

# Cheshire East

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Macclesfield Wards

Please find attached a further submission regarding Macclesfield Warding from Macclesfield Councillors and supported by Macclesfield Constituency Labour Party.

## Attached Documents:

- boundary-commission-further-submission-regarding-macclesfield-warding---6-december-2024.docx

## **Boundary Commission Further Submission regarding Macclesfield Warding**

### **Introduction**

This further submission is on behalf of 9 of the 12 Councillors in Macclesfield and Macclesfield Constituency Labour Party.

We would firstly like to thank the Boundary Commission for both visiting Macclesfield and taking into account the views of local residents, the Civic Society and local Councillors. We are community based, most of us live in the wards we represent or very close by and we appreciate your observation that ‘the Labour Party’s proposals and evidence were more compelling ... and the best balance of our statutory criteria’. In visiting Macclesfield, you have been able to see for yourselves the impact of our proposals and the community evidence.

The proposals we submitted were the first option produced by Cheshire East Council Officers during the preparation of the Council’s submission to the Boundary Commission. They were made after a meeting of the Electoral Review Sub Committee where all Macclesfield and Bollington Councillors spoke about their local knowledge and experience and reports were received from meetings involving all Macclesfield Councillors.

One of our main challenges was the issue of Macclesfield having to reduce from 12 Councillors to 11. We looked at every option and the final proposals to reduce Tytherington to 1 Councillor Ward would create a relatively compact residential area with good road connections and no physical barriers between the different parts of the ward and no deprivation issues. You have been able to see for yourselves the impact of these proposals.

### **Comments of Boundary Commission Proposals**

We support the proposal to include the electors east of Tytherington Lane in the proposed Bollington and Rainow Ward since this reflects the views of the community from the recent community governance review.

We note the suggestion regarding Tytherington Ward that to simplify electoral arrangements, the Springwood Ward for Macclesfield Town

Council would be created. Our alternative proposal would be that this actually be a polling district within Macclesfield Tytherington Ward of Macclesfield Town Council and that there be two Town Councillors for that ward. This would deal with the issue of electoral imbalance with the much smaller numbers of electors in the proposed Springwood Ward. We note that the polling district would be represented for Cheshire East purposes as part of the Bollington and Rainow Ward by the two Councillors elected for that Ward. There is a precedent for this with Gawsorth Moss Parish Ward being in Macclesfield South Cheshire East Council Ward and Gawsorth Parish. This could be tidied up in due course with a CGR.

### **Comments on the Proposals from Macclesfield Conservatives**

Despite the Boundary Commission being an independent body and having consulted widely with the community, Conservatives (who have no Councillors in Macclesfield) have opposed the proposals particularly for Tytherington and Gawsorth.

The comment in their submission that the proposals submitted by Labour were rejected several times is not accurate. In fact, all other warding proposals in the Borough were agreed from representation and discussions with the local Councillors whereas the proposals made in the same manner by the significant majority of Macclesfield Councillors were blocked by a political party with no Councillors in the community of Macclesfield.

The Cheshire East Council review process involved listening to the input of current members. With the exception of Macclesfield where we have a unique situation in that the local knowledge and experience of members has been ignored. This was the only part of the process to prepare the submission of Cheshire East Council where this political bias took place.

Instead of the community-based proposals already accepted by the Boundary Commission, the proposals from the Conservatives slice through existing communities to attempt to create a single Councillor ward for Macclesfield Central. In doing so, existing long standing communities would be separated.

Attempting to reduce Central Ward in size creates significant issues on every ward contiguous with Central. Using Crompton Road as a boundary between Central and West and Ivy Ward is not appropriate, because Oxford

Road is the natural boundary between the two communities. The Town Centre, as part of a key service centre is not the responsibility of a single ward. The Town Council employs a Town Centre Manager and organises many free community events, so the suggestion of additional workload is exaggerated.

Whilst the Conservatives suggest that a small town-centric ward is preferable, this has not been suggested for other towns in the Borough and therefore the reasoning is fundamentally flawed. It is just an excuse to reduce Central Ward to one Councillor so Tytherington can remain as a two Councillor Ward. We have already provided evidence which the Boundary Commission have accepted that a one Councillor Tytherington Ward would both meet the Boundary Commission criteria and work well for the community.

In addition, South Park should be the boundary between South and Central with roads off the top of Park Lane being part of the Central Ward community with John Street and Mill Road forming a boundary between the Central and Byron Street communities. The pedestrianised area on High Street forms a natural break between the two wards.

The proposals to change West and Ivy Ward and Broken Cross and Upton Ward boundaries make no sense either. Whole swathes of the Weston Estate are being moved into Broken Cross, including most of the current locations of Polling Stations in West and Ivy.

Finally, the Conservative proposals seek to place 4BFR and 4GDT in both West and Ivy Ward and Gawsworth Ward. This is a location that the Boundary Commission chose to visit and your assessment that this area is urban in nature with close links to Macclesfield for amenities and services is correct as you have seen for yourselves.

This along with the mis-spelling of road names and a clear lack of understanding regarding both the geography and community in Macclesfield all indicate that the Conservative proposals are made by Councillors who neither represent Macclesfield or have any understanding of what they are actually proposing and the unfortunate impact this could have.

References to the 2011 boundary review should also be discounted. Initial Cheshire East elections were contested using the old County Council divisions where voters per councillor figures were all over the place.

## **Summary**

The Boundary Commission criteria for the revised warding have a very clear requirement to reflect the interests and identities of local communities, promote effective local government and deliver electoral equality. We were therefore very encouraged that the Boundary Commission stated in their proposals that 'the Labour Party's proposals and evidence were more compelling ... and the best balance of our statutory criteria'.

Our proposals, accepted by the Boundary Commission with one small amendment which we support:

- Meet all the criteria of the Boundary Commission.
- Have been drawn up by experienced officers following the input of all local Councillors.
- Reflect the community experience of Councillors with many years' service to their local communities and the interests and identities of Macclesfield's communities.
- Include ratios for representation that reflect the deprivation in Macclesfield.
- Meet the needs of the residents of Macclesfield for 2027 and beyond.

## **Submitted by:**

Cllr Fiona Wilson on behalf of Cllrs Sarah Bennett-Wake, Liz Braithwaite, Mary Brooks, Ashley Farrall, Nick Mannion, Brian Puddicombe, Judy Snowball and Rob Vernon.

Submission also supported by Macclesfield Constituency Labour Party.

6 December 2024