

Herefordshire independents Group response to LGBC (dated November 2012) Draft Proposals

Our Group of Herefordshire Independent Members provide the following comments to The LGBC Draft Proposals (November 2012) for New electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council & submit these comments on Thursday 04th January ahead of the consultation cut off date of 07th January 2012:- Again, the consultation has been hurried & involved the Christmas natural break period.

1. We wish for our previous 'community evidenced based' material as sent 23rd August 2012, to be reconsidered as the undue haste to create Single Ward working across the whole County, will not lead to Effective & Convenient Local Government.
2. The Draft Proposals by The LGBC appear to break community identity whereas such community identities are currently in place with some 'multi-ward member' working successfully bringing communities together during recent years.
3. The Commission should recognise that, prior to Herefordshire Council voting on whether to 'send the letter' to the LGBC requesting consideration of All single Ward Member working, Officers of the Council appeared to have predetermined the outcome by informing Herefordshire's Parish Councils, in advance of Herefordshire Council actually meeting!
4. Glaring examples of how the process has failed, can be found in the mapped areas of Leominster, Ledbury, Hereford City, where multi-ward working has been successfully working & should be allowed to continue.
5. The Draft Proposals will continue to leave unacceptable variances of electorate per Councillor, due to the rigidity of aiming for single ward member working and Herefordshire Council not having its Local Development Plan in place at this time.
6. It appears The Commission is now aiming for a 53 Member Council purely to aid reduction in these variances rather than aiming to make more Effective & Convenient Local government.
7. The proposed Hinton & Hunderton Single Member Ward is divided by the busy A49 Trunk RD with 27,000 traffic movement per 24hr average, and entirely separate communities.
8. Belmont Rural has a live Planning Application in for 85 family houses & County consideration for a Western By-Pass Link Rd which could lead to yet more homes being approved so the proposed % variance could rocket upward.
9. In the North of the County, Richards Castle Parish is not aligned to the proposed Mortimer Ward in any way for its routine Service provision so should be included in the LGBC proposed Kingsland Ward which itself, **should retain a Ward name of Bircher.**
10. Bromyard East & Bromyard West, as individual Ward names are found to be acceptable.
11. Other Ward names should not be aligned to any individual Parish name as this could lead to more confusion.