**Milton Keynes Green Party**

**Objection to proposed Ward Boundary Changes**

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While we generally support the proposed changes we wish to object to the proposed boundary changes that would place the urban areas of New Bradwell, Oakridge Park and Bradville in the Hanslope & New Bradwell ward, a predominantly rural area of Milton Keynes. This change does not align with the character, demographics, or challenges of the New Bradwell, Oakridge Park and Bradville communities.

The LGBCE report relies on incorrect and unsubstantiated claims by the Lib Dems. The report treats these unsubstantiated and incorrect claims as evidence, which they are not. For these reasons we urge the Commission to reconsider its proposals.

**Urban vs Rural**

New Bradwell is currently part of the Wolverton Ward, an urban area with which it shares numerous similarities, including housing types, socioeconomic demographics, and challenges such as urban infrastructure, community development, and public service needs. This connection provides for cohesive governance and effective representation that reflects the specific needs of residents. Similarly Bradville and Oakridge Park are currently part of Stantonbury ward, another wholly urban ward.

By contrast, the proposed boundary change would place New Bradwell, Oakridge Park and Bradville within a predominantly rural ward. This does not reflect the urban nature of those areas and risks undermining the effective representation of those communities. Rural wards typically face different priorities and challenges, such as agricultural development and dispersed population needs, flooding, rural crime, fly-tipping, which differ markedly from those of an urban environment.

It is quite inappropriate to have a mixture of rural and urban areas, which have such different characteristics and local government priorities, in a single ward.

**History**

New Bradwell’s historical ties to Wolverton Ward foster a sense of community and shared purpose that would be disrupted by the proposed changes. The settlement of New Bradwell was created by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) in 1860s for workers at its Wolverton works, when they ran out of land to expand within Wolverton itself. They built housing, school, church, pubs, etc in New Bradwell to create a new community. Until the coming of the new city of Milton Keynes in 1970s most residents of New Bradwell were employed in the Wolverton works or the neighbouring McCorquodales printing works.

Many residents of New Bradwell, Oakridge Park and Bradville continue to access services, schools, rail station, supermarket and community facilities within the Wolverton area, reinforcing the historical, natural and functional linkages.

**The fictitious community links between New Bradwell and Hanslope**

It is also important to challenge the assertion of an employment link between New Bradwell and Hanslope. There isn’t one, albeit that there may be a handful of residents of New Bradwell who work at His Majesty's Government Communications Centre at Hanslope Park.

This idea originates from the Lib-Dem submission. That stated: “New Bradwell and Hanslope have strong links with the major employer at Hanslope Park, which attracts residents to live locally, so there is a mini community within the area who are well connected by employment, road and other transport links, but who also share similar schools, sports and social areas, so that New Bradwell pairs well with the Hanslope parish.”

There are no such strong links between New Bradwell and Hanslope. There is no significant employment within New Bradwell so there cannot be many Hanslope residents working in New Bradwell. Similarly apart from HMGCC, there is no significant employment within Hanslope so there cannot be many New Bradwell residents working in Hanslope. Very few residents of New Bradwell work at HMGCC, single figures at the most.

Historically the villages of Hanslope, Castlethorpe and Haversham looked more to Wolverton as their nearest market town rather than the village of New Bradwell.

**Transport and Geography**

The Lib-Dem submission claims that there are good transport links between New Bradwell and Hanslope. This is not the case. The transport links are poor. The road route is a series of narrow country lanes with high banks and hedges and no footway. In places it is also winding and steep. So it is inconvenient for drivers and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

There is no regular bus service linking New Bradwell and Hanslope. In January this year a bus service was introduced between Hanslope, Castlethorpe and Haversham and Stantonbury Campus which happens to pass through New Bradwell. However this operates just once per day in each direction and only in term time and it goes the wrong way for anyone in New Bradwell to be able to get to work in Hanslope. So there is no useful bus link between New Bradwell and Hanslope.

**Conclusion**

Although the links between New Bradwell and Hanslope are merely unsubstantiated claims by the Lib Dems the LGBCE report treats them as evidence. In para 44 it states, “while the Liberal Democrats provided evidence of community links between Hanslope and New Bradwell, particularly in regard to employment.” The claim is incorrect. There is no evidence of such community links, because they do not exist. Consequently it should not have been treated as evidence when drawing up new ward boundaries.

We request that the Commission maintain New Bradwell’s alignment with Wolverton Ward or a similarly urban ward that reflects its community’s characteristics and that Oakridge Park and Bradville should also be in an urban ward. We believe this will ensure the continued effective representation and governance of those communities. While we do not have a specific proposal to put forward the commission’s proposal is partly based on a false evidence and so we request that the commission re-assesses its recommendation with that false evidence ignored.