

Wakefield

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Comment text:

Please find attached my comments on the Commission's proposals for the Castleford wards of Wakefield District Council.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

Attached Documents:

- wakefield-boundary-commission-comments.rtf

COMMENTS ON THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY WARDS IN CASTLEFORD

I have studied the current Boundary Commission proposals for redrawing the boundaries of the Castleford Central & Glasshoughton (CC&G) ward, in particular those between it and Altofts & Whitwood (A&W). Having done so, I offer the following comments and counter-proposals to rectify what I believe are two principal anomalies in the proposed boundaries between the two wards.

I come at this as a life-long (59 years) resident of Castleford who has studied the history of the town in depth and is an active member of both Castleford Heritage Trust and Castleford Civic Society. I consequently have a strong affinity and sense of identity with the town, along with an intimate acquaintance with its geography, society and culture.

My first observation is that the Commission's suggestion that the houses on Craig Hopson Avenue and Amberwood Avenue should be included in CC&G is illogical, as they are clearly a part of Cutsyke and I am not convinced by the argument put forward by councillors that their residents identify with Glasshoughton. Children from this estate will attend primary school (Aketon Pastures) in Cutsyke and the nearest post office and convenience shopping facilities are also in Cutsyke

Aside from the above factors, on what grounds do I suggest this estate lies within Cutsyke? Both my parents were born and brought up in Cutsyke, on Westwood Road, and my dad in particular for all his life identified more strongly as a 'Cutsyker' than being from Castleford (despite living outside of Cutsyke for 61 of his 88 years!). I once asked him where he reckoned Cutsyke began and ended and his answer was that the Cutsyke-Glasshoughton boundary was the Castleford-Pontefract Monkhill railway line from the level crossing on Leeds Road and south-eastwards; the Cutsyke-Castleford boundary was the now-closed Cutsyke Junction-Methley Junction line (since converted to the Castleford Greenway cycle track) from the above-mentioned level crossing and north-westwards; and the Cutsyke-Hightown/Whitwood boundary was St Martin's Grove and the eastern edge of the cemetery on Leeds Road. This seems a very logical answer, as each of the three boundaries is delineated by a clear feature – in just the way the Commission suggests a ward boundary should ideally be defined.

If these houses are to remain in the A&W ward, then number equalisation requires that some others be moved from A&W to CC&G. There is a very obvious way of doing this, which again would create a strongly-defined boundary between the two wards and – more importantly in my view – would correct a glaring anomaly which ought to be righted in any case, regardless of any other considerations.

My suggestion is that the current boundary which essentially follows Beacroft Road and Barnes Road (albeit with numerous short dog-leg diversions off the line of these roads) be shifted to the west and, instead, should follow the Castleford-Glasshoughton railway line – a clear, solid and visible boundary.

By any rational definition, the area between Beacroft/Barnes Roads and the railway – especially the older houses to the west of Beacroft Road – is physically, economically and culturally part of central Castleford. Some of it is less than five minutes' walk from the town centre while it also contains the town's fire, ambulance and police stations, along with a school (Half Acres J&I on Temple Street) which draws many of its pupils from the streets to the east of Beacroft Road. Residents in this area (and the Half Acres estate) strongly identify with central Castleford and ought to be represented by councillors whose remit includes this area.

(As an aside, the historic boundary between the townships of Castleford and Whitwood ran down the centre of Aketon Road and would still constitute a logical boundary today, given that the vast majority of houses lie on its eastern side, along Hemsby Road and adjoining short streets.)

I daresay that making the railway line the CC&G/A&W ward boundary would, again, have implications for ward populations. If my suggested changes result in the CC&G ward having numbers above the median you are working to, I would suggest you look at the possibility of transferring some voters into the neighbouring Airedale & Ferry Fryston (A&FF) ward. The area around the junction of Holywell Lane, Fryston Road, Sheepwalk Lane and Spittal Hardwick Lane is an area more associated with Townville (in A&FF) than Glasshoughton: residents here are more likely to do their convenience shopping in Airedale (Tesco Express or the Co-Op in The Square), are likely to use the library and be registered with a GP there and their children will attend both primary and secondary schools in Airedale.


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