

Solihull

Personal Details:

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

Comment text:

Dear Boundary Commission;

Thank-you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on redrawing the boundaries of Olton Ward; in particular moving certain streets (including the one I live on, Richmond Road) into Lyndon Ward.

I would like to stress two points:

1. I hope this is a genuine consultation, where parties exchange information to collectively come to a better decision. I have been in senior leadership within policing for many years (including time served as the Borough Chief Superintendent for Solihull) and I have had experience of good consultation and token consultation. I dearly hope this exercise is in the camp of the former.
2. I would like to talk about community. No-one knows better than Councillors about the importance of community. All the evidence suggests that when communities come together they are stronger, healthier, safer and more resilient. In everything we do in the public sector, we should seek to build community - not only is it the right thing to do, it also saves money.

On this point I want to stress that Olton feels is a community:

Firstly - it looks like a community. My house predates the line of Victorian terraces that run from Richmond Road into Kineton Green Road. It was

the old gatehouse of Richmond Park - but the style red brick terraces of Richmond Road flow uninterrupted across the Warwick Road into houses of the same area. For more information I would suggest speaking to local historian Keith Staples (who currently has an exhibition at Olton library. For ease of access he has a facebook page).

Secondly it feels like a community. There is an unbreakable connection between St Margarets School and St Margaret's Church (that this boundary change would sever). The connection is formal but it is also part of the lived experience of children and parents that have grown up together over the last decade. Whilst I know Lyndon may feel like a community too - I don't know it, and neither do other people who would experience this change. Names matter and people associate with where they have grown up. Having spoken to many people on the street I know they also feel strongly on this point. I would therefore ask you not to change it.

I would also like to thank Councillors who work hard in often challenging roles, with little thanks or remuneration. I would like to reflect on this, the work you do and the challenges communities around Solihull collectively face, are significant. I am sure we can refocus efforts on the challenges of economy and community wellbeing and perhaps a little less on this boundary change - I struggle somewhat to see the merit here for the community, in fact quite the contrary.

If there is a determination to proceed may I suggest commissioning the work of a community consultant or an urban geographer who would assist in mapping community networks, capacity and identity.

Yours sincerely:

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Attached Documents:

None attached