

18 February 2018

Dear Sirs

I am writing to comment on the draft proposals for new wards in the City of Bath in two capacities –

1) as Lay Chair of Widcombe Parochial Church Council and churchwarden of St Thomas à Becket Church and

2) as a resident of Bath & North East Somerset living in Prior Park Road, Widcombe.

In my capacity of 1) above, the PCC's opinion is that the proposed changes for the Widcombe ward area are not satisfactory and do not meet the stated aims of the LGBC, other than in respect of voter equality. Our particular objection is that the draft proposals will result in the 500-year-old Widcombe Parish Church of St Thomas a Becket being taken out from Widcombe and into Claverton Down Ward.

Widcombe C of E Junior School, for which the church is the Founder and provides the Foundation Governors, will be situated in another ward – Bathwick. Our second church within the benefice will remain in Widcombe. The one joint PCC is responsible for all of these three entities, which will be spread over three wards.

On a personal level, where we live, we are very much part of Widcombe yet these proposals move us to Lyncombe ward. We have strong social, transport and amenity links to Widcombe and this is our community. We believe that we should be included in an extended Widcombe & Lyncombe ward. We believe wards can be designed to still achieve the 'equality of voters' objective whilst better reflecting our local community.

Widcombe, as it exists now, has a strong and vibrant community spirit with natural boundaries such as the river to demarcate it from other city areas. To be split across five wards for local council representation would greatly complicate communications and community engagement on a variety of local issues.

I believe the ward proposals should be reconsidered to better reflect our strong local community and achieve consistency of local representation with predominately two councillor wards (by combining Widcombe & Lyncombe).

I am aware that the Widcombe Association has proposed an alternative way to achieve the stated aims for ward design, including electoral equality, and strongly commend these proposals to you.

Yours faithfully

Angela Frith

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Churchwarden and Lay Chair Widcombe PCC