

Stratford on Avon District Council

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Organisation Name:

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Comment text:

This review is driven by the premise that the number of District Councillors in Stratford on Avon should be increased from 36 to 41 (an increase of 14%). This would reduce the average population size of a Councillor's Ward from 3,614 to 3,173. (Based on mid 2019 estimates from ONS) My ward (Brailes and Compton), has a current population of 3,325 and is 28th out of 36 in order of size. Unsurprisingly it is one of the larger wards in terms of geographical size given the population density. The increase in the number of District Councillors (+14%) would very much affect the amount of Council Tax that we would all have to pay. Whilst we do need Councillors to represent us and a lack of Councillors is an obvious danger to local democracy, it's worth noting that the average population size of a Councillor's ward in England that I was able to find data for was 3,518 (based on 302 English Councils). Stratford is not out of ordinary when compared with other Councils. Its Councillors have slightly more population than the average, but there seems to be no pressing case to reduce ward size as the current average population size is very close to the national average. Having more Councillors has the implicit implication that the workload for the existing set of Councillors is somehow too high or even unmanageable. How can this be when five of our existing District Councillors also have time to be County Councillors and some can even spare the time to be Town Councillors as well? Maybe if these five gave up their County Council roles, we wouldn't need to increase our District Councillors by, what's that number... oh yes, five. Stratford's case is not justified. There has been talk of a merger with Warwick Council (they have combined on the production of a local plan) and there is of course always the prospect of a Unitary Authority in the near future. Why increase the number of Councillors against this possible dissolution of the existing arrangements? It will be expensive and disruptive. We all have to squish up our wards to accommodate extra councillors when all they need to do to work more efficiently and stop taking on roles in other local authorities. My County Councillor is a Stratford District Councillor and a Shipston Town Councillor. All she has to do is drop the extra roles (and allowances) and we wouldn't need to 'recruit' more Councillors to take on the work. I'm afraid Stratford have not been particularly transparent with the submission to yourselves. Given that this consultation exercise is likely to be just 'window dressing' and my comments above are going to be ignored, I will address the question of ward boundaries given that you will be increasing the Councillors to the unjustifiable number of 41.

[REDACTED] the area known as SW7 (South Warwickshire Seven), is an ecclesiastical set of parishes bound together in one Benefice. It contains the villages of Barcheston (with Willington), Barton on the Heath, Burmington, Cherington (and Stourton), Long Compton, Whichford (and Ascott) and The Wolfords. This is a coherent community with a strong sense of identity that it has been my privilege to serve as Community Magazine editor for the last six and a half years. It is not however the Council Ward of Brailes and Compton. If you want to change boundaries, I would recommend that Barcheston and Burmington are combined with the other villages in SW7 and Brailes is reattached somewhere else. In all likelihood, this would create a smaller ward than Brailes and Compton and would bring the SW7 community together in the same District Council ward. One Councillor, One Vicar, One Magazine, Seven Parishes. Good luck with this somewhat pointless expensive and difficult exercise which in my view is driven by a District Council set upon its own agenda of self-interest and self-preservation.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded