

Sandwell

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Rowley Regis

I endorse the draft proposals put forward by the Local Government Boundary Commission for the Rowley Regis area of Sandwell Council, which shares a border with my ward of Belle Vale on Dudley Council.

I am grateful that the commission has adopted sensible recommendations put forward in the last consultation to ensure all of Cradley Heath is under one ward, as is also the case now for Blackheath and Old Hill too.

As the Rowley Regis area is not actually a town, rather a collection of different towns and areas that have come to be categorised together in more recent times, it can be difficult to fully recognise the local community ties in the area. I feel an approach that respects the actual towns themselves, Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Old Hill, is far better than treating the area as one town under the banner of Rowley Regis and apportioning it as necessary.

On the northern boundary of my ward with Sandwell Council, we have several roads that are clearly most connected with Cradley Heath rather than Blackheath that actually fall under the existing Blackheath ward. These draft proposals resolve that issue and allow the creation of a Cradley Heath only ward, which I advocated for in my initial response to the consultation as this would better preserve the identity of Cradley Heath. These roads all bear Cradley Heath in their address, but presently find themselves in Blackheath ward, which must be confusing for residents as this is counterproductive.

To account for the increase in elector numbers, I welcome the proposal to move Old Hill as a united town into a new ward with Blackheath, along with the Brickhouse Estate. This looks to be a much clearer and more understandable boundary for all of these towns and communities, with local amenities sitting within correct wards and no parts of these areas being excluded from their most logical township partner.

I think the inclusion of the areas around Uplands Avenue and Buckingham Road with the rest of the remaining Rowley ward is in fact a much better solution than my original suggestion of seeing if these could be included in a Langley or Whiteheath ward. These estates all feed into one another and all sit in the shadow of the Rowley Hills, sitting on the southern and eastern slopes of the local landmark.

In summary, I think all of the proposed changes to ward patterns in Rowley Regis achieve the aims of the boundary review. They respect local ties and keeps communities together in the same ward, ensures that local amenities are in the same wards of the communities they serve, they are easy to understand for residents and help elected members represent their electors better. I support the implementation of them in full.

Attached Documents:

None attached