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Sent: 12 August 2018 22:48
To: reviews
Subject: Submission for the review of Crawley Borough Council
Attachments: Crawley Borough Council Conservative Group - LGBCE Submission August 2018.docx

Dear Sir or Madam

Please see attached a submission on behalf of the Crawley Borough Council Conservative Group.

[Redacted]

Leader of the Crawley Borough Council Conservative Group.



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Introduction

The Crawley Borough Council Conservative Group broadly supports the draft recommendations published by the LGBCE but do have two amendments that we feel could further improve the draft recommendations. In addition, we are strongly opposed to the amendment put forward by the Labour Group at Crawley Borough Council that was forced through the Full Council meeting on 1st August by just a one-vote majority along party lines (18 votes to 17) to place Ifield's Orchards estate into Langley Green ward.

Our two amendments strengthen Crawley's neighbourhood principle by better matching the Crawley neighbourhoods of Ifield, Northgate, Langley Green and Three Bridges with their proposed neighbourhood based wards.

Our amendments are detailed in Appendix B in the link below which is of the agenda for the Crawley Borough Council Full Council meeting on the 1st August 2018.

<https://democracy.crawley.gov.uk/documents/g2676/Public%20reports%20pack%2001st-Aug-2018%2019.30%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=10>

Mixed Patten of Wards

There is unanimity at Crawley Borough Council for the three two-member wards within an otherwise all three-scheme and we very much welcome the LGBCE proposal for Furnace Green, Gossops Green and Tilgate to remain as two-member wards, albeit recognising that Gossops Green ward needs to take in some additional electors from outside the neighbourhood.

East of the London to Brighton railway line

We welcome the draft recommendations which are no changes from the existing arrangements.

South of the Arun Valley railway line

We support the draft recommendations but still believe that the West Sussex County Council scheme previously submitted to the LGBCE would be better for Broadfield with the neighbourhood being split only twice. If Broadfield has to be split three ways, then the draft LGBCE recommendation is probably the best possible scheme. Nothing else has been suggested for us to give a view upon so with our preferred option not being recommended by the LGBCE, we believe the draft LGBCE draft recommendations for Broadfield and Gossops Green to be the next best thing.

The two areas of Broadfield neighbourhood moving into neighbouring wards are not recognised in the name of their new wards which we feel is far from ideal for residents in those areas. Options for ward names could include Gossops Green & East Broadfield, Gossops Green & North-East Broadfield, and Bewbush & North Broadfield. We envisage that it will be difficult to explain to Broadfield residents who are moving into an adjacent ward why their Council ward is solely "Bewbush" or "Gossops Green" which are the names of other neighbourhoods.

North of the Arun Valley railway line

Ifield

We very much support the LGBCE draft recommendation for the Ifield ward to exactly match the Ifield neighbourhood. This is also supported by residents of The Orchards estate, West Sussex County Council, the MP for Crawley and did have the unanimous support of both political groups at Crawley Borough Council in the scheme that the Council previously submitted to the LGBCE.

We are therefore very disappointed that the Labour Group at Crawley Borough Council have since changed their position and now want to create an unnecessary divide in Ifield when there is no electoral equality requirement to do so, and which does in fact worsen electoral equality for Langley Green ward by taking the variance to -9%. Their argument that The Orchards estate is already in Langley Green ward under the existing arrangements is weak as this estate was only ever put into Langley Green ward for the purposes of electoral equality during the last review in 2002. Being used to something (the existing

arrangement) which is not liked by the residents of The Orchards is not a valid argument in our opinion. This was always the outlier under the existing arrangement that was solely for the purposes of electoral equality for Langley Green rather than community of interest. Residents of The Orchards will be disappointed if this review does not correct this anomaly and place them in Ifield ward as Ifield is their neighbourhood. The Labour Group amendment also creates a weaker boundary between Ifield and Langley wards by deviating from the strong Ifield Avenue boundary.

Langley Green & Manor Royal

We recognise that Langley Green ward needs to gain electors for the purposes of electoral equality but see no reason why the Manor Royal Business District should be added to Langley Green from Northgate when every elector east of the A23 can be added to Langley Green ward under our revised Langley Green & Tushmore proposal. These residents do not reside in Manor Royal, they are residents of Northgate.

Our proposal includes all the electors from the LGBCE draft recommendation but maintains the geographical land area of the Manor Royal Business District/Industrial Estate within its existing Northgate Ward. This further matches the WSCC Electoral Division of Northgate & West Green. The difference from the previous West Sussex County Council submission is that the 70 electors of First Choice House on the east side of the A23 are included in Langley Green ward, ensuring no loss of electors from the LGBCE draft recommendation.

The link below is from the Manor Royal Business Improvement (BID) website. It is a map of the zones that make up Manor Royal. You will clearly see that all of the residential area around Tushmore Lane in Northgate is not part of Manor Royal at all, and nor do these residents see themselves as part of the Manor Royal Business District. In the link you will see that the boundary between all the residential housing in the Tushmore Lane area and Manor Royal in Zone 3 is very similar to the ward boundary proposed by the Conservative Group. Either this boundary or the similar one we propose will be ideal in separating the proposed wards of Langley Green and Northgate & West Green.

<http://www.manorroyal.org/assets/610%20x%20915%20Map%20-%20v1.pdf>

It should be noted that Crawley Borough Council went to great lengths to protect Manor Royal from permitted housing development in gaining Article 4 protection, to ensure that Manor Royal is maintained solely as employment land and not be developed for residential use. We support this and feel that not naming Manor Royal as part of a residential neighbourhood ward helps to strengthen Manor Royal itself as a business district that should not have residential housing.

It feels wholly inconsistent to have Manor Royal named as part of any Council ward as it is not a residential area with any electors and no electors identify as living in Manor Royal. The Council's own Local Plan clearly designates Manor Royal solely as employment land and not for housing development. Our proposal of calling the ward Langley Green & Tushmore gives a much better identity to the residents of the Tushmore Lane area of Northgate, as well as those immediately to the south of the Tushmore Roundabout who need to move into Langley Green ward for the purposes of electoral equality. Should the LGBCE adopt our amended boundary but prefer not to use the Tushmore name, then we feel that "Langley Green" would be the next best option for the ward name.

Our slight amendment to the previous West Sussex County Council proposed scheme is to add only First Choice House on the eastern side of the A23 into Langley Green & Tushmore which is the only other residential development east of the A23 that is included in the LGBCE's proposed Langley Green & Manor Royal ward. This ensures that all the electors in the LGBCE proposal for Langley Green & Manor Royal ward are included but that only residential areas are added to Langley Green ward rather than the Manor Royal Business District itself.

Our amendment and proposed ward name of Langley Green & Tushmore gives recognition to the electors moving into Langley Green ward, rather than being consumed within the large Manor Royal Business District of which they are not part of, as shown on the map of Manor Royal which is linked to in this submission.

Regardless of our proposed amendment, the area immediately to the south of the Tushmore Roundabout is a much better match for the proposed Langley

Green & Manor Royal/Tushmore ward than the Labour Group amendment of adding The Orchards estate from Ifield into Langley Green ward. You only have to look at a map or walk around this area to see that it has much more in common with the Tushmore Lane area of Northgate than both political groups at Crawley Borough Council agree needs to go into Langley Green ward, as well as it being adjacent to Langley Drive which is the main entrance into Langley Green.

Crucially, we support the LGBCE proposal as this small area to the south of the Tushmore Roundabout is simply an extension of the existing Tushmore Lane area of Northgate neighbourhood that is going into Langley Green ward, with the Tushmore Roundabout as the central point for this area. In addition, the Tushmore Roundabout has multiple pedestrian crossing points meaning that it is not a barrier with either Langley Green or the Tushmore Lane area of Northgate.

By contrast, The Orchards estate in Ifield clearly has nothing in common with the Tushmore Lane area of Northgate. Under the Labour Group amendment, adding The Orchard estate from Ifield into Langley Green ward would be an additional and separate area going into Langley Green ward as well as Manor Royal and the Tushmore Lane area. The LGBCE draft recommendation effectively adds only one area to Langley Green, that being the area to the east and south of the Tushmore Roundabout.

All of the area south of the Tushmore Roundabout faces on to and accesses the A23, and is also somewhat detached from the rest of Northgate and West Green to the south. This is especially so for the small area of West Green from Longmere Road northwards which faces onto the A23 and clearly is closer to the part of Northgate (south and east of the Tushmore Roundabout) proposed to go into Langley Green ward by the LGBCE, as well as to Langley Green itself.

Ifield Avenue has limited crossing points both north and south of the Tushmore Roundabout and is a natural divide between Ifield and Langley Green, as well as further separating the Longmere Road area of West Green which is already a considerable distance from the rest of West Green.

We also believe that having one ward out of Crawley's 13 wards that geographically covers virtually a third of the entire Borough is too large. Our

amendment helps to redress that by reducing the excessively large geographic area of the proposed Langley Green ward.

Our amendment maintains Langley Green with a variance of -8% as per the LGBCE proposal whereas the Labour Group amendment takes Langley Green ward to -9%.

Three Bridges

We are very pleased that the LGBCE have supported the view of the residents of Three Bridges by keeping the entire neighbourhood within one ward. We do feel that placing much of the town centre from the east side of Crawley High Street eastwards into Three Bridges is a mistake for the town centre. In recognising that something needs to come out of the proposed Northgate & West Green ward for electoral equality, our town centre amendment enables Three Bridges ward to better match the Three Bridges neighbourhood and also keeps more of Northgate neighbourhood together.

Our amendment to the LGBCE draft recommendation is to only include the County Buildings/Town Hall site as well as south of Haslett Avenue West. This means that virtually all the existing electors in the town centre part of the existing Northgate ward who are also in the WSCC Electoral Division of Northgate & West Green, would remain in Northgate as part of the proposed Northgate & West Green ward.

Our amendment takes Three Bridges ward down to a variance of +1% as opposed to +7% under the LGBCE proposal which is a significant improvement.

Northgate & West Green

The Conservative Group are keen to see as many existing electors as possible in the town centre part of Northgate remain in their existing ward which would also match their West Sussex County Council Electoral Division. There is no reason to move them for the purposes of electoral equality. Our amendment sees only undeveloped sites at the town hall/county building sites and south of Haslett Avenue West leave Northgate by going into Three Bridges. The rest of the town centre which is virtually all the existing electors would stay within their existing Northgate ward.

It should be noted that under the LGBCE proposal, part of the town centre is still within Northgate & West Green, that being the area from the west of Crawley High Street westwards. There are residents living on both sides of Crawley High Street and we feel they should be in the same ward.

Our proposed amendment keeps the majority of the town centre and virtually all the existing electors within Northgate & West Green. It should be noted that Crawley High Street and the town centre is where Northgate and West Green neighbourhoods naturally come together and our amendment reflects that well. This informs our view that Crawley High Street (currently a boundary between Northgate and West Green under the existing arrangements) should not be a boundary between Northgate & West Green with Three Bridges, but remain entirely within the new ward of Northgate & West Green.

Conclusion

The Conservative Groups proposed minor amendments to the LGBCE draft recommendations improve the warding scheme in the following ways and have the additional benefits, particularly when compared to the scheme with the amendment proposed by the Labour Group.

1. Overall Electoral Equality has a 4% lower total variance when compared with the LGBCE scheme as amended by the Labour Group.
2. No ward has a variance greater than 8%. The Labour Group amendment to include Ifield's Orchards Estate into Langley Green ward and remove the area south of the Tushmore Roundabout creates an outlier by taking Langley Green ward's variance to -9%.
3. A better match with Crawley's neighbourhoods, as shown when compared to Crawley's neighbourhood map as submitted in Crawley Borough Council's original submission for a draft scheme.
4. 361 less Crawley electors being moved out of their existing neighbourhood ward into a ward outside of their neighbourhood. The Labour Group amendment sees 316 Ifield neighbourhood electors moved out of their neighbourhood into Langley Green ward and moves back 359 electors into their Northgate and West Green neighbourhoods, while still having 1099 town centre electors moved out their Northgate

neighbourhood into Three Bridges ward (total of 1,056 Crawley electors moving out of their neighbourhood). The Conservative Group amendments does not have that change and only moves 652 (almost all future electors on sites not yet developed) town centre electors out of their existing Northgate neighbourhood into Three Bridges ward (total of 695 Crawley electors). This is a net difference of 361 Crawley electors not being moved to a ward outside of their neighbourhood under the Conservative Group proposals.

5. The Ifield ward exactly matches the Ifield neighbourhood.
6. Three Bridges ward contains the entire Three Bridges neighbourhood with only the minimum of additional areas added, making the Three Bridges neighbourhood a greater percentage of the overall Three Bridges ward.
7. Much greater co-terminosity with the West Sussex County Council Electoral Divisions for Northgate & West Green, Three Bridges and Langley Green & Tushmore, leading to more convenient local government with less confusion for residents as well as for both Local Authorities.
8. A better proposal for Crawley town centre and for Northgate & West Green more generally by ensuring the town centre is the central and focal point where these two neighbourhoods come together in their new proposed ward that joins the two wards together under the existing arrangements.

We urge the LGBE to add the two Conservative Group amendments to the LGBCE draft proposed scheme and not to adopt the Labour amendment for their Final Recommendations.