

# Cheshire East

## Personal Details:

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**Organisation Name:** (District or county councillor)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Sutton, Bollington and Rainow, Macclesfield town

I am the Cheshire East councillor for Sutton ward. I was first elected in May 2023. I am also the parish clerk for Wildboarclough and Macclesfield Forest Parish Meeting. Sutton ward currently covers the parishes of Sutton, Rainow, Wincle, and Wildboarclough and Macclesfield Forest.

I want first to comment on the proposals with respect to Sutton ward.

I am disappointed that Rainow has been removed from the ward and warded instead with Bollington and Pott Shrigley. Rainow is a distinct and rural community, with much of the village sited in the Peak District National Park. A busy main road that connects Macclesfield and Whaley Bridge, runs through the village. Bollington is much more populous and more urban in nature than Rainow. It has a town council rather than parish council, and the town council includes councillors representing political parties whereas Rainow parish does not. I am concerned that the issues and concerns of Rainow residents will be overlooked and the concerns of Bollington residents will inevitably take precedence if Rainow is warded with Bollington.

Sutton Parish consists of three villages - Langley, Lyme Green, and Sutton Lane Ends. In 2022, as part of its Community Governance Review, Cheshire East Council initially proposed splitting the parish up and including Lyme Green within Macclesfield Town Council. This proposal was deeply unpopular with Lyme Green residents, who want to retain their village identity and their position with Sutton parish. I therefore welcome the Commission's proposals to retain the whole of the parish within one Cheshire East ward.

The proposal to include Bosley in Sutton ward makes sense, not least as the ward currently includes several properties with a Bosley address. The addition of North Rode means that some ten miles' of the A54, a major road between Buxton and Congleton, will be covered by Sutton ward.

The ward is already geographically very large and rural, and the proposals increase its overall size.

I then want to comment on the proposals for the new Bollington and Rainow ward.

In addition to my concerns about the warding of Rainow with Bollington, and I also deeply concerned about the Commission's proposals to include parts of Tytherington within the new Bollington and Rainow ward.

The area around Livesley Road in Tytherington is an urban area within the boundary of Macclesfield Town Council. The current border between Macclesfield and Bollington dates back to the creation of the two respective urban district councils in 1894. Livesley Road and the surrounding roads were developed in the last twenty years, and are similar in character to much of Tytherington. The area is divided from Bollington and Rainow by the Silk Road, a busy dual carriageway and major arterial road linking Macclesfield to the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Linkway, and thereby the A34 and M60. There are large areas of open countryside between the Silk Road and the rest of the proposed Bollington and Rainow ward.

The warding of Livesley Road with Pott Shrigley, Bollington, and Rainow is not appropriate. Livesley Road is part of Tytherington. Its issues and concerns are inherently urban in nature, and directly related to Tytherington's position in Macclesfield town. Livesley Road and its adjoining roads should be warded with Tytherington, and the proposal to include them in Bollington and Rainow ward appears to violate the Commission's statutory criteria in relation to cohesive communities.

The Commission's recommendation that a new Macclesfield Springwood ward for Macclesfield Town Council should be created to cover Livesley Road and the adjoining roads appears to violate all three of the Commission's statutory criteria. I have already made clear that it would violate the cohesive communities criteria. The proposed ward will likely frustrate local government administration at election times. With a likely 220 registered voters, it is difficult to see how individuals would be able to generate the necessary signatories to be nominated as candidates, and impossible to see how ten signatories would be generated in relation to calling a parish/town council by election. More importantly, in a contested election (which all Macclesfield Town Council elections are), even on a high turnout, would mean fewer than 100 votes being cast. Staffing a polling district for this few voters will be expensive for Council Tax payers, and the small number of votes in a contested election will likely result in recounts being required.

Finally, and most significantly, it would violate the equity criteria. The proposal would result in votes of residents in one part of Tytherington being worth more than 20 times more than the votes of their neighbours in other parts of Tytherington. (1 councillor for 220 voters versus 1 councillor for c4550 voters.) This is iniquitous in the extreme and grossly unfair. Indeed, the disparity across Macclesfield town as a whole, even excluding the proposed Macclesfield Springwood ward, is significant. The proposed Macclesfield South ward is likely to have c3100 voters per town councillor, whereas Macclesfield Tytherington ward will have c4450 voters per town councillor. In effect, voters in the South ward will be 40 percent more represented than their Tytherington counterparts. Again, this is unfair in the extreme.

In relation to the proposals for the Cheshire East ward of Tytherington, I am also concerned about the Commission's proposals to treat Beech Farm Drive and Beechwood Mews as part of Macclesfield town centre and not as part of Tytherington. Both are clearly part of Tytherington. Beech Farm Drive is a largely 1970s development consisting of lowrise flats and terraced houses. Beechwood Mews is later, with terraced and semi-detached houses. Both are similar to other developments across Tytherington, and not with the largely Georgian and Victorian development in the town centre. They are separated from the town centre by a park and river, a 5 lane wide dual carriageway that can only be safely crossed via an elevated footpath or at a major traffic light crossing, and a large commercial area that includes a post office sorting office, a large office tower block, and a multi-storey carpark. Beech Farm Drive and Beechwood Mews residents do not live in the town centre and associate themselves very clearly with Tytherington. They should be warded with Tytherington, and the proposal to include them in Macclesfield Central ward

appears to violate the Commission's statutory criteria in relation to cohesive communities.

Voters in the proposed Macclesfield Tytherington ward will also be the least represented of any residents across the whole of Cheshire East. I understand that the submission from the Labour Party, which largely forms the basis of the Commission's proposals, states that this underrepresentation can be justified because Tytherington residents are generally richer than those in other parts of the borough. Even if this were a correct interpretation of the Commission's statutory criteria around equity, it does not apply to Tytherington. While there are some very large and expensive properties in parts of Tytherington, overall Tytherington consists of generally ordinary two and three bedroom houses and flats. Tytherington Park, Brocklehurst Avenue, Tytherington Drive, Rugby Drive and Orme Crescent, for example, are generally very ordinary houses and are far from large executive homes, and residents in those areas deserve equal representation on Cheshire East Council.

Finally, I would comment on the proposals in relation to Macclesfield Central ward. The Commission's proposals appear to provide a Cheshire East ward and a town council ward some 9 percent above target. Macclesfield town centre faces some unique and significant challenges, which are very different in nature to other parts of the town. The large number of empty commercial properties on Chestergate and Mill Street, anti-social behaviour, and other high street related challenges would be enough for any town or borough councillor to deal with, without having more residents than the borough average. I would ask the Commission to reconsider its proposals with regards to Central ward and Tytherington ward, and find a more equitable and manageable warding arrangement that does not disadvantage residents in these two areas.

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*