

City of Nottingham**Personal Details:**

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Comment text:

As a resident of Wollaton West ward I would like to say that I am happy that the proposal is to keep the ward intact. It is a good reflection of the Wollaton community which has a strong local identity around Wollaton Village and Wollaton Park. The fact that it remains a three member ward is appropriate, enabling a diversity of councillor representation, which reflects the community. As a current local Councillor for the Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey Ward, I have severe misgivings about the mechanism for deciding on the boundaries by electoral registration rather than population, as it will lead to an under-representation of many of my current constituents, ie students. It will mean that they will have fewer Councillors representing their needs on the Council. We currently have a very active group of Councillors who regularly meet with student representatives to discuss issues relating to the student experience in the City, and these new warding arrangements will mean that there will be fewer councillors speaking up for them in future. However, I do recognise that these criteria are beyond your control, and I do support the proposal for the new Lenton and Wollaton East Ward. I am glad it is a multi-member ward, and I think there is a common interest between many of the residents of the area. Both the current WELA and Dunkirk and Lenton Wards are dominated by two major institutions, the University of Nottingham and the Queens Medical Centre, their activities have a strong influence on the area, for example through displaced parking, their cleansing regime, by their expansion or contraction and through the large amount of people and vehicles which travel to and fro. The fact that there would be a group of Councillors who can share responsibility for tackling these issues with those institutions on behalf of residents will be a very positive factor. The new ward will also be home to a large proportion of the University of Nottingham students, who share an interest in the quality of housing available to them, particularly houses in multiple occupation, the availability of affordable public transport and reduction in crime. The fact that they will be represented by one team of Councillors who will probably represent them from when they arrive at University and live on Campus to when they graduate will simplify things for them. Many residents will share community facilities with students such as the Health Centres at the University of Nottingham and Lenton. The churches in Lenton Abbey, Wollaton Park and Lenton and the Community Centres all serve a mix of local residents and students and there are also great City Council parks which are well used by people from the whole area, for example Highfields is frequented by students living on campus and off, residents of Lenton Abbey, Dunkirk and Lenton, as well as the wider City. Dunkirk Primary School already serves many Lenton Abbey children and would in future be in the same ward. I am very happy that the proposal does not break the area down into single member wards. I believe that single member wards would tend to limit the diversity of Councillors, not just representing the local area, but as a body across the City. The current multi-member system enables a mix of people to become Councillors, representing different communities and people with different interests and experiences. I know, for example, that if I had been faced with being a single member I would not have stood for election when I did, as I was a full time teacher. I would have not felt confident that I could adequately represent the needs of citizens, being able to attend events, meetings and being available when needed. Standing in a two member ward gave me confidence that I would have someone else to call on when I was not available, and this worked very well. I think single member wards would deter younger people from standing because of the perceived demands it would place upon them when they have work and family, I also believe that women would be more reluctant to stand as they often have caring responsibilities which they would feel would be a limiting factor for them. As a woman Councillor I think it is very important to try to give each area the opportunity to elect a woman, I have received a larger number of votes than my male co-councillors on each occasion, and this I believe, is primarily because women want to be represented by a woman. I receive a great deal of casework from women, sometimes of a sensitive nature, and they feel more confident approaching another woman with their concerns. If there are single member wards it will be less easy to provide this option. The same goes for members of ethnic minority populations, the likelihood is that with single member wards there will be less opportunity for ethnic minority members to be elected. I am also aware, as a former Chief Whip, that sometimes it is important to have a multi-member ward because at any time a single member can be affected by things beyond their control. In my experience there have been times when Councillors have had a major operation and been immobile for weeks or months, where they have been taken ill, or a partner or child has been ill and they have been unable to fulfil all their obligations for a period of time. In these circumstances it is really helpful to have a co-Councillor who can step in, take on the majority of the work, representing their citizens, until the member is able to resume their full duties, or until a by-election can be called. In my case my first co-Councillor was a recent graduate in his first job when he was elected, then had the opportunity to take up another role, he found that it was not possible to continue with the same level of commitment and therefore stood down. A by-election was called, but during the interim my constituents still had representation. In a single member ward they would have been left without a Councillor for several weeks.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded