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Review Officer (Bolton),
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England,
PO Box 133.
BLYTH
NE 24 9FE

7 October 2021

Dear Sirs,

I was first elected to serve as councillor for Astley Bridge Ward in 1983 having previously served as a councillor for Halliwell Ward in 1975. To this end I have had considerable involvement in events in and issues concerning Astley Bridge.

The draft proposals cause me considerable concerns. As set out in detail in the response from the Conservative Group the two estates of Whitehill Lane and Templecombe Drive would be detached by direct road access from the proposed ward of South Turton. For ease of reference I attach the extract relating to Astley Bridge so do not propose to further recite the details set out in that response. I do however offer a specific and direct example of how local knowledge is important in serving as a ward councillor. As a member of the Planning Committee when the Templecombe estate was first approved I subsequently raised the planning enforcement issues referred to in the submission.

These conditions clearly confirm that no road links do or can exist between these two estates and the proposed South Turton ward. Further Springfield Road, as a pedestrian and emergency access only, is an unadopted private road serving just the properties on Springfield Road.

Further, only in the past week I have been in discussions with the Borough Solicitor about the status of an area of public open space on a former, now infilled, quarry which was again part of the original approval in 1989, the area was and has been maintained as such as a condition of the s106 agreement. The successor developer is now seeking to develop this area but thanks to my detailed involvement I am able to produce the specific details. A councillor for the proposed South Turton would not have this historic knowledge or records.

This is but one example of similar issues over recent years across the estate. In recent months the sale of marginal land by the subsequent developer resulted in a number of planning applications for development. Again with local knowledge the case for refusal was successful. For ease of reference I attach copies of the relevant correspondence from the Borough Solicitor in 1990 in which a number of the specific planning conditions are referred.

I now address the matter of the area bounded by Andrew Lane and Blackburn Road known as Eagley Bank. This includes Andrew Lane park which is used each year for a number of community event the most important of which is the annual Christmas event around the lighting of the Christmas Tree. This event was instigated over 10 years ago by the three Astley Bridge Councillors who were then instrumental in founding Friends of Astley Bridge to enable the event, including free refreshments, to be self-financing whilst raising large sums for charity. Over the past 10 years many community groups have been involved including Team Eagley Bank, which as the name implies is local to the area. If the area in question ceased to be within Astley Bridge ward this and similar events would not be possible as a similar event is already held in the current Bromley Cross ward at Dunsar War Memorial.

The Christmas event involves all the schools in the current Astley Bridge Ward and whilst school catchment areas may not be material when I deliver boards and collect the finished artwork from each of the schools it is clear that they see themselves as part of Astley Bridge. The attendance by pupils, staff and parents at the tree lighting is clear evidence of the community involvement.

Andrew Lane Park is also the venue during school holidays for organised children's activities funded by Astley Bridge councillors from local funds. The loss of the park would mean that unless new sources of funding are identified children in the area would potentially miss out on such opportunities.

Again led by Astley Bridge ward councillors, Easter displays and events at Andrew Lane park, planters and bulb planting, art displays and Remembrance poppy displays amongst other events organised by Astley bridge councillors and Friends of Astley Bridge involve all the schools and the wider community. In recent months Astley Bridge ward councillors have been involved in public consultation events in the park to ascertain public views on how we might improve the park and usage. Currently a number of funding opportunities have been identified. These would potentially be lost if the area and park were to become part of the proposed South Turton ward.

It is clear to me that the loss of this area would leave a huge void in the opportunities for community activity in the proposed Astley Bridge Ward and to the many residents both remaining in Astley Bridge as well as those transferred to the proposed ward of South Turton.

I cannot argue in such strength for the limited number of residents to the north of Eagley Way which were formerly part of the Eagley Mills prior to conversion and whilst I would be sad to see this area lost to Astley bridge I cannot see a compelling argument in this detail.

To the east the of the proposed Astley Bridge ward, Hall l'th' Wood has no affinity to Astley Bridge. The properties to the east of the railway to Tonge Moor Road have no connection whatsoever relating to either Tonge Moor to the south or for shopping to the supermarket at Harwood in Bradshaw ward and in all probability the proposed Lidl store at Turton Road/Darwen Road in Bromley Cross.

Bus services between Astley Bridge and Hall l'th' Wood are limited to one each hour in each direction. This clearly shows the limited travel needs between the two areas.

Over the period I have served as an Astley Bridge councillor, until Covid 19, I have held a regular surgery at a community centre in Drummond Street, being the only such suitable venue. This is close to the Asda junction of Blackburn Road A666, Belmont Road A675 and Moss Bank Way A 58. This affords easy access to all residents of Astley Bridge whereas residents of the Templecombe, Whitehill and Eagley Bank areas would have no such direct easy access to Bromley Cross in South Turton. Equally

for residents in Hall 'th' Wood, with a much lower level of car ownership, would have no such easy access

I have spoken to many residents of Astley bridge all of whom are opposed to the draft proposals. I have also spoken to a smaller number of residents of the area around and beyond Hall i'th' Wood all of whom concur that they do not consider any links to Astley Bridge. The further east the stronger this view is and in the area east of the railway one resident was positively hostile to the suggestion.

In summary I submit that the Templecombe and Whitehill estates have no direct road connections with the proposed South Turton ward, Eagley Bank and as with Eagley Bank and Andrew Lane park are integral to the community of Astley Bridge ward whereas Hall i'th' Wood has no such connections or affiliations.

I trust this proves helpful in addressing the issues raised by the draft proposals.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Canon Dr John Walsh OBE DUniv(hc)

EXTRACT FROM THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR BOLTON

We begin this critique with two areas we refer to as the Whitehill and Templecombe estates. The former built in the late 1960's and the latter during the late 1990's into the early 2000's. Both estates have vehicular access only from the frontage of Belmont Road A 6. Indeed condition 7 of the planning consent for the Templecombe estate, then known as Springfield Heights in March 1989 specifically states:

- a) *vehicular access to the site for all residents and visitors shall only be from Belmont Road referred to in condition 7; and*
- b) *except for emergency use there shall be no vehicular access to or from the site via Cow Lane, Whitehill House, Springfield Road, Threlkeld Road, Farnborough Road, Kermoor Avenue or Craighall Road.*

This is re-iterated in a letter to the ward councillor from the Borough Solicitor dated 13 March 1990. In a further letter dated 25 June 1990 the Borough Solicitor confirms that as a result of enforcement action commenced the developer confirmed that Farnborough Road was not to be used for vehicular access and an advertisement confirms that the address for Springfield Heights was Belmont Road.

This is important because it means the ONLY vehicular access from the two estates to the proposed South Turton Ward is via Belmont Road, south to Bar Lane, a narrow road, to Blackburn road thence north. A distance of around 2 miles. An alternative route via High View to Sharples Avenue is via a narrow unadopted road passing close to a children's nursery. The final option would be to travel north, leaving the Borough to Belmont, then via a narrow country lane to join the A666 travel south to re-enter the Borough and the proposed South Turton ward, a distance of over 5 miles.

This is clearly at variance with the statement at page 10 of the Bolton Electoral Review Members Briefing that:

Internal access. Recommendations for ward boundaries will normally provide for people to move between all parts of the ward without having to venture outside the ward. This normally means vehicular access by road.

It seems evident therefore that the two estates have no links with the remainder of and has no community of interest with the proposed South Turton Ward.

In terms of pedestrian links the issues are similar. Many of the residents of the Whitehill Lane area are elderly yet the topography of the area makes pedestrian access equally problematic. The hilly nature of the area rising from 149m, 488 ft at Blackburn Road/Springfield Road to 191m, over 620 ft at the vehicle access platform at Templecombe Drive/Belmont Road means that residents see Belmont Road, even with a less frequent bus service and not Blackburn Road, as their normal travel route even with many more bus services along Blackburn Road.

Such poor links would make it far more difficult for an elected member to represent the proposed South Turton Ward. Without access to a car it would be virtually impossible to properly service and represent the entire ward. Pre Coronavirus Astley Bridge councillors held a regular monthly surgery at the Drummond Street Community Centre. This was easily accessed by residents via Belmont Road. As there is no public building or facility in the Templecombe or Whitehill area such a surgery would

not be possible and residents would need to leave the ward to attend a surgery in Bromley Cross by a route described above.

Thus it is that all transport links from these two estates both by car or bus, are via Belmont Road south to Astley Bridge. This serves as the major shopping centre recognised by Bolton Council as a District Centre with stores including Asda, Lidl, The Range and many small local shops such as, butchers and confectioners.

As a District Centre these shops serve much of north Bolton from Heaton in the west to Brightmet in the east, the northern town centre to north beyond beyond the Borough such as Belmont.

Many faiths have places of worship in Astley Bridge including St Paul's CofE, Holy Infant and St Anthony RC, Astley Bridge Baptist, Bank Top United Reform Church and the Pentecostal Church. Residents see these as the natural centre to all of Astley Bridge.

For recreation Astley Bridge Park, Astley Bridge Bowling Club and Bar Lane Bowling Club are all south of these two estates on or accessed from Belmont Road.

There are key issues relating to these areas. For example the speed of traffic on Belmont Road has been a long standing concern to local residents. This affects residents on both sides of Belmont Road and the draft proposals would result in the road being split between two new wards with the Horrocks Fold area to the west being split from these two areas to the east of Belmont Road. Working with residents, Astley Bridge councillors supported by GM Police and Bolton Highways Department have been working to address the problem with speed warning signs and a recent GM Police speed enforcement campaign.

This is seen as a clear indication of the close relationship with Belmont Road as a uniting not dividing line.

It is also noted that the proposed boundary to the rear of properties on Kermoor Avenue and Eastgrove Avenue is not well defined. We note that at paragraph 74 of the proposals describes such a boundary between the existing Tonge with the Haulgh and Darcy Lever with Little Lever wards.

"....the current boundary ... which runs between the properties on Kirkwall Drive and Strawberryhill Road. We do not consider this to be a clear and identifiable boundary...."

The Conservative groups concurs with this assessment.

The electorate of the Whitehill Lane is on the 2020 register is 338 and that of the Templecombe estate 623. The effect of re-uniting these two areas would be to add 961 to Astley Bridge. In addition 339 voters in the remainder of polling district AC of Astley Bridge as set out below would need to be transferred from the proposed South Turton, a total of 1300 as set out below. It is unlikely that any growth will occur in these areas due to development given the nature of the areas.

To the east of Blackburn Road at Eagley Bank a further major issue arises with the proposed transfer of this area to the proposed South Turton Ward.

This area, known as Eagley Bank was traditionally home to workers at Eagley Mills including the Mill Manager, but any such links have been long since broken. Over 50 years ago Bolton Council closed Andrew Lane to through traffic from Eagley Way. Thus the name has historic links but does not have current ties with the Eagley Mills residential complex. All vehicular movement from Eagley Bank has to be south to Astley Bridge via Blackburn Road and the district centre. It would again be necessary for a resident of this area to leave the ward in order to travel by car into the South Turton ward.

The proposed transfer of the area bounded by Blackburn Road, Andrew Lane and Eagley Way would take the heart from the Astley Bridge community.

Andrew Lane Park is the venue for many Astley Bridge events, not least the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting. This event is attended by upwards of 3000 local residents. Organised by the Friends of Astley Bridge and ward councillors the event involves local groups such as Team Eagley Bank, local scouts and all the local schools. As well as supporting these events the schools, High Lawn, The Oaks, Sharples CP, Sharples High, St Pauls CofE, Holy Infants and St Anthony RC, and Thornleigh RC High, as well as Astley Bridge Baptists Sunday School and local nurseries produce artwork, not just at Christmas. Each year paintings and artwork from these are mounted around the Christmas trees at the junction of Blackburn Road and Andrew Lane for Christmas, Easter, Remembrance time and special events such as HM The Queen's Jubilee.

The Christmas event raises funds for many charities and without this area being included in Astley Bridge such an event would not have a venue. Although school catchment areas are not considered as material the simple fact that all the Astley Bridge schools and many voluntary groups come together illustrates the strong community of interest and why this area is a key community within Astley Bridge.

The impact of retaining Eagley Bank in Astley Bridge would be to add a further 369 electors as set out below.

It is accepted that the proposed transfer of the properties to the north of Eagley Way has some logic being closely linked to the Eagley Mills residential development. Wakefield Mews, Threadfold Way, and Bridge Mill are all part of former Eagley Mills complex. The electorate of this area is just 128.

The above sets out the powerful case to support the local community and largely retain the current Astley Bridge Ward as proposed in the initial representations by the Conservative Group. The effect of these proposals would be to add 1669 voters to the draft proposals for Astley Bridge.

Clearly this will have direct consequences for both the proposed Astley Bridge and South Turton wards. We address by proposing that the Crompton ward polling districts of ED and EE be transferred from the proposed Astley Bridge ward to the proposed Halliwell and South Turton wards respectively.

The net effect of these proposals would give an electorate for Astley Bridge of 10295. (see appendix)



BOLTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

Planning & Engineering Services Department

ON ANY REPLY PLEASE QUOTE MY REFERENCE

Maunders Homes (North West) Limited,
Development House,
3 Crofts Bank Road
Urmston,
Manchester

For the attention of Mr. Baker

date	your reference	our reference	enquiries to
2nd February, 1990		DC/PM/KH/ B/33208	Mr. P. Marfleet Extension 6055

Dear Sirs,

SPRINGFIELD HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT, BELMONT ROAD, BOLTON

I refer to your recent telephone conversation with my assistant Mr. Marfleet regarding the use of Farnborough Road for gaining access to the above site.

As you know, I have been in receipt of information recently which suggests that prospective purchasers of dwellings on this site are being advised by sales staff that Farnborough Road is to be a permanently open highway for access to this site. Whilst I can accept your assurance that this is definitely not the case, I trust this situation will be stressed explicitly to those sale staff on the site.

Additionally, it is a fact that there should be no vehicular access of any description via Farnborough Road, but yet it is apparent that this is not the case, particularly at weekends. A barrier should therefore be in evidence at all times to prevent this access, and the Council is of course pursuing enforcement action to effect this end and the service of this enforcement notice is imminent.

Yours faithfully,

A.H. Barritt
Head of Development Control

Ray Jefferson MA MPhil MRTPI Director of Planning & Engineering Services
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Legal and Administrative Services

Councillor J. Walsh,
[REDACTED]

Bolton.
[REDACTED]

date	your reference	our reference	enquiries to
13th March, 1990.		S/NP/KPB/ 82/149	Mrs. Patel, Extension 1109

Dear Councillor Walsh,

DEVELOPMENT BY MAUNDERS HOMES (NORTH WEST) LIMITED AT SPRINGFIELD ROAD/BELMONT ROAD, SPRINGFIELD HEIGHTS, BOLTON

I refer to your inquiry as regards the Enforcement Notice issued in respect of the above mentioned development.

The Enforcement Notice was issued for non-compliance with two planning conditions subject to which planning permission was granted on 20th March, 1989, namely:-

- (a) vehicular access to the site for all residents and visitors shall only be from Belmont Road via the access road referred to in Condition 7; and
- (b) except for emergency use there shall be no vehicular access to or from the site via Cow Lane, Whitehill House, Springfield Road, Threlkeld Road, Farnborough Road, Kermoor Avenue or Craighall Road.

On service of the notice the developer claimed that the planning conditions had been complied with, in that the access road had been created and that no vehicular access was taking place from Farnborough Road or any other road mentioned in the condition; it was claimed that this had been blocked and that access was not possible.

The Borough Solicitor, after having considered the matter, decided that under the Town and Country Planning Legislation it was not expedient to issue the notice as there was no breach of planning control. Further, that if the Council were to persist with the notice then it was more than likely that it would find that ~~at~~ on appeal it would have to pay damages to the developer.

/cont.

The placing of bollards on the development leading to Farnborough Road is not a condition to the planning permission, therefore it is not something that can be enforced by the Council, although this requirement could be laid down as "a step" in order to comply with the notice.

The Council has been assured that the relevant conditions will be complied with and if they are not then the Council will have to consider re-issuing the notice or alternative remedies.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of J.W.G. MacGregor.

J.W.G. MacGregor
Borough Solicitor