

Objection to Proposed Boundary Changes Affecting Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council

I am writing in strong opposition to the draft proposal within the Telford & Wrekin Community Governance Review to divide Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council; specifically, the suggestion to place Stirchley with Hollinswood & Randlay, and Stirchley Village within a separate Brookside Parish. This submission sets out the reasons why such a change would undermine established community identity, reduce local government effectiveness, create unnecessary financial burdens, and be opposed to local opinion.

1. Community Identity and Interests

Stirchley & Brookside has functioned as a shared community for decades, bound by common facilities, services, and a shared sense of belonging. Residents of both areas use and identify with the same schools, library, shops, post office, sports fields, youth facilities and community centres – the majority of which are based in Stirchley Centre but serve the entire parish effectively. These are not simply service points, but genuine community hubs that foster social interaction, belonging, and cohesion across both neighbourhoods.

Youth provision offers a particularly strong example of this shared identity. Programmes such as Funzone bring children and families together from across Stirchley and Brookside, and their success depends on a unified parish structure. A separation would risk undermining this provision, fragmenting funding and governance, and ultimately disadvantaging young people in Brookside who currently benefit from shared youth resources.

Geographically, Randlay Avenue forms a clear, long-established physical boundary between Stirchley and Randlay. This boundary reflects genuine differences in community identity. Stirchley residents do not naturally look to Hollinswood or Randlay for their local facilities or sense of belonging. Similarly, Hollinswood operates as a wholly separate community, with its own facilities, playing fields, shops and community centres that Stirchley residents neither use nor identify with. There is no practical or social link that justifies merging the two.

Finally, Stirchley Village residents strongly identify with Stirchley, not Brookside. Placing Stirchley Village within Brookside would erase that distinct identity and force residents to identify administratively with an area they do not live in, undermining the community's integrity.

2. Effective and Convenient Local Government

The current parish structure is efficient and well understood by residents. It ensures that local services, facilities and representation are easy to access, and it reflects clear, logical boundaries recognised by residents.

Splitting the parish as proposed would create confusion about which council provides which services, risk duplication of administrative functions, and potentially disrupt established maintenance responsibilities. It would also be impractical to split polling districts across parish lines. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) concluded in 2023, after extensive consultation and an Act of Parliament, that polling district TTT (formerly TBZ) should move away from Brookside and enter The Nedge ward. To now disregard those findings would be inconsistent and disingenuous, undermining the integrity of that process conducted by the commission on the request of Telford & Wrekin Council just a few short years ago.

3. Value for Money & Financial Considerations

The current combined parish achieves economies of scale, allowing resources to be shared efficiently across both Stirchley and Brookside. Community grants, community interest organisations, and youth programmes all benefit from joint management and funding.

If the areas were divided, both parishes may face increased administrative and staffing costs, duplicated governance structures, and reduced capacity to deliver community projects. It would also be unreasonable for Stirchley residents' council tax precepts to subsidise Hollinswood facilities they do not use.

With significant housing development planned on The Hem, the responsibilities for maintenance, play areas, bus stops (17 of 25 within Brookside), and community spaces will only increase, requiring strong, unified local governance rather than fragmentation and confusion.

4. Local Support

There is no evidence of local demand for this change. On the contrary, local opinion is overwhelmingly opposed. During recent canvassing for the Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council elections in August 2025, I encountered widespread opposition to both the previously proposed *Nedge Parish Council* (since rejected) and to the idea of merging Stirchley Village into Brookside. Residents consistently expressed pride in living in Stirchley, and a desire for their identity and representation to reflect that fact.

It is therefore clear that the proposal does not have community support and, if implemented, would generate significant opposition.

Conclusion

The proposed reorganisation is unnecessary, divisive, and inconsistent with the principles of community identity, effective governance, and value for money that underpin the Community Governance Review process. Stirchley & Brookside has a long, successful record of joint working, shared services, and community cohesion. Splitting it would deliver no identifiable benefit and would instead undermine the social, financial, and administrative integrity of both communities.

I therefore urge the Committee of the CGR to reject this proposal and instead retain the existing boundaries of Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council, and Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council.

With regards

[Redacted Signature]