

Wychavon District Council

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Doverdale Park Residents' Association

Comment text:

The residents on Doverdale Park Homes, Hampton Lovett [REDACTED] object to being moved into the Droitwich West ward of Wychavon as we are a rural and NOT an urban community. Please see the attached report from the Residents' Association. I am the Treasurer of the Association who compiled the report with the Secretary and Chair.

Uploaded Documents:

https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1644760074_Boundary+Changes+Objection+2022.docx

Wychavon Electoral Boundary Proposals 2022

Report from Doverdale Park Residents' Association, Hampton Lovett:

We are an officially qualifying residents' association representing 86 out of the 102 homes (of which 5 are currently vacant), thus 89% of the total on Doverdale Park homes and accounting for 135 individuals eligible for voting.

The proposed changes to the electoral boundaries in Wychavon were brought to our attention by our Parish Council, with whom we have a good working relationship. In your report paragraph 52, it states that, "*We would be particularly interested in further evidence from residents of Doverdale Park, as to whether our proposal is indeed an accurate reflection of their community identity*". Herewith the considered response following an official ballot of our membership to the three main criteria cited in your report. It should be noted that the ballot gave a 100% consensus, there being no objections or abstentions for this response.

1. Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.

We have no information that would be relevant to your review. However, within your report we note that there are different proposals from political parties, so we realise that there are other options available regarding boundaries.

2. Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

We believe that the outcome of the proposal would curtail access to the main council. We would have only 2 councillors representing the whole proposed ward of Droitwich West, thus giving us 2 voices in a sea of 26. Droitwich West proposes to put us with the urban area of the Westlands estate, a very different population to ours, which is an over 55yrs semi-retirement park. This does not chime easily with the mixed age range of Westlands, which has its own issues and would not identify with the likely issues facing our residents.

In terms of retaining our current parish council, let us start by saying we are the epitome of the term "parochial". Our parish council fought for our bus route from the park (although the route to the town of Kidderminster was cancelled and its service to Droitwich is inadequate

being typical of a rural area in the UK) and has just received permission for traffic calming measures on the main road outside our park.

The parish council influence all of our issues, speed cameras, bus stops, village hall and our control of these facilities would be drastically reduced.

We are advised that our representation would drop to about 7% from a current 27% (Wychavon). In addition, our current enjoyment of direct access to district and county council through our parish council would be lost. The proposed shift would make our ward political, whereas the parish council is non-political, thereby providing harmony within a small and isolated community.

3. Community identity/Groups/Interest/Boundaries

We enjoy a different style of home and live in what both we and visitors regard as a holiday atmosphere. This being one of the main reasons for its residents to be here. Our area is a highly evolved, neighbour-driven environment possessing powerful community spirit and a strong sense of identity and belonging. We are a unique and independent environment, living on private land within a discreet and partisan society. Doverdale Park was once a park and not characteristic of the landscape of Droitwich. Its identity is most definitely rural being surrounded by pasture, fields and woods.

In your report you have mistakenly assumed that residents on Doverdale would identify with Droitwich due to amenities. But this is simply not the case. We value the rural area in which we live and identify with rather than the urban area of Westlands and Droitwich. We think it important to keep the green belt divide between Hampton Lovett and Droitwich as did the planning officers when the proposed housing estate was refused in 2017. We are indeed identified as the strategic gap between rural and urban in the planning report.

We feel we have a strong separation from Droitwich as our parish includes woodland, a church (which is attended by members) and village hall, where all of our local interest groups and our own functions are staged. We believe access to this would be marred by the proposed boundary change. We enjoy unspoilt views being surrounded by pasture land. We moved here to live "in the country". Undoubtedly, we do visit Droitwich, but any rural community has to use its local town for primary facilities such as health centres. This should not identify us as town dwellers rather than the victims of Hobson's choice. Also, many residents prefer to shop in other towns such as Bromsgrove and Kidderminster. Upon leaving our site, our

preference is to turn right (away from Droitwich) to our considered rural centres of Hampton Lovett and Cutnall Green (Post Office and farm shop).

Also, there are natural boundaries (such as the brook) as well as the train line and major road that separates us from Westlands. The only other buildings are industrial units, from which we enjoy arboreal screening. This gives us a strong sense of separation from town living.

Conclusion

You state that your task is to best balance these three considerations when making your recommendation and we would propose that the information we have now given you in two out of three of these areas should influence your final decision. Please be aware that **all** our members vehemently object to the proposal that we are moved into **Droitwich West**, preferring to retain our rural identity as part of Hampton Lovett.

For and on behalf of Doverdale Park Residents' Association.

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Chairperson

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