

# Swindon

## Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Postcode: [REDACTED]  
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Covingham and Dorcan Ward

I question the decision that the number of Ward Councillors will continue to be 57. Using the Localism Act 2011, Parish Councils were created across the whole Borough in 2017 with the premise that the parish councils could use the right to express an interest in taking over the running of a local authority service. Grounds Maintenance, e.g. grass cutting, hedge cutting, etc., litter picking, drug paraphernalia removal, litter bin and dog bin emptying, graffiti removal, small fly tipping, play ground safety and maintenance of areas, road sweeping, minor tree works up to a height of six foot and miscellaneous small minor works were forcibly transferred to the parish councils to reduce the financial burden on the Borough Council. Whilst this has been welcomed by some and in places the improvements are clear to see, this has not been the case Borough wide. What this has created is another level of bureaucracy for the residents to navigate and additional costs to the council tax payers. The residents are unclear about who to contact with a question or complaint as it was not adequately publicised that the responsibility for providing such services had been passed to the parish councils. With the significant reduction in Ward Councillor responsibilities due to the transfer of these services, it would suggest that the number of 'seats' on the Borough Council could, and should, be reduced accordingly. Several of the newly created Parish councils are being run as what can only be described as 'mini Borough' councils, often with Ward Councillors as Parish Councillors in positions of authority and control, who do not understand or respect the legal framework that Parish Councils are governed by. Furthermore, this must also be a conflict of interest as what might be correct for the Borough Council could have an adverse effect on the Parish Council and vice versa. What the Localism Act also promoted was the sense of place, enabling residents to have pride in the area that they live, to protect and celebrate their distinct identity and have influence over local decisions. Some areas in Swindon have artificially divided residential areas where the same postal area or named estate is split across more than one ward, which have differing values as to the level of service provided and a variation in

costs payable which is divisive and difficult for the residents to understand. Covingham, where I live, is in a favourable position in that the whole area is in Dorcan and Covingham Ward whereas small parts of Coleview and Liden are included to make up the number of residents. Every effort should be made to avoid splitting a discrete residential area, thereby ensuring consistency, quality and financial equality across the area and facilitating the protection of its distinct identity.

## **Attached Documents:**

*None attached*