

REIGATE & BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW

SUBMISSION FROM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION GROUP OF COUNCILLORS

1. INTRODUCTION

This submission is made on behalf of the seven members of the Residents' Association Group of Councillors at the Borough Council - Cllrs Stead (Leader), Cllrs Mrs Bray, Cllr Harper, Cllr Harrison, Cllr Selby, Cllr Whinney, and Cllr White.

We do not agree with the proposals submitted by the Borough Council itself, on behalf of the Conservative Group, in relation to the Nork, Tattenhams, Preston and Tadworth & Walton wards. This submission relates only to these four wards.

2. APPROACH

The three wards of Nork, Tattenhams and Preston were treated as a group in the last Boundary Review undertaken in 1998, and we agree this is a sensible approach for 2018.

Nork and Tattenhams are 3-member wards, and Preston has a single member. The forecast of voter numbers within the three wards is within 0.1% of the target requirement for two wards, as set out below.

Nork	6,724			
Tattenhams	6,161			
Preston	2,739			
Total	15,624	(100.1%)	Target	<u>15,598</u> (two wards)

The overall approach should be to reconfigure the three wards into two wards with 3 members each. We recommend some minor changes to tidy up the boundary between Preston and Tadworth, and to equalise the number of voters.

Our disagreement with the Council's own submission relates to the required transfer of voters from Tattenhams to Nork. The Council's divides the community and we see no merit in it. Our proposal better aligns with community interests. The differences are set out in Section 5.1 on pages 3 and 4.

All numbers quoted are based on the 2023 forecasts developed by the Council, except where indicated.

A map setting out the proposed boundaries is being submitted on our behalf by the Council.

3. BOUNDARIES

The two future wards are marked by strong boundaries:

- + London Borough of Sutton and Epsom & Ewell to the west;
- + the A217 dual carriageway to the east, separating the two wards from Banstead Village;
- + the common land around Burgh Heath to the south-east, separating Tattenhams and Preston from the village of Burgh Heath;
- + Tadworth to the south, on the higher land marked by Shelveys Way.

4. COMMUNITY

This section provides a summary of the community issues and arrangements in the three wards. More details are provided in the separate submissions from the Nork Residents' Association and the Tattenhams Residents' Association.

From a community perspective, the residents' associations were established when development started in the 1920's and 30's, with the express purpose of looking after the interests of local people. They work with local councillors whatever their political party, and with other public bodies (for example, the NHS). They both have large memberships, publish quarterly newsletters and are involved in community and social activities. In the 1980's Nork put forward its own candidates for election, with Tattenhams following in the 1990's, requiring registration as political parties.

The wards look more closely to the larger town of Epsom, rather than Banstead, with significant parts of both Nork and Tattenhams wards having an Epsom Downs postal address. Nork and Tattenhams combine to form a single county council division ("Nork and Tattenhams") and are in the Epsom & Ewell parliamentary constituency. Other wards in the north of the borough, including Preston, are in the Reigate constituency.

NORK: The name Nork was used for the area since at least the 17th century, and it was used for Nork House built in 1740, a country house in what is now Nork Park. The area is defined by the wedge of land bounded by the roads from Epsom (Yew Tree Bottom Road) and Sutton (A217 Brighton Road), with the through route from Ewell (A240 Reigate Road) bisecting the ward. All these routes converge at the village of Burgh Heath, to the south and beyond the ward.

Extensive development of the farm and woodland started in the 1920's and continued into the 1930's, with some later infill. Nork has a solid, well established community. It is characterised by large gardens, many of which have been hived off to create about 20 cul-de-sac developments in the last 15 years.

There are two shopping parades, Drift Bridge and Nork Way, and the area lies within the parish of St Paul's, Nork in Warren Road, with its community facilities, groups and activities. The nearby Warren Mead Infant and Junior Schools provide primary education. The ward is centred around the 116 acres of Nork Park, with panoramic views over London, and the Nork Community Association in Nork Way.

Nork is served by a separate branch line with Epsom Downs and Banstead railway stations, accessing London via Sutton. Nork's buses have only a slight link with the south of the borough - the 166 and 318 ply through Nork between Banstead and Epsom.

TATTENHAMS: The name Tattenhams derives from a series of fields, Upper and Lower Tattenhams (named after a mediaeval Lord of the Manor), and then celebrated in the world famous Tattenham Corner in the west of the ward, next to the border in Epsom Downs. The current ward is bounded to the north by the lower ground beyond Yew Tree Bottom Road and Reigate Road and to the south by Chetwode Road, with the dual carriageway A217 Brighton Road and the common land at Burgh Heath to the east. The main west-east route is Great Tattenhams, continuing into Tattenham Way, and bisected by A240 Reigate Road.

Development in Tattenhams started later than Nork in the 1930's, and the houses are generally built more densely in smaller plots. As a consequence, only 3 cul-de-sac developments have been created in the last 15 years.

The main focus of the ward is the Tattenham Corner village centre at the extreme west of the ward, with its large shopping parade, post office, medical centre, volunteer-run library and railway station. The area lies within the parish of St Mark, Tattenham Corner, with its extensive community facilities, groups and activities. The ward is served by Shawley Community Primary School.

Tattenhams has its own Tattenham Corner branch railway line, accessing London via Croydon. The main bus routes are the frequent 460 and 480 routes into Epsom, with the 420 into Sutton.

PRESTON: The Preston Estate takes its name from the former manor house and was built on former farmland (North Tadworth Farm and South Tadworth Farm) in the 1950's and 60's as social housing by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, and the London Boroughs of Merton and Sutton. Most are family houses, with some maisonettes and flats. These properties have been transferred to Raven Housing Association, and many properties are now privately owned under "right to buy". Preston has two major housing developments in progress – 229 homes being built on the playing fields of the former de Burgh secondary school and 69 on recreation land released by Reigate & Banstead. When complete there will be no significant vacant plots of land.

The modern Leisure Centre in Preston Park with swimming pool, gym and both indoor and outdoor sports facilities, community hall and youth centre lies at the centre of Preston. Preston is served by Epsom Downs Primary School, with its Children's Centre and nursery. Merland Rise Church is a strong evangelical church in the heart of Preston and has extensive community facilities, outreach and activities. Preston is served by the same rail and bus routes as Tattenhams.

5. BOUNDARY CHANGES

The majority of Preston ward would be combined with Tattenhams ward. From the perspective of rail and bus travel and local shopping and other facilities the Tattenham Corner village centre is a community focus for Preston. The combination has the advantage of joining that part of the broader Preston Estate which is currently in Tattenhams ward (around Long Walk, Broad Walk and Chetwode Road) with the majority in Preston ward.

The Nork and Tattenhams ward boundaries have not changed, as far as we can tell, since the 1930's; the exception being Home Farm Close which was moved from Nork to Tattenhams in the 1998 review. As a consequence, the prospect of changes has not met with support from local residents. However, the reduction of the number of councillors from 51 to 45, and the need to ensure electoral equality means change is a regrettable necessity. This is discussed in 5.1 below.

Some tidying up of the Preston and Tadworth boundaries is discussed in 5.2 below.

5.1 NORK AND TATTENHAMS BOUNDARY: The Council with the votes of Conservative councillors proposes an option which moves the residents north of Great Tattenhams at the west end of the ward into the Nork ward. The Residents' Association Group of Councillors favour an alternative which would move the entire TAT2 Polling District – the network of roads between Brighton Road A217 and Reigate Road A240 – into Nork. Both options would achieve the target of electoral equality.

Arguments against the Council's Option

- a. The heart of the Tattenhams ward and community is centred around the western boundary at Tattenham Corner, overlooking Epsom Downs and the race course. This extends along Great Tattenhams, both north and south, around the village centre at Tattenham Corner; the Council's option would separate off the library and medical centre from the rest of the village centre. The Council's option is an arbitrary division of the community to the north from the village centre, and the catchment area of the school (Shawley Way Primary) and the Parish Church (St Marks, Tattenham Corner) would be divided.
- b. The areas of Tattenhams moved into Nork have little community linkage with the community facilities, schools, church and shopping facilities (eg Drift Bridge) in Nork.

- c. Yew Tree Bottom Road and Reigate Road form a recognised and firm boundary between Nork and Tattenhams, and follows the parish boundary between St Pauls, Nork and St Marks, Tattenham Corner.
- d. In order to achieve electoral equality, the Council’s option retains Shawley Crescent in Tattenhams, when it is strongly linked to the network of roads around Shawley Way. Similarly, Claremount Gardens and Claremount Close is arbitrarily moved into Tattenhams from Nork when they have no direct road linkage with it.

Arguments in favour of the Residents’ Association Councillors Option

- a. The TAT2 Polling District between the Brighton Road A217 and Reigate Road A240 is a distinct section separate to the rest of the Tattenhams ward. It is bounded by Nork to the north, with the proposed Banstead Village & Burgh Heath ward to the east and south across an area of common land. It is part of the parish of St Marys, Burgh Heath and separate from the remainder of the ward which is in the parish of St Marks, Tattenham Corner. (Note that the Council’s submission erroneously claims that all of the ward is in the parish of St Marks, Tattenham Corner.)
- b. The boundary between Nork and Tattenhams is rather indistinct at this point, following The Drive, being the entrance to Nork Park and then across Nork Park, dividing off the recreation ground to the south from the rest of the parkland. Drawing the electorate in the network of roads around the recreation ground (Tattenham Way, Picquets Way, Brighton Road, The Brindles, and Bywood Close) back into Nork ward is supported from a community perspective.
- c. The area to the east and south beyond Tattenham Way (Waterer Gardens, Tangier Way and Wood, Meadow Way and Ruffetts Way and part of Brighton Road) borders the common land opposite the village of Burgh Heath. It has some community linkages with Burgh Heath with its shopping parade, Peace Memorial Hall and community groups. However, its incorporation into Nork ward retains the connection with the rest of the TAT2 polling district, and continues the firm boundary along the A217 Brighton Road and A240 Reigate Road.
- d. Home Farm Close and the 4 properties adjacent on the Reigate Road to be reinstated back into Nork to re-establish a strong boundary along the Reigate Road.

Specific Recommendations from the Residents’ Association Councillors relating to Nork and Tattenhams

- Transfer all of TAT2 Polling District to Nork - **914 electors**
- Transfer Home Farm Close, plus Nos. 500, 500A, 502, 504 Reigate Road - **96 electors**
- Transfer Nos. 1, 3 Downs Reach (stray properties along Yew Tree Bottom Road) - **4 electors**

This totals 1,014 electors transferred to Nork from Tattenhams

Option – Waterer Gardens

Although we think the boundary changes we are submitting above represents the best in terms of community interests whilst equalising the electorate and providing a strong boundary, we think it is highly likely the electorate in Nork will continue to grow and overtake that in Tattenhams within a few years. There is greater capacity for windfall developments in Nork. Having been equalised at the last boundary review, over the last 20 years the voter numbers in Nork have grown so they are in 2017 some 10% higher than Tattenhams.

Based on our submission, we would estimate that the voter numbers in Nork will have closed the gap with Tattenhams within 4 to 5 years. Both Residents’ Associations regret transfers from Tattenhams into Nork, and suggest that as an alternative to preserve electoral equality for longer, that Waterer Gardens (148 voters – 1.9%) could be retained in Tattenhams. This road is immediately next to the retained part of

Tattenhams and separate to the remainder of the TAT2 Polling District, being accessed off A240 Reigate Road rather than Tattenham Way. We present this as an option.

5.2 PRESTON AND TADWORTH BOUNDARY

This boundary is not altogether distinct with infill development between the two larger residential roads – Shelveys Way in Tadworth & Walton ward and Preston Lane in Preston. Ideally from the perspective of community and logical and strong boundaries, the properties in the cul de sacs accessed from Shelveys Way would all be transferred from Preston into Tadworth & Walton. This would transfer 118 electors (1.5% of target) out of Tattenhams and Preston ward, being the remainder of Vernon Walk and Copley Way (40 electors), the remainder of Fairacres and The Rise (38 electors) and all of The Dell (40 electors). This change could be accommodated within the target figure for the combined Tattenhams and Preston ward.

The Council proposes the transfer of 315 electors from Tadworth into Preston, and of the ideal arrangement discussed above accepts only the transfer of the 40 electors in Vernon Walk and Copley Way into Tadworth. The Council’s argument is that this net transfer of 275 electors (3.5% of target) would allow the new Tadworth, Walton and Lower Kingswood ward to be closer to the Boundary Commission target. The roads the Council proposes to transfer to Tattenhams and Preston ward are: Fleetwood Close, Thurnham Way, Linden Close, plus parts of both The Rise and Fairacres.

In this Residents’ Association Councillors proposal, the submission from the Council is accepted, except that all of Fairacres and The Rise would be included in Tadworth, Walton and Lower Kingswood ward. Both wards would then be as close as reasonably possible to the Boundary Commission target.

Specific Recommendations from the Residents’ Association Councillors relating to Preston and Tadworth

- Transfer remainder of Vernon Walk and Copley Way to Tadworth - **-40 electors**
- Transfer Fleetwood Close, Thurnham Way and Linden Close from Tadworth - **262 electors**
- Transfer parts of Fairacres and The Rise to Tadworth - **-38 electors**

This totals net 184 electors transferred to Preston from Tadworth

6. ANOMALIES WITH CURRENT FORECASTS

There are some anomalies with the current forecasts of the electorate, already provided by the Council to the Boundary Commission.

In Nork, an 80-bed care home (application 15/02792) approved before the 1 April 2017 cut-off has been omitted. Construction is well underway at this time. Applying the vacancy factor for new homes and the ONS constraint would give an additional 81 voters to Nork (+1.0% of target).

In projecting future voter numbers, the Council has assumed that there is a “strong” correlation between the increase in housing and voters in Nork, but a “less strong” correlation in Tattenhams. This produces the anomaly that voters are projected to increase by only 0.9% for Nork, but a higher 2.1% for Tattenhams. Analysis shows that the correlation is in fact much closer in Tattenhams than Nork. The future growth in both wards will be through windfall developments, so both should be forecast on a similar basis. In the last 15 years Nork has grown by 10% more than Tattenhams (0.7% on an annual basis), and it is likely that this will continue with the significantly larger plot sizes in Nork. If the strong correlation factor were used in Tattenhams, this would lower the voter projection by 78 (-1.0% of target).

See Appendix which provides more detail on these anomalies.

7. IMPACT OF BOUNDARY REVISIONS

Nork	6,724 (86.2%)		Tattenhams	6,161 (79.0%)
Adjustment	81 (1.0%)		Adjustment	-78 (-1.0%)
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	6,805			6,083
Transfer 5.1	1,014 from Tattenhams		Transfer 5.1	-1,014 to Nork

Nork revised	7,819 (100.3%)		Preston	2,739
	=====		Transfer 5.2	184 from Tadworth & Walton

			Combined Revised	7,992 (102.5%)
				=====
<u>OPTION</u>	-148		Retained in Tattenhams	148
Waterer Gdn				
	<u>7,671 (98.4%)</u>			<u>8,140 (104.4%)</u>

Note that without the adjustment for the anomaly, the electorates would be: Nork 7,738 (99.2%); Tattenhams and Preston 8,070 (103.5%). We calculate the electorate for Tadworth, Walton and Lower Kingswood based on the above adjustments would be 8,073 (103.5%).

We think that an above target electorate for Tattenhams and Preston is justified as the ward has much less capacity for growth compared to other wards and will trend downwards to 100%.

8. NAMES

No change is proposed to the name for Nork ward.

We propose that the merged Tattenhams and Preston ward is named "Tattenham Corner and Preston". The change to "Tattenham Corner" from "Tattenhams" reflects the emphasis towards the retained western part of the ward, and acknowledges the world-famous location. Most electors in the area do in fact describe their home as being in Tattenham Corner.

We think the Council's proposed naming of the "Preston Park" part of the ward to be inauthentic and somewhat pretentious. The new park next to the Leisure Centre was renamed Preston Park when it was created out of the larger Merland Rise Recreation Ground three years ago. But the name only refers to the park itself and is not in use for the broader area. Most electors in the area do in fact describe their home as being in Preston, or sometimes Tadworth or Tattenham Corner.

We favour Tattenham Corner being the first named as it is in any scenario approaching two-thirds of the area and population of the combined ward.

Submitted by Cllr Nick Harrison

On behalf of the Residents' Association Group of Councillors

9 April 2018