

Wakefield

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: n/a (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Related subject: Wakefield South Ward

Please see letter attached

Attached Documents:

- wardboundaries0924.1.docx

LGBCE Draft Recommendations on Wakefield Ward Boundaries: May 2024

Dear LGBCE,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your draft recommendations. I would like to make the case for some changes to better reflect community interest and identity whilst still achieving electoral equality.

Wakefield South Ward

In order to address the projected shortfall of electors in Wakefield South, the Council has proposed the transfer of Chevet and Notton polling districts from Crofton, Ryhill and Walton Ward to Wakefield South. I object to the adoption of this proposal on the grounds that it does not meet the statutory criteria of community identity as described in s.87 of the LGBCE draft.

There is a much stronger case to,

- transfer the Portobello polling district (1,221 electors) from Wakefield East to Wakefield South
- leave the 3 polling districts of Notton and Chevet (911 electors) in the Crofton, Ryhill and Walton Ward
- transfer some electors from the City Fields to Wakefield East to balance the transfer of Portobello.

At the initial consultation stage, a resident suggested transferring both Portobello and Belle Isle to Wakefield South. The LGBCE draft rejects this proposal on the grounds there is insufficient community evidence to support the transfer (s.62). However, the LGBCE draft does not apply the same principle to the Council's submission which provides no evidence of any community links to support the transfer of Notton and Chevet either.

I request a review of the draft decision on the grounds that,

- There is ample community evidence of links between Portobello and Wakefield South (see below).
- In contrast, there is no community evidence for links with Notton and Chevet.
- The overall proposal may be implemented whilst maintaining electoral equality in all three wards affected.

The close community links between Portobello and Wakefield South Ward include,

- Schools: many children from Portobello attend Sandal Castle Community Primary School and Thomas a Becket Catholic Secondary School.
- Health facilities: Maybush Medical Centre and Well Pharmacy are widely used by residents of both Portobello and Wakefield South.
- Community Voluntary Activities: For example, youth workers from St. Helens Church (Wakefield South) run youth activities at the Portobello Community Centre.
- Retail facilities: the shops and local supermarket at the Busy Corner are similarly used widely by residents from to both areas.
- Libraries: Sandal Library is the only local library and is used by both areas.
- Recreation: the green spaces and leisure opportunities provided by the Pugneys country park, Sandal Castle Hill, and Castle Grove Park are extensively used by Portobello and Wakefield South residents.
- Sports Clubs: Clubs such as Sandal Cricket Club in Wakefield South have historically included members from both Portobello and Wakefield South.

In contrast, there is little connection between Wakefield South Ward and the villages of Notton and Chevet. As previously mentioned, the Council's submission provides no evidence of community links, interests or identity to support the transfer. Under the heading of Community Identity, the Council's document states simply 'the proposal protects existing community identity of Notton and the surrounding area within the Wakefield South boundary'.

This lack of evidence is reflected in the LGBCE draft report which identifies Chevet Lane as the only link between the areas. Arguably a single road link is not adequate to satisfy the statutory requirements relating to community interests and identity as defined in sections 84, 85 and 87 of the LGBCE report. The fact residents can drive from one community to another does not mean there are genuine community links.

The case for transferring Portobello is further supported by the clearly identifiable boundaries (as in s.85 and s.87 of the LGBCE report) of the river Calder, the Pugneys country park and the railway line to the northeastern boundary of the estate.

Finally, in case there is concern that Portobello and Wakefield South fall under different parliamentary constituencies, the same applies to Notton and Chevet.

In terms of electoral equality, the proposal leaves both Wakefield South and Crofton, Ryhill and Walton well within the 10% variance limit. However, it would require a minimum of around 770 additional electors for Wakefield East to reach this threshold following the loss of Portobello. This shortfall may be addressed by transferring some City Fields electors from Stanley and Outwood East to Wakefield East (below).

City Fields

I understand City Fields is being developed under a single masterplan which envisages an integrated community with a dedicated community centre and other infrastructure. However, it falls into 3 separate Wards which is not helpful in dealing with issues common to the development.

The LGBCE review is arguably an ideal opportunity to address this fragmentation. As a new development there are few long-standing relationships which might otherwise inhibit change. The LGBCE draft report states that the number of homes and the shape of the development prevent it being included in a single Ward. This may well be the case, but the potential shortfall in Wakefield East described above, at least provides an opportunity to reduce the number of Wards involved from 3 to 2.

In order to assess the options for transfers from Stanley and Outwood East and/or Wakefield South to Wakefield East, the projected number of City Fields electors in each ward is needed. Therefore, please can this exercise be carried out in order to confirm that the overall proposal can be developed to deliver electoral equality in all wards.

I would appreciate you considering my comments and look forward reading to your final report.

Yours sincerely,



6 September 2024

Wakefield

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Email: [REDACTED]
Postcode: [REDACTED]
Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Please see letter attached. I've sent it separately via the Council's website but I'm not sure if it worked.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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