

Somerset

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: (Parish or town councillor)

Comment text:

The Somerset Council places much importance on community engagement through the Local Community Networks. Unitary Councillors are the channel through which this engagement is communicated to the authority. However, each councillor is currently spread across multiple LCNs thereby diluting the concerns and aspirations of the residents within each LCN. The reshaping of the Wards/Divisions creates the potential to strengthen direct representation by aligning the Councillors with LCNs. This would lead to a stronger reporting and function line from resident to Parish Council to LCN to Unitary Councillor to the Unitary Authority.

The Dowsborough LCN within which my Parish Council is a member, is a community with strong common interests and concerns. Yet it is proposed to split this into different groupings, not all sharing the same community priorities. Currently we have in common:

- (a) the dependency on one busy transport link, the A39
- (b) the influx of workers and their transport system for the Hinkley Point C construction
- (c) the very rural nature of the LCN and the lack of a major urban conurbation within it
- (d) a high dependency on tourism for local employment

The proposal put forward does not strengthen the focus of the Unitary Councillor, rather it weakens the representation of priorities by spreading the councillor's efforts across multiple LCNs. With this review we can functionally align councillors to the current LCN structure making for stronger representation and engagement.

Attached Documents:

None attached