

Somerset

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: North Petherton Town Council (Representative of parish/town council)

Comment text:

Related subject: The area covered by North Petherton Town Council

North Petherton is situated on the eastern foothills of the Quantocks, close to the Somerset Levels. The town council area is extremely diverse with extremely rural communities such as Moorland and Fordgate as well as the new residential "villages" of Wilstock and Stockmoor. The town has an electorate of 8,134 (as at 01.08 2024) and there are plans under active consideration for further residential development of a minimum of 500 dwellings which will substantially increase the number of electors.

The Town Council area is currently represented on Somerset Council by 2 Councillors with it being a multi-councillor ward and whilst this can present challenges it has worked with incumbents of differing political parties working together for the benefit of the area they represent.

On 9 December 2024 North Petherton Town Council held a Council meeting to consider the boundary review. The following is the relevant extract from the Minutes

"161/2024 Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) - A review of the number of councillors, divisions and division names for Somerset Council.

Consideration was given to the Town Council's response to the LGBCE review pertaining to Somerset Council.

Discussion during consideration of this agenda item included

- A further 500 new homes could equate to at least 2000 additional electors
- Should stay as at least 2 Unitary Councillors and 3 should be considered due to the planned housing developments
- By the time any new ward boundaries are introduced the new residential developments will have been started
- Census information is already out of date

- The LGBCE target figure is 4,900 people for each councillor to represent - how is that arrived at?
- North Petherton needs at least 2 councillors at Somerset level to maintain representation for a growing number of residents
- Links to regionalisation and the proposed Heart of Wessex joint authority
- Representation of rural areas can be lost if the criteria for wards is purely based on population figures
- Multi member wards present challenges

RESOLVED that the Town Council's responds to the LGBCE consultation stating

(i) that it believes as the minimum representation for North Petherton should be 2 councillors (as at present) but based on the information provided by the review body the Town Council would favour a 3 member ward due to the increasing population and electorate and

(ii) that the current North Petherton electoral boundaries for Somerset Council should be retained."

Attached Documents:

None attached