

Starkie, Emily

From: ELPHICKE, Charlie <charlie.elphicke.mp@parliament.uk>
Sent: 12 August 2018 16:32
To: reviews
Subject: Response to LGBCE's draft recommendations for Dover district - Charlie Elphicke MP

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please see below my submission in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) draft recommendations for the new Dover district warding arrangements. I also wish to state my full support for the suggested amendments from Dover and Deal Conservative Association (DDCA) – as they will greatly improve community cohesion while adhering to the electoral variance criteria.

Aylesham ward

The proposed three-member ward suggested for Aylesham appears far too large, compared to the rest of the suggested ward sizes across the district. The problem arises from the inclusion of Eythorne in this ward. The community of Eythorne is very distinct from the community of Aylesham. To attempt to force these two villages together fails to comply with the Commission's community cohesion criteria. Yet the proposal to combine Aylesham and Elvington in one ward is welcome – as both villages share a proud mining heritage.

DDCA's detailed amendments are a workable way maintain community cohesion without disrupting electoral variance.

Dover town warding

My strongest objection to the Commission's draft recommendations is the inclusion of streets from inner Buckland in an enlarged St Radigunds ward. Residents I have spoken to in inner Buckland are baffled by this proposition. They point out that it makes no sense to have some houses in Buckland Avenue as part of a St Radigunds ward, rather than Buckland. They ask why well-known community landmarks such as Buckland bridge, Buckland paper mill and Buckland church are to be included in a St Radigunds ward, rather than Buckland. I strongly agree with these common sense arguments and can fully understand residents' frustrations.

The shape of the St Radigunds ward, stretching across the town centre while enveloping Tower Hamlets appears far too large. Residents in streets like Salisbury Road and Park Avenue have a far greater affinity with the existing Castle ward than St Radigunds. Indeed, the people of Dover consider the St Radigunds area to be the residential streets bordered by Coombe Valley Road, London Road and the boundary with River next to Crabble football ground. Residential streets such as Balfour Road are clearly divided from St Radigunds ward by the commercial street London Road.

The streets bordered by Beaconsfield Avenue, London Road, Cherry Tree Avenue and Barton Road have a closer affinity to Dover town than St Radigunds. They are situated in the town centre are very much part of the town community. This area includes Aldi supermarket, as well as several other shops and cafes.

Residents I have spoken to in inner Buckland are deeply unhappy with the current proposals. Therefore I support DDCA's proposals, including the creation of a Castle Charlton ward. This will make real improvements to community cohesion.

Deal town wards

The community of Sholden has far greater affinity to Deal than to Eastry. The Commission's draft recommendations will create a split in the community, where neighbours are divided between having homes in Eastry Rural, Mill Hill or Middle Deal. Residents I have spoken to are furious that their community is being torn apart in this way. Sholden is much more closely tied to Deal, and should be included in the Deal town wards.

There is also strong feeling amongst the residents of Sydney Road, Hillcrest Gardens and Walmer Way that they are a part of Walmer ward – not Mill Hill. Indeed, people living in Sydney Road have Walmer station on their doorstep, yet bizarrely they are part of the Mill Hill ward. Including the above streets in the Walmer ward would improve community cohesion.

DDCA's proposals offer a clear and workable solution to the issues raised by the Commission's draft recommendations for Deal and I support them.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Best wishes

Charlie Elphicke, MP for Dover and Deal

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