

Malvern Hills District Council

Personal Details:

Name: Mick Davies

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:

Comment text:

On 7th September 2021 I responded to the public consultation with these words: - "I am a member of Malvern Hills District Council and of Little Malvern and Welland Parish Council and am making this representation for myself, not expressing the views of either body." In addition to my position as an Independent member of the District Council and as Chair of the Council's policy group on Governance I am also Chair of Trustees of the Malvern Hills Trust (Conservators) who will be making representations on the Draft Recommendations. As a member of the Councils I naturally support the views expressed by those councils in their responses to the consultation and I am very conscious of the legitimate matters raised by the Trust arising from the recommended treatment of parishes and wards particularly in my ward/area. Nevertheless, those legitimate matters can, it seems, be managed and mitigated without compromising the essence of the recommendations as they apply to Morton Ward. My comments are therefore not intended to express or endorse the views of any of the bodies mentioned; they are my own input. I comment hereby only on the recommendations bearing on the wards and parishes in the current Morton Ward and the proposed Welland Ward. The recommendations have responded favourable to the concerns previously expressed about the perceived differences between rural and urban wards and the potential for mixed, multi member wards to be dominated, in electoral terms, by urban populations with urban concerns. My own experience in Morton over seven years is that agendas are inclined to favour, disproportionality, the concerns of parishes with higher population densities and it had demanded a conscious effort to ensure that the smaller communities are not disadvantaged when limited resources are being allocated. It is likely that the residents of Castlemorton and Birtsmorton will feel more kinship with Longdon Parishes than they have with Welland (which has grown 40% in those seven years) or that they would with the residents of Malvern Wells. The recommendations have favoured single member wards, an arrangement understood by many of my present constituents who have not experienced anything else for many decades. Some of those constituents have expressed a strong single member preference based on that understanding. The inclusion of Little Malvern in the recommended Welland ward would seem to be an entirely sensible proposal given the current Parish Council arrangements and the eastwards amalgamation with the Hook does not raise any undue concerns. I am not sure that the Hook is more or less well connected to Welland than to Upton but, other things being equal, they are similarly serviced, of similar density, similar residential and economic character and are directly connected by road irrespective of flood conditions. Notwithstanding the unexpected Malvern Hills Trust difficulties and a preference for preserving the integrity of Parishes, the melding of Upper Welland with the Welland ward responds positively to the need to differentiate the rural/urban character of a ward. All of Upper Welland is within the AONB as is a large part of Welland's housing development and each has a similar housing density within the settlement. Much of the housing stock in both settlements was completed after the middle of the 20th century with the consequential typologies and demographics that suggests. Finally, I would comment that the projected number of electors in the Welland ward provides some headroom in the event of unplanned population growth and that is a good thing. I note that the projected electors per member number for the recommended Welland ward is 8% below the mean for the district; the number of electors being a product of the projected housing supply and population numbers. As has been evidenced in recent years, the parish of Welland has been a rather special case with relation to housing development. It is a Category 1 settlement, destined to provide a share of future housing supply and is particularly vulnerable to speculative planning applications being a desirable place to live on the fringes of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty without the planning restrictions applying within the AONB. There were a dozen housing sites put forward in Welland for the South Worcestershire Development Plan review c. 2023 – 2041 and the promoters will no doubt be pushing those sites. It would be easy to contemplate the arrival of many more than the 98 growth in new voters by 2027 anticipated in the report. The

housing for c. 75 of them is already here, finished, occupied or under construction and planning applications for c.90 new dwellings are in preparation or under consideration right now. They are not in the plan but they may well happen.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded