

Walsall

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Organisation Name: I am a Councillor in Bloxwich West (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Bloxwich

As a local councillor in Bloxwich, I have considered the draft proposal affecting the area and disagree with it for a number of reasons. Under the draft proposal, the west of Stafford Road moves into Bloxwich East. This is a bad decision and not in the spirit of community identity in the area.

The current East / West boundary has a strong, consistent and identifiable boundary that runs from the bottom of the High Street to the top of Stafford Road. The draft proposal, however, distorts this boundary in an illogical way, cutting a chunk out of Stafford Road and making the distinction between East and West unclear. The boundary should be continuous and clear from the bottom of the High Street to the top of Stafford Road.

Importantly, the west of Stafford Road - which includes Enderley Road, Beechwood Close, Lydford Road and Dukes Grove - borders King George V Playing Fields (KGV park) and forms a natural community with the other streets that border KGV, namely: Bealey's Lane, Bell Lane, Stamping Way estate, and the Turnberry estate which includes Haverhill, Belfry and Troon. All of these streets form a common community opening on to a significant public facility - KGV park - and should therefore all be in the same ward: Bloxwich West.

The Bloxwich West community is enhanced by the continuous, uninterrupted walkways that exist throughout the Turnberry estate and the west of Stafford Road, revolving around the park. There is a popular walkway that is accessed from Stafford Road, leading directly to Hoylake Close, Muirfield Close and Enville Close and onwards to KGV. This indicates an identifiable self-contained community with shared green space that residents on the Turnberry and the west of Stafford Road can access without crossing the busy main road into Bloxwich East.

Under the new proposals, whilst KGV of course remains in Bloxwich West, its entrance would fall into Bloxwich East. William Wiggin Avenue is the entrance to KGV on Stafford Road and under the new proposals its junction falls into Bloxwich East - this is illogical and not in keeping with an identifiable boundary. Similarly, Bloxwich Stafford Road Sports Club is a popular facility that sits in the grounds on KGV, and is retained in Bloxwich West, whereas its entrance is a private road on Stafford Road which would be in Bloxwich East - which again seems illogical.

Many houses on Lydford, Enderley, and the west of Stafford Road back directly onto KGV and have back gardens with gates that open onto the park itself. It seems odd that, under new proposals, one side of the garden gate would be Bloxwich East and the other side would be Bloxwich West. Many of these residents have interests that are directly relevant to the adjacent public land, including the trees that overhang their properties, security concerns and green belt issues. These residents should continue to be represented in one ward by Bloxwich West councillors.

The common interests of these park communities, including the west of Stafford Road, are reflected by community groups, including the Friends of King George's Park - a new and growing group largely made up of residents who live around the park and are interested in the investments and improvements being made there. The residents living on the west of Stafford Road also use other facilities in their Bloxwich West ward; including shops on Turnberry, such as the Co-op and One Man and His Dog pub. Their interests are best represented by Bloxwich West councillors.

In the interests of Electoral Equality, the retention of the west of Stafford road in Bloxwich West would still mean the ward would be well within the permitted variance from average. Bloxwich East will benefit from the inclusion of new developments taking place within its current boundary at Yieldfields Farm and on its Blakenall border to increase its electorate.

The draft proposals also suggest the transfer of Irvine Road, Nursery Road, Somerfield Road, Reeves Street, Stuart Street and Stokes Street from Bloxwich East into Bloxwich West. These would more naturally fit into Birchills Leamore ward as a continuation of the community around Odell Road Playing Fields; and it would help to balance the ward's -10% "variance from average".

Attached Documents:

None attached