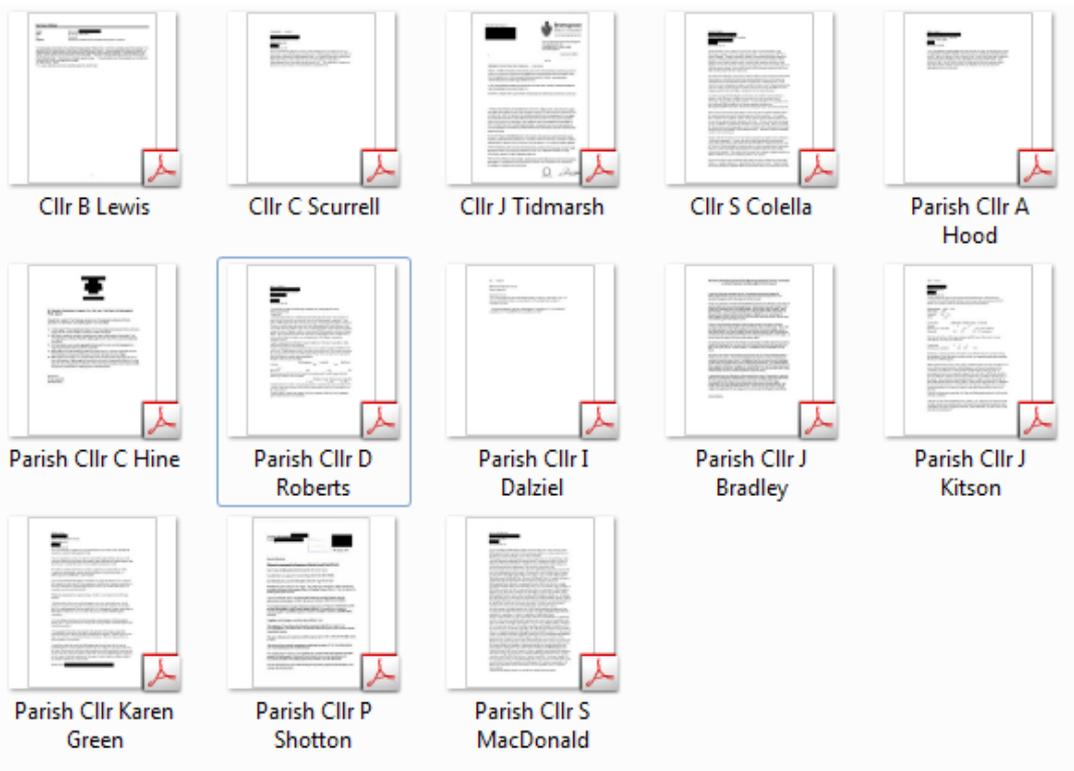


Local Councillors submissions to the Bromsgrove District Council electoral review

This PDF document contains 13 submissions from local councillors.

Some versions of Adobe allow the viewer to move quickly between bookmarks.

Click on the submission you would like to view. If you are not taken to that page, please scroll through the document.



Morrison, William

From: Brian Lewis [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 January 2013 19:52
To: Reviews@
Subject: PROPOSED BELBROUGHTON PARISH BOUNDARY CHANGES

I am particularly concerned by the number of people asking "What is this - I don't know anything about this proposal". It is apparent that the dissemination of information to the electorate is flawed. Having explained the proposal to people it is evident that the scheme put forward is not welcomed, particularly when Frankley is included. Using the A491 is a red herring, surely, if there is to be a boundary why not the M5? Frankley is virtually Birmingham area as is Hunnington, a West Midlands buffer. I fear there is an ulterior agenda at play. I do understand why so many people are worried and consider this to be the thin edge of the wedge.

Cllr Brian Lewis, B.D.C.

P.S. Local residents did not know anything about this until 4th Jan.

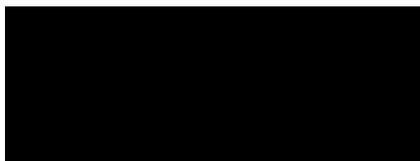
christopher scurrell

[REDACTED]
Belbroughton Parish Council
Parish councillor

[REDACTED]

31/12/2012 11:59

If it accepted that the District Council ward boundaries have to change in the way proposed, I accept that the proposed allocation of Belbroughton Parish Councillors is good, with 6 allocated to Belbroughton Ward, 6 to Fairfield Ward and 2 to the (new) Bell Heath Ward. I believe that the ratio of Fairfield Ward Councillors to Belbroughton Ward Councillors should remain 1 to 1. This required to continue the democratic representation of ward members in Fairfield ward



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RECEIVED

37 JAN 2013

3.1.13.

BROMSGROVE ELECTORAL MAP PROPOSALS 2013-01-03

History :- In 1996 or thereabouts, the Authority came to the conclusion that as District Councillor for Stoke Prior, which then incorporated the largely new housing development at Stoke Heath arising from the abandonment of the proposed Bromsgrove Southern By Pass, I was numerically representing an unacceptable large number of voters.

In the resulting split of the Ward into Stoke Prior and Stoke Heath I opted to continue to represent the old established community of Stoke Prior.

Stoke Prior is largely a farming community encompassing the world famous Salt Works of yesteryear

, forming a natural largely self contained community with a village centre, school, Doctor's surgery, Post Office and a variety of shops; Each making its contribution to the harmonious atmosphere that prevails to-day. With the demise of the world famous Salt Works, local employment is now largely provided by the world famous Harris Brush Company (the founder's son has just been awarded a C.B.E. for services to the community), Saxon Industrial Estate, Harris Industrial Estate, Metals & Ores Industrial Estate, John Corbett Industrial Estate ... all supplemented by commercial start up units. Co-operation is achieved through Stoke Prior Business Association (it also abuts Buntsford Hill industrial complex

Avoncroft Museum of Old Buildings forms the cultural centre attracting visitors from far & wide, we have a canal-side leisure boat business, an excellent Stoke Prior First School, working to capacity, and feeding Bromsgrove School is their prep school also located in the old John Corbett residence.

There are numerous well maintained recreational areas, and the commercial canal running through the Parish has been converted to recreational use, with many delightful hostelrys providing refreshment, supplementing the village watering holes.

The now defunct Polymer-latex complex, is being made safe for development and is currently being demolished – a development company proposes to develop into a residential site, and are busy consulting with residents and the Authority.



The contribution to B.D.C is therefore a combination of employment, residential, educational and leisure --- a most sought after area.

REC
07 JAN 2013

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Stoke Heath bordered by the busy Redditch Road, is largely a commuter belt, with no community centre, schools, shops etc. being bordered by Charford (a complete contrast) and Rock Hill to which through links to the town centre it more logically associates. There are few if any social activities which link neighbours, such as regularly happens in Stoke Prior.

The newly created Stoke Parish Council struggles to achieve harmony between Prior and Heath.

Thoughts are Stoke Prior should remain a separate entity, and the division of Bromsgrove District and Wychavon of Stoke Prior by the artificial boundary of Shaw Lane merits priority.

Review Officer (Bromsgrove),

Local Government Boundary Commission for England,

Layden House,

Turnmill Street,

LONDON EC1M 5JG.

Steven Colella

[REDACTED]
District Councillor and Hagley resident
[REDACTED]

12/12/2012 21:17

"Single member wards will favour/encourage older and retired members and discourage working or busy but enthusiastic people. I am concerned as I'm a typical example. Younger councillors should be encouraged but require support to manage work loads and become involved in local politics and community affairs. Had this been a single member ward I would be under immense pressure to meet deadlines so that the electorate is represented adequately. Please record this proposal will discourage younger, professional people from becoming councillors and favour older retired people who have spare time.

From the point of Hagley ward I agree with the addition of Western Rd and Newfields Pinewoods etc (currently in Clent ward) and repeat that there are a few houses in Thickenall Lane etc that should logically be included too. Putting them in a ward where the centre of population is quite a number of miles away is illogical and open to criticism. Please record that the few houses chosen not to be in the Hagley Ward is changed and put back into Hagley, irrespective of the target electorate.

I would encourage that the Hagley ward remains two member wards (similar to Rubery) as the character of Hagley is consistent across the ward and is more effectively managed through both members. As described above two members will have different skills (irrespective of current members) and therefore complement each other, effectively meeting the many needs of the electorate.

If the current twin hatted wards (district wide) were split it could unbalance the representation and unfairly disadvantage one of the councillors. For example there could be a mix of houses, shops, schools, doctors and highways issues on one side as opposed to pure housing on the other. This gives an unfair advantage to one or unbalances communities which have evolved over time. Please record that the characteristics and demographics of the ward splits will be detrimental to both the electorate and ward member as described previously. Therefore current two member wards are to be maintained.

I believe that the boundary review has been done purely on numbers and a subjective 2,400 and is premature. I believe that this is flawed and based on no particular reason other than reducing the number of elected members. Had the electorate count be 3,000 or 3,500 per member it would result in a council membership of somewhere between 32 and 39 members but maintain two member wards with a small reduction in members. This method will increase the workload of Hagley members to 6000 or 7000 electorates but still manageable in my opinion.

It is not clear how using households rather than electorates would have changed the balance i.e. single occupancy vs. households with multi-electorates. Options should have been presented so members had a choice both in their own wards and across the

district and could see the impact. Can you record that options should have been presented looking at the impact of using electorate vs households and the method of 'cutting up' the district is flawed and subjective.

I also believe that the parish boundaries should follow the district council revised boundary i.e. Hagley Parish Council incorporates Western Rd, Pinewood Ave etc (currently in Clent Parish Council and become effective from April 2013).

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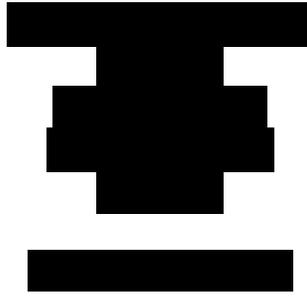
allan hood

[REDACTED]
Belbroughton Parish Counciller

Member of the public

[REDACTED]
09/12/2012 19:08

"AS A RESIDENT AND PARISH COUNCILLOR WE ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF BELBROUGHTON PARISH AND USE LOCAL SCHOOLS, CHURCH, POST OFFICE, RESTAURANTS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES. HISTROY SHOWS THAT BELL HEATH, BELL END, MADELEY HEATH, NEWTOWN, AND HOLLIES HILL, HAVE BEEN PART OF BELBROUGHTON PARISH SINCE BEFORE SAXON TIMES AND I WOULD PREFER TO STAY PART OF BELBROUGHTON VILLAGE."



Re: Boundary Commission's proposal of a third ward -Bell Heath in Belbroughton Parish Council

I would like to submit the following comments on the proposal to allocate 2 Parish Councillors to Bell Heath; 6 to Belbroughton + 6 to Fairfield:

1. I fully support the proposal and believe this to be a logical outcome as there is to be no change to the overall numbers of electors within the Parish
2. Bell Heath residents consider themselves as living in Belbroughton [as evident from correspondence with BC] Therefore Belbroughton will retain their overall number [8] councillors
3. Fairfield Ward covers a wide geographical area with a more scattered population - requiring retention of its current 6 councillors
4. Belbroughton [inc Bell Heath] already has a majority 8 - 6 and can currently outvote Fairfield where there is a difference of interest between the two villages
5. Belbroughton Councillors are using the discussion raised by the above issue to try to raise the number of Belbroughton Councillors to 9 whilst reducing Fairfield to 5 on the basis of ratio of Councillors to Electors. This is not practical and would I believe nullify the position of Fairfield in shaping policy within the Parish

Carol Hine
Parish Councillor
Fairfield Ward

Dave Roberts

Belbroughton Parish Council

19/12/2012 03:49

"I would like to make the following comments on your proposals for the Belbroughton Ward

1 Bell End.

You have placed the area of Bell End in the Romsley DC ward. The residents of Bell End are historically and currently part of the Belbroughton community. They look to Belbroughton for their educational, social, recreational and religious activities. I believe you have taken this area out of the Belbroughton DC ward because of the size of the electorate. If this is the case I would suggest that a better solution would be to place the area of Hagley which is in the proposed Belbroughton ward into a Hagley Ward. This would also increase the electorate in what appears to be a small ward. I believe these Hagley residents are an integral part of the Hagley community.

2 Parish Council

Under your proposals the Parish Council would have 3 District Councillors to deal with which I believe is not efficient.

Under your proposals a new Parish Council ward would be formed in Bell End with effectively 2 Belbroughton Parish Councillors being allocated. This would accentuate the current position where the Belbroughton Ward, which incorporates the proposed Bell End Ward, is already under represented:

Number of electors per councillor

	Belbroughton	Fairfield	Bell End
Current	168		129
n/a			
Proposed	176	129	141

If your proposals for the Parish Council are implemented I would suggest that the following would be a more equitable:

	Number of seats / Electors per councillor		
	7 / 151	5 / 155	2 / 141

I understand that you have no legal requirement to maintain the same maximum 10% variance target that you have at District level but I believe that it is reasonable to use the same criteria.

I believe there is significant support for these comments from the local community and would welcome your comments

"

Ian Dalziel

Belbroughton Parish Council
Parish councillor

03/01/2013 15:21

"The current proposals mean that Belbroughton will have 6 councillors (1 per 176 electors), Fairfield will have 6 councillors (1/129) and Bell End will have 2 councillors (1/142).

A fairer distribution would be, Belbroughton 7 councillors (1/151), Fairfield 5 councillors (1/155) and Bell End 2 councillors (1/142)."

Boundary Commission Proposals for Bromsgrove District Council: Comments on linked Proposals for Belbroughton Parish Council

I have the following comments on the Commission's proposed changes to Belbroughton Parish Council which form part of its recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Bromsgrove District Council.

Firstly, the proposal to include Bell Heath/Bell End in the new Romsley ward does not seem sensible on the ground as regards your "identity and interests" criterion. Bell Heath has significant links with Belbroughton, and to some extent Fairfield, rather than Romsley. I believe local residents are putting together further information on this point, but I believe that links are stronger in relation to, e.g., schooling, for Belbroughton Primary School, for the local Post office and other shops, and to make use of Belbroughton Recreation Centre.

Further, the proposal to separate off Bell Heath seems to be made to limit the numbers in the new Belbroughton and Clent Ward, which is rather large. This could be better achieved, I think, by including in one or both of the new Hagley wards – both rather small - the area of Hagley around Western Avenue which is proposed to (continue to) be included in Clent Parish, but whose natural identity is with Hagley. (I haven't done the sums, but the principle seems right.)

It would also be awkward for the Parish Council to deal with three District Councillors instead of the present two, on top of the two County Councillors who represent the area. We try to "join up" with all of them. This factor is not as important, but not trivial.

Secondly, the number of Councillors proposed for the new Wards of Belbroughton Parish Council is awry. The present disparity between the number of electors per councillor would be made worse. I understand that the end result of your proposals would be for this number to be 129 in Fairfield but worsened to 176 in Belbroughton. This would be rectified by changing the representation to 5 Fairfield Councillors and 7 Belbroughton Councillors, assuming, as would be fair, 2 for the new Bell Heath Ward, if that change were to be made despite the argument above.

I appreciate there are difficulties in forecasting future sizes of electorates in general, allowing for prospective developments. I think your numbers make some allowance for the proposed development by Cala Homes near the A456/A491 Hagley roundabout, but we do also have prospective developments in Belbroughton, at 2 Hartle Lane and at the old Nash Works site. These are not, of course, as big as Hagley, but significant for our village, and would worsen the disparity noted above.

James Bradley

John Kitson

██████████
Parish councillor
██████████

29/12/2012 13:43

"I fully support the aim of equal representation but disagree with removing 2 councillors from Belbroughton Parish Council to provide representation for Bell Heath. The wards are split into the following electoral numbers:-

Belbroughton	1054)	1341
Bell Heath	287)	
Fairfield	774	774
Total		2115

Councillors	Bell Heath	Belbroughton	Fairfield
Present	8	6	
Electors per councillor		167	129 29% variation
Proposed	143	175	129 35% variation

This flies in the face of fair representation and the basis of the review you are undertaking. The only just solution is

Councillors	2	7	5
Electors per councillor	143	150	154

If nothing is done the position will only be exacerbated when two current housing developments Nash Lane and Jewellery Factory are completed adding about another 30 electors to Belbroughton.

Belbroughton Ward focuses on the village of Belbroughton but many parishoners live in the rural surrounds but believe Belbroughton is the natural focal point of the community. Bell Heath is an integral part of Belbroughton with the A491 not presenting the barrier your proposals suggest. I do not believe Bell Heath should be moved to Romsley at district level as the residents have no affinity with this part of the county. Any councillor representing Romsley is unlikely to have knowledge of Bell Heath and this proposed split is likely to offer poorer representation. To maintain the levels of representation it would be better for the parts of Hagley that is in Clent and Belbroughton to be taken into Hagley rather than Bell Heath to be moved to Romsley.

I do not see having one councillor for Clent and Belbroughton and one for Woodvale as being a problem

I BELIEVE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS REVIEW SHOULD BE TO EQUALISE THE REPRESENTATION BETWEEN BELBROUGHTON AND FAIRFIELD ON THE PARISH COUNCIL AND FOR BELL HEATH NOT TO BE MOVED TO ROMSLEY"

Karen Green

[REDACTED]
Belbroughton Parish Council
Parish councillor

[REDACTED]
05/01/2013 14:17

"Re: The Boundary Commission s recommendation that a third ward of Bell Heath should be created in Belbroughton Parish.

I do not support the creation of a third ward in Belbroughton Parish, because of the concerns of Bell Heath residents that it makes them vulnerable to further changes, and also because I consider the area to be too small to function as a ward.

Nevertheless, if this third ward is created, I support the recommendations of the Commission regarding the number and distribution of Parish Councillors, i.e. Belbroughton 6, Bell Heath 2, and Fairfield 6.

I am concerned that Belbroughton councillors are using this debate to try to increase their majority on the council. Their arguement is that the ratio of parish councillors to electors should be the same throughout parish wards. This would entitle them to 9 councillors in total, and Fairfield to 5.

Whilst this arguement has numerical logic, I believe it is wrong for the following reasons:

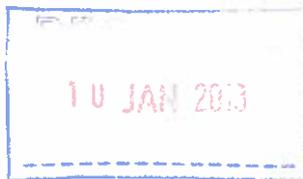
1. Bell Heath has been a part of Belbroughton since the early middle ages. It will remain so even if it is designated a separate parish ward. Its residents consider that they live in Belbroughton, and are proud to do so. Designating 2 parish councillors for Bell Heath would not in any way reduce the present number of Belbroughton councillors.
2. As no changes are proposed to the boundaries and population of Belbroughton Parish, there is no logical reason to change the existing numbers of Belbroughton and Fairfield councillors.
3. An arguement based on ratios ignores the question of how many councillors Fairfield needs to be able to effectively represent its residents. Fairfield covers a very large area and has a scattered distribution of residents. This fact alone justifies its present number of councillors.

I would also make the point that Belbroughton has always been able to outvote Fairfield on the occasions when the interests the two villages are not perceived to be the same. The greater to difference in the numbers of ward councillors, the greater the power of the one, and the weakness of the other. To increase Belbroughton s majority on the council would be undemocratic, because it would, I believe, render Fairfield incapable of influencing council policy.

Karen Green, [REDACTED]

Telephone Belbroughton [REDACTED]

E-mail [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
8th January 2013

Dear Mr Morrison,

Electoral arrangements for Bromsgrove District Council Parish Wards

I have been a Belbroughton Parish Councillor for over 25 years.

I confirm that I am opposed to Council being divided into three Wards.

Bell Heath has been part of Belbroughton since the Anglo Saxon days.

Hell Heath residents "live" in the village. They shop here, attend Holy Trinity Church and send their children to Belbroughton Church of England Primary School. They also attend the Belbroughton public Houses.

I and my colleagues believe that placing Bell Heath into another District Ward for administrative convenience will be to the serious detriment of Bell Heath residents.

Your recommendations for parish electoral arrangements if 3 wards are created in the parish are that Belbroughton Parish Council should comprise 14 Councillors, as at present, representing three wards Belbroughton 6 members, Fairfield 6 members, and Bell Heath 2 members.

I together with Colleague councillors take a different view.

The majority of Councillors at the Council meeting last night did not support your recommendations. We believe that it would reduce electoral equality and worsen an already inequitable situation.

The ratio of electors to Councillors in Belbroughton ward is 168:1 whilst for Fairfield ward it is 129:1.

The proposed new warding arrangement would result in ratios of 176:1 for Belbroughton; 129:1 for Fairfield and 141:1 for Bell Heath.

We consider that it would be more equitable, and consistent with the democratic principles adopted by the Boundary Commission for the District review, that the allocation of Councillors should be 7 for Belbroughton 5 for Fairfield and 2 for Bell Heath.

We also noted that new small scale housing developments proposed for Belbroughton will increase the electorate here.

The 6 Parish Councillors representing Fairfield supported the recommendations for parish councillor allocations.

They consider that since no changes are being proposed to the boundaries or population of the parish there is no reason to change the respective numbers of Belbroughton and Fairfield Councillors.

Faifield ward covers a large rural area with scattered residents and this justifies a higher ratio of Councillors.

Fairfield Councillors argued that since Bell Heath identifies closely with Belbroughton there would effectively be 9 Belbroughton Councillors if Belbroughton has 7 and Bell Heath 2.

Reducing Fairfield Councillor numbers to 5 would reduce their ability to represent their residents effectively and the influence that Fairfield could have on parish council decision making.

I hope that the Commission will give careful consideration to my comments.

I look forward to receiving your final recommendations.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul R B Shotton

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

Scott MacDonald

Parish councillor

16/12/2012 09:12

"I am a resident in Belbroughton village and since May 2011 I have served on the Belbroughton Parish Council but I am writing personally as a resident and I am not attempting to speak for the PC or any other councillors.

With regards to the wider Bromsgrove restructuring I have no strong feelings either way but I support the principle of what the review is seeking to achieve by way of balancing voter representation by councillors across the District whilst taking into account natural distinct communities. The aim feels instinctively fair.

My interest and concern relates to the impact the published proposal if accepted, will have on Belbroughton Parish Council. The proposal is for Fairfield Ward to remain unchanged but for Belbroughton Ward to be split to create a smaller Belbroughton Ward and a new Bell Heath Ward. The new Bell Heath Ward is to enable that area to join Romsley District Ward but for the residents to continue to be part of Belbroughton Parish. Romsley is separated from the Bell Heath area by a natural geographic boundary that is the Clent Hills and in my conversations with a number of Bell Heath residents they have expressed their desire to remain part of Belbroughton Parish because that is the community in which they socialise, their children attend Belbroughton Primary School, they worship at Belbroughton Church, etc. Accepting all of the above if it is necessary for Bell Heath to be within Romsley District Ward to fit the bigger Bromsgrove picture then that is understood and I accept the principle of the Bell Heath Ward with 2 dedicated councillors. It will be good for the Parish Council to have that area represented deliberately rather than by chance.

My real concern is that allowing for the 2 Bell Heath councillors the proposal then recommends Fairfield Ward retain its 6 parish councillors and Belbroughton Ward is reduced to 6 councillors ie it loses 2 councillors to Bell Heath Ward.

Analysis of the number of voters registered on the Electoral Roll that was updated in Oct/Nov 2012 show that Bell Heath would have the correct ratio of councillors with 14% of available councillors representing 13.5% of voters, Belbroughton would have 50% of voters but only 43% of available councillors and Fairfield would have 36.5% of voters but 43% of available councillors. By reducing the Fairfield ward councillors from 6 to 5 and increasing the Belbroughton ward councillors from 6 to 7 the ratios of voters to available councillors would be a match. It is also worth noting that planning permission has been granted in Belbroughton village for 12 new homes with an application for a further 10 new homes expected in early 2013. These new voters will further accentuate the imbalance in local representation if the current proposal stands. My request is that the Boundary Commission amends the current proposal for the reasons I have explained via my analysis of the numbers to the Belbroughton and Fairfield Wards of the Parish Council to deliver equitable representation for taxpayers at the lowest rung of government. I would like Belbroughton Ward to have 7 parish councillors and Fairfield Ward to have 5 parish councillors. This minor change will have no impact on the cost of implementing the review outcome, it will keep the same overall Parish Councillor numbers for Belbroughton PC and most importantly will deliver the stated goals of the wider BDC review ie equitable voter to councillor representation.

I thank you for taking the time to consider my straight forward request.

Regards,
Scott MacDonald 16/12/12"