 Bradwell Parish Council

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**Submission from Bradwell Parish Council to the Milton Keynes Boundary Review**

This submission is made on behalf of Bradwell Parish Council. The submission was approved at a Full Council meeting on 1 July 2024 (Resolution FC/37/24).

The statutory criteria against which decisions by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) must be made require recommendations to have regard to the need to secure effective and convenient local government and the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

Reflecting this, the LGBCE has set itself three aims: to make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents similar numbers of electors; to create boundaries that are appropriate and reflect community ties and identities; and to deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances.

We believe that the most appropriate starting point for setting ward boundaries in Milton Keynes is the existing civil parish boundaries. The City of Milton Keynes has been fully parished since April 2001 and now has 48 parish and town councils. The civil parishes are recognised by local residents as reflective of community ties and many have a very long history.

We propose that a new Bradwell and Abbey Hill ward is created that includes the following polling districts:

* Bradwell (DA).
* Heelands (DB).
* Two Mile Ash (DC).
* Bradwell Common (GA).
* Bancroft (OD).
* Bancroft Park and Blue Bridge (RA).

There are strong arguments for this proposal.

First, it would be a significant improvement on the current situation in terms of the extent to which it reflects community ties and identities:

* It would unite Bradwell civil parish within a single ward.
* It would continue to unite Abbey Hill civil parish within a single ward and retain the current link between the Abbey Hill and Bradwell civil parishes.
* It would allow two estates that are currently within the Wolverton ward – Bancroft Park and Blue Bridge (RA) – to be united with areas which they have stronger ties with. These two estates have few community ties with Wolverton – they are in the Stantonbury civil parish area, are in the Stantonbury secondary school catchment area, are separated from the rest of Wolverton by the physical barrier of the railway, and are connected to the Bradwell civil parish by Loughton Valley Park.
* It would allow two estates that are within the Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council area and that have close ties with that area – Hodge Lea (DD) and Stacey Bushes (DE) – to move from the current Bradwell ward to the Wolverton ward.
* Bancroft is connected to Bradwell civil parish by the Loughton Valley Park and through part of Bancroft being in the catchment area of Bradwell Village School. The inclusion of Bancroft and Bancroft Park and Blue Bridge in the ward would also join two parts of Stantonbury civil parish together.

Second, the new ward would have a projected 2029 electorate of 10,667 – this is close to the target electorate figure of 11,000 and is well within the tolerance band which the LGBCE is aiming for.

Third, it would help support the wider goal of achieving a close match between the communities represented by civil parishes and ward boundaries. For example, it would help facilitate the redrawing of boundaries that would be necessary to:

* Unite the Newport Pagnell Town Council area within a single ward.
* Separate the current Campbell Park ward into boundaries that fit better with the community identities of Great Linford civil parish, Campbell Park civil parish, Old Woughton civil parish and Ashland and Simpson civil parish.
* Unite the Central Milton Keynes Town Council area.
* Unite the Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council area.

Fourth, it would allow the new ward boundaries to accommodate recent and anticipated housing development on the eastern and western flanks of Milton Keynes and in Central Milton Keynes and Campbell Park. For example, removing Bradwell Common from the Central Milton Keynes ward would remove the forecast excess population from that ward.

While it would not be appropriate for Bradwell Parish Council to express a view on city-wide ward boundaries, we have checked whether our proposal would work in terms of being part of a feasible solution for the entire city that is significantly more successful in achieving the objective of respecting local communities – as defined by parish boundaries – than the current ward boundaries do. We have attached an indicative illustration of city-wide ward boundaries to demonstrate that ours is a viable proposition.