

I am the Member of Parliament for Nottingham South, having served the constituency since 2010 and my comments reflect my knowledge of the local communities affected by these proposals.

Whilst I understand that the recommendations reflect the number of registered electors, I remain very concerned that since the introduction of individual registration there are large numbers of eligible residents missing from the electoral register in Nottingham. Under-registration is a more significant problem in areas with high levels of deprivation and where there is a more transient population and therefore not only will there be inequality of representation but those who struggle to have their voices heard will be further marginalised.

Clifton North and Clifton South

The Commission's proposal continues to divide Clifton estate (an easily identifiable area, originally almost entirely Nottingham City Homes properties, largely built in the 1950s and with a stable population). This is a well-recognised community – local groups are almost all Clifton-wide with residents sharing the same local facilities irrespective of the part of the estate in which they reside. Farnborough Academy is the only secondary school for the local area, the main shopping centre on Southchurch Drive/Green Lane serves the whole estate, as do the library and churches. The Clifton Cornerstone is a focal point for the whole community with two GP surgeries and wider healthcare provision, housing support, advice services and is often used for local public meetings and consultation events. There are a number of Clifton community groups, all of which serve the whole estate, including Friends of the Flower Park, the foodbank and Clifton Family Support Group. I am unaware of any groups which seek to represent specific parts of the estate other than Southchurch Court Tenants and Residents Association which relates to residents in the sole high rise development. The whole of the estate is well connected by buses and the tram.

I note that the Commission rejected a proposal to divide the estate east-west along Southchurch Drive (at para 37) "primarily because we thought many of the shops and facilities on Southchurch Drive would be used by residents on both sides of the road". Precisely the same arguments would apply to the boundary north-south on Green Lane. That said, the proposed Green Lane boundary between Clifton North and South wards is at least clearly identifiable and probably clearer than the current boundary between the two Clifton wards.

The Commission's proposal would also break the community links between neighbourhoods on the other side of Remembrance Way (the A453) for which almost all community facilities - including local schools, health services, shops, community centres and other local services - are located on Clifton estate. However the links between these communities and the estate are less strong than the links within the estate. It should be noted that Clifton Village has its own residents group, church and community centre.

City, Embankment and New Meadows

The proposal to split The Meadows into two separate wards is completely misplaced and strongly opposed by the local community. The Bridges Community Trust (until very recently known as Meadows Partnership Trust) hosted a well-attended public meeting to discuss the

Commission's proposals where there was considerable anger at what they saw as an attempt to divide their community. There was overwhelming support for a single ward covering The Meadows (the area made up of the Commission's two single member wards, Embankment and New Meadows) and with a name that reflects that community and geographic area.

I note the Commission's description in paragraph 46 of "the very sharp contrast between the two parts of the estate" however I would suggest that this relates primarily to the style of housing rather than to two distinct communities. Local residents identify very strongly with 'The Meadows' and Old Meadows' residents would certainly not identify themselves as belonging to the Embankment.

There are numerous shared community facilities serving the whole of the Meadows area including the 3 local primary schools, the Bridgeway shopping centre, the Library, Bridgeway Medical Centre, Portland Leisure Centre, Meadows Youth Centre, places of worship, the Children's Centre and local parks including Queens Walk Recreation ground and the Embankment. Local community groups including the Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens and Queens Walk Community Centre are both run and used by the whole Meadows community with no distinction made between Old and New Meadows residents. The coherent nature of the community is further demonstrated through the numerous cross-estate projects including the award-winning Meadows in Bloom, Greening the Meadows, MOZES community energy company, Meadows History Project, Meadows Tree Project and Pride in The Meadows.

The only groups I could identify that have reflected distinct areas within The Meadows are the tenants and residents associations of which there are, or until very recently were, three: Old Meadows TRA, New Meadows TRA and East Meadows TRA. The joint-working between these groups is demonstrated by the large number of community groups above.

The proposed boundaries between the two wards are also unclear – the inclusion of the St Saviour's area within Embankment is particularly baffling as this is clearly New Meadows housing. The Hicking Building is also quite distinct from the New Meadows but is included in this ward.

The Meadows as a whole shares good transport links to the city centre (and Clifton, West Bridgford etc) with both buses and trams serving and connecting both Old and New Meadows.

The proposed City ward is a clear geographic area made up of numerous discrete communities or multi-occupied blocks of flats eg Cliff Road, Carter Gate, Nottingham One. There are few, if any, community groups covering this area. My concern about this as a single member ward is that the councillor could find it challenging to adequately engage with a highly mobile local population living in inaccessible private residential buildings and this may make it difficult to play an effective representative role in the Council – a point identified within the Commission's own guidance document where it states that "in urban areas, a ward might be so small in area that its councillor might not be able to contribute effectively to the wider business of the council".

Whilst the western boundary of the ward – Maid Marian Way – is easily identifiable, it does not represent a clear distinction between communities. Issues experienced by residents living on the eastern side of Maid Marian Way, on the Ropewalk, off Derby Road and on Standard Hill are very much in common with other parts of the city centre. These areas are included within the Commission's proposed Park ward but are very clearly not part of the Park Estate. This could be overcome by merging the Commission's proposed City and Park wards.

Other parts of the Commission's proposed Park ward such as Castle Marina are also very distinct and share more common features with the city centre blocks than with the Park Estate, for example they are not represented by the Park Estate Board and they are largely inhabited by a young and mobile population, many of whom are privately renting. There are no public transport links from Castle Marina to the Park and non-residents are unable to access the Park Estate from Castle Boulevard by car. Whilst public transport links to Castle Marina are poor, the nearest public transport links are the tram and the infrequent Skylink bus service, both of which provide easy access to the city centre.

Arboretum, Hyson Green, Radford, The Park and St. Ann's

The Commission's proposals for separate Park and Radford wards fail to understand the communities making up the current Radford and Park ward. There are 3 distinct communities: Radford, The Park and Lenton Sands (the area between Derby Road and Ilkeston Road) and the Commission's proposals do not acknowledge the links between them and with the city centre.

As acknowledged in the previous section above, The Park Estate itself is too small to form a ward but the inclusion of other areas – parts of the city centre and Castle Marina – risks poorer representation for those living in those parts of the proposed ward, particularly since they do not have the same established community organisations found in The Park Estate itself. There are very frequent bus services to the city centre along Derby Road and many residents of The Park use city centre facilities which are easily accessible on foot.

I am very concerned by the proposed inclusion of the Churchfield Lane area and 'Players Triangle' in a new Hyson Green ward. This area has always been part of Radford – with its historic links to the Players factory - and is clearly divided from Hyson Green by Alfreton Road. Local residents have no direct public transport links to Hyson Green and have strong links to Radford community facilities including local primary schools, Mellers and Radford Academy, John Carroll Leisure Centre, the Radford and Lenton Library, Radford Medical Centre, All Souls Community Centre and Church and the Radford Unity complex.

Fleet Close, Maun Avenue and Millers and Bakers Court are all only accessible from Hartley Road which the Commission has placed in the Radford ward. Residents of The Student Lodge, purpose-built student accommodation, share similar characteristics to other residents of Radford's many student blocks including St Peter's Court and Raleigh Park. There are no similar complexes in Hyson Green.

Lenton, Wollaton East and Wollaton West

I am broadly supportive of the Commission's proposals in relation to Lenton and Wollaton East although I remain extremely concerned that under-registration, particularly amongst the student population, means that there is a significant problem in electoral equality. Whilst Lenton, Dunkirk, the Wollaton Park Estate and Lenton Abbey are very distinct communities the ward is linked by its shared focus on the University of Nottingham campus and Queen's Medical Centre where many residents work or study. Residents also share use of the local parks at Lenton, Highfields and Lenton Abbey.

Kennington Road and the Southwold estate is a distinct area and this community might identify more closely with the Radford or other Leen Valley neighbourhoods rather than Wollaton East. The population is very diverse, primarily made up of social tenants and unlike the remainder of Lenton and Wollaton East, this area is home to very few student households. It is notable that Radford Children's Centre, which serves both Leen Valley and Radford is located on the Southwold School site and there are good transport links between Radford and the rest of the Leen Valley area. I would therefore suggest that this area either remains within Leen Valley or moves to the Radford ward.

I support the proposal to leave Wollaton West ward unchanged as its current boundaries reflect the community effectively.

Aspley, Bilborough and Leen Valley

Leen Valley ward is largely unchanged in the Commission's proposals (other than the area discussed above) and for reasons of continuity I would support them.