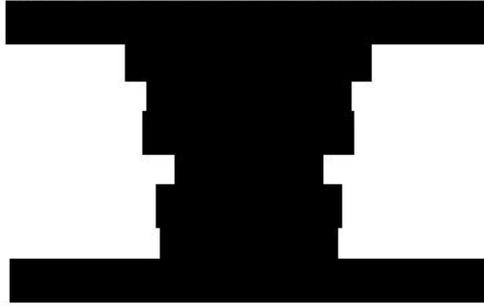


Marcus J. Hart
Leader of the WFDC Conservative Group



22nd June, 2014

Review Officer (Wyre Forest)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1 5LG

Dear Sirs

Re: Electoral Review of Wyre Forest: Draft Recommendations

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to comment on your draft recommendations for the boundaries for the Wyre Forest District.

We note that the decision to hold an 'all out' election in May 2015 and that the decision that the number of council seats will be 33, are decisions previously already taken and that they do not form part of this consultation. For the record, however, the Conservative group support this approach.

Further, for the record, the Conservative group supported a motion to Wyre Forest District Council for 'all out' elections to be held four yearly as opposed to continuing with a cycle of elections by thirds. The Conservative group accept that there was not enough support of councillors within the Council to change the Council's constitution to allow this to happen.

The Conservative Group note and understand that this is reason why the Boundary commission have drawn up proposals for 11 x three member wards, for parity and consistency of the number of elections and councillors per ward to all residents across the district. The Conservative group, therefore, understand, that the Boundary Commission would argue that they have less flexibility for one and two member wards, due to elections by thirds as they would wish to have elector equality in terms of the number of councillors and elections per ward.

The Conservative Group understand therefore, that whatever submissions are made on the proposals, there ultimately are bound to be 11 x three member wards and this issue under consideration, ultimately, is how they are divided across the district.

The Boundary commission will already have had the Conservative Group's initial submission and indeed the Council's previous submission as part of the original consultation.

The Conservative Group does not wish to regurgitate those now as the essence of our reply needs to focus on the Boundary Commission's own draft recommendations.

The Conservative Group agree with the Council's recommendations held at its meeting on 18th June, 2014.

However, the Conservative Group would just like to emphasise the following specific points:-

The Conservative Group does recognise that some of the geographical size of the wards, particularly Wyre Forest Rural is not perfect but understand the reasoning and rationale for doing so. The Conservative group fully supports the position that the Boundary Commission should not include within Wyre Forest Rural, the polling districts of Shatterford (BE – F) and Upper Arley (BE – D) within it.

The Conservative Group feel that the Wyre Forest Rural ward is geographically large enough, without making it unnecessarily any larger. The whole of Upper Arley Parish can be accommodated in the Bewdley and Rock ward and if this were the case would produce a ward of 7547 electors, 1% above electoral equality and then Wyre Forest Rural, a ward of 7209 electors, 3% below electoral equality. In both cases, the wards would remain well within the 10% variance in the Commission's own guidelines and would allow the whole of the parish of Upper Arley to remain in one electoral ward, again in accordance with the Commission's own guidelines.

The Conservative Group feel the Boundary Commission's proposal for the new Aggborough and Spennells ward includes to its northern extremity a triangular area of houses, bounded by Offmore Road, Chester Road North and the railway line. This area would be the only part of the new Aggborough and Spennells ward within the St Georges and St Oswalds County Council Division.

The entire length of Offmore Road, between George Street and Chester Road North, comprises the boundary between the St Georges and St Oswalds County Council Division and the St Chads County Council Division, a previous decision of the Boundary Commission, of which this proposal conflicts. The re-drawing of this boundary to move the area from the proposed Aggborough and Spennells ward to the Offmore and Comberton ward would make an improvement in variance and are in any event, within the Commission's own 10% variance guidelines.

In respect of the Severn Valley ward, the Conservative group is also concerned about a district ward boundary stretching into two separate towns, but notes the Commission's difficulty with the allocation of electors equally in 11 x three member wards and therefore does not seek to interfere with this proposal, save for suggesting that it be called Wribbenhall and Lickhill to represent its communities.

The Conservative group also note that the Sutton Park and Habberley South ward does not contain any part of the Sutton Park Road and question whether this ward is

therefore, now, appropriately named. As the entire Sutton Park Road is to be in the Foley Park and Hoobrook ward we wonder whether this is appropriately named and whether this ought to have reference to Sutton Park in this ward name, ie Sutton Park and Hoobrook.

In conclusion, the Conservative Group do not object to the Boundary Commission's proposals, subject to the geographical amendments of Wyre Forest Rural, Bewdley and Rock and Aggborough and Spennells/Offmore and Comberton, as stated.

Yours faithfully

Marcus J. Hart
Leader of the WFDC Conservative Group
For and behalf of the WFDC Conservative Group