

# Wirral

## Personal Details:

**Name:** Mr Pat Cleary

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Postcode:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation Name:** na (District or county councillor)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** All Birkenhead wards (Birkenhead & Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Prenton, Bebington, Claughton, Oxtown, Bidston & St James) , Bromborough, Hoylake & Meols, West Kirby & Thurstaston, Heswall, Greasby, Frankby & Irby

I offer the following observations which I hope will inform the Commission's work.

As a general point I would say that the change to the local election cycle in Wirral and the flexibility provided by the potential for 1, 2 and 3-member wards offers an opportunity to address some of the inadequacies of the current 3-member only arrangement and create more coherent ward boundaries that better reflect the physical and social geography of Wirral. This in turn should help facilitate more effective local government.

Birkenhead wards. I have the following suggestions for the greater Birkenhead area plus Bromborough.

Create a ward that reflects the key landmarks within the town of Birkenhead. The current Birkenhead and Tranmere ward excludes part of the town centre shopping area along Grange Road West as well as the key heritage asset of Birkenhead Park. A new ward should include the above and retain the town's other landmarks – Hamilton Square and Woodside, the full town centre shopping areas along Grange Road/Conway Street/Argyle Street and Oxtown Road, Birkenhead Central Library, the emerging town centre linked settlement known as Hind Street (between Birkenhead Central and Green Lane train stations). Having all these key sites in one ward will help streamline the council's regeneration programme, most of which is centred on Birkenhead.

Create a new ward reflecting the full geography of Tranmere. At the moment, much of Tranmere is in Rock Ferry ward. In particular, the

community between Mersey Park and Victoria Park is fractured by this arrangement. A new border could run along the Old Chester Road or preferably extend down to the Mersey shore.

Rock Ferry ward is currently much bigger than Rock Ferry itself. It has been rather clumsily drawn up to achieve a sufficient electorate for 3-members. As already stated, parts should be switched to a new Tranmere ward. Other streets between Bebington Road and Borough Road would be better off in Prenton or Bebington wards while the streets near The Oval leisure centre are a higher income area that would sit better within Bebington ward. The Rock Ferry area has far more in common with New Ferry and putting them together in one ward would make for a more cohesive ward. New Ferry would benefit from being in an identifiably Birkenhead ward. Housing growth means Bromborough could possibly lose New Ferry and still be large enough for 3-members.

I would strongly favour breaking up the current Claughton ward. There is a wide social disparity between the area close to the town centre and the Noctorum area. Noctorum should be its own ward and could take some streets from the current Oxton ward as well as Claughton. The Claughton ward boundary could be extended into Bidston and St James and contracted slightly to facilitate a new ward for Birkenhead town centre. The Oxton ward as currently defined is significantly larger than Oxton itself. This broader area of Oxton, Claughton and Noctorum is one which would benefit from smaller wards more clearly aligned to actual communities.

Non-Birkenhead wards: There are a few stand out issues with the current ward boundaries which should be addressed either by shifting borders or creating some smaller wards.

The town of West Kirby is split in half at the moment. This is very confusing for people and should clearly change given the flexibility to amend ward sizes. Also Thurstaston is closer to and more connected with Heswall than West Kirby.

Finally, Greasby with Irby is not an ideal arrangement. Irby is closer to and better aligned with Pensby. Perhaps Greasby could be a 2-member ward?

I have attached these comments as a pdf file which includes bold text that may be helpful.

## **Attached Documents:**

- boundary-commission-consultation-comments.pdf

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