

Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

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Comment text:

Letter objecting to boundary proposal

Uploaded Documents:

[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1652034521_Steve+Reynolds+boundary.pdf\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1652034521_Steve+Reynolds+boundary.pdf)

To Whom It May Concern

I represent Oakengates & Ketley Bank both as a Borough Councillor and as the Mayor of Oakengates through the Town Council. I am also a Parish Councillor for Wrockwardine Wood & Trench.

The suggestion to reduce Oakengates & Ketley Bank from the current three seats down to one by making Oakengates, one of the principal and important market towns, a single member ward is very concerning. The areas which you have suggested to annex to surrounding wards, these being Ketley Bank to Ketley, Trench Lock to Hadley, Beverley to Ketley and the Hollyhurst Ward to Wrockwardine Wood do not reflect the community links in place and do not reflect the geography of the area on the ground.

The links to Oakengates in respect of Ketley Bank, Beverley & Wrockwardine Wood (Hollyhurst Ward) are both historical and socially connected. Ketley Bank is closely tied with Oakengates both historically and in the present day. Ketley Bank Residents use the services and the high street in Oakengates and thus require a say in the area and Ketley Bank should not be separated from Oakengates under any circumstances. The linking of Ketley Bank with the community of Ketley is inappropriate as they do not share community identity, do not have sufficient transport links between these areas and do not have any connection. They are significantly separated by a main road and have no connection, whether this is through community groups, schools or services. Residents from Ketley Bank struggle to access services within Ketley as the bus links are poor (with residents having to travel through Oakengates to get to Ketley, residents would have to cross a busy main road (Mossey Green Way) further demonstrating how these communities are not linked. Since these proposals have been publicised, many residents have contacted me from Ketley Bank and they have been very concerned about no longer being a part of the community of Oakengates as this is where they consider their home town. I hope you will take these concerns into consideration.

Oakengates as one of the principal market towns of Telford deserves and requires greater representation than the proposed one councillor, this is to ensure investment continues into the town. There are also many issues which are raised as a location for a market, many businesses, a theatre and a significant leisure offer which are not present in other single member wards. Residents will therefore receive reduced capacity from their electoral representative as this individual will need to apply themselves to the issues raised above.

Furthermore, the communities of Beverley, Wrockwardine Wood and Trench Lock are also closely tied to Oakengates and to separate them under these LGBCE proposals would be unfair as these residents see Oakengates as their local community to which they belong and use the services provided within the town. I have recently been contacted by residents from these areas who have stated that they would prefer to remain within their community of Oakengates as this is where they use for shopping, going out and is where their health services are located.

Many of these reasons have been raised by residents as to why we should keep areas our community together and continue the retention of the current ward boundaries for Oakengates and Ketley Bank.

The community Centre which is the home of the Local Children's Centre, is used by families from across Oakengates, Ketley Bank, Trench Lock, Wrockwardine Wood and Beverley. The provision for elderly residents is also used by residents from the above areas. This is the same for the school holiday activities. This demonstrates the close community ties which exist within the current boundary.

Local businesses within the town support the current boundaries to be retained as the customer base come from the current ward boundary. The businesses also raised that they felt it was important that Oakengates was not downgraded to just one Councillor as they felt this would harm their businesses comparative to other local market towns.

The current ward boundaries are well supported with bus links and also has a significant green network which also helps with the connectedness of the area.

Families from across the current ward boundaries generally attend the same nursery primary and secondary schools. Oakengates Nursery serves the residents in Ketley Bank and Wrockwardine Wood, The current ward boundaries have also Telford Priory School as their local catchment school.

I really hope that you take these issues into consideration and do not separate our very close community. I feel that this would detrimental to both local residents and our market town.

Yours Sincerely

Cllr. S J Reynolds

Borough Councillor for Oakengates & Ketley Bank