

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this review exercise. Somerford Parish Council is aware that Cheshire East Council has submitted its views to the LGBCE and the Parish Council would like to make the following comments and suggestions on that submission insofar as they affect the parish.

Introduction

Somerford Parish Council has considered the Cheshire East Council Report and submission to the LGBCE in its entirety and understands and agrees with principles set out in the Introduction to that report.

However, the conclusion which is drawn in paragraph 4.5 for the Cheshire East Council's proposed ward of Brereton is not agreed. Whilst it may well satisfy a statistical desire to produce a numerically balanced result, it does not address the 'interests and identities' of the residents of the respective parishes which would make up the newly constituted Brereton Ward.

This response will address both the factors which are considered to make the proposed ward illogical and unbalanced insofar as 'interests and identities' are concerned, and those which would achieve a balance of those factors.

Report Proposal

The Cheshire East Council report proposes that the parishes of Arclid, Bradwall, Moston, Somerford, Warmingham and (most of) Brereton should make up the new Brereton Ward.

With the exception of small parts of Brereton parish, Somerford has no shared interests or identity with any of these parishes. Each of them has, to a greater or lesser degree, a shared affinity to the town of Sandbach to the west whilst Somerford has an affinity with the town of Congleton to the east. Arclid, Bradwall, Moston and a small part of Brereton are contiguous with Sandbach, while Warmingham is contiguous with Crewe, further west. On the other hand, Somerford, Newbold Astbury and Moreton cum Alcumlow, Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths, and Eaton are all contiguous with Congleton.

The principal roads through the parish of Somerford are the A50 which passes through the length of Somerford as it links Holmes Chapel and Congleton, whilst the new road through Somerford, the Congleton Link Road, joins the A534, Macclesfield to Congleton road, which is used by the majority to access the M6 Motorway (South) rather than Sandbach town beyond.

Somerford Parish Council proposal

The Parish Council does not hold a view which would satisfy any statistical imperative to equalise the electors per councillor ratio since the individual electoral statistics for each parish are not disclosed in the Cheshire East report, nor have they been able to be ascertained. We therefore address the issue solely from the report's claimed objective, insofar as it reflects the interests of the electorate of Somerford, namely "reflecting the interests and identities of local communities...which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable."

Somerford has very little in the way of community/social infrastructure and therefore largely relies on the town of Congleton and neighbouring parishes for such provision. Whilst Congleton provides the majority of publicly and privately provided facilities such as schools, health care provision, shopping, garages etc. much is also accessed in neighbouring small parishes such as:

- Newbold Astbury and Moreton cum Alcumlow – primary school, village hall, principal church (Astbury St. Mary), pubs and restaurants, garage services and shopping.
- Smallwood – primary school, village hall, pubs and restaurants, chapel to Astbury St. Mary principal church becoming the district church for Smallwood in 1846.

A major feature in the life of a Somerford resident has been the opening of the Congleton Link Road. Whilst this road may have brought benefits to some, although perhaps not to the extent promised, it has also brought unwelcome changes to Somerford and these changes have forged a new relationship with the parishes of Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths and Eaton, through which the CLR travels, such that a joint working party with those parishes to address these issues has been formed.

We therefore submit that the Cheshire East proposal should be revisited insofar as Somerford is concerned and link it instead with one or more of the parishes with which Somerford truly shares interests and identities, rather than merely looking for a mathematical solution.

Attached Documents:

None attached