

SUBMISSION TO THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council believe that our District Council are in favour of creating a “three Member Ward” policy throughout the District and propose that Wolverley and Cookley should be joined with an already large geographical area including Churchill to Chaddesley extending to the borders of Spennells.

Whilst we appreciate that there may be financial savings to be made in this way and it can give good representation in **Urban** areas, Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council believe that this is a most unsatisfactory situation in **Rural** areas, where the number of voters may fall a little short of the ideal, but a very large geographical area has to be covered. Bearing this in mind the Parish Council believes that Wolverley and Cookley should remain as a “two Member” ward having a total registered electorate of nearly 4000 plus zoned development at the Lea Castle site in Cookley and affordable housing in Wolverley amounting to at least 50 extra dwellings. This can be further justified because of its very special situation in relation to tourism and holiday accommodation, both of which give rise to greater demands on its representation than is normally the case. If we can refer to your document (delivering electoral equality for local voters) where you state that electoral equality is the ideal yet you recognise that this is unlikely to be exactly achieved and this is the situation we now find ourselves in.

This quite large Parish community, having a very long history dating back to the 9th century, is bounded largely by the A449 and A442 roads and supports two Primary Schools and one High School. It embraces many tourist attractions including the Kingsford Forest Park, the very popular and busy Bodenham Arboretum, the Staffordshire/Worcestershire Canal, the World War Two underground factory and Cold War seat of regional government and is dissected by the very popular Worcestershire Way that begins in the North-East of the Parish and ends in Malvern Hills.

Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council firmly believe that to be most effective a District Councillor should have an intimate knowledge of the needs of the area and its communities and that the District Council’s proposals simply cannot meet this qualification. Indeed, it is perfectly possible that the three elected Members for the new Ward to be proposed by the District Council, ranging from Wolverley to Spennells, could all reside at the opposite end of this huge geographical area. If this should happen then the Parish of Wolverley and Cookley would surely be poorly represented.

Furthermore, since there would be at least 4 Parish Councils included in this large area proposed by the District Council it would leave the District Councillors having to attend too many Parish Council meetings every month in addition to their District Council duties, thus diminishing the quality of the relationship between the Parish and District Councils.

Finally, we do hope that you can agree that to regard the outlying Parishes to be the same as the urban parts of the district is to misunderstand the differences between them and leaves the rural areas relatively under –represented and we respectfully ask you to allow Wolverley and Cookley to become a 2 Member Ward in its own right.