

To The Local Government Boundary Commission,

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for your efforts in putting together the interim proposals for the new wards that will make up Birmingham City Council.

I, as Member of Parliament for Birmingham Erdington, would like to add my support to these sensible proposals which, I believe, will strengthen democracy for our Local Government in Erdington.

It is my belief that these new boundaries respect the community identities of Erdington and will enable for a sense of unity and, as such, fair representation in Birmingham City Council. I am confident that the Councillors who represent these newly organised wards will do so in a way that allows every person, and every community in Birmingham a voice on the Council.

Turning now to your detailed proposals, I have some comments about some wards in my constituency. I will take them in turn:

Castle Vale

Castle Vale is a vibrant and united community that is characterised by countless local enterprises, unions and public services. The Castle Vale Community Housing Association and the Castle Vale Tenants and Residents Association provide for a close link between many of the residents whilst all the schools in the area are linked. A one-member ward would allow this tight-knit community to be well represented on the Council.

Erdington

The proposed Erdington ward really contains two communities: Erdington and Abbeyfields. Both areas have all the hallmarks of a local community but are too small to be given the status of one-ward wards each because of the overall constraints laid down by Government of reducing the number of Councillors from 120 to 101. It is the sharing of Erdington High Street as well as other facilities like the local library and leisure centre as well as St Edmund Campion School, which the two communities have in common, which makes for a natural fit in one ward.

Kingstanding

This proposal brings back together the two Kingstanding communities that were separated in previous boundary changes. The community is brought together by two key focal points: Christ the King Church – which, together with the St John's Centre, is used by a variety of groups – and Kingstanding Leisure Centre. A series of other third sector and community organisations link Kingstanding's population and justify a two-member ward.

Perry Common

The new ward would be a collection of three well-established but demographically similar communities: Wryley Birch Estate, Perry Common and New Oscott. Due to their respective sizes they cannot have wards of their own but their geographical proximity and demographic similarity rightly justify a one-member ward.

Pype Hayes

The three separate communities – Pype Hayes Estate, Pitts Farm Estate and the housing to the rear of the Baggot Arms pub – that make up this new ward are too small, as in Perry Common, to warrant three wards. Whilst the Pype Hayes Estate is by far the biggest residential area, all three share Pype Hayes Park as well as the popular shopping street of Chester Road. To fit within Governmental constraints on the number of Councillors, the best strategy is to constitute this area as a one-member ward.

Short Heath

Short Heath Park is the bridge between the Court Farm Estate and Topcroft Estate. Both these areas have similar style and aged housing and residents use the park, the local schools and shopping equally. They come together to make up a one-member ward.

Stockland Green

The new two-member ward brings together a number of communities that use common shopping, public services and open spaces. It is clearly defined in geographical terms, largely by M6, Gravelly Hill and the Sutton New Road, all of which act as natural barriers.

Tyburn

The proposed one-member Tyburn ward groups three communities: Birches Green, Erdington Hall and the Limes. There are some very strong community ties that bind these three neighbourhoods together such as the shared local shops situated on the Bromford Road; Kingsbury Secondary School; Erdington Hall Children's Centre; the Midland Medical Partnership Doctors Surgery on Wood End Road, together with the very distinct geography of the three communities.

Finally, in supporting the broad thrust of your proposals, I am heavily influenced by the 30 community organisations with whom I have spoken, all of whom support your proposals with only minor reservations on the part of two of them. Of the hundreds of local people I have spoken to or have been written to by, only three have said they oppose your proposals. My view is a Member of Parliament should listen very carefully to such representations, reflecting as they do distinct community identities. Can I therefore once again reiterate my thanks to all that have been involved in presenting these proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Jack Dromey.

Jack Dromey
Member of Parliament for Birmingham, Erdington