

**Staffordshire County Council  
Submission on Warding  
Patterns – Response to LGBC  
Draft Proposals**

**October 2023**

# Contents

<b>Background</b> .....	3
<b>Cannock District</b> .....	4
<b>East Staffordshire Borough</b> .....	4
<b>Lichfield District</b> .....	7
<b>Newcastle under Lyme District</b> .....	7
<b>South Staffordshire District</b> .....	7
<b>Stafford District</b> .....	8
<b>Staffordshire Moorlands District</b> .....	11
<b>Tamworth District</b> .....	12
<b>Rationale</b> .....	13

## **Background**

To create Staffordshire's officers' response to the LGBCE proposals, officers have again collaborated with our elected members, listening to feedback and seeking additional community insight.

The remainder of this paper provides Staffordshire County Council's (SCC) response to the LGBCE Draft Proposals across the eight districts and boroughs of Staffordshire, outlining where we agree with the proposals, and including counterproposals where we do not.

## **Cannock District**

We support the recommendations made by the LGBCE, noting that the two submissions had many shared boundaries. Some of the differences are open spaces, which SCC considered during the consultation phase, that do not affect electorate numbers and provide improved coterminosity with the new ward boundaries.

The LGBCE proposal for Cannock Chase is broadly in accordance with what SCC submitted in March 2023 whereby we provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

## **East Staffordshire Borough**

We note that the LGBCE proposal for East Staffordshire is in accordance with the SCC proposal with the exception of the boundary between Burton Town and Burton Trent.

We support the recommendations of the LGBCE, on the basis that the proposed boundaries for Burton Town and Burton Trent provide improved coterminosity with the new ward boundaries, and use the railway line as a strong, natural boundary.

Furthermore, the LGBCE proposals for East Staffordshire are broadly in accordance with what SCC submitted in March 2023 whereby we provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

## **Burton Town**

The LGBCE proposal places Shobnall in the Burton Town division, rather than the Burton Trent division as proposed by SCC. During the consultation phase SCC had considered the option proposed by the LGBCE but rejected it due to the resulting electoral inequality. If, however, the LGBCE is minded to accept a variance of 13% then SCC supports their proposal on the following grounds:

- 1) The railway line forms a strong, natural boundary between the two divisions.
- 2) Coterminosity is improved, as Burton Town division would be coterminous with the new wards of Burton & Eton and Shobnall.

## **Burton Trent**

The LGBCE proposal places Shobnall in the Burton Town division, rather than the Burton Trent division as proposed by SCC. During the consultation phase SCC had considered the option proposed by the LGBCE but rejected it due to the resulting electoral inequality. If, however, the LGBCE is minded to accept a variance of -9% then SCC supports their proposal on the following grounds:

- 1) The railway line forms a strong, natural boundary between the two divisions.
- 2) Coterminosity is improved, as Burton Trent division would be coterminous with the new wards of Anglesey and Stapenhill.



## **Lichfield District**

We note that there were changes to Lichfield City Council in May 2023, whilst the LGBCE was considering its recommendations.

We note that the LGBCE proposal for Lichfield completely aligns with the SCC proposal, and we are therefore in agreement with the proposal.

The proposal submitted by SCC in March 2023 provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

## **Newcastle under Lyme District**

We support the recommendations made by the LGBCE which are broadly in accordance with what SCC submitted in March 2023, with minor changes across four divisions in the north of the district, whereby we provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

## **South Staffordshire District**

We support the recommendations made by the LGBCE which completely align with the proposal SCC submitted in March 2023 whereby we provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

## **Stafford District**

We note that the LGBCE proposal for Stafford is based on the submission by the Stone Labour Party, noting that the submission had little in common with the SCC proposal.

We do not support the recommendations by the LGBCE. The proposal does not appear to consider the differences between urban and rural wards. Making the rural parts of Stafford too large makes representation significantly more difficult.

We therefore urge the LGBCE to reconsider the submission of SCC from March 2023 or alternatives that would improve effective and convenient local government.

## **Eccleshall & Gnosall**

As above, we do not believe that the proposal for Eccleshall satisfies the criteria of effective and convenient local government.

## **Stafford West & Rural**

We disagree with the recommendations for this division for the reasons set out above.

## **Stafford South East**

We do not support the recommendations for this division for the following reasons.

Walton on the Hill – We suggest Walton-on Hill to be part of Stafford South East Division. The community value arises from Walton High School

consisting of a majority of the pupils that reside in the Stafford South East Division. The school sits on the border of Stafford South East Division and Trent Valley.

Lodgefield Park and the Saltings - This area is part of the Baswich Ward within the Borough. The people living there are mainly elderly citizens that have no connections with Trent Valley. All community activities take place within Stafford South East Division. The river and canal separate the two divisions.

Meadowcroft Park and Penkside - Separating Stafford Town Division and Stafford South West from Stafford South East is the railway line and we believe this should be the marker for the separation of the three divisions. The 365 houses which are now being built (due for completion 2024) the other side of the railway line from Meadow Croft Park would compensate for the move from Stafford Town to Stafford South East for Meadowcroft Park.

Penkside should be left as part of Stafford South East being the same side of the railway line as Meadowcroft Park.

All the children attending Silkmore Primary Academy live in the Penkside side of the railway line and the children attending the Children Centre. The Community Centre along with St Peter's Church is in the heart of Penkside community.

### **Stafford South West**

We do not support the recommendations for this division for the following reasons.

Boundaries that were under SCC proposal (for Stafford West) had clear boundary lines - the M6, the railway line to 2 sides and the main road (Newport Road) to the north. This was changed slightly to add the Newport Road both sides giving the golf course as the boundary.

The Wolverhampton Road (major road into Stafford) which was completely within Stafford West is now proposed to be split between 3 divisions.

The identity of Rowley is very different to that of a rural area and parts are of a private estate nature again split by this new proposal.

We therefore urge the LGBCE to reconsider the submission of SCC from March 2023 or alternatives that would improve effective and convenient local government, community identity and electoral equality.

## **Wedgwood**

We would suggest a name change of Stone Rural North as opposed to Wedgwood.

The name Wedgwood derives from Josiah Wedgwood whose roots are in Etruria (Stoke on Trent) and not within the electoral commission boundaries for Staffordshire. Also, the Wedgwood factory itself remains in Stoke on Trent. Furthermore, the name Wedgwood is an ongoing commercial entity.

## **Staffordshire Moorlands District**

We support the recommendations made by the LGBCE for the divisions of Caverswall, Cheadle & Checkley, Churnet Valley, Leek Rural and Leek South which are broadly in accordance with what SCC submitted in March 2023, whereby we provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

We do however wish to draw attention to our disagreement with the specific proposals laid out for Biddulph North and Biddulph South and Endon.

### **Biddulph North and Biddulph South & Endon**

We do not support the recommendations for Biddulph North and Biddulph South & Endon. The proposal provides an electoral variance of -11% in Biddulph North and +7% in Biddulph South & Endon. We therefore urge the LGBCE to reconsider the submission of SCC from March 2023 or alternatives that would improve the electoral inequality between these divisions.

# **Tamworth District**

## **Overview of LGBCE Proposal**

We note that the LGBCE proposal for Tamworth completely aligns with the SCC proposal, and we are therefore in agreement with the proposal.

The proposal submitted by SCC in March 2023 provided rationale and evidence as to community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

We note the concerns of the LGBCE that the wards boundaries used to build the division boundaries have been in place for some time and may no longer be entirely representative of the communities in the area. However, we have found no evidence to suggest this is the case and we therefore support in full the draft recommendations for Tamworth District.

## Rationale

**Criteria 1:** We worked with the Boroughs/Districts and Parishes to get the data producing and electoral forecast, we have used the strategy that is suggested by the LGCE to ensure there is a balance over the three criteria. The sum used for the electoral equality was to take the Cllr size, calculate the projected electorate to create an actual allocation on the council size per district. Our calculation resulted in 62 – thus remaining at our current Council size, and the removal of one Cllr in Tamworth, and placing an additional Cllr in East Staffs.

**Criteria 2:** We have worked closely with the Strategic Delivery Managers (SDM's) who work closely with our District, Parish and Borough Councils and provide support to our County Councillors for their divisions. Strategic Delivery Managers hold a vast amount of local knowledge and insight for their patches across Staffordshire. Alongside working with the SDM's we held workshops with the Councillors which enabled us to help them to understand the criteria we need to work with for this review. We collaborated with them to understand their divisions, their communities and geography which naturally helped us to collate that much needed local insight and community identity.

**Criteria 3:** Due to collaborating with the Councillors and our local councils we have been able to remain as coterminous as possible and provide a healthy balance across all three of the criteria.