

Malvern Hills District Council

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Comment text:

My comments are in the document attached below...

Uploaded Documents:

Download (https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1659955278_Untitled+document.docx).

I note that you have amended your original proposals in respect of the Priory (2 member) and Pickersleigh (1 member) wards to put them together into a proposed 3 member ward.

We oppose this suggestion as the two communities are extremely different from each other. My opposition is based on this fundamental difference and unsustainable joining together of totally separate communities.

- Pickersleigh is by a considerable margin the most socially deprived ward in Malvern Hills District with a significant percentage of social housing (much in poor condition) meaning a councillor's knowledge and work needs to be focussed to a large degree on issues of social deprivation and housing. In contrast Priory is one of the most affluent wards in MHDC with a highly educated, older than average and comfortable population concerned about a range of different issues, many of them national. They are two very different communities with no synergy between them. They are hundreds of years apart in age

- In community terms the two wards face differently. Pickersleigh's main retail area is Barnards Green and Malvern Retail Park, while Priory has the focal point of Malvern town centre at its centre.

Geographically the two current wards are both visibly and psychologically divided by the railway line with only a single road crossing (and one pedestrian underpass) linking the two parts of the new proposed ward. This is completely unsustainable. Pickersleigh is flat and on the flat, while Priory sits on the side of the Malvern Hills and indeed reaches to the top of the ridgeline up to 500 feet higher than the bottom of the proposed ward boundary. Hardly anyone would want to, or need to cross this distance on any day except for fitness training! For local people such a proposed ward would not make sense either in terms of forming a coherent community or any criteria in terms of convenience.

Returning to your original proposals would meet the ward size criteria and also fit better with the local communities own perceptions. Please reconsider this specific proposal. At a recent Council Meeting (Tuesday 26th July) councillors from all parties picked up this proposal and agreed that it was unworkable. Please see the recording online.

Cllr Paul Bennett

