

OBJECTION TO BOUNDARY REVIEW PROPOSALS for OAKENGATES for 2027

OVERVIEW

- It is proposed that Oakengates Town is taken over by Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish, along with a small portion of the Beveley area of Ketley Parish, in contravention of Terms of Reference 8.17 (*grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and it would be inappropriate to use it to build artificially large units under single parish councils*);
- The existing ten councillors representing Oakengates, Ketley Bank, Wombridge and Middle Pool would be reduced to seven, while their area would be increased (for no apparent reason) by the addition of part of Beveley;
- This part of Beveley is mostly still under construction as part of the Ketley Millenium Village. This inclusion is in contravention of Terms of Reference 3.3 (*appropriate, equitable and understood by their electorate*), 3.4 (*reflect the identities and interests of communities and should take account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion*);
- It is also in contravention of Terms of Reference 8.5 (boundaries should generally reflect physical barriers such as railways or motorways), as it is separated from Oakengates by the B4373 on a high embankment;
- The existing three councillors representing (Oakengates) North ward would be merged with the eight councillors of W.W.&T. Trench ward and reduced in number to seven;
- The existing (Oakengates) Hollyhurst ward and (W.W.&T.) Wrockwardine Wood West ward (Middle & Urban Roads etc.) with one councillor each would both be replaced by a new Wrockwardine Wood South ward with one councillor.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

1. There is no logical reason for a small part of Beveley to be moved into the new Wrockwardine Wood, Trench & Oakengates Parish. Historically, Beveley has always been part of Ketley and it has no road links at all to the rest of the proposed parish, except by going through Ketley. It is completely separated from the rest of the proposed parish by the main railway line and the B4373 on a high embankment. The Borough Council's proposal for the remainder of Ketley parish is to have 11 councillors representing an average of 339 electors each, while the new W.W.T&O parish would have 15 councillors for a whopping 10,336 electors – an average of 689 each and stretching all the way from the M54 to Hortonwood. This would again be in contravention of Terms of Reference 8.17 (*grouping needs to be compatible with the retention of community interests and it would be inappropriate to use it to build artificially large units under single parish councils*);
2. The Borough Council's proposals suggest that the existing Oakengates Town and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish share a common identity. However,

Oakengates is an old town at its core, with long-established council estates in Wombridge and Ketley Bank. These areas all look to Oakengates town as their obvious centre. W.W.&T is an area originally based around the Wellington to Newport road, with much less obvious links to Oakengates, especially since the B4373 Wrockwardine Wood Way cuts the area in two. Much of the Trench ward of W.W.&T is a 1970s Telford Development Corporation estate and looks to shops and facilities in Trench.

3. The existing (Oakengates) Middle Pool ward of the Trench Lock area is newly built housing and is also cut off from Oakengates by the high embankment of the B4373. It would be much better linked to a parish of either Hadley or Trench.
4. The proposal to merge Hollyhurst (Oakengates) ward with Wrockwardine Wood West (W.W.&T.) ward is welcome, as the existing boundary down the middle of New Road has long been illogical but should be entirely within Oakengates Town.
5. The Borough Council is not averse to splitting Polling Districts, as is evidenced by its proposal to split District TOB in Beveley. Instead, it would be logical to remove the Station Hill, Cockshutt Road, Willows Road, The Nabb and Silkin Way areas from the TSG and TSB wards of Saint George's. This small area contains the former Oakengates Police Station and Oakengates Methodist Chapel and its residents look to Oakengates as their District Centre, rather than up the steep hill to Saint George's. They use Oakengates as their postal address and they should be allowed to return to that town. The boundary of the existing Oakengates Town is currently under the A442, only a few feet from the town centre and should be moved to include these roads which were historically part of the town. It would also be sensible to move the Central Park development out of Oakengates Town (from which it is isolated by the A442 dual-carriageway) and into Saint George's.

SUMMARY

1. Oakengates should remain with its own Town Council, consisting of Polling Districts TOE, TOH, TOO, TOW and an estimated 250 electors from wards TSB & TSG. Based on the Borough Council's ***Polling Places, Polling Districts & Polling Stations Review 2023*** (The most recent figures available online), this would give:

TOE (Ketley Bank)	1964 electors
TOH (Hollyhurst)	348 electors
TOO (Oakengates & Wombridge)	2217 electors
TOW (Wrockwardine Wood West)	364 electors
TSB & TSG (estimated from Saint George's)	<u>250 electors</u>

TOTAL for proposed Oakengates Town Council 5143 electors

This could be served by 10 councillors, around 514 each on average, preferably with as little division into separate wards as possible.

2. Ketley parish would retain its TKY (Ketley) ward and all of its TOK and TOB (Beveley) wards, which would give:

TKY (Ketley)	(from current review figures)	2693 electors
TOB (Beveley)	(from Polling Places 2023 review)	659 electors
TOK (Beveley)	(from Polling Places 2023 review)	325 electors

The figures from the Borough's current boundary review shows that the figures for TOK and **part of** TOB are already up to 1036, so the total would be higher, although the current review does not show how many electors it was proposing to transfer into Oakengates. No suggestion is made here for the total number of Ketley councillors, nor how that should be split between wards.

3. The area known as Wrockwardine Wood runs round three sides of the hill known as The Cockshutt. The West side of the hill is linked to Oakengates and its TOW polling district is already proposed to re-join Oakengates. The North side (Chapel Terrace, etc.) is already part of the existing W.W.&T. parish, while the east side is already part of Saint George's. Therefore, retention of the name "Wrockwardine Wood" in parish terms is not helpful.
4. This would allow for a Trench parish of TWR and TWT, with the possible addition of Middle Pool ward TOT, which would give:
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| TWR & TWT (Trench) | (from current review figures) | 4693 electors |
| TOT (Middle Pool) | (from Polling Places 2023 review) | <u>390</u> electors |
| TOTAL for proposed Trench Parish Council | | 5083 electors |
- No suggestion is made here for the total number of Trench councillors, nor how that should be split between wards.
5. No alterations are proposed here for Saint George's, except that Station Hill and the roads there-off should be transferred to Oakengates, while the Central Park estate should be transferred from Oakengates into Saint George's.

REFERENCES

Community Governance Review 2025 Terms of Reference

https://www.telford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/26324/terms_of_reference_-_community_governance_review.pdf

Community Governance Review (The Borough Council's Proposal) especially pp.12-17 and 121

https://www.telford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/26325/community_governance_review_information_pack.pdf

Local elections 2023

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20107/elections/5233/local_elections_2023/3

POLLING PLACES, POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS REVIEW 2023

https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/26592/returning_officers_final_proposals

Polling station review 2022 map of polling Districts

https://www.telford.gov.uk/downloads/file/21804/overview_map

Boundary Review Committee

<https://democracy.telford.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=1165>