

Response to LGBCE boundary consultation

Introduction

Redrawing the ward boundary maps is a difficult and unforgiving task. We're grateful for the efforts put in by LGBCE to get to know our communities and attempt to translate that into equitable boundary suggestion. That said, we have received a number of representations from residents in Bath and North East Somerset who feel that, in places, the Commission has put undue emphasis on electoral equality at the expense of natural community boundaries. In an effort to help address this, we submit the following amendments which we believe will improve the community cohesion of the wards. We have not fully calculated the electoral numbers, given that the commission has the tools to do that much more effectively, but based on our estimates we think that they should sit within the acceptable range.

Bath City North

We feel that the parishes of Kelston and North Stoke should be returned to Bathavon North from Newbridge. We have had some feedback from those parish councils that they would feel more comfortable within the largely rural Bathavon North than the urban Newbridge ward. While we accept the Commission's argument that ideally one should not have to leave a ward to get from one part to another, this situation has existed without issue since the inception of Bath and North East Somerset, and the issues faced by residents in Kelston and North Stoke, supported by parishes, are very different to urban Newbridge.

In the east of this area there has been much consternation about the changes to Lambridge/Larkhall ward. While there is a sensible community centred on Larkhall village, the current boundary excludes much of the area that considers itself part of that community- such as the area running down St Saviour's Road. This would start to push the limit of Larkhall Ward in terms of electoral equality, so we would propose that, in an effort to not split this community between two wards, the Fairfield Park area should be added to create a 2 member ward.

The area around Camden Crescent is another community that has been split between multiple wards. If the boundary for Walcot Ward was moved to encompass all of this community, and further shifted West and South as all the first consultation proposals suggested to include the Richmond Hill area and Walcot Street, this should balance out the houses lost in Fairfield Park.

We would then propose moving the boundary of Lansdown Ward southwards so it runs along Julian Road to compensate the houses lost to Walcot. This would also have the advantage of creating a more recognisable Kingsmead Ward. We would then combine Abbey and Kingsmead to create a single 2 member ward that contains all of the city centre areas, as well as the community around Royal Victoria Park.

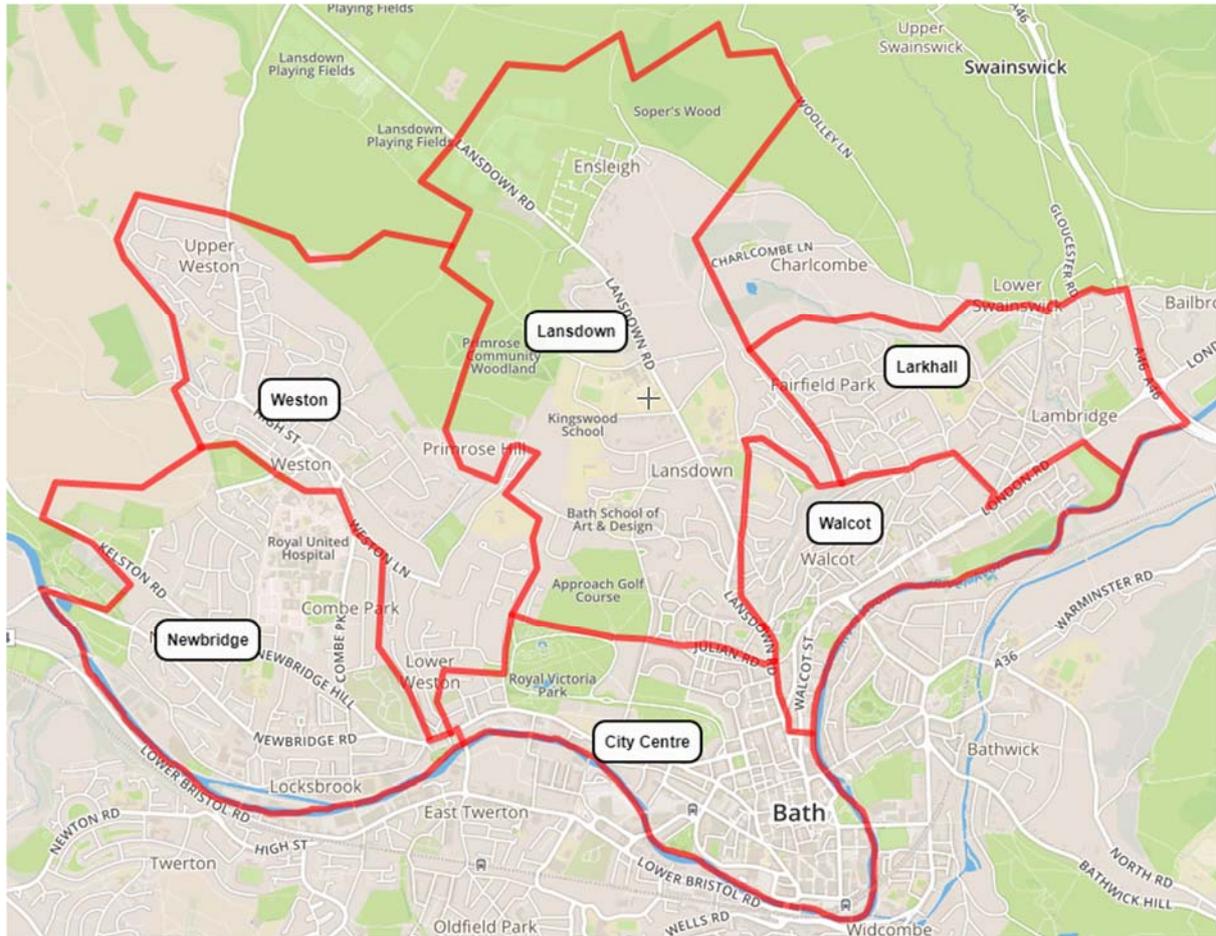


Figure 1 Bath City North

Bath City South East

The South East of the city has also generated a lot of interest and complaint, particularly about the splitting of Combe Down village.

Starting from the premise that we want to keep the historic village of Combe Down together in a single ward, we shifted the boundary of Combe Down ward eastward on its eastern most edge to take in that area. We then moved the boundary with Lyncombe Ward eastward as well to compensate. This left Claverton Ward unviable but unable to join with Bathwick ward. Therefore we considered joining Combe Down and Claverton, with the previously discussed adjustments to the border and creating a 3 member ward. This was seen as being the simplest way to keep all of Combe Down in a single ward.

Various adjustments were then made to bring areas like Perrymead and Widcombe Hill back into Widcombe, and the area of housing beside the University back into Bathwick, the Dolemeads into Widcombe, where they more naturally fit. It was also felt that Holloway and the roads off it should move into Widcombe so the boundary runs along the Wells Road, or

along the back garden line of Wells Road. The only access to Holloway is from Bear Flat so it makes sense for this to be included in the same ward as Bear Flat.

Finally, we believe strongly that Lyncombe and Widcombe Wards should be combined. The Bear Flat/Poets's Corner area does not have any direct community links to Widcombe Village, and so to combine them would keep all of Bear Flat/Poet's corner together as a clearly defined community in a single ward.

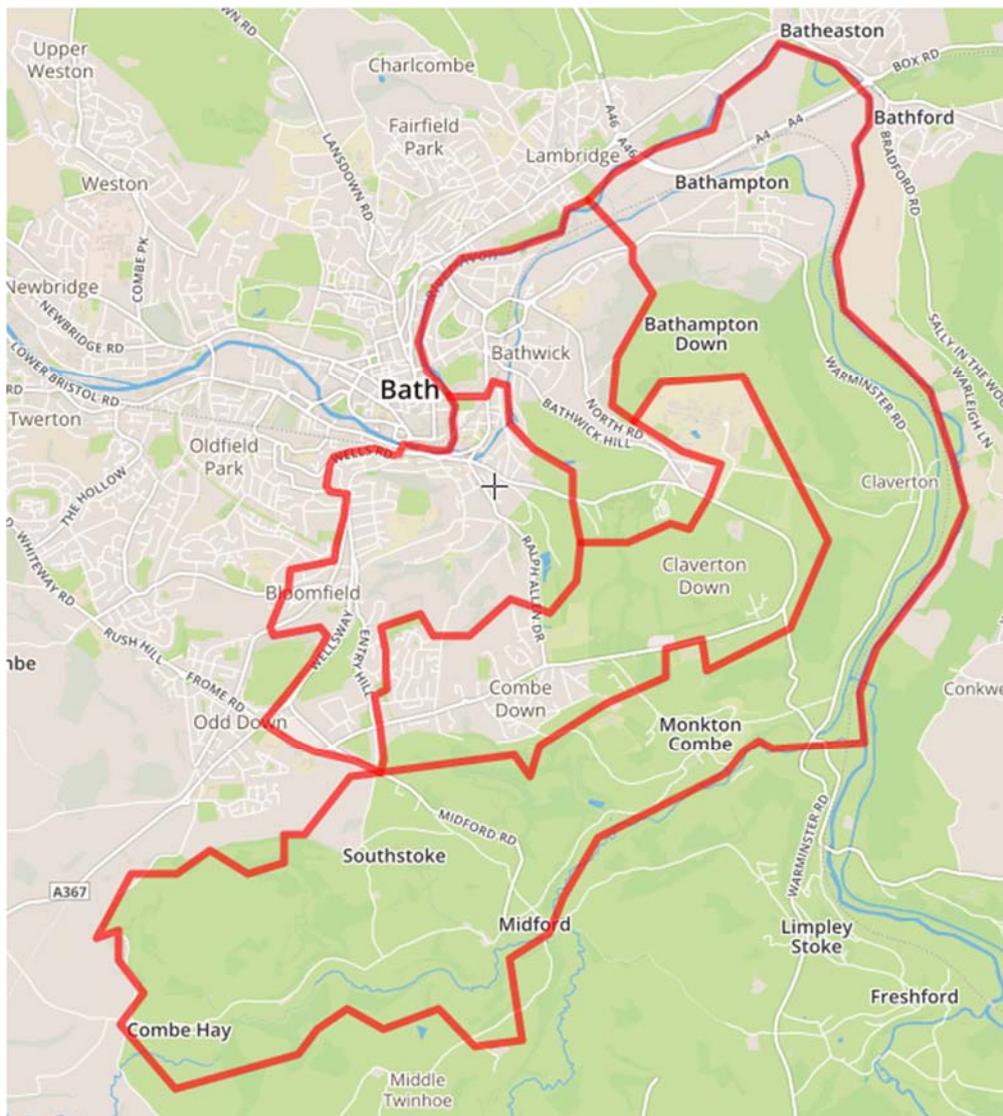


Figure 2 Bath City South

Bath City South West

In Bath City South West, we would move the border between Lyncombe and Moorlands along Englishcombe Lane to where the existing border is on Englishcombe Way. It would

then make sense to run the boundary down Chantry Mead as a more natural community boundary between Moorfields and Lyncombe.

The border between Odd Down and Moorlands needs to move to include in a field south of Englishcombe Lane where a major planning application is being put in. The only access to this development will be from Englishcombe Lane and so this development would end up orphaned from the rest of the ward.

The Southdown border with Odd Down would be tidier if it ran along Englishcombe Lane, and would put the whole of the 'Kingsway' community into a single ward.

Oldfield Park ward appears to be the combination of 2 communities that might be better served being split into a two member ward south of the railway (Oldfield Park) and a single member ward north of the railway (Riverside). These two communities are distinct and separate and do not share many characteristics. While it's a crude measure of what defines a community, I would suggest that those south of the railway go to the Sainsbury's on Moorland Road and those north of the railway go to the Sainsbury's at Green Park. This, to us, indicates a different aspect to these communities with significantly different community interests.

There is also some community boundary tidying that could be done along the Southdown and Twerton border. Elements of the Twerton community around Shophouse Road/Lansdown View have ended up in Southdown, and elements of Southdown around Haycombe Drive have ended up in Twerton.



Figure 3 Bath City South East

North East Somerset

We were happy with the arrangement of parishes in North East Somerset and the new boundaries in Midsomer Norton and Keynsham.

Our one suggestion relates to the Clutton and Farmborough Ward. In terms of geography and electorate, the ward is one of the largest, and so in the interest of good governance, it would seem prudent to move the parish of Marksbury into Saltford Ward and parish of Chelwood into Chew Valley. Both Saltford and Chew Valley are two member wards, while Clutton and Farmborough is a single member, therefore they are more able to manage the larger area.