

Walsall

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Comment text:

Related subject: ward: Short Heath

Local Government Boundary Review – Walsall MBC
Short Heath Ward Response – Cllr Poonam Gill

1. I thank the Local Government Boundary Commission for their draft proposals for Walsall. As a local councillor for Short Heath, I would like to comment on the proposals for the ward I represent.
2. Although the Commission has followed a local resident's idea to include Clarkes Lane and the Honeybourne Way and Durham Avenue Estates, as well as Slater Street in Short Heath, I think this is not the right course of action to follow.
3. The old railway between Willenhall and Short Heath is clear and has separated the two areas for a long time and separates the two community identities.
4. Short Heath should move eastwards into Bentley and Darlaston North as there are closer links between these areas.
5. I support the recommendation to move Overdale Drive and other streets into Short Heath. The boundary should include Granbourne Road and include the houses in between. These areas all share a connection to Stroud Avenue and Short Heath.
6. Children from these areas go to local schools such as Willenhall E-act Academy, Lodge Farm School, Rosedale School and Short Heath Junior School
7. Many residents use the Stroud Avenue Shops and High Road shops as their local shopping areas.
8. Granbourne Road is a clear connection used to link the two areas over the old railway line.
9. These areas and Short Heath used to be one ward before Local Government changes 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 tied.

10. I strongly support with the 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.

11. 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.

Proposals for Boundaries

12. 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.

13. The current northern boundary between New Invention/Willenhall North and Short Heath should be maintained in its entirety, as the Boundary Commission have proposed.

14. 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.

15. The eastern boundary with the M6 Motorway (and the Birchills-Leamore Ward) should be maintained in its entirety, as the Boundary Commission have proposed.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

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

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

25. 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.

26. 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.

Please find attached maps of my proposals.

Attached Documents:

- maps-of-my-proposals---short-heath-ward---boundary-review-2024.docx

Maps of my proposals

