

North Hertfordshire District Council

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Comment text:

I am making these comments as the group leader of the Conservatives and as the elected member for the Hitchwood Offa and Hoo ward. Having reviewed the report from the commission on the rewarding of North Hertfordshire District Council I welcome that a number of the Conservative ideas have been put into the draft recommendations as our group did not fully support the initial Council's submission for rewarding. The commission has taken on board the arguments to place the North Parish ward of St Ippolyts into the Hitchin ward because it is urban and this has been accepted by the council in its response. In the same way I believe the urban expanse of the area near Baldock should be part of an expanded Baldock ward and not in the rural ward of Bygrave Parish. The council objects to the commission's proposal for this area to make a large three member ward. I hope that you will revisit this and take into account the comments made by the Conservatives in our original submission. Namely expand Baldock East to two members and keep Arbury ward and Weston and Sandon ward as they are. At North Herts there is history of urban expansions in parishes and when the development at Great Ashby was built (part of the Chesfield ward) which sat in the Gravely Parish the new build was separated out into a new community council as it did not fit with the existing rural parish. I believe the new homes will be more in common with Baldock and the new residents will identity as part of the town and not part of a rural parished community in a similar way to that in Great Ashby when this area was created for housing as it has a close proximity to Stevenage. I will leave the elected councillors to comment on the wards proposed for the towns of Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston as they have the local knowledge on using the roads and railway lines make ward boundaries and keep communities together. Looking at the proposals for the South-West parishes the new boundaries give electoral balance and put neighbouring communities together. However, I do strongly object to some of the naming proposed. There has been a tradition of using ward names that do not use the parish / village name and if the commission did not like the names suggested from the initial submissions and those proposed from various parties then I would like to suggest that the commission keeps some of the existing names or makes changes as follows: 1) The proposed new ward of Offley and Pirton – this ward will contain the parishes of Offley, Pirton, Hexton, Lilley and Cockenhoe. The new ward is formed from part of the Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo ward. The history of this ward was three single member wards were joined in the last review so I would propose that the new ward is called just Offa. This was the previous name and contained the parishes of Pirton and Offley. This is the name suggested by the council in its comments on the draft proposal and I would agree. This name is known by the residents and it has local historic interest. 2) The proposed ward of Langley, Preston and Walden. This ward contains the parishes of Preston, Langley, St Pauls Walden and Kings Walden. St Pauls Walden parish includes the settlements of St Pauls Walden, Whitwell and Bendish, while Kings Walden parish contains Ley Green, Breechwood Green and Kings Walden. There is no village/ parish called Walden. I would suggest the new ward is called Hitchwood as some of the settlements were contained in this ward previously and it is the name of a historic woodland area in the ward and would be familiar to residents. 3) The proposed ward of Gravely, St Ippolyts and Wymondly is a bit of a mouthful and previously there was a ward called Ashbrook covering part of this area so I would proposed that this name is used. Its named after the Ash Brook which is in the ward. As the commission has suggested that other names could be put forward as part of the consultation this gets away from using alphabetical naming or largest settlement first and it short and easy to remember. 4) The ward name of Cadwell comprises the parishes of Ickleford and Holwell so this is in keeping of not using village / parish names so should be retained as it is. 5) The proposed new ward of Codicote and Kimpton contains the settlements of Kimpton, Peters Green, Blackmore End, and part of Codicote parish – the Codicote east part is in Knebworth ward. To be in keeping of not using names I would suggest the ward is named Mimram as proposed in submissions as the river Mimram goes through the ward. This would be in keeping with not using village names for wards

that contain more than one village / settlement. I hope that you will review my suggestions and incorporate them into your final proposal for North Hertfordshire District Council. Cllr Claire Strong

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded