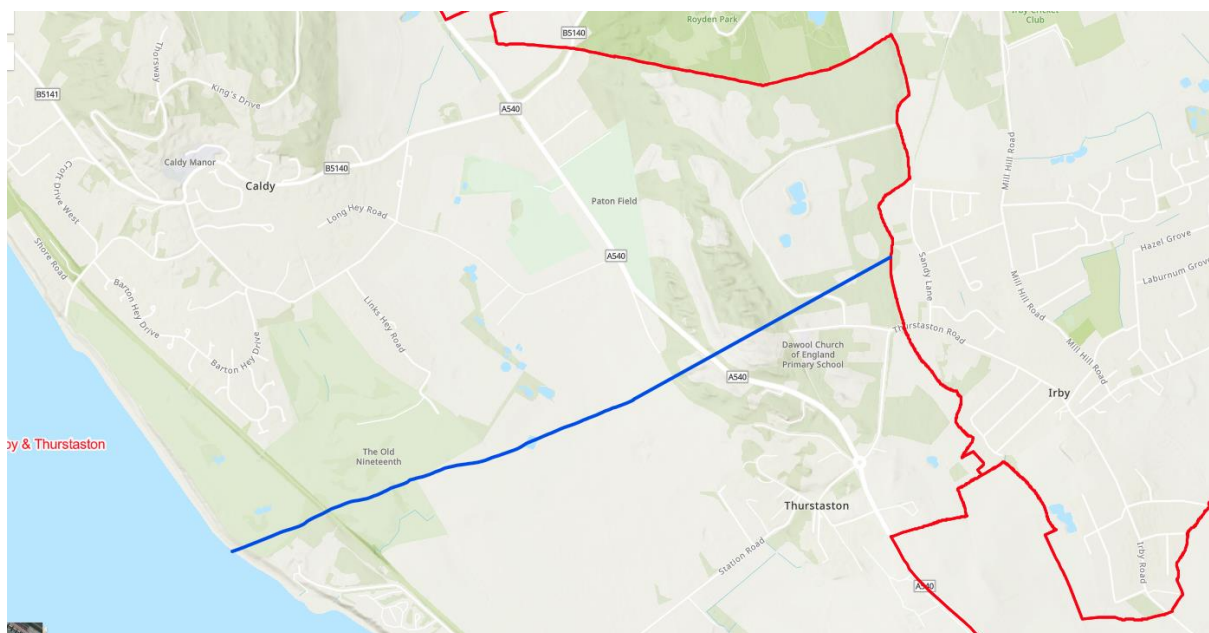
To address the above issues we propose changing Hoylake & Meols ward to a two-member ward with a border as per the blue line below running across the Royal Liverpool golf course to The Kings Gap/Market Street roundabout then along Station Road and past Hoylake train station.



The above map would now form the northerly border of West Kirby ward. It would mean that the Hoylake & Meols ward would be clearly identified with Hoylake and Meols and not also, confusingly, a large part of West Kirby. This would remove all of the polling district ND and much of the polling district NC from Hoylake & Meols and transfer them to the West Kirby ward. The new population of a 2-member Hoylake & Meols ward would be ~8,304 giving a +6% variance.

This means the electorate in West Kirby ward would increase by ~2,410 giving a variance of ~+9%. This could be improved by shifting the proposed border between Hoylake & Meols and West Kirby slightly. However, we retain our view that the sparsely populated Thurstaston area is more closely linked with Heswall than with West Kirby. Thurstaston is two miles from the centre of Heswall compared with three miles from the centre of West Kirby. Shifting the border between West Kirby and Heswall wards so that Thurstaston becomes part of Heswall ward makes more sense in terms of community identity and will yield better variances across wards.

Our proposed border is as per the blue line in the map below:



This affects around 422 electors and would improve the variance of the West Kirby ward to 6%. The total electorate in Heswall ward would then increase by ~422 yielding an improved variance of -3%. It would then be sensible to rename wards as follows

- West Kirby
- Heswall & Thurstaston

The above changes mean that the overall number of councillors would drop from 66 to 65. This would mean far better variances for wards in West Wirral and more equality of representation across the borough. It would better meet all three of the key criteria the Boundary Commission needs to consider.