

Walsall

Personal Details:

Name: Miss Amandeep Garcha

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Short Heath

1. I thank the Local Government Boundary Commission for their draft proposals for Walsall. As a local councillor for Short Heath, I wish to comment on the proposals for the ward I represent. I would also like to thank the Boundary Commission for acknowledging the comments I made and the community evidence I provided.
2. Although the Commission has adopted a suggestion made by a local resident to incorporate Clarkes Lane and the Honeybourne Way and Durham Avenue Estates, as well as Slater Street, I believe this is the wrong direction to take as it would damage the identity of the Short Heath community which is very distinct from the Willenhall Community.
3. The old railway between Willenhall and Short Heath is clear and has separated the two areas for a long time.
4. As a result, I think the ward boundary should move eastwards into Bentley as there are closer links between these areas and less physical barriers between the two.
5. I am glad to see the recommendation to move Overdale Drive and other streets into Short Heath. The boundary should be moved further up to Granbourne Road to include the houses in between. These areas all share a connection to Stroud Avenue and Short Heath.
6. The Stroud Avenue area was built at the same time as Poplar Avenue, Overdale Drive and Granbourne Road, as Short Heath expanded in the 20th Century.
7. Children from these areas attend local schools such as Willenhall E-ACT Academy, Rosedale Infant School, Short Heath Junior School and Lodge Farm Primary School
8. Many residents use the Stroud Avenue Shops and High Road shops as their local centre.
9. The Stroud Medical Practice also shares an identity with Stroud Avenue, linking the areas together.

10. Granbourne Road is a clear and commonly used connection between the two areas and breaks the formal railway line for access.
11. All these areas once made up one ward before Local Government reorganisation in the 1970s. The modern-day parts of Bentley were once part of Short Heath. Further information can be seen here (<https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/reg/districts/walsall.html>) of changes between the parishes of Short Heath and Bentley which shows that these two areas have always been significantly tied.
12. Willenhall Gurdwara on Walsall Road should stay in the Willenhall Ward as this is an important worship centre for Sikh Community in Willenhall.
13. I strongly agree with the Boundary Commission's proposals for the northern boundary between New Invention and Short Heath, and I am pleased that the Commission has chosen to maintain the current boundary between New Invention and Short Heath, down Coltham Road, Wood Lane and the Wyrley and Essington Canal. The New Invention and Short Heath Communities have separate identities. I would like to reiterate the comments that I and Cllr Josh Whitehouse made in the first phase of the consultation on this boundary, and I am pleased that the Commission have agreed with this.
14. Further to this, we strongly support the distinction that has been made on the southwestern boundary between Willenhall and Short Heath and the recognition that Five Fields acts as a strong natural boundary for both communities.

Proposals for Boundary Line

15. I would argue that the new boundary for Short Heath should be as set out below. I have included maps to show how the new boundary should look and to demonstrate the alterations that I have made.
16. The current northern boundary between New Invention/Willenhall North and Short Heath should be maintained in its entirety, as the Boundary Commission have proposed.
17. The current southwestern boundary along Five Fields and the rear of properties on Fibbersley and Thorne Road etc should be maintained in its entirety, as the Boundary Commission have proposed.
18. The eastern boundary with the M6 Motorway (and the Birchills-Leamore Ward) should be maintained in its entirety, as the Boundary Commission have proposed.
19. The Southern Proposed Boundary on Clarkes Lane etc should be changed to follow the old railway line to the north of Durham Avenue, Slater Street and Honeybourne Way in the Willenhall/Willenhall South Ward. Farmbridge Close and Farmbridge Way (north of the old railway line) should be moved to Short Heath Ward.
20. To promote electoral balance and create consistency, both sides of Western Avenue should be moved into the Short Heath Ward. This would involve moving properties on the north side of Western Avenue from the current Bentley and Darlaston Ward to the Short Heath Ward, as well as Glenhurst Close.
21. Many of the streets in this particular area share names with streets in other parts of Short Heath, e.g. Linden Lane/Linden Close, again showing the connections between these areas.
22. The Commission have already proposed incorporating Overdale Drive and surrounding Streets into Short Heath, so it would make sense to

incorporate the streets on the other side of Western Avenue. There is no clear boundary between these two sides.

23. Poplar Avenue, from the junction with Western Avenue to the junction of Granbourne Road should be moved to the Short Heath Ward due to close local connections and amenities and the natural link on Granbourne Road as I have described above.

24. Silverstone Close, Leyburn Close, Condoover Close and Faversham Close should all be moved into the Short Heath Ward from the Bentley and Darlaston North Ward.

25. There is a gap in the houses and an alleyway on Poplar Avenue just before the junction with Monmouth Road which would act as a natural break between the two wards.

26. Bentley West Playing Field is a natural boundary between these new suggested parts of the Short Heath Ward and the Bentley area.

27. All of these areas are served by the 41 bus route which again connects these areas well.

28. I also believe that these suggestions work well statistically. Under the Boundary Commission's initial proposals, the variance for the Willenhall Ward is 6% above the average, meaning that some areas can be put back into this ward from the proposed Short Heath Ward. The Short Heath Ward is 1% above the variance meaning that it does not have to take on as many electors as proposed. The Bentley and Darlaston Ward is -4% from the variance, meaning that some electors can be moved to the Short Heath Ward. This means that all three wards would still meet the Commission's need for electoral balance.

29. If the Commission need to further decrease the size of the Willenhall Ward, I would argue that the Coronation Avenue and Riverbank areas should be moved to the Bentley and Darlaston North Ward as these have far greater connections to the Bentley area than to Short Heath or Willenhall, along Wolverhampton Road West.

Attached Documents:

- boundary-proposal-short-heath.docx

Local Government Boundary Review – Walsall MBC

Short Heath Ward Response – Cllr Amandeep Garcha

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Maps of my proposals

