

Bradford

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: Bingley Town Council (Parish or town councillor)

Comment text:

To whom it concern,

Please see attached a letter on behalf of all three Bingley Ward District Councillors, which is our collective submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) consultation on its further draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements in the areas of Baildon, Bingley Rural, Bingley and Shipley.

Please can you confirm receipt.

Kind Regards,

Cllr Joe Wheatley
Bingley Ward Councillor (Labour)

[REDACTED]

Attached Documents:

- lgbce-submission---bingley-ward-district-councillors.pdf

Bingley Ward District Councillors

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) consultation on its further draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements in the areas of Baildon, Bingley Rural, Bingley and Shipley.

As the elected District Councillors for the Bingley Ward, we are writing to submit our **objection** to the latest LGBCE proposals.

We spent several months working within our group to identify the best possible boundary change for our ward and the constituency. The option that caused the least disruption was moving the designated section of the Eldwick into Baildon. The section we proposed moving included the pub, post office, church and recreational ground, all of which would be represented by the new Eldwick & Baildon Ward Councillors. Amenities on the doorstep of residents that would (as per our original proposal) likewise share the same representatives (the basis for this comment is expanded within point 2 below). Likewise, the section we proposed to retain in the Bingley Ward included all the properties adjacent to the Prince of Wales Park and had immediate and adjacent boundaries with Lady Lane polling district and the Gilstead polling district.

The issue with the current proposal (largely adopted from the Baildon Town Council proposal) is multi-factored. The primary points of concern are:

1. The proposed change would draw a boundary straight down a town that is linked by history, character, as well as access to shared amenities and interests (e.g. shops, parks, theatres, art centres, etc).

In terms of impact, the residents of the proposed Bingley East Ward for example would not have elected representatives responsible for the amenities and services they are readily able to access from their front door (e.g. Myrtle Park, Bingley Arts Centre, etc), and that form part of the community they identify with.

Ward Councillors as a matter of custom & practice are the first to receive and have priority comment on grants or planning applications that would impact their ward. In fact, the Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) Constitution (part 4B, s10.1) specifically outlines the right of ward members to speak on planning applications:

“All Council members have the right to make written comments on an application and attend meetings of the Committee and the Bradford, Shipley & Keighley Area Planning Panels. Ward members also have the right to speak. Other members (subject to any issues concerning the need to declare an interest and not participate as discussed elsewhere in this Code) who have indicated that they wish to make representations on behalf of supporters or objectors may speak at the discretion of the chair and in line with procedures drawn up by the Strategic Director Place in consultation with the chair.”

So, even if a planning application might readily impact the residents of either Bingley East or West, only the Ward Councillors for the area where the planning application was

made would have a direct right to speak at the planning panel.

2. There are clear administrative issues that would arise from the proposed changes, relevant to the LGBCE's consideration to statutory criteria 2 and 3:

As Bingley Ward Councillors, we are working together on a number of projects that span our ward. Through the meetings we have organised our community network has been significantly strengthened and is giving rise to strong inter-community support, activities and projects.

Bingley Ward has a very clear geographical, social and community cohesion with current representation and BMDC organisation that enables us to pick up and respond to local issues quickly and effectively, and to support our residents, the suggestion to break that up would be destructive of our natural and successful community cohesion.

The proposed boundary changes would make this example a living reality on day-to-day issues. To put this into a simpler scenario: residents in Bingley East could raise concerns regarding potholes in the pavement at Myrtle Park in Bingley West. Bingley West Councillors could ignore the issue (it's not their residents complaining) and Bingley East Councillors would very likely be deterred from interfering in an amenity outside their elected ward boundary (as it's a local ward issue, not a district wide issue).

(A list of the community groups/organisations we work with and comprise the social and community make-up of our existing ward is provided within appendix 1 below).

3. Since 1898, the villages bordering Bingley Town to the west have deliberately sought to ensure they were represented by elected officials advocating the interests of village communities, so their interests would not be overlooked by a town centric focus. This proposal would undermine the historic and contemporary arguments that ensure the interests of the outer villages (Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth and Cottingley) are represented by elected officials rooted and focused on village concerns rather than inner town interests. Likewise, the residents of Bingley Town have sought to ensure they are represented by elected officials that articulate and reflect the town's interests within the wider district.
4. Community connection and cohesion would be undermined. The Parish of Holy Trinity in Bingley and Gilstead would be split between the newly created wards. Many of the community groups (provided separately) are spread across the community and would be split across the newly created wards.

The proposed boundary also ignores Bingley Town's historic identity and disregards the many local community groups that work within and cooperate across the town. This proposal would be akin to putting a boundary in the middle of Baildon high street separating a core community into two.

It should be noted that all other core towns within the Bradford Metropolitan District sit within one ward, not two. This proposed boundary change would draw a line right through the heart of the town.

5. The proposed changes were submitted by a single Town Council within the Shipley Constituency with no reference to wider community consultation. It is a very ward-centric proposal that seeks to reinstate its' historic boundaries at the expense and disregard of the historic boundaries, community interests and community identities of the three other local wards.

We understand that all boundary reviews are difficult and perfect solutions are rarely ever identified. So, the goal is to identify the option that meets statutory criteria 1 but results in the least disruption with regards to statutory criteria 2 and 3.

For the reasons outlined above, we are submitting our **objection to the current proposal** and **support the previous proposal** recommended by the LGBCE to move a section of Eldwick into Baildon, with an amendment, that amendment is as follows:

Extend the proposed Eldwick & Baildon boundary to include the following streets:
Southway, Moor Croft and Stone Hill. This would mean that Warren Lane would become the clear boundary between Bingley Ward and Eldwick & Baildon Ward.

Kind Regards,

Cllr Joe Wheatley, Bingley Ward
Cllr Marcus Dearden, Bingley Ward
Cllr Susan Fricker, Bingley Ward

APPENDIX 1

Gilstead Village Society

Crossflatts Village Society

Bingley Arts Centre

Bingley Music Town

WI 5 Rise Frocks

Bingley Music Town

Friends of Prince of Wales Park

Bingley Local History Society

Friends of Myrtle Park

Jerr Wood Action Group

Bingley Camera Club

Bingley Walkers Are Welcome