

## **North West Leicestershire Labour Party**

### **Submission to Electoral Review of Leicestershire County Council**

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the electoral review of Leicestershire County Council. We have considered the proposal made by the County Council and welcome many of the changes proposed: Long Whatton and Diseworth within one division and the core of Ashby de la Zouch within one division.

However, we do not agree with the County Council proposal for the Coalville area.

The proposal creates a new division that includes Whitwick and the core of Coalville, encompassing an area known as the 'Green Wedge'. The Green Wedge is an area of separation between Whitwick and Coalville and there has been considerable local protest about retaining the area of separation between the two communities.

We don't believe that a division that crosses the Green Wedge would be acceptable to local communities. Residents may well suspect that this would make housing on the green wedge more likely thus effectively merging Whitwick and Coalville. Many of the issues of concern are different in the two communities.

Also, the proposal splits the centre of the Coalville area across three divisions which we feel will unnecessarily dilute a focus on issues of concern to Coalville residents.

#### **Analysis & Proposals**

In order to retain Whitwick parish in one division and to ensure the electoral variance is less than 10%, a minimum of 288 additional electors need to be added to the Whitwick division.

The choice made by the County Council is to include the whole of the Coalville West ward, which we have rejected for the above reasons. We have also rejected adding polling districts from the Valley division because of the potential to split parishes and consequential impacts to ensure electoral equality in the Valley division.

We have considered in detail two further options: adding the Castle Rock ward to Whitwick division and adding the remaining Broom Leys polling district to the Whitwick division.

#### **Option 1**

In this option, the whole of the Castle Rock ward is added to the existing Whitwick division. The Castle Rock ward is already closely connected to the

Whitwick division and shares a common transport route – Leicester Road/Warren Hills Road.

The remaining polling districts fall naturally in to a Coalville North division which would run from Bardon ward to Snibston North ward (SNA polling district only) and include Greenhill ward, BRB polling district, Coalville East ward and CWB polling district. These are highly integrated communities which run along the main East-West route through the town.

Coalville South would include the wards of Hugglescote St John’s, Hugglescote St Mary’s, Snibston South, Ellistown and Battleflat and the polling district CWA. Again, these are highly integrated communities, largely bounded to the north by the main East-West route through the town.

The electoral variances for this option are:

Whitwick	6%
Coalville North	-3%
Coalville South	-8%

A map illustrating this option has also been submitted.

## **Option 2**

In this option, the whole of the Broom Leys ward is included in the Whitwick division. This would reduce the number of wards split across divisions.

The remaining polling districts fall naturally in to a modified Warren Hills ward which would include the Ellistown & Battleflat ward. There is a direct road route between Ellistown and the remaining division and Ellistown has previously been part of a similar division.

The remaining polling districts would form a modified Coalville division (existing division excluding polling district SNB).

The electoral variances for this option are:

Whitwick	-2%
Warren Hills	-9%
Coalville	6%

## **Summary**

Both of the options described above are preferable to the County Council proposal for the Coalville area. They avoid having a division crossing the locally sensitive ‘Green Wedge’ and having the centre of Coalville split across three divisions. They both meet the size requirements and they more naturally fit existing communities than the arrangement proposed by the County Council.

