

## Runnymede District

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### Comment text:

Runnymede & Weybridge Constituency Labour Party 15 July 2018 Dear Madam/Sir, Electoral review for new warding in the district of Runnymede Since our recent annual local elections, in Spring'18, I am the new member for the Egham Hythe ward. My response is made on behalf of Runnymede & Weybridge Labour Party, 493 members as of early July. RUNNYMEDE: The most significant issue is that of the reduced numbers of registered voters across the country including Runnymede. Runnymede estimates are not representative of those who should be currently registered. I would like to know why the 2023 estimates for the district's "North area" are so low, particularly as figures for earlier years were much higher and the District local Plan has identified that area for a great deal of extra housing in order to meet national requirements. With due respect, we need the district to be asked to substantiate housing allocations used to make their 2023 forecast. Indeed on just one development in Egham Town there will be another 200 dwellings (340-electors) approximately, built on a brown field site well before 2023! Also, Englefield Green has a number of new student halls which will increase eligible voter (electors) numbers. Almost all the sites identified for residential in the draft Local Plan are in the North area. To continue with a boundary review is effectively giving in to "Gerrymandering" and it would be crass of any individual not to mention this in a submission. Just because the government has effectively done this possibly by legal methods does not make it moral or acceptable in a decent democratic society. Englefield Green's boundary changes also ignore the clear fact that in 2015 General and Local elections the 2014 Act change to individual voter registration (IER) has caused thousands to fall off the register. Between 2014-2015 alone we saw 1500 voter (electors) whipped off the register in Englefield Green East ward alone, mostly due to students being unaware of the move and unaware of the right they have to register both at University and Home for local elections purposes. A slightly dated report by the Guardian newspaper itemises the issues <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2015/feb/05/missing-voters-individual-electoral-registration-disaster> Runnymede borough was one of the worst effected, when comparing DWP records of those actually living in the area to those registered to vote. Advertising registration has continued to be poor from the local authority, which has also failed to apply models, such as that used in the city of Sheffield, to partner with Royal Holloway to boost registration. Changes in, "South area", Addlestone and Chertsey have failed to take into account the effect individual registration has had on homes of multiple occupancy (HMOs) and the numerous short term rental flats in the borough which have a long history of low registration. The boundary changes proposed offer no effective study of those potential electors who are denied their vote purely from ignorance or moving property numerous times in a short period. EGHAM HYTHE: Egham Hythe Ward currently has natural boundaries of the M25, Runnymede roundabout and Pooley Green level crossing to the West and the Thames to the North. It is ridiculous to suggest making a zigzag cut into the community simply to put some Egham Hythe people into Egham Town. Yes, many use the supermarkets and shops in Egham but so do people from Old Windsor, in Berkshire, but no one is including them in this particular piece of numbers mis-management. Egham Hythe's Pooley Green railway level crossing on Vicarage road (under the M25) is currently the western boundary of the Egham Hythe ward and should continue to be the boundary, not least because the level crossing is often closed for 35 minutes in the hour! You can't get a more effective border than that and it de marks the community in real terms and unites Egham Hythe residents in being cut off from Egham Town in many ways. Should the Southern rail access to Heathrow go ahead, it will run alongside the M25 (through the disputed area) causing even more of a divide. Changing the ward boundary will disrupt the 'real Egham Hythe's' ability to come together with a joint response to any consultations in the future through to 2033. The Egham Hythe Northern boundary of the Thames is historical in that the medieval docking points give "the Hythe" it's own distinct name, so you would remove the point of the name and its connections with local schools, community centre etc. The foot bridge that links the 2 ends of New road across the railway line is well used and demonstrates that people choose to use facilities on both sides. The level crossing on Thorpe Road is a barrier but those on the North side have the same significant social issues that those on the South side face, eg encroachment of the same office blocks on

Thorpe road and the Causeway (built as both a flood Defence and road in the 13th century) parking problems, the ensuing traffic management difficulties as well as flooding issues. To remove the Northern strip of Egham Hythe at this time would be to deny the residents the opportunity to work with fellow ward members and representatives to solve these issues or stop them getting worse.

EGHAM TOWN: The suggested addition to Egham Town Ward of the tow path and Causeway up to Staines bridge is positively ridiculous; a simple glance at a map can tell you that - but the reality is much more stark: The new Runnymede roundabout is a positive barrier for local traffic as it is designed to aid through traffic not to facilitate local journeys. The left turn into Egham High Street from the Causeway (and Glanty) can be dangerous when the traffic leaving the M25 is heavy. Equally no pedestrian in their right mind would choose to walk into Egham from the Causeway as the roundabout and its approach is designed for vehicles with no pleasant or easy pedestrian route round it. People living in that part of Egham Hythe look to Egham Hythe schools, Pooley Green shops (via New road) Sainsbury on the Causeway and Staines, not Egham, for other shops. Yours sincerely Runnymede Councillor Fiona Robertson Dent – on behalf of Runnymede & Weybridge Constituency Labour Party of approximately 493 members (as discussed at our General Meeting). <http://www.hythe.surrey.sch.uk> <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/article/14344/The-Hythe-Centre> <https://heathrowrail.com/proposed-route/>

**Uploaded Documents:**

None Uploaded