North Somerset

Personal Details:

Name: Cllr Mike Dunn
Email: [redacted]
Postcode: [redacted]
Organisation Name: North Somerset Council (Councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Rural east - Wraxall

As a ward councillor for Long Ashton I want to raise concerns about the proposed move of The Elms, Wraxall, from Long Ashton ward into Nailsea Golden Valley ward.

I disagree with the panel's suggestion that residents of The Elms do not see themselves as being part of Wraxall. They very much do. I've recently knocked on a number of residents' doors and this is regularly the first local issue that people raise - it's extremely important and salient to the people who'd be affected. They look across the moor towards the rest of Wraxall (Temperance House, Wraxall Primary, Millennium Green play park, and the Cross Tree Centre) as the core of their village, not 'back' towards Nailsea town centre. This is not something that can be understood by looking at a map or walking around the area - it's important to speak to the people who live there too. Elms residents made clear to North Somerset Council during the Community Governance Review that they were part of Wraxall & Failand not Nailsea, and North Somerset Council agreed with this local knowledge and feedback. Ward and parish councillors do too. I'm concerned that a review of a map would override the voices and lived experience of residents.

Secondly, I have major concerns about the democratic deficit these proposals will create for residents in the Elms, and the connected costs for North Somerset Council. Residents would remain in Wraxall & Failand at a parish council level, but will be moved into Nailsea at a district council level. This means they'd be considered as Nailsea residents by North Somerset Council and their ward councillor, but would have no representation at, or recourse to, Nailsea Town Council. Residents will need to learn that for some issues they should speak to parish councillors in Wraxall, while for others they'll have to speak to a ward councillor in Nailsea. I'm sceptical that many residents will have the time or knowledge

to get this right first time, and democratic representation will suffer as a result.

By carving out an area of Wraxall & Failand parish that will no longer have its parish and ward boundaries match, the proposals also create a unique polling area, and additional complexity and staffing requirements at polling stations. The cost to taxpayers every election cycle seems disproportionate - particularly when residents are specifically asking for it not to happen.

It will also require an additional ward councillor to attend Wraxall & Failand Parish Council meetings on top of the two Long Ashton ward councillors who already do, with responsibilities and outcomes from parish council meetings needing to be divided according to which of the two council wards the parish would now encompass. And for the Nailsea Golden Valley ward councillor it would add an additional monthly commitment to attend parish council meetings as well as Nailsea Town Council meetings, in what is a single-member ward. I believe these additional burdens on elected representatives and on parish/district council officers would negatively impact residents.

Attached Documents:

None attached