

Carlsson-Hyslop, Dan

From: michael edwards [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 January 2018 08:53
To: reviews
Cc: Michael Edwards
Subject: Response to LGBCE recommendations for Nottingham

Michael Edwards,
[REDACTED]

Regarding the proposals for Nottingham, I think the City Council is right in asking for minimum change and the retention of multi-member wards.

Much of the services provided by the council have been organised with the existing ward boundaries in mind. Re-organisation brings cost at a time of financial challenge to the council. Re-organisation that will be based on sophisticated assessments of the impact of future housing developments, but will ignore the significantly higher levels of registration that has been achieved (from the level used) in the determination of new boundaries.

Multi-member wards make it easier for political parties to organise lists of candidates with a better gender and ethnicity mix.

The proposal to split The Meadows was a total surprise and astonished local community reps. So outside of any expectations was it that no-one would have thought that making the case for keeping The Meadows together needed an explicit statement.

The Meadows is served as one by 3 schools, a health centre, a shopping centre, a children's centre, a library, a community centre, a Muslim centre, a community gardens, a youth centre, a leisure centre and probably more.

Only one organisation has proposed dividing the Meadows – the local Conservative party. In proposing change, the local Conservatives did not seek opinion from local Meadows organisations.

LGBCE say - "The Conservative Group also argued that the Meadows itself consists of two distinct communities, represented by two different community groups."

I'm not clear whether by groups LGBCE or the Conservatives means the TRAs, or social groups, but there are problems with both concepts.

OMTRA don't claim to represent the whole of the older Meadows (their boundaries run from Wilford Crescent West to Bathley Street, Glapton Road to Mundella Road); nor is the older Meadows all the same, nor is it all The Embankment (nowhere near).

NemTRA seek to serve the neighbourhood defined by housing built in the seventies, part of which runs into the ward proposed to be called The Embankment.

Meadow Lane is distinctive and also set to become very different as a former industrial area becomes converted to new residential areas.

Nor does the proposed new boundary follow the New Meadows boundary. From Eugene Gardens to Ladysmock Gardens, Radburn style streets will lie outside of the New Meadows ward.

But the New Meadows ward is not homogenous either. What was once Westcroft Meadows is still older Meadows, and the development along Crocus Street is set to be dramatic and very different again.

By the way, part of The Embankment (esp. Carroll Gardens) is proposed for the New Meadows ward, and a tram stop was named Meadows Embankment cos part of the west Meadows is near the river.

I think LGBCE expected a reaction. The report has been shaped by one visit to The Meadows. The report says - "46. In relation to the Meadows, when we visited we were struck by the very sharp contrast between the two parts of the estate and, on balance, consider that single-councillor New Meadows and Embankment wards would better reflect communities in this area. However, we would warmly welcome comments from residents and others on our proposals in this area as part of the consultation on our draft recommendations."

I think LGBCE have completely overlooked how the people regard The Meadows, and how public and the service provide or The Meadows. The Meadows does not need the confusion of 2 wards, nor does it need the division.

They are certainly used to local Councillors taking decisions based on what's best for The Meadows, rather than having to seeking a balance between one-half of The Meadows or the other.

I would add a further concern about naming of the wards. "The Embankment" may have been suggested as a general concept (perhaps reflecting the promenade alongside the River Trent). Using a local prominent feature is often used in wards names - giving a general view rather than aiming to indicate precision. But The Embankment is also a street name, and happens to be the street with the largest and most expensive houses in The Meadows. Carrying the name for a wider area is divisive. Further, The Embankment has also been used to indicate a small neighbourhood in The Meadows, with properties on nearby Woodward Street carrying the name in the address on their deeds. If the proposal to have single member wards is retained, the name must be changed from something so exclusive.

Ditto, New Meadows. Because part of the New Meadows is in the proposed Embankment ward.

Note, Bridge as a name for the local ward has been around for over 100 years and is a general concept rather than indicating anything of exclusive precision. The name has currency - the main shopping precinct in The Meadows is named Bridgeway and the local partnership trust has within the last year renamed itself "Bridges Community Trust".

Returning to Westcroft Meadows, this is only used these days when drawing upon historical records. Indeed, what once was Westcroft Meadows has become in significant part regarded as the city centre (that part proximate to Nottingham Midland railway station) and the part running south to Meadows Way has been referred to by the City Council as the Southern Gateway for over 10 years. The residents of Hicking Building, and of the Picture Works, both on the Queens Road, regard themselves more as city centre than Meadows. City centre policing also includes the Southern Gateway.

The development planned for this area for over a decade is starting to come to fruition. I presume LGBCE has been given best estimates of what may well happen, and I appreciate the difficulties

there are in being able to rely fully on estimates when what one year may be envisaged to be office development could be changed into a residential development.

Currently, I understand the developments to be -

- Hicking phase 2 construction - 350 homes - has begun;
- "Laceworks" - student accommodation with 222 apartments to begin construction in March;
- mid-Traffic Street (50 or so apartments);
- "Vantage" - student accommodation with planning permission for 150 or so apartments being sought;
- "Cresswell site" - flats and student accommodation with planning permission for 400 or so apartments being sought.

Also, there are "Unity Square", "Crocus Square" and "Sentinel" that are currently expected to office developments. What might be proposed for north of the "Cresswell site" and elsewhere along Crocus Street is less known, and on other plots along Traffic Street.

The point is not to challenge the certainty or otherwise of the figures for such developments that the LGBCE has had to use. No doubt, best endeavours have been made.

Rather, it is to express concern about the assertion in the LGBCE report that there is insufficient evidence of a link between the city centre and The Meadows. For the thousands of people who are to live in this area, the overlap will be all too clear. Regarding themselves as living a city centre style life, with much in common with those living north of the railway corridor, but many of them taking advantage of Meadows parks, Meadows Library, Meadows schools and Meadows shops (some in developments closer to the Bridgeway Shopping Centre than most of The Meadows).

The overlap of city centre and The Meadows is all too clear and the retention of a Bridge ward offers advantages.

I think the council were right to advocate a 3 member ward with the whole of The Meadows, Meadow Lane and the city centre.

To divide The Meadows along the lines proposed in the report is wrong.

The naming of wards should remain general rather than imply a degree of precision that will confuse.

Note, I have been a Bridge ward Councillor since October, 2011; worked in an office on Queens Drive from 1984 to 2004 and live in the city centre.