

Barnsley

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Dear Sirs,

Further to my earlier emails of 5th June 2023 and 7th February 2024. I am pleased that you rejected plans to split the Parish of Silkstone.

Firstly I would like to revisit my earlier proposal to reduce the size of the Council from 63 to 42 Members per Ward by having two instead of three Members and elections every four years rather than by thirds as a present. My reasons remain the same, viz:-

“I submit that the current total of 63 Councillors is more than is required by an Authority of this size and with its current efficient oversight arrangements, ie Area Councils, Scrutiny and Audit. Extensive delegation in terms of Planning and Licencing reduces the need for much of the Councillor involvement which was the case in the past. If the Council were to be reduced to 2 Councillors per Ward whilst retaining 21 Wards that would give a total of 42 Councillors. At present Barnsley has an electorate of 184,026 which equates to 2,921 electors per Councillor and reducing to 42 Councillors would increase that to 4,381. For comparison neighbouring Sheffield has an electorate of 388,923 served by 84 Councillors, ie 4,630 per Councillor. Therefore a reduction in Councillors would bring Barnsley into line with its nearest South Yorkshire neighbour.

There are four Authorities in South Yorkshire, of which Barnsley and Sheffield are the only two which retain election by thirds with Doncaster and Rotherham having moved to all-out elections every four years. There would be advantages for Barnsley in doing the same and it would be necessary with a move to 2 Councillor Wards. Firstly, there would be costs savings to the taxpayer and more importantly it would eliminate the

restrictions imposed by pre-election purdah in two of the four year electoral cycle.”

Secondly and turning to the most recent proposals. I note that the ruling group now proposes creating an enlarged ward by adding the Parish of Stainborough and part of the Parish of Tankersley to the Dodworth Ward. You will already have received an objection from Stainborough Parish Council. I summarise the objection, which I support, below:-

- “Stainborough Parish is only 350 electors, so moving such a small number of residents from the rural Ward they have been in for a number of years seems to be un-necessary to equalise the number of electors in Penistone East Ward as new housing planned in the Dodworth area will exceed the actual number of residents in Stainborough Parish
- Stainborough Parish has always been in the Penistone East Ward and sits in that Ward along side 8 other rural Parish Councils
- Penistone East Ward has a rural nature and Stainborough Parish is a rural community. Stainborough Parish has a strong rural community identity, and it is important for us (residents) to retain this rural community identity.
- The proposal of BMBC is the creation of a new rural Ward which will consist of Dodworth, Tankersley and Stainborough. However, there is concern that this will be rural in name but not in nature. Dodworth and Tankersley both have direct access to the M1 motorway links, Stainborough does not.
- Stainborough Parish residents have strong community ties with Penistone including for recreation, education and commercial use. There is no link for residents with Dodworth. For example, there are bus services from the villages of Hood Green and Stainborough (which make the Stainborough Parish) but none to Dodworth. Children school in local villages of Silkstone Common and Thurgoland, then onto Penistone Grammar, not to Dodworth.
- Unlike the current situation in Penistone East Ward, whereby Stainborough Parish sits alongside similar parishes, in the proposed new Ward Stainborough Parish (350 residents) will sit alongside Dodworth over 10,000 and Tankersley approx. 2,000 residents. The concern is that Stainborough Parish would not be able to make its voice heard as it is a very small parish compared to Dodworth and Tankersley.
- Stainborough Parish is very rural in nature. Dodworth and Tankersley both have industrial and commercial sites. Stainborough Parish has a strong rural community identity with no industrial or commercial areas.
- Stainborough Parish has numerous sites of Biodiversity, Conservation areas and areas of historic interest, such as Wentworth Castle and Gardens managed by the National Trust, with the vast majority of the Parish in the Green Belt. This is not the same for Dodworth or Tankersley.
- Stainborough Parish, as 2 small villages, has a number of issues which arise which can be said to be rural in nature. The issues facing smaller rural villages are vastly different to those issues facing larger urban areas. Currently there is support from other local rural parish councils who may have similar issues as Stainborough Parish. It is felt that urban areas such as Dodworth would not face such issues and support could be limited.
- Overall for Stainborough Parish residents there is no affinity with either Dodworth or Tankersley

I understand that there are alternative proposals which would involve reducing the Council from 21 to 19 Wards and this would in effect allow the numerically larger Wards of Penistone East and Penistone West to remain within their current boundaries. I would support such a proposal. There

is no reason why 21 Wards/63 Members should be considered sacrosanct and the attempts to concoct boundaries to fit that arbitrary figure seems pointless.

I hope you will consider the points I have raised in respect of this submission and look forward to seeing the final proposals.

Attached Documents:

None attached