

Bradford

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Comment text:

Related subject: Bingley East and West

As a former Bingley Town Councillor and resident of Gilstead, I am appalled by the proposals as to how Bingley should be divided in order to achieve parity in electoral numbers. The proposal takes no account of the fact that the suggested Bingley East area has no community, transport or indeed historical or economical links with Baildon area. Bingley Town Council was formed at the request of residents who felt strongly that Bingley as a distinct town with its outlying villages, was not sufficiently represented or considered within the Bradford Metropolitan District. The current proposals would make it impossible for elected town councillors to properly represent residents' interests in regard to facilities, amenities or development within the main Bingley Town Centre. Bingley is in the Aire Valley. The river is a significant factor in the topography, settlement history and development of the town. The suggestion that it should become part of a Wharfedale constituency is beyond belief, I am fully in favour of the alternative proposal formulated by the current Bingley Town Council, as attached below.

I am incredulous that the Boundary Commission can pay so little regard to the history, geography, community and economic development of such a distinct area. Please think again. This is disenfranchisement on an unheard of scale.

Response to Boundary Review for Bingley, Bingley Rural and Shipley.

From the Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) emerging Local Plan:

- Bingley is designated as one of the three principal towns in the Bradford district and so a focus for growth, with a current housing growth requirement of 850.
- Cottingley is designated a local centre with a current housing growth requirement of 150, and maintaining its key greenbelt separation from Shipley and Bradford is a key

priority.

Bingley Town Council (BTC) was formed in 2016 following a campaign by local residents. As part of that campaign a boundary, that reflects community ties and identities, was defined that encompassed Bingley and its surrounding villages, Crossflatts, Micklethwaite, Eldwick and Gilstead, to the North and West, with Cottingley to the East. This boundary was chosen as it included the areas and villages with strong historical links and a close identity with Bingley. This boundary therefore has been recently verified as representing the wishes and community identity of local people.

Being situated in the Aire Valley, Bingley has moors to the north, with no roads over them, only around, and the area is geographically separate from the areas to the north, namely Ilkley and Wharfedale. The suggestion of moving any element of the area to a Wharfedale ward is not supported.

To the west lies Keighley East ward. There are no community ties or shared identity between the wards. Given the ward boundary between Bingley and Keighley East also represents the parliamentary boundary between Shipley and Keighley constituencies, any move of residents between these areas would not represent convenient local government. The suggestion of moving any element of the area to the Keighley East ward is not supported.

To the east lies Baildon ward, with Shipley ward to the south-east. The topography of Bingley parish with the villages on hillside slopes away from the main valley floor, means that most travel is through the town to the main arterial highways. Consequently there are limited local links to Baildon ward. Whilst the main arterial links go through Shipley, this is because it is a suburb of the regional city of Bradford and has urban considerations completely different from the semi-rural nature of Bingley parish. The suggestion of any arbitrary splitting of a community, be it Eldwick, Cottingley or Bingley itself is not supported as it will not reflect community identity and historical links.

The proposed wards of Bingley East and Bingley West, with the railway line as the boundary, is not supported, in fact it is actively opposed.

These proposed wards cleave Bingley in two, with the town centre and its facilities and services in Bingley West but the vast majority of its residents in Bingley East. If enacted this would severely restrict the ability of the Bingley East residents and ward Councillors to have any significant influence on what happens in their town centre.

The residents of the proposed Bingley West ward, who mainly live in Cullingworth, Wilsden and Harden, will most likely want their representatives to focus on the villages and rural

issues, to the detriment of Bingley Town Centre.

So in effect, under this proposal, one of the principal towns of the district will have no effective local government, as no-one will really be looking after the towns' interests, disenfranchising the whole community.

Our proposal is that:

- 1). Bingley Rural ward should remain as originally proposed, with Denholme moving into Worth Valley ward and Wagon Lane/Ash Grove moving into Bingley ward.
- 2). Any arbitrary split of one of the BTC wards into another Bradford ward, just to achieve electoral equality, will cause dislocation and disruption for residents as it will not reflect the strong Bingley community interest and identity that exists historically and today. Moving residents into another Bradford ward that has a completely different focus and no community links, will not provide for effective or convenient local government.

Therefore it seems that the only sensible way to meet the statutory obligations, is to recognise that the number of councillors obligation carries less weight than those for electoral equality and community identity and, as such, Bingley ward should be represented by four Councillors. This would give Bingley ward a draft variance of -9% by 2029.

Unless there is an opportunity to reduce the number of BMDC Councillors elsewhere, this would increase the number of BMDC Councillors by 1 to 91. Given the 3 year election cycle within Bradford they could be elected on a 2x2 with a fallow year, or a 1,1,2 cycle.

Attached Documents:

None attached