

Worcester

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Comment text:

Related subject: whole City

Worcester Labour Party - Response to Boundary Commission further draft proposals May 2023

Rainbow Hill and Warndon & Gorse Hill

We agree with the proposal that Warndon and Gorse Hill Wards should be merged and that that the Avon Road and Teme Road area should be included in this new merged Ward. In our submission in July 2022 we gave reasons for merging the two Wards and we stand by those reasons.

We are very concerned, however, that this new three member Ward will have poor electoral equality with 12% more electors than the average for Worcester. This is an area of high need with many more residents than appear on the electoral register.

There are a number of ways in which better electoral equality can be achieved. We disagree with your proposal to move Derwent Close, Fairmount Road and Fairmount Close into Rainbow Hill. These roads are very firmly part of Warndon and form part of the local community linked to Fairfield School, the Fairfield Centre and Medical Centre on Carnforth Drive.

We suggest the following:

Move Portefields Road, Maple Avenue, Birch Avenue and Hollymount Road fully into Rainbow Hill. In terms of community identity, these roads

relate to the Rose Avenue area with a local community centre, local shops and Hollymount Primary School, all of which are in Rainbow Hill.

Move all of Tunnel Hill, Troutbeck Drive and Eskdale Close into Rainbow Hill to reflect the Tunnel Hill locality. This creates a strong boundary between Rainbow Hill and Gorse Hill.

Renaming of Warndon and Gorse Hill

We suggest 'Warndon' or 'Warndon and Elbury Mount'.

Renaming of City Centre Ward to Cathedral Ward

We agree that the City Centre Ward should be named Cathedral Ward. The Cathedral is a focal point at the heart of the city, physically and culturally. It is within walking distance of all areas of the Ward as proposed in your draft recommendations in November 2022.

Moving of Woolhope Road and Bolston Road to Battenhall Ward and Cromwell Crescent to Nunnery Ward

We disagree with the proposal to move Woolhope Road and Bolston Road into Battenhall Ward and Cromwell Crescent into Nunnery Ward.

In November you included Woolhope Road and Bolston Road in the new Cathedral Ward. We see no reason to change this. Residents in both roads have the Cathedral by way of backdrop, Fort Royal Park on the doorstep and have excellent walking routes into the city centre a short distance away. In every respect they look to and identify with those living just on the edge of the city centre.

Cromwell Crescent is easily accessed on foot from Cannon Street, Livingstone Street and Cromwell Crescent Lane. It is part of a collection of streets nestled within the boundaries of the railway line and London Road, and with a strong local identity. It makes no sense, in terms of community links, to move Cromwell Crescent into Nunnery Ward.

Move Cranbourne Grove and Lilburne Close to Nunnery Ward

We disagree with this proposal.

There is no road link or vehicle access between Cranbourne Close and Lilburne Close and the rest of the new development. Residents in Cranbourne Close and Lilburne Close exit their homes via Wylds Lane on to London Road or towards the city centre, through Fort Royal Ward. Residents in the new housing on the Crown Packaging development exit using Williamson Road onto Newtown Road, almost all of which main road is part of Nunnery Ward. The two sides of the development have limited contact.

Move Wych Elm Close to Nunnery Ward

We believe that Wych Elm Close should remain in Fort Royal Ward. There is a steep hill separating Wych Elm Close from the rest of Nunnery Ward. Geographically it is closer to streets in Fort Royal Ward than Nunnery Ward.

Proposed changes to boundaries in the South West of Worcester (Bedwardine, St John and St Clement)

We were surprised to see the proposals in the May 2023 further draft proposals, suggesting significant changes to electoral arrangements on the West side of Worcester. Previously you had suggested only very minor changes, accepting in full the City Council's rationale for retaining the existing Ward boundaries in Bedwardine, St John and St Clement.

The arguments you put forward in November 2022 in support of retaining existing electoral arrangements in Bedwardine, St John and St Clement remain valid.

Bedwardine – boundaries are strong and well defined, with the River Severn and city boundary in particular. Pitmaston Park, Christopher Whitehead School and Pitmaston Primary School provide a strong community focus and the Ward is served by good transport links along Malvern Road, Bromwich Road and Bransford Road. Under your November 2022 proposals, there is also good electoral equality.

St John's – the whole of the retail centre of St John's lies within the Ward, and the 'Village in the City' hosts shared community facilities and has a long-established sense of community. Dines Green looks to the St John's centre for shopping and leisure and there are good transport links along Bromyard Road between St John's centre and Dines Green. There are several other aspects of St John Ward as currently configured that aid a strong community identity, namely Laugherne Brook and nature reserve and Mecco Alley and the newly established Mecco Park. Under your May 2023 proposals, these would be split between two new Wards, losing cohesion and the strong sense of community that exists around Laugherne Brook and Mecco Park.

There is also good electoral equality.

St Clement – whilst largely unaffected by the May 2023 proposals, we would point out that the University acts as the focal point for the Ward, generating a large student community, has strong boundaries (including the railway line) and is coherent in terms of natural communities and electoral equality.

On the strength of the arguments you yourselves have made, with which we concur, we would ask that you revert to the November 2022 proposals for Bedwardine, St John and St Clement.

Attached Documents:

None attached