

**BELBROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**(BROMSGROVE DISTRICT)**

**Katie Limm**  
**Clerk**

Review Officer (Bromsgrove)  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

9 April 2013

Dear Sir,

**Electoral arrangements for Bromsgrove District Council**

Belbroughton Parish Council is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Commission's revised proposals for Bromsgrove District Ward boundaries.

The Council is also pleased to note that the Commission has listened to its concerns and those of local residents about the proposals to include Bell Heath in Romsley Ward and is now proposing to place Bell Heath in the Belbroughton and Clent Ward.

However, the Council is dismayed that the consequence of this welcome change is a proposal to abolish Woodvale Ward and place Fairfield in Romsley Ward. Your original proposal to retain Woodvale Ward covering Fairfield, Bournheath and Dodford was entirely in keeping with local community identity and therefore the Parish Council did not comment on it. The revised proposals make no case for abandoning what was considered to be appropriate at that time.

The Council therefore asks the Commission to reconsider its current proposals relating to the district ward for Fairfield. However, the Council has asked me to make clear that it would not want this to lead to a re-examination of the treatment of Belbroughton and Bell Heath and a return to the original flawed proposals in relation to these areas of the parish.

Fairfield has many long-standing ties with Bournheath and Dodford as well as with Belbroughton. The Parish Council has often worked closely with Dodford and Bournheath Parish Councils on issues of local concern, for example planning issues and traffic on local roads. There are many social and other ties, for example many Dodford and Bournheath residents use the post office and shop in Fairfield and there are shared community groups like the Drama Group and Bridge Club. Fairfield has little if any contact with Romsley, Hunnington and Frankley and no shared community with them. The needs and characteristics of these areas are very different from those of Fairfield.

The Parish Council is therefore at a loss to understand the comment in your covering letter that the wards now proposed 'provide for a better reflection of communities than the draft

recommendations in this area'. What evidence does the Commission have that Fairfield has any sense of shared community with Romsley?

Nor would the revised proposals make for stronger boundaries. The three villages of Dodford, Bournheath and Fairfield are almost entirely located to the west of the M5 which forms an identifiable boundary. They share the same rural roads and many of the same local issues- which can be most effectively addressed by the same district councillor.

It is difficult not to conclude that the Commission is more interested in making the numbers fit to suit Bromsgrove District Council's desire for fewer District Councillors than in taking account of the community realities on the ground. Yet the relevant legislation requires the Commission in formulating its proposals to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties. The proposals as they stand simply ride roughshod over local ties. This view is shared by other Parish Councils in the District who voted at the County Association of Local Councils Area meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March to write to the Commission to register their disquiet about the conduct of the review and the disregard for local community interests.

The Council urges you to reconsider these proposals and to ensure that Fairfield is included in a District ward that properly reflects its local ties and community of interests.

Yours faithfully

C E Limm  
Clerk to Belbroughton Parish Council