



Graham Chapman
Labour

Deputy Leader

Councillor for Aspley

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Via email: Dan.Carlsson-Hyslop@lgbce.org.uk

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Dear Mr Carlsson-Hyslop

I am Deputy Leader of the City Council, Councillor for Aspley and an LGA National Peer for East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside. I have mentored over 20 Leaders and Deputy Leaders, mainly of major authorities. I specialise in area working on the City Council, which, in a recent external assessment, obtained extremely good reviews. Indeed, it is outstanding. We are currently helping another major authority to establish its area working systems. I also invented the LGA's Ward walk system which requires outside councillors to do reviews of ward needs and ward working in other authorities. I have personally completed over 20 of these in other authorities.

I say all this not to boast but to illustrate an extensive level of knowledge and experience which I think needs to be given due weight.

First, I will say how happy I and my fellow councillors are with the proposals for Aspley. They make sense.

On other proposals, I will make 3 points:

1. Key to good area working is good partnership with other agencies especially. Key to good partnership is coherent easily understood systems and boundaries. Moving into a system which fragments the city into so many variables will
 - cost
 - reduce effectiveness
 - create confusion

2. I will not go into detail about this because I know the City Council will make a more detailed case. I simply want to state that all my experience in Nottingham and elsewhere supports these conclusions.

Social cohesion

If I am asked what am I most proud of about Nottingham, it is its comparative social cohesion. It is however very fragile especially since Brexit. It needs constant attention and nurturing. In terms of social cohesion, some of the current Commission proposals in the Meadows, in the Park, with the establishment of single member wards will not bring people onto the streets or feed directly into the hands of seasoned extremists, of course not. But it will chisel away at what we have tried to build up in terms of social mix and cross ethnic representation. The proposals for the City Centre, with its very specific demography of people without children and schools; the enclave of the Park+ with its relatively homogenous population; the division of the Meadows into segments, all risk the possibility that representatives will reflect those narrow demographics leaving minorities within those areas feeling less represented, and I refer to minorities both black and white. Wards where people have to cast three or even two votes reduces that risk considerably. A narrow demographic is also unhealthy for the experience and development of the representatives themselves. The city centre rep, for example, will never obtain experience of schools or parenting issues.

In more general terms, I would put it to you that in my own ward, Aspley, which is a predominantly white working class area which has elected an African woman who is making a real contribution to her Aspley electorate, bringing a different perspective in terms of food, domestic skills (she has just set up a sewing club) breaking down barriers across ethnic communities may well not have happened under a single ward system. The same principle applies across the city.

3. Teamwork

Teamwork is critical for giving constituents the best service. A range of councillors in a ward will have a range of attributes upon which constituents can call. I specialise in finance and legal, one of my fellow councillor's community and employment. Moreover, we learn from each other. I have years of experience and contacts. My fellow councillors, who live in the community, have direct community experience and contacts they bring to the table. I have helped induct a newer ward colleague and helped build up her confidence. We flex times for surgeries, which happened only this week, instead of cancellation. We try not to take holidays at the same time to ensure all year round coverage. We motivate each other to go out knocking on doors. It is much easier in a team.

None of this is available in a single member ward and in the end it will be the constituents who will lose out.

Yours sincerely



Graham Chapman
Deputy Leader