

## Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

### Personal Details:

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### Comment text:

The current pattern of wards accommodates for too many 3-member wards, where there has been significant lack of accountability of some councillors in areas where there are 3 members, especially where wards contain areas of both deprivation and of relative affluence. The needs and requirements of areas of Telford which are currently combined in wards are significantly different, and this needs to be reflected in re-drawing the map. My overall recommendation to the Commission is to increase the number of wards within Telford, whilst retaining the same number of elected councillors (30 in the Telford constituency). There are two examples of the scenario which I will comment on specifically. Firstly, The Nedge currently comprises of the areas of Hollinswood, Randlay, Stirchley, and Holmer Lake. This area for one ward is far too large, and the differences of issues between the areas are too significant to be properly worked by three councillors. Holmer Lake is an affluent area of Telford, and uses local facilities in Stirchley, whereas Hollinswood is a deprived area of Telford, and has use of its own facilities without having to travel to any other part of The Nedge ward. My proposal is to have one ward of Hollinswood & Randlay, with 2 sitting councillors. This ward will mirror the same name of the Parish Council, and follow the same boundaries, with the exception of Arundel Close and Botfield Close, whose postal address and geography is in Randlay, but currently sits in Stirchley and Brookside Parish. I would then recommend a 2 member Stirchley ward, including Holmer Lake as it is currently, and also including all of Stirchley Road and its estates such as St James Crescent and Ryton Way within the Stirchley ward. This area currently sits with Brookside, however despite bordering Brookside geographically, its residents do not use Brookside local facilities, and use Stirchley's instead. The area Stirchley Road sits in is named Stirchley Village, demonstrating that the area does not relate to Brookside. Brookside would be reduced to a single member, and geographically would compromise of the inner ring road with a south-westerly border with Aqueduct and a southerly border with Madeley (the area of the ward known as Tweedale and Cuckoo Oak). Overall, there are still 5 councillors representing the areas mentioned, with 3 in The Nedge and 2 in Brookside currently, moving to 2 in Hollinswood & Randlay, 2 in Stirchley, and 1 in Brookside. Brookside having arguably the highest level of deprivation in Telford needs one single dedicated councillor that can work entirely on the issues that are presented in Brookside only and should not have to dedicate resources to more affluent areas of Stirchley Village when this can be done by other councillors in a different ward that has its own issues. Secondly, Madeley & Sutton Hill is currently a 3-member ward, similar to The Nedge, however its issues and needs could not differ anymore than what they currently do. If Brookside isn't the most deprived area of Telford, then Sutton Hill is. At present, the focus and attention needed on Sutton Hill is being muddled by members spending resources on more affluent Madeley. Both Madeley & Sutton Hill have their own centres, with shops, fast food outlets, community centres and churches, and residents do not identify either place with each other. Like Brookside, Sutton Hill needs an increase of representation per elector, which is why I propose that Sutton Hill sits as its own ward, and like Brookside again, focuses on an inner ring road where the vast majority of residents live and need support from their elected councillor. Madeley would break off on its own and keep the remaining 2 councillors, supporting a larger geographical area that stretches from Halesfield Industrial Estate to Blists Hill Victorian Town and everything in between. These proposals would bring a much-needed focus to areas of deprivation in Telford that seem to have been underworked by 3-member wards as they have too much to cover when elected. Community identity is seriously important in Telford, and as boundaries currently sit, some residents question whether or not they are voting in the right place – this is especially the case in the parts of Stirchley and Stirchley Village that vote in Brookside. I strongly believe residents would be far better represented by a reduction in 3-member wards across the whole of Telford, and that by highlighting these two examples, that increasing voter representation in deprived areas can and should lead to better services from elected councillors.

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded