

Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

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Comment text:

Having represented the residents of Oakengates, Ketley Bank and the surrounding area for the past 10 years, I have seen the close community connections which are both historic and contemporary. Oakengates and Ketley Bank are intrinsically tied to one another, sharing both community and critical services. Ketley Bank relies on Oakengates for the doctor's surgery and dental services which reside within the main town. The majority of residents in Ketley Bank utilise these services, many also using the direct bus service which ties these two communities tightly together. By contrast, if residents in Ketley Bank were to use the limited services available in Ketley, the bus route would be more complex, with bus users having to travel through Oakengates before they arrived in Ketley. Furthermore, many residents of Ketley Bank, as outlined in the recent consultation held by Telford & Wrekin Council, use Oakengates as one of their main locations for shopping. Oakengates is one of the five original market towns which were amalgamated to create Telford New Town in the 1960s. Oakengates is a natural community and commercial hub for the surrounding residential areas, and thus residents living in these areas are invested in the future of the town and want to continue to have their voice heard as part of the collective of residents which live, shop and love our market town. Many Ketley Bank residents have expressed their disbelief at being separated from Oakengates, having always been a part of this historic mining community, especially because of the family ties which exist in this area. Many local families reside just within the current boundaries of Oakengates and Ketley Bank, and this is demonstrated through the local schools. With two primary schools in the current ward, Queenswood Primary School in Ketley Bank and Wombridge Primary School in Oakengates, the children of Oakengates and Ketley Bank go to school within the ward, with children from Ketley Bank often attending either of these schools, and vice versa. In contrast, Meadows Primary School in Ketley is not seen as a primary school which can serve the communities of Oakengates and Ketley Bank. The picture is similar with secondary school places, with the majority of young people from the current ward of Oakengates and Ketley Bank attending the same school – Telford Priory School. By contrast, secondary-age pupils in Ketley mostly attend Hadley Learning Centre. It would be devastating for Oakengates and Ketley Bank to be separated, having shared a rich heritage together since the Industrial Revolution transformed the local landscape. Furthermore, it is not just nostalgia and tradition which ties these communities together, rather it is the familial links, the shared commercial and health services and the community identity which is celebrated through our shared rich community events programme and through the extensive offer of our community centre which serves both the oldest and youngest residents of Oakengates and Ketley Bank. Oakengates is the location for the community centre which serves the current ward arrangements for this area. It is the place where the wider community can socialise, seek advice and support about their health or employment, or attend a wide range of clubs and activities. The community centre is ran by the Town Council, and we have weekly attendees to our services from right across the ward, including Ketley Bank, Wrockwardine Wood, Trench Lock and Beveley. Our youngest residents and their parents access our Children's Centre whilst our oldest residents attend our weekly senior social activities. In my view, it would be damaging to these community relationships to separate Oakengates from the wider area which it is so intrinsically linked with. Oakengates is also the venue for the local library and the historic Saturday market which are both used by residents from right across the current ward. Aside from the adverse impact the separation of Oakengates from its wider area would have on local residents, it would also be a tragedy for one of the original five market towns to have its representation slashed from three members to one. This would make it the only market town within the borough to not have greater representation. This is essential for ensuring Oakengates, as a market town and high street, achieves the support and recognition it deserves and so desperately needs to survive the current market trends and uncertain future. Wrockwardine Wood and the Holyhurst area is another residential area which leans on and utilises the services provided by the town of

Oakengates. The children who live within this area frequently attend Wombridge Primary School and Telford Priory School, and use the doctors and dental services provided within the town of Oakengates. The road which winds through the residential area of Wrockwardine Wood is one of the key gateways into Oakengates and demonstrates the interconnectedness of this area geographically. Furthermore, the green network also demonstrates how these areas are linked, with Middle Pool serving as a regular dog walking spot and area of natural escape for residents from Oakengates, Wrockwardine Wood and Trench Lock, with a path network which ties these areas closely together. Trench Lock, albeit a newer community, has become very well connected with Oakengates, and again looks towards Oakengates for commercial, health and social needs. Many young families from this area attend the Children's Centre at the community centre in Oakengates, and also utilise the school holiday activities which are held throughout the communities of Oakengates and Ketley Bank. In previous years, the holiday activities have taken place on a rotation in Trench Lock, Oakengates, Ketley Bank and Wrockwardine Wood, further demonstrating how these communities are all connected. Many families in Trench Lock feel that Oakengates is their local community hub. In contrast to the more recent community of Trench Lock, Beveley shares its history with the mining community of Oakengates and Ketley Bank. Beveley is another area which has historically been part of Oakengates – in fact, it is only separated by a road which was created as part of the New Town development. Beveley is part of Oakengates, just as much as we recognise that Wombridge is. Beveley and the Millennium Community do not have any local services like shops or pharmacies, and thus look to Oakengates for these amenities. As a councillor, I want local residents to have the most effective representation possible and I strongly believe that the retention of the community links which exist, and have been mentioned above, achieves what we are all seeking. This representation to the Boundary Committee is made with the families and residents of the current Oakengates and Ketley Bank ward in mind, and I hope that this community can continue to work together as it has so successfully achieved in previous years.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded