

To: Reviews@

Subject: Review of Belbroughton & Fairfield Wards

I make the following comments on the revised proposals for the single member wards.

Firstly I am particularly pleased to see that the Commission has listened to local concerns regarding moving the area of Bell Heath into Romsley and now propose keeping Bell Heath as part of Belbroughton.

The principal of equal representation is I believe accepted and reasonable. When reading the comments from the electorate of Belbroughton it is evident that there is a strong view that there should be equal representation at Parish level. The commission made comments regarding the make-up of Belbroughton Parish Council when Bell Heath was to be a separate ward. The majority view seemed to be that the overall ward of Belbroughton was under represented on the Parish Council. Belbroughton has 1341 electors and Fairfield 774 with the present council split 8-6. There are therefore 167 electors per councillor in Belbroughton and 129 in Fairfield. To give parity there should be 9 councillors representing Belbroughton and 5 representing Fairfield. However to ensure Fairfield has adequate representation I believe the overall Council should be reduced to 13 Councillors with 8 representing Belbroughton and 5 Fairfield. This would give the ration of 167 for Belbroughton and 154 for Fairfield. I would ask that the commission makes a recommendation on this proposal. In the absence of any comment the electorate may well ask for Bromsgrove District Council to undertake a separate review of the position which would only increase costs further.

I would also like to make comment upon the proposal to put Fairfield into Romsley. I do not believe this is a perfect solution although I do not have access to the electoral numbers to know how the maths works out. The problem is that this is a particularly large rural area with two main communities Romsley and Fairfield. Road communications are reasonable but there is little else that joins the two communities and it will be nearly impossible to find one individual who has sufficient knowledge of both areas to adequately reflect the views of both communities. The result will be that the community that has their representative living in their area will receive the best representation. I would prefer to see the wards of Romsley, Frankley and Huntingdon being divided into Wards with Fairfield being in a ward with part of Dodford. Although this may mean one extra ward and another Councillor I believe the extra cost would be outweighed by the better representation that would ensue. If the number of Councillors is set in stone then dual representation should be considered with Fairfield going into Perryfields with dual representation and Romsley, Frankley & Huntingdon being divided into two rather than 3 wards.

The proposed ward of Belbroughton and Clent has much stronger natural ties with their being integration between the two communities and the revised proposals for this ward are probably the best solution to the problem.

Kind regards

John Kitson

Local resident and Belbroughton Parish Councillor