

Swindon

Personal Details:

Name: Mr John Firmin
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Parish or town councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Swindon South

I am not revising my previous proposal for new Borough wards but add the following observations on the draft recommendations put forward following the initial consultation. These are my personal views and South Swindon Parish, on which I serve, will respond separately.

Walcot – current Walcot & Park North Ward

The different treatment of Drakes Way and Queens Drive in deciding which options are acceptable for pairing with Walcot East is not really explained. Both are dual carriageways. There is a very longstanding pairing of Walcot East and Walcot West in the same ward and no justification is given for the only option considered now being the linking of East Walcot with Shrivenham Road and Broadgreen. I am not sure the impact of the Upham Road bus gate, at the Queens Drive end, has been properly considered. This means that the large majority of Walcot West traffic exits onto Drove Road rather than Queens Drive with only residents on Queens Drive itself exiting that way.

Broadgreen – current Central Ward

The removal of the housing near the bus station from the same ward as the rest of Broadgreen means that this block of voters is removed from their natural grouping, using services on Manchester Road. Both Station Road and Manchester Road continue from Corporation Street towards Wellington Street. Wellington Street, rather than Corporation Street, forms the natural end of the terraced housing. The area from Wellington Street toward GWR Park forms a new area of mainly flats leading towards the Railway Village.

The Railway Village – current Central Ward

The Railway Village's proposed split at Emlyn Square divides an area that is part of The Works/Heritage Action Zone area between the Queen's Park and Kingshill & Okus wards. There are distinct issues with maintaining historically important housing, and several current and future projects, around Emlyn Square which require a single ward perspective as the issues are common.

The Kingshill & Okus designation of a proposed ward indicates an area ending at the Westcott Place/ Kingshill/ Wootton Bassett Road roundabout and not bending further around toward GWR Park & Emlyn Square in one direction and into Rushey Platt the other way. There is no need for a ward of this unusual shape as per alternatives, which meet required voter numbers, set out in proposals put to you by me and others.

Old Town – current Old Town Ward.

Currently the business area of Old Town is split between Old Town and Eastcott wards. The current proposed warding proposes a three-way split between Queen's Park, Croft & Lawn and Kingshill & Okus. No justification is given as to why Wood Street and areas at either end should be separated between three wards. There are different views as to what constitutes the full extent of Old Town, some of which exceed the maximum number of voters for a three-member ward, but there are better options that at least maintain no more than a two-ward solution.

Meadow Way – current RWE polling district in Ridgeway Ward.

I do not follow the argument for putting one small area east of the A419 into the Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden ward. This area has existed in the Ridgeway ward while being part of South Swindon Parish and this situation should continue with Meadow Way being in the more rural ward beyond the A419.

My understanding is that these residents more often vote at Liddington rather than Badbury Park, including at the recent General Election. I understand the link between Day House Lane and Meadow Way is now blocked to traffic.

South Swindon Parish Warding

The proposed re-warding of South Swindon Parish is inconsistent in representing equal numbers of voters. I support Parish wards matching Borough wards given current and potential layering of services between the two levels of council. The one exception, which I understand you must make under your rules, is for Badbury Park to stand alone as a one-member ward given it is in a proposed Borough ward with parts of another Parish. This principle of matching Parish and Borough ward boundaries should be followed for any revised ward proposals you put forward.

Based on the current twenty three councillors on South Swindon Parish the division would be as follows.

Broadgreen & East Walcot Five Parish Councillors

Croft & Lawn Four Parish Councillors

Kingshill & Okus Five Parish Councillors

Parks Four Parish Councillors

Queen's Park Four Parish Councillors

Badbury Park One Parish Councillor

Attached Documents:

None attached