

York

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Comment text:

Related subject: West York and general

I am disappointed with two aspects of the Commission's proposals for York.

Firstly, while the Commission has recognised the advantages of single-member wards in areas like Leeman Road, many other parts of the City will continue to be two- or three-member electoral divisions. There is evidence to suggest that, where an area has a single representative, residents are more likely to relate to that individual. Accountability is improved. In turn, the Councillor feels a personal sense of responsibility for a defined area. They can expand their knowledge of the issues affecting the area and develop a plan to achieve longer-term improvement. With three-member wards, the commitment of Councillors is often diminished, as a "my colleague will deal with that issue" attitude sometimes develops. There can be a lack of cooperation on local issues where representation is split between different and competing parties.

Secondly, at a more general level, I would like to see annual elections reintroduced. Annual elections (elections of either 1/3 or 1/4 of the Council each year) avoid the possibility of a complete change in membership at a single election. If a completely inexperienced Council is elected, momentum is lost, and policy priorities are thrown into chaos for several months at least. More gradual change is desirable (if that is what the electorate votes for)

As far as the ward boundaries are concerned, on the west of the City, the distinct Foxwood neighbourhood should have a single representative. The necessary electoral quota can be met by adding homes in the Gale Lane area to the Foxwood/Woodthorpe wards.

The Lowfield/Hob Moor/Front Street area should be a single-member ward. There is a strong sense of community across those polling districts. There is little synergy between the Holgate Road/St Pasuls Square suburb and Westfield. The former looks towards the City centre for services, the latter to the Front Street shopping area.

I would ask that the Commission further refine its proposals along the above lines.

Attached Documents:

None attached