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To: reviews
Subject: Submission to Staffordshire County Council initial consultation - Cannock Chase CLP and Labour Group
Attachments: Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Labour District Councillors response to the Staffordshire boundary review - 20.03.2023.pdf; Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Labour District Councillors response to the Staffordshire boundary review - 20.03.2023.kmz; Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Labour District Councillors response to the Cannock Chase boundary review - 06.02.2023.pdf; Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Labour District Councillors response to the Cannock Chase boundary review - 01.08.2022.pdf

Categories: Submissions, Nicole

Good morning,

Please find attached a joint submission to the initial consultation of the Staffordshire County Council electoral review from the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and the Labour group of councillors on Cannock Chase District Council.

I have also attached a .kmz shape file of our proposals which can also be viewed [here](#). We have also referred to two previous submissions which were made to the ongoing review of the Cannock Chase District Council ward boundaries. Some of the points and explanation we put forward in those submissions are relevant to this submission so I have also attached those as well.

Please let me know if you have any queries regarding our submission or if you have any trouble with the files or links to our maps. We look forward to seeing the draft recommendations later this year.

Many thanks,

Councillor Josh Newbury



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Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Cannock Chase District Council Labour Group

Joint submission to the initial consultation on division boundaries for Staffordshire County Council

Monday 20th March 2023

Introduction

This submission to the boundary review of Staffordshire County Council is made jointly by the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party ('the CLP') and the group of Labour and Labour and Co-operative councillors on Cannock Chase District Council ('the group').

We would like to propose a new pattern of divisions for the area the CLP and the group covers, that being the Cannock Chase District ('the district'). An interactive map of our proposed boundaries can be viewed here: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1jGtZvTaVondW6y-1ccOMyBomzpqYzSs&usp=sharing>. We have also provided the Boundary Commission with a shape file (.kmz format) of our submission.

Given that the number of divisions across Staffordshire is remaining at 62 and given that the average variance for Cannock Chase's divisions by 2028 is estimated to be relatively small, we have based our proposals on the assumption that there will continue to be seven seats allocated to the district. For reasons we will explain in more detail, we are proposing a pattern of seven single-member divisions, as opposed to the five single-member divisions and one two-member division which we currently have in the district.

The fact that the review of ward boundaries for Cannock Chase District has not yet concluded presents us with a difficult question: do we base our initial proposals to this review on the Commission's draft recommended district ward boundaries, or do we base them on our own final proposals to that review (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1BJUPYAjRC1uG7cL-eFFCVHAczj74Zg&usp=sharing>) from February of this year? We have opted to use our final proposals but we may propose a somewhat modified set of division boundaries at the draft recommendations consultation in the summer as we will then be clear on what the final map for the district wards will be.

Below is explanation of boundaries, names and commentary around our seven proposed divisions. We will begin at the southern end of the district and move northwards.

County division comments

Norton Canes and Heath Hayes

Boundary

Our proposed 'Norton Canes and Heath Hayes' division includes all of the civil parish / district council ward of Norton Canes, as well as almost all of our proposed 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury'

district council ward. The boundary between this and the neighbouring division runs along Gorsemoor Road and along the backs of properties on Hednesford Road, so that all properties on Hednesford Road fall within this division. At the Hednesford Road / Hayes Way / Hill Street roundabout, the boundary then moves between the rear of properties on Hill Street and Sweetbriar Way so that houses on the former street are excluded but the latter are included. This division then also takes in the following estates off of Keys Park Road: Foxtail Way, Waterlily Close, Meadowsweet Way, Watermint Close and Watermead Close. Unlike the proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury district ward, this division does *not* include Keys Park Stadium and the 'Cherry Blossom' Taylor Wimpey development around it, nor does it include any properties on Hill Street.

It also takes in all properties on Kings Croft and continues along the rear of properties on Littleworth Road, then moves around the Holly House Farm and down Sevens Road, not taking in any properties on that road. Similarly to the proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury district ward, this division therefore includes the uninhabited rural unparished area east of Heath Hayes up to the district boundary, known locally as 'No Man's Bank'.

Division name

We suggest that the name 'Norton Canes and Heath Hayes' should be used for this division. 'Heath Hayes and Norton Canes' would be an acceptable alternative if that is more typical of naming conventions.

Although this proposed divisions is broadly similar to the existing 'Cannock Villages' division, we do not feel that this name should be retained. It is not known in the area covered by the division, despite having been used for many years, and residents certainly do not identify with it. Indeed, the current, and recent, county councillors representing the division do not use its formal name and instead simply refer to the area they cover(ed) as 'Norton Canes and Heath Hayes' or 'Heath Hayes and Norton Canes'.

The villages of Norton Canes, Heath Hayes and Wimblebury have their own identity and residents often comment that they retain a 'village feel' and separate identity. The current division name subsumes their identities into that of Cannock which does not recognise their individual statuses. Besides, there are other villages nearby, such as Prospect Village and Cannock Wood, which could also be considered 'Cannock villages' if such a wide definition is being used. We feel that a name which recognises the two main villages in the division would be more appropriate.

Commentary

As Norton Canes is a geographically distinct community, it makes perfect sense for it to have its own three-member district council ward. However, it is clearly far too small to have its own county division and therefore it must be combined with another area to take in sufficient electors. Due to the need for contiguous divisions, there are only two options to satisfy this need: the Heath Hayes area, or the south-eastern side of Cannock.

For several reasons, we believe that it is far more appropriate to combine Norton Canes with Heath Hayes, as it currently is. First of all, the two villages are closely linked and have a common history stretching back hundreds of years. These close ties continue to this day with, for example, many Norton Canes residents travelling into Heath Hayes for shopping or to access a dentist and many Heath Hayes residents travelling into Norton Canes for employment or to access a GP. Much of Heath Hayes also falls within the catchment area of Norton Canes High School. Secondly, the two villages have strong, well-used road links with 'Five Ways Island' being a local transport focal

point for the villages' residents. Whilst there are road links between Norton Canes and Cannock in the form of more modern roads serving industrial estates, most residents would either use the A5 to reach Cannock, or travel into Heath Hayes and take Cannock Road. Thirdly, there are strong links between Norton Canes Parish Council and Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council which means that councillors serving the two villages are in frequent contact; this can facilitate better representation at county level.

Having said that, there are issues with the current boundary of the existing Cannock Villages division which need to be remedied in this review. We have discussed this at length in our two submissions to the review of Cannock Chase District Council's ward boundaries so we will not go into as much detail in this submission; we would ask that the Commission refers to comments made on our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury district ward in our previous two submissions for further explanation and justification of the points below.

In summary, we propose that houses on Meadow Way, Kensington Place, and properties on Gorsemoor Road which were built as part of the Meadow Way estate, are not included in this division but are instead placed in the neighbouring division, which we are referring to as 'Hednesford South and Hawks Green'. We believe that these houses would sit best in the same division as the rest of the master planned Hawks Green area which was built long after most of the rest of Heath Hayes.

Additionally, the current division boundary has straight lines which bisect Sweetbriar Way, Waterlily Close, Watermint Close and Kings Croft. This is very confusing for residents and campaigners alike and is clearly due to those estates having been built long after the boundaries were drawn. This discrepancy will be rectified in the review of the district ward boundaries as the new Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward is likely to take in all of the houses on those roads which currently fall under the 'Hednesford South' ward and 'Hednesford and Rawnsley' division. We would like the new county division boundary to reflect this change and ensure those roads are no longer arbitrarily cut in half.

The only deviation from the proposed new district ward of Heath Hayes and Wimblebury we have made is to include Hill Street and the 'Cherry Blossom' development adject to Keys Park Stadium in the neighbouring division. We make this suggestion partly for electoral equality, but also because these roads are generally regarded as being part of Hednesford. Hill Street features a "welcome to Hednesford" sign and is regarded by many residents as one of the 'gateways to Hednesford'. Keys Park Stadium is the home of Hednesford Town Football Club. It was not possible to include them in a Hednesford ward at the district level, but it should be possible to include them in a Hednesford division for the county level. If possible, we would suggest this deviation as it would be better from a community identity perspective.

Cannock South and Bridgtown

Boundary

Fundamentally, our proposed 'Cannock South and Bridgtown' division is a modification of the existing 'Cannock Town Centre' division. We suggest a very minor alteration along Stafford Road which will ensure a small cul-de-sac, built since the last county council boundary review, is included in the neighbouring division (along with all of Stafford Road) rather than this division. This new cul-de-sac is called The Crescent (WS11 4AD).

A more substantial alteration sees the existing division's northern boundary moved southwards in order to readjust an imbalance between Cannock's two divisions. Rather than the boundary being along Westbourne Avenue, Old Fallow Road and Cannock Road / Hednesford Road as it currently is, we propose that it moves down to Beecroft Road and Allport Street. All of the properties on Allport Street would fall within this division, with the actual boundary going along the boundaries of houses on Allport Street and Pennine Drive. The north-eastern boundary of the division would remain as it is currently.

Ward name

We feel that 'Cannock Town Centre' is a misleading name as the division covers a much larger area than the town centre. Indeed, very few residents live in what most people would consider the town centre and the division contains several distinct areas of the town which are very populated, such as Longford, Rumer Hill and Bridgtown. The latter is a parish in its own right and maintains a separate identity. We therefore feel that Bridgtown should feature in the division's name; we expanded on this in comments on our proposed 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown' ward in our two submissions to the ongoing district ward boundary review.

Although we intentionally steered away from 'points on a compass' ward names in our submissions to that review, we are concerned that using names we proposed as part of that review for county divisions could lead to confusion. For example, using 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown' would not be appropriate as our proposed division covers a much larger area than the proposed district ward of that name. The proposed 'Cannock Park and Old Fallow' ward is split between this division and the neighbouring division so using part of that name could also be confusing.

We have therefore settled on 'Cannock South and Bridgtown' as a proposed name for this division although we would be open to other suggestions from the Commission or other submissions.

Commentary

This division would sit wholly within the Cannock unparished area and cover the majority of what most residents would consider to be Cannock. Although it is difficult to draw boundaries in a densely populated urban area in a way that makes sense to residents, we feel that our proposed boundary is an improvement on the current division boundary. It continues to use Cannock Park and Golf Course as a clear boundary, and it also uses Beecroft Road which is a largely non-residential road.

This boundary would not split any of the identifiable communities within Cannock and nor would it join Cannock on to any other nearby communities, as had to be done in the district ward boundary review for reasons of electoral equality. The Cannock / Chads Moor unparished area should still be appropriate for two divisions, even by 2028, and we believe this proposed boundary would divide the area into two coherent divisions.

Cannock North and Chads Moor

Boundary

In a similar vein to the previous division, this proposed division is a slightly enlarged version of the existing 'Chads Moor' division. The only modification of the current boundaries is the addition

of the roads outlined in the previous section. This means that this division would take in roads down to, and including, Pennine Drive, Greenfields and Brunswick Road.

Ward name

Although the current division name is entirely appropriate for much of the area covered by the division, we feel that it should be noted that it also covers some areas which locals would consider to be part of Cannock as opposed to Chadsmoor. This would be particularly true if our proposed enlarged boundary were adopted. We are therefore proposing that the division be named 'Cannock North and Chadsmoor'. This would also avoid any confusion around the likely creation of a new district council ward called 'Chadsmoor' which will cover a smaller area.

We would certainly not support the removal of the Chadsmoor name from the division's name as Chadsmoor is a distinct community which initially grew separately to Cannock. Chadsmoor has its own high street and many of its own local services and amenities so locals are proud of its name and would not want to see it lost from the division name.

Commentary

As with the current division, we feel that this proposed division would deliver both strong community identity and strong electoral equality. For the reasons outlined above, moving its southern boundary to where we have suggested would reduce the splitting of streets and be a more logical boundary. The other three sides of the division would continue to have very clear boundaries: the district boundary to the west, Belt Road (wholly contained in the neighbouring division) to the north and the train line and main A road to the east.

Although one proposed district ward, 'Hawks Green', does combine parts of Cannock with other areas, we feel it best to retain two divisions wholly within the Cannock unparished area if possible. Based on our calculations, we believe that it should be possible and would be the best option on community identity grounds.

Hednesford South and Hawks Green

Boundary

The two divisions we are proposing for the Hednesford and Rawsley area is a major departure from the large two-member division which currently exists. We will set out our reasoning behind proposing two single-member divisions in the 'commentary' section. Our proposed boundary for this division is essentially the whole of the proposed 'Hednesford Hills and Rawsley' district ward combined with the Hawks Green area. In this regard, it is essentially the southern / eastern half of the current division.

The Hawks Green area is the western half of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish. Here we are proposing that it is bounded by Cannock Road and Gorsemoor Road to the south and Hednesford Road to the south-east. Its western boundary is the A460. Moving into Hednesford, the boundary deviates from the A460 and follows a small brook before coming down Stafford Lane and then up Uxbridge Street, splitting those streets down the middle. There is then a boundary over the Hednesford Hills, matching the proposed district council boundary before the division then takes in the villages of Littleworth, Rawsley, Hazelslade, Prospect Village and Cannock Wood. The southern boundary of the Hednesford section of the division is as described

in the 'Norton Canes and Heath Hayes' section i.e. it includes Hill Street and Keys Park Stadium but not the other estates off of Keys Park Road.

Ward name

In a similar vein to the proposed names for our two divisions covering the Cannock / Chads Moor area, we are keen to avoid confusion with the three proposed district wards for Hednesford. Having said that, there is much less room for confusion with our proposed Hednesford divisions as we have used the exact boundary between the proposed 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley' and 'Hednesford Pye Green' district wards as the boundary between the two proposed divisions.

We would suggest 'Hednesford South and Hawks Green' as the division name in order to reflect both parts of the proposed division. Currently, Hawks Green is left out of the existing division's name entirely. This is likely due to the fact that calling it 'Hednesford, Rawnsley and Hawks Green' would be too long, which is understandable. However, over the years it has led to confusion amongst Hawks Green residents around why they are represented by 'Hednesford and Rawnsley' county councillors when they do not live in either of those areas. We therefore believe that splitting the existing division into two single-member divisions would provide an opportunity for Hawks Green to be acknowledged in a division name.

Commentary

When first discussing this boundary review with our members and councillors, one of the first clear steers that came out was a desire to move away from the current two-member Hednesford and Rawnsley division. Across the country, two-member county council divisions are rare. Indeed, there is only one other in Staffordshire, and we believe there are good reasons for this rarity. Two-member divisions are very large and often difficult to represent for the members elected to them, partly due to the sheer number of households, but also because they often contain many different communities with their own identities, needs and priorities. In the case of our district, it is likely that splitting the Hednesford area into two divisions was too tricky at the two previous reviews, so a two-member division was seen as the best option.

However, we are in a different situation now given that the existing division is larger than the average electors per councillor figure across the district and county, with over 25,000 electors predicted by 2028. This is largely driven by significant housing growth along Pye Green Road and Green Heath Road in Hednesford. This rapidly growing population is being accounted for in the ongoing district ward boundary review and we believe that now would be an excellent opportunity to create two new single-member divisions.

According to our calculations, the principles of 'nesting' district wards within county divisions, which is always beneficial to minimising voter confusion in two-tier areas, can be followed closely here. In the case of the 'Hednesford South and Hawks Green' division, the entirety of the 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley' ward could be included, as well as the clearly defined Hawks Green area which was master planned and built rapidly, largely during the 1980s. There is more detail on Hawks Green, its history and community cohesion in our second submission to the district ward boundary review from February.

There is a clear natural boundary over the Hednesford Hills and other main roads, such as Stafford Lane and Uxbridge Street, could ensure as clean a division as possible within Hednesford. Keeping the southern part of Hednesford together with Hawks Green also means clear links

between the two communities, such as Keys Park Road and Hemlock Way, are kept within the same division.

Hednesford North and Brindley Village

Boundary

The boundary of this proposed division is a combination of the proposed district wards of 'Hednesford Green Heath' and 'Hednesford Pye Green'. The clear boundary road of Belt Road (wholly contained within this division) is retained as the southern border with Chads Moor. The previously outlined boundary with the other proposed Hednesford division runs along its eastern edge. The northern boundary with the 'Etching Hill and Heath' division over Cannock Chase itself is kept as it currently is.

Ward name

As previously mentioned, we wish to avoid any confusion between district wards and county divisions. We are therefore suggesting 'Hednesford North and Brindley Village' as the name for this division. The 'Brindley Village' part of the name refers to an area of the Brindley Heath Parish which includes most of its population i.e. the area from Brindley Heath Road and Edison Close going north up to and including Bracken Close. Although it is physically joined on to Hednesford, Brindley Village has always had its own identity which is still reflected in its own road signs. It has not been recognised in any ward or division name since the single-member 'Brindley Heath' district ward was abolished in 2002, so it would be fitting for it to be included in the name for this division.

Commentary

As noted previously, this division could be the perfect opportunity to 'nest' two district wards in one county division. For the reasons outlined above, we do not believe it is tenable to continue with a large two-member division. We believe that this 'Hednesford North and Brindley Village' division would be a compact, clearly identifiable area which would lead to more effective representation for residents.

Brereton and Ravenhill

Boundary

Similarly to Cannock, our two proposed divisions for the Rugeley and Brereton area are essentially modified versions of the two existing divisions. The area to be shifted centres around Rugeley town centre, namely the area to the north of Western Springs Road / Horse Fair and the railway line. Currently, this area (up to Church Street and Station Road) is included in the existing 'Brereton and Ravenhill' division. For reasons we will come on to, we are proposing that this area is removed from this division and added to the other division covering Rugeley. Importantly, the division would retain the area covered by the former Rugeley Power Station.

Our proposed division is therefore made up of the *existing* district council wards of 'Brereton and Ravenhill' and 'Hagley'. We also propose to include part of the industrial estate on the other side of the railway line in order to provide a pedestrian and cycle link between the soon-to-be new community on the former Rugeley Power Station site and Rugeley town centre, via Leathermill Lane. If that link is not necessary, then the boundary can simply be aligned with the railway line.

Ward name

We propose that the existing division name be retained. The removal of Rugeley town centre from the division would actually make 'Brereton and Ravenhill' a more appropriate name as it would reduce the amount of territory considered to be part of Rugeley. Some acknowledgement of 'Hagley' could be added to the name, however, the name Hagley is likely to disappear in the ongoing district ward boundary review so it may soon be obsolete.

Commentary

The first dilemma we faced when coming up with proposals for the Rugeley and Brereton area was whether it would have enough electors to warrant two divisions, without the need to add in any other parts of the district to 'make up the numbers'. Adding in any other areas would not be acceptable on community identity grounds and, clearly, Cannock Chase represents a very large natural boundary between Rugeley / Brereton and the rest of the district. Our calculations suggest that it would be possible to continue with two divisions for the Rugeley and Brereton area alone because although they may be on the small side, they should sit within the 10% variance allowed.

As with the district ward boundary review, the challenge when drawing a boundary in Rugeley and Brereton is the question of where to include the power station site which, as the Commission's figures show, will soon include a new community with at least 1,500 electors. In the district ward boundary review, it has been possible to include both the power station site and the town centre in the same ward, a modified 'Western Springs'. However, it seems to us that this will not be possible for the two county divisions without compromising electoral equality.

We came up with an early draft of the Brereton and Ravenhill division which moved the power station site into the neighbouring division. However, this necessitated adding in even more of the Western Springs ward which left the power station site attached to the rest of the 'Etching Hill and the Heath' division only by a small sliver of land north of the canal, accessed via Station Road. This would have paired the new power station community with the western side of the town, very far away from it. We therefore feel that our proposed boundaries strike a balance between the need for the two divisions to be of roughly equal size (once the power station site is built out) by 2028 and at the same time not drawing incongruous boundaries in order to achieve that.

The only other alternative is to split the Rugeley and Brereton area along a north / south line. However, we do not believe that this is viable as there is no clear delineation which could achieve this and it would almost certainly involve crossing the Rising Brook and the fields either side of it which provide a clear natural boundary within the town. It would likely also require the creation of divisions which cross Western Springs Road, a road which has been established as a clear dividing road during the district ward boundary review process.

Etching Hill and the Heath

Boundary

This proposed division includes all of the current 'Etching Hill and Heath' division with the addition of Rugeley town centre and the surrounding area as described above. Aside from a small uninhabited area described below, this division would therefore essentially be a combination of the *existing* district council wards of 'Etching Hill and the Heath' and 'Western Springs'.

The new boundary would extend further down Horse Fair as far as the railway line. The boundary would go along the railway line until it reached the canal, which would then become the boundary. When it reached the footbridge on Leathermill Lane, the boundary would then continue up that road to its junction with Power Station Road, and then a stream would form the rest of the boundary up to the district's external boundary i.e. the River Trent.

Ward name

There has always been a slight confusion over the naming of this division. Since 2002, the district ward covering a smaller area has been named 'Etching Hill and **the** Heath' whilst the larger county division has been called 'Etching Hill and Heath', omitting 'the'. As this is likely to have been an oversight, we propose that this division should be called 'Etching Hill and the Heath'.

Commentary

The current iteration of this division is far too small, and therefore a large number of voters need to be moved from the 'Brereton and Ravenhill' division into this division. We hope, and believe, that moving the whole town centre area into the 'Etching Hill and the Heath' division will provide a balance between the area's two divisions, taking into account the 1,500 or so new electors who will be moving onto the former Rugeley Power Station site in the coming years.



Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Cannock Chase District Council Labour Group

Joint submission to the consultation on draft recommendations for Cannock Chase

Monday 6th February 2023

Introduction

This submission to the boundary review of the Cannock Chase District is made jointly by the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party ('the CLP') and the group of Labour and Labour and Co-operative councillors on Cannock Chase District Council ('the group'). As with our submission to the initial consultation, our response reflects the views of CLP members and group councillors.

We are not supplying a new map of district ward proposals with this submission as we are primarily either in agreement with the draft recommendations, or we wish to restate our proposals from the initial consultation. As with the initial consultation period, we welcome the high degree of agreement between different political groups in the District and the many similarities between the District Council's submission and the Commission's draft recommendations.

We welcome the pattern of 12 three-member wards as we believe this will provide uniformity across the District, something that we do not have currently, and enable the continuation of the 'by thirds' electoral system. We also welcome the fact that the draft recommendations minimise the crossing of what most residents would consider clear community boundaries between local towns and villages. This has not been possible in every case, and we do feel that some of the Commission's proposals do not place enough emphasis on this, but broadly speaking the draft recommendations do represent community lines which most residents would recognise.

We agree in full with the Commission's draft recommendations for the Hednesford area, the Rugeley and Brereton area, and for Norton Canes. We wish to make further representations around the Cannock and Heath Hayes areas, and around the proposals for parish and town council wards, some of which we disagree with strongly.

As we did with our previous submission, we will begin at the southern end of the district and move northwards.

District ward comments

Norton Canes

Boundary

We fully agree with the Commission's proposal to retain the current boundaries for Norton Canes. There would be no logical way of splitting Norton Canes, so we welcome the strong cross-party support for keeping its district council boundaries coterminous with the parish boundary.

Ward name

We support retaining the existing ward name for Norton Canes.

Commentary

As we stated previously, Norton Canes has a strong, separate community identity from the rest of the District, particularly given the fact that it is geographically separate from the main urban area. We welcome the Commission's recognition of this and the strong electoral equality that the current ward boundary would provide.

Heath Hayes and Wimblebury

Boundary

We would like to resubmit the same proposed boundary for this ward as we did to the initial consultation last year. This differs from the Commission's draft recommendations in that we propose that the area contained in the proposed 'Gorsemoor' parish ward (labelled C) should be kept in the Hawks Green ward and also that all homes on Meadow Way and Kensington Place, and some homes (numbers 90 to 100 and 241 to 257) on Gorsemoor Road, also be included in the Hawks Green ward.

Ward name

We welcome the Commission's agreement that the name 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury' best reflects the communities included in the ward. However, we would point out that the name becomes slightly more problematic if a part of the Hawks Green area is included within this ward for the reasons outlined below.

Commentary

We welcome the fact that the Commission has largely agreed with our submission, and the submission from the District Council, in respect of the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward. Namely, that the southern boundary should remain as it is currently, that the eastern boundary should take in much of the rural unparished area and that the estates off of Keys Park Road and Brickworks Road should be added to this ward. We feel that these changes address the current illogical boundary, futureproof the ward with regards to new housing developments, and provide good electoral equality.

However, we object to the Commission's proposal to include the Badgers Way estate in this ward on the grounds of both community identity and electoral equality.

In terms of community identity, Heath Hayes is generally regarded as one village with an identity distinct from nearby communities, even though it has effectively become joined on to the Cannock / Hednesford urban area. However, the Hawks Green area also has a somewhat separate identity due to its status as a planned community which built up rapidly much later than most of the remainder of Heath Hayes which grew organically over a longer period as a former mining village. Made up of multiple estates built up around the main roads of Heath Way, Hayes Way and Hemlock Way, the Hawks Green area developed quickly, primarily during the 1980s, as a large urban extension. The Badgers Way estate was amongst the first areas of Hawks Green to be developed. The community was built with its own local infrastructure which is centred around the 'Hawks Green district centre' at the junction of Heath Way and Hayes Way. Due to this, Hawks

Green residents tend to use the same services e.g. shops in the district centre, GP surgery, primary schools, etc. Hawks Green also has its own community centre, the Hayes Green Community Centre, which acts as a central point for the surrounding estate, as demonstrated by the fact that it serves as the polling station for the whole current Hawks Green ward.

Given that the area was planned as a 'garden suburb', the estates are linked together with many green footpaths which promotes linkages between them despite the fact that from a vehicular perspective they may seem separate. This is the case for the Badgers Way estate and the Meadow Way estate which feed onto footpaths that link with Hayes Way and the Gorsemoor Road play area. Unusually for Hawks Green, these two estates also share a road link: Thistledown Drive. The Commission's draft recommendations therefore cut Thistledown Drive, a small residential side road, in half which would be confusing for those residents and does not promote good governance. We would argue that given that these are arguably the two most connected of the Hawks Green estates, they should be kept together in the same ward. The neighbouring areas of Heath Hayes to the east are generally much older and focused around the local high street of Hednesford Road. We would therefore propose that for reasons for common community identity, shared infrastructure and physical links, the Badgers Way area should be kept within the Hawks Green ward for both district council and parish council elections.

In terms of electoral equality, we note that by 2028, the proposed Hawks Green ward would have one of the lowest numbers of electors per councillor, leaving it close to the 10% variance. Meanwhile, the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward would be slightly larger than the average ward, meaning its variance is 9% higher than Hawks Green's. We believe this would be a large variance between two neighbouring wards which are primarily within the same parish and without a solid community identity reason for that variance. Therefore, keeping the Badgers Way estate within Hawks Green would provide a more even variance between Heath Hayes and Wimblebury and Hawks Green. It should also be noted that there are no prospects of substantial development within the Hawks Green ward, due to the fact that urban development already covers its whole area. Within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, on the other hand, there are prospects of significant development on 'safeguarded' land to the east of Wimblebury Road and possibly also in the fields to the east of John Street and south of Littleworth Road. Therefore, if the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward is already significantly larger than the Hawks Green ward, the disparity between the two could grow even larger in the coming years. We therefore feel that it would be appropriate for the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward to be slightly smaller than proposed in the draft recommendations, allowing room for future growth, and the Hawks Green ward slightly larger, in acknowledgement of the fact that it will not grow significantly before the next review.

In terms of the minor change we proposed for Gorsemoor Road and Kensington Place, we would like to again request that this alteration is made. The houses at the end of Gorsemoor Road (numbers 90 to 100 and 241 to 257) and along Meadow Way and Kensington Place were all built at the same time as part of the Meadow Way development within Hawks Green. For the reasons stated above regarding Hawks Green's somewhat separate identity, we feel that these houses should be included within the Hawks Green ward. The current boundary, which the Commission has proposed to retain, is unnecessarily confusing and we found the Commission's justification for its retention in the full report on the draft recommendations equally confusing. In point 52, it is stated that it would not be possible to remove these homes from the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward "without creating an unviable parish ward". If the remainder of the Meadow Way estate was located in a different parish to these houses, we would understand that argument,

however they are not. All of Gorsemoor Road and the houses on Meadow Way and Kensington Place are all contained within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish. Therefore, the homes in question could simply be transferred to the Hawks Green ward for both district council and parish council purposes. If the Commission felt that splitting Gorsemoor Road near to its junction with Meadow Way would be confusing, we would accept the whole of Gorsemoor Road remaining in the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward whilst all homes on Meadow Way and Kensington Place are included in the Hawks Green ward. However, we would point out that there are many proposals to split roads elsewhere in the district, for example most homes on nearby Hill Street will be included in Heath Hayes and Wimblebury whilst others will be included in the Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley ward.

Hawks Green

Boundary

As with the previous neighbouring ward, we propose the same boundary for Hawks Green that we submitted in our response to the previous consultation; this is also the same as the District Council's response to the initial consultation. Therefore, our submission differs from the draft recommendations in the boundary with the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward explained above, and also in that the Rumer Hill area of Cannock (south of Lichfield Road) would not be transferred to the Hawks Green ward.

Ward name

In our response to the initial consultation, we proposed the name 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green' for this ward. This was in response to feedback from some residents in the area of Cannock east of Old Hednesford Road that they do not identify with Hawks Green name and consider themselves firmly part of Cannock. However, this name was seen as overly long and not reflective of the fact that the Hawks Green area makes up the vast majority of this ward (even more so if the Badgers Way estate is kept within Hawks Green). For this submission, we therefore agree with the draft recommendations and the District Council's submission that the name 'Hawks Green' should be used for this ward.

Commentary

As we stated in our submission to the initial consultation and in the section above on the neighbouring ward, we feel that the estates which make up the Hawks Green area have strong links with one another and should therefore be kept together. We feel that a Hawks Green ward with a significant chunk of what is regarded locally as the Hawks Green area missing does not make sense on a community identity basis.

We very much welcome the correction of the boundary around Sapphire Drive as this will be much more logical and contribute to good governance.

However, we strongly object to the inclusion of the Rumer Hill estate within the proposed Hawks Green ward on community identity grounds. We can appreciate why this change may have been proposed from an electoral equality perspective, albeit that shifting the Badgers Way estate out of this ward significantly undermines that. We feel that retaining the Badgers Way estate in Hawks Green would enable the Rumer Hill estate to remain within the neighbouring ward, which the Commission has called 'Cannock South' and we have named 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown'. Although the Rumer Hill area is fairly close in proximity to Hawks Green, its residents very much

feel part of Cannock and do not identify with Hawks Green at all. This is underlined by the fact that Rumer Hill residents would not travel into Hawks Green, or Heath Hayes, to access local services or amenities but would instead look to Cannock town centre. Rumer Hill residents would also use schools in Cannock as opposed to the schools much further away in Heath Hayes. The draft recommendations would split Rumer Hill Road which is illogical to residents in the area, particularly given that the railway line is not the physical barrier it would appear to be on a map. Rumer Hill has a long association with Cannock so we therefore argue that this change should not be made and that the strong cross-party consensus in submissions to the initial consultation should be heeded.

Cannock Longford and Bridgtown

Boundary

Once again, we propose the suggested boundary which we submitted to the initial consultation last year, albeit with a minor change around the town centre proposed in the District Council's submission. This differs from the draft recommendations in that, as detailed above, the Rumer Hill area south of Lichfield Road remains in this ward and that Bideford Way, Dorchester Road, Exeter Road, Burnham Green, Barnswood Close, Meriden Close and Poplar Lane are *not* added to this ward.

Ward name

Our suggested name for this ward is, as before, 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown'. We reiterate the fact that Bridgtown is a parish and small community in its own right and should therefore be recognised in the ward name. Residents in the southern part of Cannock also identify with the 'Longford' name to refer to the area around Longford Road and the 'Longford estate'. We welcome the fact that the District Council's submission includes this ward name, and we hope that the Commission will recognise the need for Cannock ward names which reflect the different areas of the town, as opposed to generic 'points on a compass' names which do not.

Commentary

As previously stated, we object to the Rumer Hill estate being removed from this ward due to the community identity of the residents who live there. Although in our initial consultation submission we did not propose any changes to the boundary between the current Cannock South and Cannock West wards, aside from moving the St. James estate from the latter to the former, we accept the Commission's proposal to also move Victoria Street, Queen Street, Newhall Street, Danilo Road and Manor Avenue into this ward. This would make for a more logical boundary in this part of the town which currently has a somewhat confusing boundary. However, in discussions of the Boundary Review Working Group, it was felt that the draft recommendations resulted in a jagged, somewhat confusing boundary around the town centre. We therefore agree with the proposal in the District Council's submission to move the boundary northwards to Park Road; this would not affect many properties but would provide a simpler, cleaner boundary.

Cannock Park and Old Fallow

Boundary

Our proposal for the boundary of this ward matches the draft recommendations, aside from the minor amendment around the town centre as proposed in the District Council's submission. Our initial proposal for the boundary between this ward and the ward to the north included part of

Cannock Road and one side of Burns Street in this ward. However, we accept the Commission's proposal for a tighter boundary around the Sankey Road, Hardie Green and Smilie Place estate.

We would also like to draw the Commission's attention to one minor difference between the draft recommendations and our previous submission along Stafford Road (the A34). Near to the District boundary with the South Staffordshire District, there are a row of flats north of the White Lion pub and the junction with Cemetery Road, on the eastern side of Stafford Road. In the Commission's draft recommendations, these flats are drawn in the Cannock North ward due to the boundary going along Cemetery Road and then up Stafford Road as far as the District boundary. We argue that it does not make sense for all of Stafford Road to be included in this ward, aside from a small row of flats at its end. We therefore suggest that all properties on Stafford Road are included in this ward.

Ward name

In our initial submission, we proposed the name 'Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow' for this ward, to reflect local names for the western and eastern parts of this ward respectively. However, in discussions with the Boundary Review Working Group, there were some concerns raised over the 'Shoal Hill' name, mostly due to the fact that Shoal Hill itself and the Shoal Hill Tavern are located outside of the District. It was also felt that the name was too long.

Following discussions at the Working Group, we therefore support the District Council's submission of 'Cannock Park and Old Fallow' for this ward. The 'Park' part of the name would refer to Cannock Park which is situated roughly in the middle of the ward and is something of a unifying feature. This was the reason for a previous ward which straddles the current Cannock North and Cannock West wards being named 'Parkside'. As stated in our previous submission, 'Old Fallow' has long been associated with the area around Old Fallow Road and would be recognisable by residents in that park of Cannock. We therefore feel that 'Cannock Park and Old Fallow' provides a good balance between the western and eastern sides of the ward and reflects the communities it covers.

Commentary

Whilst this ward may not be the strongest in terms of community identity, we feel that it strikes the best balance possible between keeping coherent communities within Cannock together and maintaining good electoral equality.

Chadsmoor

Boundary

We welcome the Commission's draft recommendations for this ward and we do not have any suggested amendments to its boundary. We accept the Commission's comments around the fact that it is not possible to move Apollo Close from the Hednesford Green Heath ward into this ward due to the need to create an unviable parish ward; we will instead seek to have this anomaly addressed through a Community Governance Review. We welcome the proposal to move Festival Mews out of this ward and into Hednesford Green Heath.

Ward name

We were very disappointed to see that both the Conservative group's response to the initial consultation and the Commission's draft recommendations retained the Cannock North name for

this ward as opposed to 'Chadsmoor' which is a clearly identifiable name for the area the ward covers. Most residents in this ward feel that Chadsmoor has a distinct identity, having developed separately to Cannock and having its own high street with local amenities. As we stated in our previous submission, the Chadsmoor name can be seen in a local primary school and a nursery school within this ward, as well as numerous local businesses. It is also the name of a county council division which covers a similar, albeit slightly larger, area. We therefore welcome the fact that the District Council's submission proposes 'Chadsmoor' as the name of this ward and we strongly urge the Commission to adopt this name.

Commentary

We believe that this ward is strong from both a community identity perspective and from an electoral equality perspective.

The Hednesford wards

There appears to be a high level of agreement over the boundaries and names of the three wards which cover the Hednesford and Rawsley area. We do not propose any changes to the draft recommendations for Hednesford Green Heath, Hednesford Pye Green or Hednesford Hills and Rawsley and we would encourage the Commission to continue with its draft recommendations.

Brereton and Ravenhill

Boundary

We welcome the adoption of our proposed boundaries for this ward and we do not propose any amendments to the draft recommendations.

Ward name

Welcome the retention of the 'Brereton and Ravenhill' ward name as we feel this will best reflect the new ward boundary, despite the addition of the Pear Tree estate from the existing Hagley ward.

Commentary

As we stated in our submission to the previous consultation, we believe on balance that the new community which will be developed on the former Rugeley Power Station site would fit better with a ward containing Rugeley town centre due to the planned road and pedestrian / cycling linkages. We feel that the addition of the Pear Tree estate would be cohesive from a community identity perspective as there are footpath links between that estate and the existing Brereton and Ravenhill ward, and it was built at a similar time.

Western Springs

Boundary

As with the previous ward, we welcome the draft recommendations and do not propose any amendments. We particularly welcome the inclusion of the three cul-de-sacs off of Wolseley Road as this is much more logical than the current boundary which includes them in the existing Etching Hill and the Heath ward.

Ward name

We welcome the retention of the Western Springs ward name as this has many local connections.

Commentary

We restate our belief that Hednesford Road is a key unifying road in the town whilst Western Springs Road is a dividing road due to the limited number of junctions along it. We very much welcome the fact that the Commission has drawn the draft recommendations based on this and we hope that the proposed boundary is carried through to the final recommendations. We do not believe that any other configuration, such as combining the western side of the existing Hagley ward with the Etching Hill area, would make sense from a community cohesion perspective.

Etching Hill and the Heath

Boundary

Again, we welcome the draft recommendations and do not propose any amendments.

Ward name

We agree that retaining the current ward name is the best approach as this would still represent the proposed ward well, even with the additions from the existing Western Springs ward.

Commentary

We welcome the usage of Western Springs Road as a clear delineation between this ward and the proposed Western Springs ward. We feel that this makes sense from a community identity perspective and provides a clear, identifiable boundary for the two Rugeley wards. We also note that our proposal, and therefore the draft recommendations, only divide one proposed ward (Western Springs) between Rugeley's two county council divisions whereas the Conservative group's initial proposals also divided this ward between the two divisions, a situation which would cause confusion for residents.

Comments on parish ward proposals

For the most part, we welcome the Commission's proposals for parish and town council ward boundaries. However, we feel that there have been oversights or misunderstandings in some areas as well as missed opportunities to create parish wards which are more reflective of smaller communities within proposed district wards.

Hednesford parish

We welcome the proposals for the Hednesford parish. The 'Green Heath', 'Pye Green' and 'Hednesford Hills' wards will make sense as they are coterminous with the proposed district council wards. Whilst we believe the 'Hawks Green' and 'Keys Park' wards are illogical on their own merits, we acknowledge that this is down to the out-of-date parish boundary which can be rectified through a Community Governance Review ahead of the first parish elections at which they would be contested (2027).

Brereton and Ravenhill parish

Again, we support the two proposed parish wards and their names. A better name than 'Power Station' may emerge as the development of the power station site commences but, again, this could be updated via a future Community Governance Review.

Rugeley parish

As we stated in our response to the initial consultation, we believe that a parish the size of Rugeley should be divided into more wards than just the three required by the proposed district council boundaries. We also believe that more than four parish wards are needed and therefore, with one exception, we cannot support the Commission's draft recommendations.

We would urge the Commission to look again at our initial proposals for six parish wards for the Rugeley parish which we believe would provide boundaries and ward names which better reflect the community identities within Rugeley.

We do support the *boundaries* of the proposed 'Hagley East' parish ward, which is clearly necessitated by this area's inclusion in the Brereton and Ravenhill district ward. As we stated previously, the Pear Tree estate has its own identity and is geographically discrete, with just one access point along the Queensway. However, we object to the 'Hagley East' ward name as we do not believe this reflects the area or the estate's identity. 'Hagley' was chosen as the name of the existing district ward which covers this area as there was a historical link between the western side of the ward and the name 'Hagley Park'; this can be seen in the road name Hagley Park Gardens and the former Hagley Park Academy (which opened as Hagley Park Secondary Modern). However, the Hagley Park Academy has since become a site of The Hart School, so the Hagley Park name has been lost. If asked where they live, residents in the area would not state that they live in 'Hagley', they are likely to consider their area as simply part of Rugeley. Many residents on the Pear Tree estate would state that they live "on the Pear Tree" as the estate has its own identity which can be seen on the signage at the estate's entrance. We would therefore ask that the Commission renames this parish ward to either 'Pear Tree Estate' or 'Pear Tree'.

We do not support the proposed 'Western Springs South and Hagley West' ward as we believe that Western Springs Road provides a natural delineation for the purposes of parish warding. We believe that the long, and somewhat clunky, ward name underlines the fact that this ward is seeking to combine two areas which it would make more sense to have in separate parish wards. The character of the town centre area is very different to the Hednesford Road / Burnthill Lane area and we would therefore once again propose the initial suggestions we submitted in our previous response. This would mean that the existing Hagley district council ward, minus the area outlined above which will go into the Brereton and Ravenhill district ward, would form a parish ward named 'Hagley'.

Following on from this, we propose that the remainder of the Rugeley parish within the proposed Western Springs district council ward would form a separate parish ward simply called 'Western Springs'. This ward would be bounded by Western Springs Road to the west, the railway line to the southeast and the District boundary to the east. We believe that this is a clearly delineated area which would avoid an arbitrary boundary along Church Street and Station Road.

We feel that a single, very large parish ward covering the Rugeley parish portion of the Etching Hill and the Heath district ward would be unwieldy, out of step with the three other smaller

proposed Rugeley parish wards, and would not reflect the community identities within this part of Rugeley. We therefore cannot support the Commission's proposed 'Etchinghill' parish ward and instead propose, as we did previously, that the area be divided into three parish wards: 'Springfields', 'Etching Hill' and 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill'.

Our proposed 'Springfields' parish ward at the northern end of the ward would primarily comprise the area which locals refer to as the 'Springfields estate' i.e. the cul-de-sacs ringed by Springfields Road, Crabtree Way, Jennie Lee Way, School Road and Plovers Rise. This estate was built in one phase, has developed an identity of its own and a small parade of shops on Byron Close. This proposed ward would also include the Forest Hills Primary School and some other estates in the immediate vicinity of the Springfields estate. We would urge the Commission to recognise that the Springfields estate has its own identity separate to that of the Etching Hill area which lies at the other end of the district ward, and that a parish ward is needed for this area.

In terms of the Etching Hill area itself, we suggest that the hill, off of Mount Road, and the area around it is included in a separate parish ward. The feedback we received when formulating our response to the initial consultation was that the roads we have drawn into this ward have a lot in common as many of them predate the large, sprawling development which makes up much of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward. This is a historical part of Rugeley and the association with the 'Etching Hill' name goes back very far. We therefore believe that it would make a strong parish ward, of similar size to our proposed 'Pear Tree Estate' and 'Springfields' wards.

We propose that the remainder of the proposed Etching Hill and the Heath district ward would form a parish ward called 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill'. The main roads linking estates within this ward together are Plovers Rise, Crabtree Way, Green Lane and Woodcock Road. 'Green Lane' is suggested for the ward name as it is the main road through this area. We feel that 'Slitting Mill' should also be featured in the ward name as it is a discrete village with its own history and separate identity. As we argued in our previous response, we feel that any parish ward containing Slitting Mill should also contain Hagley Road as this is the main road in and out of Rugeley for the village's residents.

Below is a table which shows the estimated figures for our proposed Rugeley parish wards:

Proposed Rugeley Town Council wards				
<i>District council ward</i>	<i>Town council ward</i>	<i>Approximate (current) electors</i>	<i>Number of town councillors</i>	<i>Electors per town councillor</i>
Etching Hill and the Heath	Etching Hill	1,461	2	731
	Springfields	1,557	2	779
	Green Lane with Slitting Mill	3,879	5	776
Western Springs	Western Springs	3,251	5	650
	Hagley	2,008	3	670
Brereton and Ravenhill	Pear Tree Estate	1,307	2	654

Heath Hayes and Wimblebury parish

In our response to the initial consultation, we did not make any proposals for parish wards within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury parish as we assumed that the existing parish ward boundaries would be retained. However, they have not been retained in the draft recommendations and we

object to the Commission's proposals, particularly the 'Wimblebury' parish ward (labelled E) which covers a much wider area than the area generally regarded as Wimblebury. Wimblebury is a village at the northern end of the wider parish which has a separate, proud identity and we therefore feel that, as it does currently, it should have its own parish ward. The boundary between Heath Hayes and Wimblebury is generally regarded as the point where Wimblebury Road becomes John Street. Therefore, the current Wimblebury parish ward includes Claygate Road and its offshoots but does not include the estate immediately to the south (Brisbane Way and its offshoots). We therefore propose that this continues to be used as the boundary for the Wimblebury parish ward.

The remainder of our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury district ward which is located in this parish would then form a larger parish ward simple called 'Heath Hayes'. This boundary would include the older, original part of Heath Hayes village, as well as some newer additions such as the Brisbane Way estate and Fremantle Drive.

In terms of the Hawks Green area, we would propose that it be split into two parish wards, as it is currently, as one parish ward covering the whole area would be too large compared to the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury parish wards. We suggest that the most recognisable and clear boundary within Hawks Green is the Hayes Way district road, so we propose that this road be used to split the area into 'Hawks Green North' and 'Hawks Green South' parish wards. We propose that the boundary deviates north, away from Hayes Way towards its western end in order to avoid splitting Wrens Croft and Robins Croft, two roads which were built at the same time and form part of the newest section of the Hawks Green area.

In order to illustrate our proposals for the Brereton and Ravenhill, Rugeley and Heath Hayes and Wimblebury parishes, we have created a map which can be viewed [here](#).



Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party and Cannock Chase District Council Labour Group

Joint submission to the initial consultation for the boundary review of Cannock Chase

Monday 1st August 2022

Introduction

This submission to the boundary review of the Cannock Chase District is made jointly by the Cannock Chase Constituency Labour Party ('the CLP') and the group of Labour and Labour and Co-operative councillors on Cannock Chase District Council ('the group'). In drafting this submission, the CLP and group sought the views of councillors, previous election candidates and regular party members to ensure it reflects opinion and local knowledge from across the district.

Alongside this written submission, we have prepared maps of both our [district-level](#) and [parish-level](#) proposals using Google My Maps. We have also provided the Boundary Commission with the shape files (in .kmz format).

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the group took part in the District Council's cross-party Boundary Review Working Group. They were pleased to see a great deal of common ground and consensus, particularly between the Labour and Conservative groups, reflecting similar thoughts on community boundaries and the most sensible proposals within the constraints of the review's parameters. This submission is broadly similar to that of the District Council, albeit with slightly different proposals within the Cannock area, which are detailed below, and a full set of proposals for the Rugeley and Brereton area which is absent from the Council's submission.

At the beginning of this review, the group expressed a strong preference for the retention of the system of electing 'by thirds' as opposed to 'all-out' elections every four years. Our rationale for this was set out in our submission regarding council size and we are pleased that the Boundary Commission concurred with our suggestion of 36 councillors. We feel that a uniform pattern of twelve three-member wards would serve the district best going forward and we understand from past reviews that this is the generally preferred position of the Boundary Commission when a council will elect by thirds.

Whilst a mixture of wards of different sizes can ensure good representation of smaller communities, we feel that this benefit is outweighed by the fact that voters in three-member wards are able to vote more frequently than those in two-member wards. This system can also be confusing to voters who may not understand why a district council election is being held but they are not able to vote.

We understand that one political party in the district is advocating for 36 single-member wards. Again, whilst small wards can have benefits, we feel that there are significant drawbacks to this system, for example where a ward is vacant those residents are left without any representation on the council. Additionally, single-member wards would make the system of electing by thirds essentially redundant as all residents would only be able to elect their district councillor once

every four years. Whilst this may be the preference of some political parties, a change to all-out elections can only be made by a resolution of full council. If this was going to happen, it ought to have been done well in advance of this review commencing but no such decision was taken, or even proposed.

We will begin the explanation of our submission at the southern end of the district and move northwards.

Explanation of district ward proposals

Norton Canes

Boundary

We propose that the boundary of the Norton Canes ward should remain as it is currently, coterminous with the Norton Canes parish.

Ward name

We suggest that the ward name remains 'Norton Canes' as this reflects the name of the ward's principal settlement and that of the coterminous parish. There is strong association with the name throughout the ward with all residents feeling that they are part of Norton Canes. There are small hamlets south of the A5 at Little Wyrley and west of Brownhills West along Commonside (an extension of Albutts Road) but these form part of the Norton Canes parish.

Commentary

Norton Canes is a geographically discrete village within the district with its own identity and strong sense of community. There are clear areas of separation between neighbouring towns and villages, namely Heath Hayes, Burntwood and Brownhills, and residents are keen for these to be maintained. Many of the amenities and services required by a community are available within Norton Canes village itself, such as two primary schools, a secondary school, a medical centre with three general practice surgeries, a community centre with numerous local groups, a library, two churches and several pubs. There is a small but well used commercial area around the junction of Burntwood Road and Brownhills Road, known locally as 'the bridge' for historical reasons. Norton Canes has grown considerably over the last seven years, particularly along its southern edge, but many new residents comment that they feel the village has a welcome sense of community. Locals consider the village to be one community and consequently, no division of the district council ward would make sense to residents or be acceptable on community identity grounds.

There is potential for a new housing development within the Norton Canes ward that would effectively be an extension to Heath Hayes as opposed to Norton Canes. The site in question is bounded by Cannock Road / Lichfield Road (the A5190) to the north, Newlands Lane to the west and south, and Newlands Brook to the east. It has been suggested that this area should therefore be removed from the Norton Canes ward at this review. However, we would argue that development of the District Council's Local Plan is not yet at the stage where there is certainty over whether this housing development will go ahead in the next Local Plan period (up until 2036). We therefore believe that the best course of action is to keep the ward boundary as it is and for councillors to request a minor boundary change in the future should a new development commence before the next routine district ward boundary review is due.

The electoral figures provided to the Boundary Commission indicate that Norton Canes is currently the district's largest ward and will grow to 6,799 electors by 2027. This will sit comfortably within the 10% variance afforded and is very close to the 'target figure' of 6,862 electors per ward by 2027, assuming a uniform pattern of twelve three-member wards. Therefore, retaining the current boundaries of Norton Canes would also deliver robust electoral equality.

Heath Hayes and Wimblebury

Boundary

Our proposal for this ward matches that in the District Council's submission which itself reflected input from our group, amongst others. It is based on the current Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward, albeit enlarged due to that ward being much too small. The southern boundary with Norton Canes remains unchanged.

We propose a minor change to the current boundary between this ward and Hawks Green ward. Currently, a small group of houses that are part of the Meadow Way estate, constructed in the 1980s as part of the wider Hawks Green development, sit in the Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward. We feel that this is confusing and unnecessary and therefore propose that all homes on Meadow Way and Kensington Place be moved into the ward we have named 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green'. We also suggest that houses on Gorsemoor Road built at the same time are also transferred, those being numbers 90 to 100 and 241 to 257.

The northern boundary that cuts across Wimblebury Road remains the same. The eastern boundary of the ward, which currently does not stray far from Wimblebury Road, extends all the way across to the district's eastern boundary.

We propose that the western and north-western boundary of the ward is altered considerably, gaining significant numbers of electors from what is currently the Hednesford South ward. The currently split streets of Keys Park Road, Kings Croft, Watermint Close, Waterlily Close and Sweetbriar Way move into our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, as do Meadowsweet Way and Foxtail Way. The new Taylor Wimpey 'Cherry Blossom' development around Hednesford Town Football Club also moves into the ward, and so does both sides of Hill Street, up to its junction with Keys Park Road.

Ward name

We suggest the name 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury' which reflects the two communities contained within the ward. The current ward name includes 'East' after 'Heath Hayes', possibly to distinguish it from the whole parish. However, we feel that this is confusing given that there is no 'Heath Hayes West' ward, that being Hawks Green. Our sense is that when residents refer to "Heath Hayes", they are typically referring to the older part of the village which predated the Hawks Green development. The Labour representatives on the Council's Boundary Review Working Group raised this point and this was agreed to by other political groups. We are also keen to remove 'points on a compass' names for wards wherever possible as we feel they mean very little to our residents.

Commentary

We make the suggestion of substantial alterations to the boundary with Hednesford South ward partly to ensure electoral equality, but more importantly to address the issue of a very

problematic and confusing boundary between the Heath Hayes & Wimblebury and Hednesford parishes which bisects many cul-de-sacs. The current boundary was clearly drawn long before Keys Park Road, Brickworks Road and the developments off of them were built. By way of an example, on Watermint Close, numbers 5, 17 to 23 and 36 to 56 are in the Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury ward whilst numbers 1 to 3, 7 to 15 and 2 to 34 are in the Hednesford South ward. This confusing segmentation of residential roads is repeated on Sweetbriar Way, Waterlily Close and Kings Croft. We believe that this straight-line boundary through streets is bad for residents, councillors, election candidates and council staff alike. We therefore strongly urge the Boundary Commission to take heed of the cross-party consensus outlined above which has formed around a solution to rectify this issue.

We believe that most residents of Kings Croft, Watersmead Close, Watermint Close, Waterlily Close, Meadowsweet Way and Foxtail Way would feel part of Wimblebury whilst same is true of Heath Hayes for most residents of Sweetbriar Way. Most children in these areas attend Heath Hayes schools and residents would typically shop on Heath Hayes high street or the Hawks Green district centre. We therefore feel that these roads would fit best within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward.

Whilst moving the eastern boundary of the ward over to the district's eastern boundary does not affect any properties, it ensures several fields where potential future housing developments (which would extend Heath Hayes or Wimblebury) have been mooted by landowners fall within a Heath Hayes ward as opposed to a Hednesford ward. In doing this, the ward boundary is 'future-proofed' to account for potential additions to the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury area.

The addition of the new estate around Keys Park Stadium (home of Hednesford Town Football Club) and Hill Street into Heath Hayes and Wimblebury generated a lot of debate within the Council's working group. Initially, our draft proposals included the estate around the stadium and Hill Street within a Hednesford ward. However, using estimates of elector numbers provided by officers at the Council, it appears that this would leave Heath Hayes and Wimblebury much too small. We therefore agreed with the Conservative group's proposal that these areas should move into this ward. However, we felt that Hill Street should not be divided as was initially suggested and instead, both sides (up to Keys Park Road) should remain in the same ward. This was agreed by the Boundary Review Working Group with the consensus boundaries put forward in the Council's submission.

We agree with the Council's justification for this proposal: that many children living on the development attend Heath Hayes schools and the area has transport links into Cannock as well as Hednesford. As with the other Keys Park Road offshoots, many residents shop in Heath Hayes and Hawks Green. When it comes to Hill Street, we feel that, along with Hednesford Road in Heath Hayes, it forms a continuous route linking Hednesford with Five Ways Island. We would encourage the Boundary Commission's staff to drive along this route to observe this. We feel that many residents of Hill Street would look to Heath Hayes for services and amenities as opposed to Hednesford town centre which is further afield.

We feel that the Council's proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, which we have mirrored, strikes a good balance between incorporating areas which identify with and look to Heath Hayes whilst also ensuring an appropriate number of electors. Whilst it may be on the small side to begin with, a new 400-home development planned east of Wimblebury Road in the near future should add around 720 electors to the ward.

Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green

Boundary

This is another ward whose boundary matches the Council's submission, albeit with a minor change around Eastern Way which does not affect any properties. This ward includes all of the current Hawks Green ward with some additions. We have already explained the addition of homes from Gorsemoor Road, Meadow Way and Kensington Place in the previous section. At the northern boundary, we suggest that all of Keys Close should move into this ward; currently, there is a confusing split between the Hawks Green and Hednesford South wards which, as explained above, needs to be addressed. Similarly, some homes on Sapphire Drive and Turquoise Grove are currently in the Hednesford South ward which is a ridiculous situation given that they sit at a dead end of the Sidon Hill Way estate and are clearly part of the Hawks Green area. Given that the remainder of Keys Close is added to this ward, Farm Close also needs to be added.

The western boundary moves westwards, crossing the railway line, to follow Old Hednesford Road in Cannock down to Lichfield Road and then following this street, but not taking in any of its houses. Therefore, the Pebble Mill Drive estate, The Hills, the Stoney Lea Road estate, Hollies Avenue, Hollyoak Way, Hollies Park Road as well as several industrial estates move into this ward. We have moved the boundary around the junction of Eastern Way and Old Hednesford Road to ensure that this new western section of the ward is contiguous with Hawks Green; it would not be contiguous along Lichfield Road due to houses on both sides of that road being in a different ward.

Ward name

We propose the name 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green' for this ward. Initially, we agreed with the Council's submission of retaining simply 'Hawks Green' as the ward name. Hawks Green has referred to the area now covered by the housing estates built in the 1980s since before it was developed. Whilst further development has taken place since, such as Wrens Croft, Robins Croft and the Newlands Park estate (Pheasant Way and offshoots), these are linked to Hawks Green via Hayes Way and would therefore relate to the name.

Feedback that one of our local councillors has received from residents of the Pebble Mill Drive estate is that they do not want to lose 'Cannock' from the name of the ward they live in. We are therefore putting forward an alternative which would retain the clear link to Cannock as well as to Hawks Green which makes up the bulk of the ward. 'Pebble Mill' refers to the Pebble Mill Drive estate which forms the vast majority of the Cannock side of the proposed ward.

Commentary

We feel that the estates which make up the Hawks Green area have strong links with one another and should therefore be kept together. The main roads of Heath Way and Hayes Way connect estates with one another and with the Hawks Green district centre which includes a large supermarket, restaurants, shops, a pub and a community centre.

As with the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, keeping Hawks Green together necessitates the addition of other nearby areas. We feel that adding the entirety of Keys Close, Sapphire Drive and Turquoise Grove makes complete sense as the current boundaries divide these cul-de-sacs; again, we do not believe that it would be acceptable for this situation to be left unaddressed by this review. In terms of the roads off of Old Hednesford Road, we feel that there are links between this area and Hawks Green. For example, Hawks Green Lane provides a vehicular link, one of the

few roads which crosses the railway line. Hawks Green Industrial Estate lies on the Cannock side of the railway line, as does the Council's 'Hawks Green Depot', half of which has recently been developed into the road named 'The Hills'. A more modern link between the two areas comes with the McArthurGlen West Midlands designer outlet village which lies in the unparished area of Cannock but is clearly visible from the Newlands Park estate on the other side of Eastern Way.

Cannock Longford and Bridgtown

Boundary

This is a slightly enlarged version of the current Cannock South ward. The roads added to the ward are Beech Tree Lane, St Lukes Close, Oakwoods, Ivy Close, Dartmouth Avenue, South Close and the St James estate (St James Road, Maple Crescent, The Willows, Birch Avenue and Elms Drive). Other than this change, the other boundaries, including retaining both sides of Lichfield Road to the south of the designer outlet village, remain the same.

Ward name

The name for this ward has been the subject of some debate, but our suggestion is 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown'. There seems to be wide consensus around the need for the ward name to include Bridgtown as this is a parish in its own right and was a distinct community separate from Cannock until the latter grew substantially. Consequently, residents and businesses in Bridgtown are still very keen to maintain their own identity. There has been criticism of the current 'Cannock South' ward name as this does not give equal status to Bridgtown but instead relegates it to simply an area of Cannock.

As previously mentioned, we would like to see the end of 'points on a compass' ward names as they mean little to our residents, so we are putting forward a suggestion which approximately corresponds the area of Cannock covered by this ward. 'Longford' is a historical name for the area around Longford Road and is still a name used by residents and businesses today; the 'Longford estate' is often referred to by locals. We believe the name Longford is locally identifiable and one of the clearer areas of the Cannock unparished area, along with Rumer Hill (also in this ward) and Chadsmoor. Whilst not all of Longford Road is in this ward, most of it is and the character of the houses north of Oaks Drive and Bideford Way is very different to those south of that junction which lie in this ward. We therefore feel that 'Cannock Longford and Bridgtown' is a good fit for the boundaries suggested for this ward.

Alternatives to 'Longford' could include 'Ascot', a nod to the Ascot Drive estate which makes up a significant portion of the ward, and 'Rumer Hill' which refers to a discrete area east of the railway line and south of Lichfield Road. These alternatives were discussed at the Boundary Review Working Group but it was felt that they refer to fairly small areas within the town and therefore may not be appropriate as a name for the wider ward.

Commentary

We feel that this ward would be a good fit on the grounds of community cohesion as its residents have a lot in common. As the ward is geographically compact, residents tend to use the same shops and schools, particularly Bridgtown Primary School and Longford Primary School. The vast majority of residents in the ward are linked with the town centre by either Wolverhampton Road and Avon Road (the A4601) or Walsall Road. We feel that the town centre and Eastern Way (the A460) provide clear delineations which make sense as northern and eastern boundaries.

Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow

Boundary

The southern boundary of this ward follows the route outlined above, generally the existing boundary between the existing Cannock West and Cannock South wards aside from the roads listed above which we suggest are transferred. Most of the town centre remains in the Cannock Longford and Bridgtown ward, with the Market Place and High Green areas in this ward.

The eastern side of the ward, to the north of the town centre, contains all of the areas currently in the Cannock West ward, along with a number of additions. The entirety of Stafford Road (the A34) moves into this ward, rather than stopping at the junction with Westbourne Avenue. The boundary also moves up to the southern side of Cemetery Road, meaning that the Bevan Lee estate, Mulberry Road and Fallowfield, some of Pye Green Road, Broomhill Bank and Ashleigh Croft, the northern side of Old Fallow Road, Old Fallow Avenue and Amelia Court are also added.

Further east, the boundary moves across to Old Hednesford Road, as far as Crab Lane. Therefore, Heath Gap Road and the Walnut Drive estate are also added to this ward. The only difference between our submission for this ward and the Council's submission is the Sankey Road area. Our submission for this ward extends its boundary along Cannock Road and then down Burns Street, meaning that Sankey Road, Smilie Place and Hardie Green are incorporated into this ward; the Council's submission puts this area into the ward to the north (Chadsmoor).

Ward name

As with the Cannock Longford and Bridgtown ward name, there was a considerable amount of discussion over this ward's name, with several ideas being put forward but little consensus reached. Initially, our group suggested 'Cannock Shoal Hill' to the Boundary Review Working Group. 'Shoal Hill' is a reference to the hill and common of the same name just outside of the district's western boundary. The Shoal Hill Tavern in this area is well known and popular with local residents. A Conservative councillor who once lived in the area confirmed that many residents refer to the part of Cannock in the vicinity of Old Penkridge Road, New Penkridge Road and Hatherton Road as 'Shoal Hill'.

However, the difficulty with the 'Shoal Hill' name is that it only refers to that particular part of the ward and so residents in other parts, particularly those on the other side of Stafford Road, may not feel any connection to it. Therefore, we consulted our councillors and members in the Cannock area who suggested 'Old Fallow' as a possible name for the eastern side of the ward. This is another name which was historically associated with the area around Old Fallow Road.

We feel that a combination of these two 'area names' within Cannock would be a good fit for this ward.

Commentary

There is a long-established precedent for a ward within Cannock which straddles the town centre and/or the leisure centre and golf course, which constitute a large green space in the town. The current Cannock West ward does this and so did the former Parkside ward. The latter included both the New Penkridge Road area and the Bevan Lee estate and was seen as coherent due to common links into the town centre and children attending the same secondary school.

We would argue that the electoral figures mean that Cannock will be too small for four three-member wards and too large for three three-member wards without any territory from the Cannock unparished area moving into neighbouring wards. This is why we suggest extending the Hawks Green ward to Old Hednesford Road. We feel that the three Cannock wards in our proposals broadly reflect different areas of the town with which residents identify. Whilst this Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow ward combined several of these, we feel that it is a coherent ward which conforms to the electoral parameters set out for this review.

Chadsmoor

Boundary

The proposed Chadsmoor ward stretches across areas currently split between the existing Cannock North and Cannock East wards. Its southern boundary follows the northern boundary of Cannock Shoal Hill and Old Fallow described above. Its eastern boundary is the railway line. The northern boundary constitutes the existing boundary between the Cannock unparished area and the Hednesford parish. However, we suggest two slight alterations to correct minor issues along the Belt Road boundary. Firstly, we propose moving Apollo Close into this Chadsmoor ward as it is clearly part of the wider 'planets estate' i.e. Mercury Road, Saturn Road, etc. Secondly, we propose ensuring all properties on Festival Mews, a very small cul-de-sac off of Belt Road, fall in the Hednesford Green Heath ward; Festival Mews is currently split between two wards.

Ward name

Unlike the other two Cannock wards, the name for this ward is uncontroversial and has strong recognition amongst the community. The area residents would typically describe as 'Chadsmoor' is covered by this ward. The Chadsmoor name can be seen in a local primary school and a nursery school within this ward, as well as numerous local businesses.

Commentary

Whilst some residents might describe Chadsmoor as the northern end of Cannock, most Chadsmoor residents see it has a distinct community in its own right. It developed separately from either Cannock or Hednesford and consequently, there are many local services and amenities, particularly around the commercial area of Cannock Road (between its junction with Moss Street and Burns Street) which forms a local centre.

We have opted to deviate slightly from the Council's submission by not including the Sankey Road area in this Chadsmoor proposal. There are two main reasons why we have done this. Firstly, the Council's estimates for elector numbers indicated that their proposed boundaries for this ward could potentially be higher than the 10% tolerance either side of 6,862 electors per ward which we are working to. As Chadsmoor is a deprived area, councillors representing the area typically have a higher than average caseload. Therefore, making it the largest ward in the district could exacerbate this and lead to challenges for councillors to manage this workload. Secondly, the feedback we received from our councillors and CLP members was that the Sankey Road area looks more to Cannock than it does to Chadsmoor and it would therefore fit better within a Cannock ward.

The ward boundary we have suggested would also ensure the two-tier form of local government in our county is not confusing for residents given that this ward would be entirely contained within the Chadsmoor county council division. Whilst boundaries between the two will not match exactly,

they would be very similar. There is precedent for this type of similar district wards and county divisions which share the same name in several other two-tier areas, such as Norwich.

Hednesford Green Heath

Boundary

We agree with the Council's proposal for this ward i.e. that aside from the minor changes to Apollo Close and Festival Mews along Belt Road, it should retain its current boundaries.

Ward name

We propose that as this ward would retain its current boundaries, its name should remain 'Hednesford Green Heath'. 'Green Heath' is a name which has long been associated with the western side of the town, as demonstrated by the existence of Green Heath Road. Other alternatives have been suggested, such as 'Hednesford Valley' or 'Pye Green Valley'. Whilst these names do link with the ward, we feel that they refer specifically to the new housing estate constructed on Lamplight Way and offshoots and the open green space adjacent to it which is known locally as 'the Skelly'. We certainly believe that the three Hednesford wards we are proposing should all include 'Hednesford' within their name to reflect the town's distinct identity.

Commentary

We feel that the existing Hednesford Green Heath ward uses clear dividing lines within the town, such as the railway line and Green Heath Road. The cohesiveness of this ward has only increased over time with the large number of new housing developments which have been built in the ward. All of the housing growth in Hednesford over the last decade or so has been concentrated in this ward, meaning that small new communities have sprung within the area. The extent of housing growth in this ward means that despite it currently being a two-member ward, it would warrant three councillors following this review, despite the overall size of the Council being reduced.

Initially, we tried to map some alternatives to the existing boundaries of this ward, but we found they necessitated the division of Bradbury Lane and its offshoots, which seems incongruous and was something our group and members of the CLP felt would not be acceptable to local residents.

Hednesford Pye Green

Boundary

This ward is largely based on the existing Hednesford North ward but with several additions to the southern end of the ward to ensure better electoral equality. We propose that the boundary be extended down to Stafford Lane and also take in the Essex Drive estate plus Kingfisher Drive and Pendle Hill.

We also proposed some minor changes to the boundary over the Hednesford Hills Nature Reserve so that as much of that area is included in the ward featuring its name as possible. It is not possible to remove the entire nature reserve from this ward due to there being homes at the very end of Valley Road.

Ward name

Given that we feel 'Hednesford North' means very little to residents, we would like to see an alternative name for this ward. Given that our proposed boundary extends quite far south within

Hednesford, this would no longer be an appropriate description for the ward in any case. The suggestion we agreed on is 'Hednesford Pye Green'. As with areas like Bridgtown and Chadsmoor, Pye Green has its own identity and its own community centre which houses many local groups as well as Hednesford Town Council. It would therefore be a positive development to have Pye Green included in a ward name. The proposed ward boundaries include both Pye Green Community Centre and the iconic local landmark of Pye Green Tower.

Commentary

A ward based around the key roads of Rugeley Road, Bradbury Lane and Green Heath Road makes sense both geographically and on community cohesion grounds. We therefore feel that minimal change is the best approach when it comes to this ward. Having said that, the current southern boundary of the ward in the area south of Market Street is somewhat confusing, particularly the division of Eskrett Street and Cheviot Rise. The proposal put forward in our submission, and that of the Council, addresses this situation and would provide a more coherent boundary between this ward and the ward immediately to the south.

Given that Green Heath Road separates the older part of Hednesford from newer developments, we have retained this as a clear dividing line. As previously mentioned, we have kept all of Bradbury Lane and the cul-de-sacs off of it together as we feel there is no natural break within this road which could facilitate a division. Additionally, many of the roads on the northern side of Bradbury Lane were built at a similar time, all far earlier than the estates to the south, such as the Corsican Drive estate and the Bond Way estate.

In an initial draft of this ward, we included the entirety of the Brindley Heath parish in this ward as we felt that it would be advantageous both from the perspective of not unnecessarily dividing parishes and also electoral equality. However, other members of the Boundary Review Working Group felt that this placed houses very close to Rugeley into a Hednesford ward. Given that there are relatively few electors in the Brindley Heath parish, we have agreed that the current boundary across Cannock Chase should be retained.

Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley

Boundary

This ward combines much of the existing Hednesford South ward with all of the electors from the existing Rawnsley ward, albeit not all of that ward's land area, as explained in the section on our proposed Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward.

As already mentioned, significant numbers of properties have been removed at the ward's southern end with the vast majority going into Heath Hayes and Wimblebury. Therefore, in line with the Council's submission, we propose that the new southern boundary of the ward should be at Lower Road and the Sharon Way estate, with a small row of houses further south on Hill Street and Meadway Close also falling in this ward.

At its western end, the boundary follows the railway line, then a section of the Rising Brook and then down Stafford Lane to the double roundabouts, meaning the Stagborough Way estate stays in this ward. The whole area of Hednesford known as Church Hill (named after the road which passes through it) is also drawn in this ward.

We have included all of the Rawnsley ward, except for the fields to the south of Cannock Wood Road and Sevens Road for reasons set out in the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury section. However, we have chosen not to draw the boundary directly along these roads as this would unintentionally exclude a row of eight or so houses on the edge of Prospect Village. We have therefore drawn the boundary slightly wider around nearby fields in order to encompass these houses and Holly House Farm within this ward.

Ward name

We agree with the Boundary Review Working Group's suggestion of 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley'. 'Hednesford Hills' refers to the nature reserve and raceway which are almost entirely contained within this ward. 'Rawnsley' covers the cluster of villages within the existing ward of the same name. Although only one of these villages is called Rawnsley, it would not be possible to list all of them, so we suggest continued use of 'Rawnsley' to refer to all of them for the purposes of this ward name.

If for any reason the Boundary Commission seems it not possible to use this ward name, we would suggest 'Hednesford Church Hill and Rawnsley' as a 'second choice' alternative.

Commentary

When we first considered a pattern of wards for this part of the district, we determined early on that it would not be appropriate or rational to split up the five villages (Littleworth, Rawnsley, Hazel Slade, Prospect Village and Cannock Wood) which make up the existing Rawnsley ward. Prospect Village and Cannock Wood are geographically separate communities which are linked to the wider Hednesford area by Littleworth Road and Rawnsley Road. The other three villages are largely formed around Littleworth Road and Cannock Wood Street.

Using the Boundary Commission's suggestion of identifying dividing roads and unifying roads, we determined that Littleworth Road is a unifying road for the five villages and for the southern end of Hednesford which is also in this ward. We are therefore proposing a ward which includes the entire length of Littleworth Road, as opposed to seeing it arbitrarily divided between two wards as it is now and as it is in the submissions from other political groups. Littleworth Road forms one continuous development from Hednesford through to the edge of the urban area at Rawnsley and Hazel Slade. We therefore feel it would make sense for it to be unified into one ward for the first time in the Council's history.

The Rugeley and Brereton area

As evidenced by the lack of 'lines on the map' north of the Chase in the Council's submission, there was disagreement between political groups over fundamental points, particularly whether the former Rugeley Power Station site, due to developed into around 1,000 homes, should be drawn into a Rugeley ward or remain in Brereton and Ravenhill ward. There was also disagreement over the extent of change to the existing Western Springs ward which should take place.

We spent considerable time consulting residents and CLP members in Rugeley as this is arguably the most complex area for this boundary review due to the unique circumstances of huge housing growth taking place in the near future. Ultimately, the overwhelming view amongst our CLP members is that the power station site should be added to the Western Springs ward as opposed to remaining within Brereton and Ravenhill for reasons we will explain in detail below.

Brereton and Ravenhill

Boundary

In order to ensure the new development on the power station site does not fall within Brereton and Ravenhill ward, we propose that the area north of the Trent and Mersey Canal is transferred to Western Springs ward. However, there is a small development (Bridgewater Road) which is linked to Armitage Road by The Mossley; we suggest that it would not make any sense for these houses to be removed from Brereton and Ravenhill.

We also propose to add the 'Pear Tree estate' to Brereton and Ravenhill; this estate is made up of the Queensway and all of the streets which link to it. In order to ensure this estate is contiguous with the rest of our proposed Brereton and Ravenhill ward, the boundary travels north up Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane, then down Horse Fair as far as the railway line, then along the railway line until it meets the canal. This means that Devall Close is added into the ward along with the Pear Tree estate.

Beyond the Co-op store on the Queensway, the boundary leaves Hednesford Road and follows a footpath which is situated behind Landor Crescent and goes all the way down to Stile Cop Road which is the ward's southern boundary. However, it is important to note that we have added a small kink in the boundary where it diverts away from this footpath for a short stretch. This is to ensure that a section at the end of Durham Drive is not inadvertently added into this ward.

Ward name

We propose that the ward name should remain unchanged. Our proposed ward still includes both the Brereton and Ravenhill areas. Our feeling is that the addition of the Pear Tree estate need not alter the ward name as the estate has footpath links with Ravenhill. Additionally, the Pear Tree estate, along with the whole of the existing Hagley ward, is included with the Brereton and Ravenhill county council division.

Commentary

Our members in the Rugeley and Brereton area feel that the new community on the power station site will look to Rugeley as opposed to Brereton due to the clear vehicular links (along the A51) and cycleway and footpath links which are planned between the new development and the town centre. Between the new houses and the existing Brereton and Ravenhill settlements there will be the A road, a large industrial estate and the canal. This means it is very unlikely that new residents will access services and amenities in Brereton and Ravenhill; they are instead likely to rely on what is available in Rugeley. On this basis, we feel that it is most appropriate for the power station site to be taken out of this ward and added to Western Springs. Indications from figures provided to us by the Council are that this would also produce a more even split of electors between the three wards we are proposed north of the Chase. Keeping the power station in the Brereton and Ravenhill ward would likely put its electorate towards the top end of the 10% tolerance range by 2027, whereas this would not be the case for the modified Western Springs ward we are proposing.

In terms of adding the Pear Tree estate into this ward, we feel that this would be the most effective way of ensuring electoral equality whilst not compromising community cohesion. There are footpath links between the Pear Tree estate and the rest of the ward and the homes on the Pear Tree estate were built at a similar time and by the same organisation (the Coal Board) as many homes in Ravenhill.

Western Springs

Boundary

Our proposed Western Springs ward, in a nutshell, combines the existing Hagley ward, minus the Pear Tree estate and Devall Close, with the power station site and the areas of the existing Western Springs ward which lie east of Western Springs Road and Wolseley Road.

We have also added in three cul-de-sacs which come directly off of Wolseley Road as this would make much more sense than keeping them in the Etching Hill and the Heath ward as they have no direct vehicular access to the rest of that ward, other than down Wolseley Road. These cul-de-sacs are Richardson Way, Albany Drive and Howell Mews.

Ward name

We propose retaining the 'Western Springs' ward name. Western Springs Road is a strong feature in the town, and we believe that the name carries importance due to Rugeley being twinned with the city of Western Springs in Illinois, USA.

Commentary

Although our proposed Western Springs ward may look like an odd T shape on a map, we believe that this reflects the general layout of the town's main roads which roughly form a T shape, with the town centre being the meeting point of the roads. Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane form a strong north-south link between the town centre and the southern edge of the town. The A51 and Western Springs Road / Wolseley Road form clear east-west routes, linking Rugeley with Stafford and Lichfield.

From our perspective, Rugeley provides a clear example of the difference between dividing roads and unifying roads. We see Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane, which pass through the centre of the existing Hagley ward, as a unifying road for this southern part of Rugeley. The fact that the roads have multiple access points, providing a link for numerous estates of various ages, indicates that they are a unifying feature which we believe should be retained as far as possible. We have therefore drawn as much of the Hagley ward as possible into this Western Springs ward, as opposed to carving it in half along Hednesford Road and Sandy Lane. Although we have had to use a stretch of this main road for the boundary with Brereton and Ravenhill, this affects very few properties. Unlike the Conservative group's proposals, we have kept the Cardigan Avenue and Rutland Avenue estate together with the western side of the Hagley ward.

On the other hand, we view Western Springs Road as a dividing road and therefore feel that it would serve as an effective boundary between the two Rugeley wards we are proposing. From driving down Western Springs Road, or even simply viewing it on a map, it is evident that there are no vehicular access points along a large stretch between the junction with Green Lane and the roundabout where it meets Wolseley Road. Even Plovers Rise, which serves a number of large estates, is directly parallel to Western Springs Road for quite a distance due to a lack of access points. There are a few pedestrian crossings, but one of these is an 'up and over' walkway more akin to a railway crossing which demonstrates what a physical barrier Western Springs Road is. The existing Western Springs ward straddles this long, junctionless section of Western Springs Road which does not make much sense from a community cohesion perspective. We therefore cannot agree with the Conservative proposal to simply add the power station site into the existing Western Springs ward. We feel that a more substantial change is needed, one which recognises Western Springs Road as a physical barrier which would constitute an effective ward boundary.

We also feel that it is very important to keep wards contiguous and as compact as possible i.e. not made up of disjointed parts. One proposal brought forward by the Conservative group, in order to facilitate their proposed Western Springs ward mentioned above, was to combine the western side of the Hagley ward with the existing Etching Hill and the Heath ward. To our CLP members, this would not make sense or promote good local governance because it would not be possible to travel from the Burnthill Lane area and The Birches estate of Hagley ward to the Etching Hill area without either driving through the Western Springs ward, or driving a long way out of Rugeley and coming back in via Slitting Mill. This proposal therefore combines two geographically detached parts of Rugeley which may work in terms of electorate numbers but is not logical on community cohesion grounds. We believe that our proposals strike the right balance between retaining unifying roads as far as possible and using dividing roads elsewhere.

Etching Hill and the Heath

Boundary

Our proposed Etching Hill and the Heath ward includes all of the existing ward of the same name, minus the three cul-de-sacs off of Wolseley Road outlined in the previous section. We have added the area of the existing Western Springs ward which lies west of Western Springs Road into this ward. Slitting Mill remains in this ward, as does the Chase Side ward of Brindley Heath parish.

Ward name

We do not feel that our additions to the existing ward warrant a change of name and we therefore propose that 'Etching Hill and the Heath' remains the ward name.

Commentary

We have already made the point around Western Springs Road being a physical dividing line, which is pertinent to this ward. The only point to add in support of our proposed boundary for this ward relates to Slitting Mill. Feedback we received from our members is that the main route into Rugeley for residents of Slitting Mill is Hagley Road. Currently, this road and its offshoots are in the Western Springs ward, meaning that Slitting Mill is somewhat detached from the rest of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward. In our proposals, we have drawn Slitting Mill and Hagley Road into the same ward which we feel better reflects Slitting Mill's place in Rugeley.

Explanation of parish ward proposals

Due to the complex nature of warding some of the district's larger parishes, we have opted to make an attempt at drawing some parish-level ward boundaries for certain areas as we know the Boundary Commission will have to do this as part of this review.

Hednesford parish

Our thoughts for the Hednesford parish are fairly straight forward. We propose that there should be three parish wards match the parts of the district wards of 'Hednesford Green Heath', 'Hednesford Pye Green' and 'Hednesford Hills and Rawnsley' which lie within the Hednesford parish boundary. We suggest that they are named 'Green Heath', 'Pye Green' and 'Hednesford Hills' respectively. We would suggest not dropping 'Hednesford' from 'Hednesford Hills' as this is the name of the nature reserve and a ward simply named 'Hills' may not make sense to voters.

In terms of the portions of Hednesford parish which we have suggested should move into the 'Heath Hayes and Wimblebury' and 'Cannock Pebble Mill and Hawks Green' wards for district council purposes, we would propose that they form a new Hednesford Town Council ward named 'Keys Park'. This name refers to the Keys Park Stadium and Keys Park Road which link these areas together.

Brereton and Ravenhill parish

A split within the Brereton and Ravenhill parish would be necessitated if the Boundary Commission accepts the arguments for adding the power station site to some form of Western Springs ward. This is the only division that we would propose, however, as residents in the existing Brereton and Ravenhill community do not wish to be divided into parish wards.

Based on the forecasted electorate of 1,800 on the power station site, we would suggest that the 'Power Station Estate' ward should elect three of the council's thirteen parish councillors and the 'Brereton and Ravenhill' ward should therefore elect ten. We do not have a more eloquent ward name than 'Power Station Estate' at the moment; we would suggest that the developer's marketing name for the estate may be adopted in the future.

Rugeley parish

Given that Rugeley is a very large parish with nineteen town councillors, we would suggest that it should be divided into more wards than simply the three which would be necessitated by our district council ward proposals.

Clearly, a new 'Pear Tree Estate' ward would need to be created with boundary matching the portion of Rugeley parish we are suggesting should move into the Brereton and Ravenhill ward. The estimated electorate we have received from the Council for this area indicates that it should warrant two town councillors.

Within our proposed Western Springs district ward, we propose the creation of two Rugeley Town Council wards: 'Western Springs' and 'Hagley'. The dividing line between these two wards would be Western Springs Road. This means that all of the existing Hagley ward, minus the Pear Tree estate as described previously, would be a separate ward and then the remaining area of Western Springs would also form a parish ward. The estimated figures we were given suggest that our proposed 'Hagley' ward would have three town councillors and the 'Western Springs' ward would have either four or five, depending on the figures compared to the 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill' ward we will come on to.

Within our proposed Etching Hill and the Heath district ward, we proposed three wards for the purposes of town council elections. The first, at the northern end of the ward, would be called 'Springfields' as it would primarily comprise of what locals refer to as the 'Springfields estate' i.e. the cul-de-sacs ringed by Springfields Road, Crabtree Way, Jennie Lee Way, School Road and Plovers Rise. This proposed ward would also include the Forest Hills Primary School and some other estates in the immediate vicinity of the Springfields estate. This ward should be just right for two town councillors.

The bulk of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward would form a parish ward called 'Green Lane with Slitting Mill'. The main roads linking estates within this ward together are Plovers Rise, Crabtree Way, Green Lane and Woodcock Road. 'Green Lane' was chosen for the ward name as it is the

main road through this area. However, we would be happy for a less functional, more interesting name to be used instead. We feel that 'Slitting Mill' should be featured in the ward name as it is a distinct community with its own sense of identity. As previously mentioned, we feel that any parish ward containing Slitting Mill should also contain Hagley Road. This ward would have at least five town councillors, possibly six depending on the exact electoral figures.

Finally, we suggest that the remainder of the Etching Hill and the Heath district ward forms a town council ward simply called 'Etching Hill' in reference to the hill itself, which is located off of Mount Road. Our members felt that the roads we have drawn into this ward have a lot in common as many of them predate the large, sprawling development which makes up much of the Etching Hill and the Heath ward. There is a lot of history to this part of Rugeley and the association with the 'Etching Hill' name goes back very far. Similarly to the 'Springfields' and 'Pear Tree Estate' wards, this ward appears to be a good size for two town councillors.

Below are two tables which provide the 'workings out' for our proposed Rugeley and Brereton parish wards:

Proposed Rugeley Town Council wards				
<i>District council ward</i>	<i>Town council ward</i>	<i>Approximate (current) electors</i>	<i>Number of town councillors</i>	<i>Electors per town councillor</i>
Etching Hill and the Heath	Etching Hill	1,461	2	731
	Springfields	1,557	2	779
	Green Lane with Slitting Mill	3,879	5	776
Western Springs	Western Springs	3,251	5	650
	Hagley	2,008	3	670
Brereton and Ravenhill	Pear Tree Estate	1,307	2	654

Proposed Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council wards				
<i>District council ward</i>	<i>Parish council ward</i>	<i>Approximate (projected) electors</i>	<i>Number of parish councillors</i>	<i>Parish councillors per elector</i>
Western Springs	Power Station Estate	1,800	3	600
Brereton and Ravenhill	Brereton and Ravenhill	5,530	10	553