

From: William Thomas [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 April 2018 12:26
To: reviews
Subject: Crawley ward Boundary Review 2018
Attachments: wardboundaryletter4.18..doc

Dear Sir or Madam

Please take the attachment into your consideration for the changes to Crawley's Ward Boundaries.

Best wishes

Geraint Thomas

I am writing as a resident of Crawley since 1950 with a Masters Degree in Regional and Urban Planning and an Honours degree in Geography which led to over thirty years of Geography teaching in local secondary schools, including Hazelwick in Three Bridges. Over the years, I have lived in Pound Hill, Gossops Green, Furnace Green and Ifield. As such, I know the town intimately – particularly as I have been a Borough Councillor since 2009.

I write to express my support for the boundary scheme proposed by Crawley Borough Council.

The Ward boundaries proposed by the Borough Council deliver better electoral equality than the other scheme suggested by Cllr Crow, meaning a resident's vote will be worth more or less the same as everyone else's.

I have studied carefully the West Sussex County Council Electoral Division boundaries you agreed to in 2016 which seemed to suggest that electoral equality was a major, if not the predominant consideration in your final judgement – which I can understand.

The % rounded variances for the Divisions you approved were (if I am not mistaken and without going into naming the Divisions) 2, 0, 4, -5, 6, -6, 8, -3 and -2. These I believe you conclude provided 'reasonable electoral equality'. Obviously the Divisions are larger than the Wards which partly explains the relatively low variances.

The Borough Council's proposal has done its best to minimise the variances in Ward boundaries for the borough and I again list them without naming the Wards : 6, 5, -4, 2, 3, -3, -5, 8, 4, -8, -3, -4 and 0. If these figures are totalled, ignoring plus and minus, this adds up to 55.

Cllr Duncan Crow proposals' variances are 9, 9, -4, 9, 3, -10, -5, 9, 4, -8, 1, -4 and 0 which totals 75.

So there is a **twenty point difference across the 13 Wards on electoral equality** between the proposals. This suggests that the Borough Council's scheme scores significantly better on electoral equality to which the Boundary Commission attaches considerable weight than Cllr Crow's.

In particular, in Cllr Crow's scheme, a vote in Bewbush and Broadfield North, Broadfield, and Northgate and West Green is 'worth' considerably less (with almost 10% positive variance) than a vote in Gossops Green, Langley Green and Tushmore (with almost 10% negative variance).

The Borough Council's proposal manages to avoid crossing well-established man-made boundaries such as the railway lines and major avenues, including the town's busiest road: Crawley Avenue, and ensures we have local Wards which can conveniently and effectively be represented by our councillors.

Crawley's neighbourhoods have a long history and are an important part of our town's history and community identity. The council's scheme preserves our integral neighbourhoods by only moving areas with an identity separate to that of the main neighbourhood (Town Centre, Manor Royal and Tinsley Lane) or whole housing developments (Broadfield) to ensure a scheme which recognises community interests and identities while delivering strong electoral equality and convenient and effective local government.

Langley Green and Manor Royal

This proposal to recognise that Crawley's busiest road might constitute a boundary is a good one, in contrast to the Conservative proposal which has it partitioning three different wards, in several cases requiring you to exit the ward in order to access the main body of it.

The issues affecting the north of the town are held in common across the proposed new ward (Crawley Avenue congestion and air pollution, Manor Royal and Gatwick Airport), in contrast to a Three Bridges Ward extending all the way from Gatwick Airport into the Town Centre, covering a huge range of different demographic groups and geographies for which it would be hard to provide a single effective voice (such as on the issue of a second runway). Unifying the town centre with Pembroke Park, and the Telford Place and College Car Park developments will clearly ensure that issues related to high population flatted developments are similarly well represented by a single set of councillors.

Bewbush, Broadfield and Gossops Green

The council's proposal seeks to minimise changes to these neighbourhoods without breaking up housing developments, which can be seen as reflecting areas of local community identity.

Unlike the Conservative proposal, there is no unnecessary breaking down of the neighbourhood barrier between Bewbush and Gossops Green, which would have required voters to exit their ward in order to access the main body of it.

Southgate

It seems strange to me that the Conservatives are proposing to include Station Way in the Southgate Ward. In addition to crossing another natural boundary, the high density development proposed for this area clearly has more in common with other sites in the town centre than the 19th Century housing on the other side of the railway line in Southgate.

Yours sincerely

Geraint Thomas
Borough Councillor for Northgate