

Wakefield

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Comment text:

As the three councillors for the current Central Castleford and Glasshoughton ward, we wish to make a submission to the 'Draft Recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Wakefield Council – May 2024'. We believe our proposals represent an alternative which better meets the three main considerations which the Boundary Commission uses to guide its work and proposals.

Ensuring that the recommendations 'reflect community identity'

1. The proposal to include part of Cutsyke in the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward results in the splitting of an existing well-defined community.
2. It is said that the electors living in "03NE, 03NH and 03NJ" view themselves as living in Glasshoughton. We take the view, based on personal experience, that this is an assertion that cannot be sustained and that electoral boundaries should not be based on such conjectural evidence.

Our Proposal

We think that our proposal meets the local Government's Boundary Commission's aim to 'reflect community identity' and also the key aim of the Boundary Commission to achieve 'Electoral Equality for Equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents' within 10% of being exactly equal

The draft proposals identify 1395 (plus an estimate of 156 electors for Housing Commitments) electors being moved from Altofts Whitwood into

Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward.

As we have stated above, this involved the splitting of the Cutsyke community. Our proposals will avoid this. We propose moving the Half Acres area (03NH and 03NI) into the Central Castleford and Glasshoughton Ward and this would mean transferring some 2020 electors).

Reasons for suggesting this move

1. The current boundary of Beancroft Road / Barnes Road, which divides the current two wards, is an arbitrary one that splits rather than recognise a community, i.e. Half Acres, Smawthorne and Roundhill
2. The residents of Half Acres share schools, social clubs, doctors' surgeries, local shopping facilities on Beancroft Road / Smawthorne Avenue and play areas and parks with residents of Roundhill (04PH) and Smawthorne (04NB). Anyone walking the area would have great difficulty in seeing the logic of this community presently being split, as it is currently for electoral purposes.
3. As the residents of the Half Acres area consider they live only a short walk from the Town Centre, with its shops, rail and bus station and their connectivity with Castleford far outweighs any connection with Altofts, we would maintain these residents are firmly part of 'central Castleford' and its urban historical core.
4. At the moment the fire, ambulance and police services are on the very boundary with Castleford Central and Glasshoughton. We maintain that this is an anomaly that the Boundary Commission can finally address. By adopting our proposals these services will be located in the Central Castleford Ward along with the bus and rail stations and library. Castleford Central is the "urban core" of the town and should contain within its boundaries these facilities. We maintain including Half Acres in the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward would add to the cohesion of the town.

The Boundary Commission for Local Government aims to 'try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards'.

We think our proposals address the anomaly of the Half Acres area not currently being a logical part of the Central Castleford and Glasshoughton Ward and the fact that Beancroft Road / Barnes Road is such a poor identifiable boundary which splits an existing community in an arbitrary manner.

Including the two current polling districts covering Half Acres into the newly constituted Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward, would give the new Ward clear and identifiable boundaries, e.g. Aketon Road and the relevant active and inactive railway lines.

The Commission may be interested to know that decade ago a marker sign was put up at the junction of High Oxford Street with High Street. It marked where "Castleford" started. This further reinforces our argument that Half Acres is recognised as part of Central Castleford.

Another aim of the Boundary Commission 'is providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government'.

Our proposals to include the Half Acres area in a newly constituted Central Castleford and Glasshoughton Ward will help the more efficient delivery of local government. Half Acres, like its neighbour, the Smawthorne area is now being subjected to large scale development of House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). This is requiring a coherent response from local government to address the issues that affect our local community. By recognising the area as one community, contained within one ward, the council will be able to be more responsive to expected changes in legislation concerning the issues.

Government fund schemes for 'town centre regeneration' have been secured and it would assist greatly if we had a truly coherent 'Castleford Central Ward'. Inclusion of the Half Acres area in that ward would be a logical and helpful step.

We submit these proposals for consideration by the Local Government Boundary Commission and recognise that the Commission tasks itself with 'striking a balance' between the three 'considerations' it uses to guide its work and shape its recommendation. We genuinely believe our proposal to include the Half Acres area in a newly constituted Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward will help it to effectively strike such a balance.

Councillor Denise Jeffery, Councillor Richard Forster, Councillor Tony Wallis
Elected Members Castleford Central and Glasshoughton.

Attached Documents:

None attached