

Wakefield

Personal Details:

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Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: Altofts and Whitwood, Castleford Central and Glasshoughton

Personal submission to the Boundary Commission September 4th 2024

I am a [REDACTED] member of the Friends of Valley Gardens, Castleford. I am also a member of Glasshoughton and Redhill Environment Action Team (GREAT) and Castleford Civic Society. Finally, as a member of the public I reside in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Castleford.

I have read your draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Wakefield Council and in particular those recommendations related to the following wards:

- Altofts and Whitwood
- Castleford Central and Glasshoughton.

I have read paragraphs 39, 40 and perused your local interactive maps. As a result, I wish to make the following observations.

Observations on your recommendations.

1. Your proposals regarding the ward boundaries effectively divides the Castleford suburb of Cutsyke into two which is currently not the case. More particularly it largely separates existing properties from the new developments off Bruce Smeaton Way which does not aid the determination of a strong and emerging community identity in Cutsyke.
2. As a member of a local community group, I have met residents from the new developments off Bruce Smeaton Way. Most of the residents of these new developments have a very generalised notion of living in the Castleford area but more specifically identify themselves as living on the 'Micklefields Estate'. Having met many residents who have attended our community group events, I have not met any residents who identified themselves as living in Glasshoughton. I note that the Councillors from the Altofts and Whitwood ward have argued that those who reside in these new developments believe that they live in Glasshoughton. This has definitely not been my experience of these residents' viewpoints. Nor is it the

viewpoint of those who live nearby, as local residents believe that these new developments are located in Cutsyke instead. In particular, the new developments are built adjacent to Flass Lane which a search on Google Maps also reveals is situated in Cutsyke. Therefore, these new developments would retain a stronger community identity remaining in Cutsyke along with existing properties and for Cutsyke not to be divided as your recommendations propose.

3. This timely boundary review of these two wards provides an opportunity, not to be missed, as it can correct an historic ward boundary anomaly. This anomaly currently divides the two wards largely along Barnes Road and Beancroft Road but it is worth identifying at this point that this boundary is not applied consistently. A block of flats on the western side of Beancroft Road opposite the Smawthorne Lane junction is located in the Altofts and Whitwood ward but then as properties move north towards the railway, other properties revert to being located in the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton ward on the same side of the road. Overall, those residents living to the east of Barnes/Beancroft Road reside in the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton ward and those who live on the west of these roads reside in the Altofts and Whitwood ward. However, those residents who live largely to the west of this boundary strongly regard themselves as living in Castleford and have no perceived identity with the Altofts ward. The residents on the west of Barnes/Beancroft Roads still use the schools, shops, doctors, dentists, public transport hubs and local parks etc just the same of those residents living to the east of the current boundary line. Irrespective of which side of Beancroft/Barnes Road that residents live, they all have a strong and historic Castleford community identity. My late Father-in-law could never understand how he had no electoral connection to Castleford where he had lived and worked all his life, simply because he lived a few houses west of Barnes Road. As a local fire fighter, he asserted that the boundary between Castleford town and Hightown/Whitwood was delineated by Aketon Road. Because of the line of the River Calder and the railway, a lot of main roads/bigger streets in Castleford run east to west. An example of such a street is Oxford Street. Some of this street is in the Castleford Central ward on the eastern side of Beancroft Road with the remainder of this street being in the Altofts ward given it continues on the western side of Beancroft Road to its junction with High Street. A lot of the existing housing stock on Oxford Street has been converted to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's). Recently a number of us were talking about issues related to HMO's while we were all visiting Valley Gardens on Lower Oxford Street where I am a community volunteer. We all noted though that depending on our house number we would have to approach different councillors for support with these issues. To confirm this anomaly, which currently and inappropriately divides Central Castleford, a street sign denotes Castleford to the east at the western end of Oxford Street where it joins High Street,. I have attached a picture of this sign for your reference and the What3Words reference to locate the sign is 'spike.port.wake'.

Alternative proposal to your recommendations

To provide a solution to how to make a more effective boundary between the two wards in question, I propose that the following polling districts should be transferred to the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton ward. This would avoid Cutsyke being effectively split in the Altofts and Whitwood ward and neatly unite Central Castleford in a manner congruent with the strong urban identity which historically exists in our town. It would also more appropriately use Aketon Road as the ward boundary. Being a member of Castleford Civic Society I am aware from discussions held that this road previously provided an administrative boundary anyway.

The polling districts which should be transferred from the Altofts and Whitwood ward to the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton ward to achieve electoral equality comprise:

- 03NH
- 03NI

Conclusion

I submit these proposals as a member of the public who lives in the area affected and one who is very active in the Castleford community across a range of voluntary groups. I am not motivated by any political expediency, but by the desire to see community links recognised and strengthened in my hometown of Castleford.

Attached Documents:

- [img_2278.jpg](#)

