

From: John Leech [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 September 2016 23:09
To: reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>
Subject: Fwd:

Dear Boundary Commission

As the only opposition member of the Council, I would like to comment on Manchester City Council's proposed configuration of the new wards for Manchester on behalf of Manchester Liberal Democrats. On the whole I would like to support the proposed ward configuration with one specific minor amendment for the Chorlton/Chorlton Park/Whalley Range border, some minor suggestions in relation to the names of wards, and a couple of observations regarding the reconfiguration of the city centre:

The River Mersey is a natural boundary, very clearly separating communities. This has once again been confirmed by the constituency boundary proposals, which have recommended the Mersey to remain a boundary between Manchester Withington and Wythenshawe. Having established that this is a natural boundary, and working on the assumption that there are to be 96 councillors in 32 wards, that means that there must be 5 wards south of the river, all of which are under average size, but within the tolerance. This means that the average size of the wards north of the Mersey needs to be slightly larger, but this is far more preferable than creating a cross Mersey ward, which would make no geographic sense, and would create a very artificial ward with no community links.

North of the Mersey, the Manchester City council proposal moves polling district CPB into West Didsbury ward, creating a natural boundary between Chorlton and West Didsbury, and bringing the whole of West Didsbury within the West Didsbury Ward. I also support the decision to move the area north of the Metrolink line (Central Road and Goulden Road) back into Old Moat ward, re-establishing the natural boundary created by the tram line.

Having lost the West Didsbury polling district to Didsbury West Ward, the Chorlton Park ward has to take additional voters from Chorlton. It makes sense for the ward to expand north into the Egerton estate, where residents consider themselves to be more a part of Chorlton than Whalley Range. While there is no ideal boundary between the 2 Chorlton wards and Whalley Range, moving the Egerton estate into the Chorlton Park, moving a small number of Chorlton ward residents into Chorlton Park, and then expanding Chorlton eastwards and Whalley Range eastwards, brings all 3 wards within the acceptable limit. However, I would recommend that the boundary between Chorlton Park and Whalley Range be Wilbraham Road, rather than Brantingham Road. Wilbraham Road would appear to be a more natural boundary, being a main road, and is in line with the boundary between Chorlton and Chorlton Park wards.

Whalley Range councillors have expressed concerns about moving the Manley Park neighbourhood into Chorlton Park ward, arguing that this is very much a part of the Whalley Range community. The boundary commission may want to consider retaining Egerton Road North as the boundary between Chorlton and Whalley Range, north of Brantingham Road, and instead moving the area bounded by Wilbraham Road,

Egerton Road North, Brantingham Road and Withington Road into Chorlton ward, rather than Chorlton Park.

The Chorlton Park ward was created in 2004 during the previous boundary review. This was created by splitting the previous Barlow Moor ward, moving West Didsbury residents into the new Didsbury West ward and taking in residents from the centre of Chorlton. At the time I was a councillor in Barlow Moor Ward, and then subsequently in Chorlton Park ward after the boundary changes. There is no real Chorlton Park identity. People within the proposed ward consider themselves to live in Chorlton, Nell Lane, Merseybank or Barlow Moor. Nobody would claim to live in "Chorlton Park", with the exception of the people who live in the park itself. I would therefore argue that the ward should revert back to the name "Barlow Moor", given that Barlow Moor Road runs all the way through the ward.

The proposal to take the south end of Burnage ward into Didsbury East makes sense, given that many people in this area consider themselves to live in Didsbury, and the proposed northern boundary for Didsbury East sees the Pytha Fold estate return to Withington ward, where it was, prior to 2004. This brings Withington ward up to size and Didsbury East up to size, and then requires Burnage to spread further north, taking in section of Levenshulme ward, much of which is geographically Burnage, and is part of the area covered by Burnage Good Neighbours and Burnage Community centre.

In the city centre it is disappointing that the St George's area of Hulme has not been included within the "Deansgate" ward to ensure that the whole of the Castlefield community is included within the same ward. Similarly it is disappointing that the Green Quarter and Strageways remain in Cheetham ward, rather than being incorporated into the "Piccadilly" ward. This has obviously proved difficult to configure without creating wards that are either too big or too small. However I would ask that the Boundary Commission consider renaming "Piccadilly" as "Piccadilly and Northern Quarter" or "Northern Quarter and the Village", to reflect the very distinct areas of the Northern Quarter and the Village, and "Deansgate" as "Cathedral and Castlefield" to reflect the 2 most significant historical areas within the proposed new ward.

Kind regards

Councillor John Leech
Liberal Democrat Member for Didsbury West Ward