

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Caller / The Rt Hon Eric Pickles

“The Boundary Commission has advised that, as a result of representations received, some changes have been made to the version of the ward pattern published for consultation. These changes include:

1. Renaming 'Sheerwater' ward as 'Canalside'
2. Including Old Avenue, Hollies Avenue and Woodlands Avenue in 'Byfleet and West Byfleet' ward (rather than 'Canalside')
3. Extending the western boundary edge of 'Canalside' to include the area across Victoria Way, down Goldsworth Road to Morrison's Superstore, including roads off Vale Farm Road.

The Commission notes that it considered including the areas of Woodham Way, Broomhalls and The Grove in Horsell. However, the conclusion reached was that this would deliver poor levels of electoral equality for local voters, and accordingly no change has been proposed”.

As a Woking constituent I am writing to you in conjunction to the recent final report outlined by the LGBC with regard to the proposed boundary changes within the borough of Woking.

I am a Woodham resident who objected along with approx. 400 other residents to the inclusion of Woodham into Canalside as recommended by the LGBC (not recommended by the council). My purpose in writing is to make you aware that I do not feel that the commissions report has taken into account the views and objections submitted by the many residents.

The commission's response to fair electoral equality was more of an excuse for balancing numbers contradicting its other main aim of local community interests, which have been totally disregarded as highlighted by the hundreds of letters opposing the proposal of encompassing Woodham within Canalside. You will see further into this letter that the fair electorate vote it uses for its argument for keeping areas within Canalside will be irrelevant with a proposed regeneration.

Woodham is much more in keeping with that of Horsell, it is a non urban residential area mostly surrounded by woodland with a natural boundary of the Basingstoke canal separating it from the densely populated residential area of Sheerwater along with industrial/office and retail space.

From my understanding the council requested the review to take place for 2 main reasons.

1. A cost cutting exercise to cut the number of councilors from 36 to 30 and make a saving of £60,000.
2. To evenly distribute the work and number of electorates between the wards, as it was apparent that Maybury and Sheerwater had a higher ratio of constituents to councilors.

As a result the LGBC reported back its findings meeting its statutory criteria:

Electoral equality for Voters

Local community interests

Promote effective and convenient local government

Electoral equality for Voters

I understand that this information is partly based on information reports submitted by the local council with regard to Electoral predictions, planning data and information based on National Statistics. Such evidence came from various sources including the electoral register, Planning data on future residential developments and the office of National statistics. It was noted that the calculations for the anticipated electorate was based on

the number of dwellings expected to be completed up to March 2018 though The Local Government Boundary Commission for England, in considering the changes to the existing ward boundaries, must have regard to the likely increase, decrease or movement in electorate over a five year period from the making of its final recommendations. The Commission has confirmed that, for the purposes of this review, the population projections should extend to the year 2019.

As a result the Council felt confident in its approach to electorate projections up to 2018. To gain an indicative figure for 2019 the Council turned to the data available through the Office for National Statistics and its sub-national projections. The report noted that the Housing Land Supply projections do not extend beyond 2018, and cannot therefore be used to strengthen the 2019 estimates.

I am unaware why the Housing Land supply projections do not extend beyond 2019?

Whilst such predictions are taken into account the large and more relevant developments of Sheerwater and Woking town Centre have not been included. It has been advised that the rules state planning permission that has not been approved cannot be accounted for? The planning permission that Woking borough Council is currently undertaking is a major regeneration programme in the Proposed canalside ward (currently known as Sheerwater). Whilst I understand has not yet been approved it will be one of the biggest changes to the borough in many years and common sense would suggest that such a large proposal should have been included in the report – we are not talking about the planning of a few houses.

Whilst I appreciate the LGBC has guideline's and rules to follow there should come a point it seeks further involvement from Government when major infrastructure changes to an area are in the process of being sought to ensure that its proposals reflect such significant changes prior to changing area ward boundaries based on generalized projections and statistics. By

excluding such proposals makes a mockery of the figures used and results in frequent exercises at the cost of the local taxpayer. Your report used the figures and estimations from the council as stated below but this information is futile without taking into consideration major proposed developments with or without planning permission.

The report noted that fastest growing Borough in Surrey is Epsom and Ewell, which has seen an 11.9% increase since 2001, while Runnymede has seen the lowest increase (3.2%). Woking has seen the second highest increase in the County (10.4%) that is higher than that of Surrey, the South East and England, making Woking one of the fastest growing Boroughs in the Country.

The housing figures have been estimated based upon the annual housing target of 292 additional dwellings per annum as set out in the Core Strategy 2027. The Planning Inspectorate confirmed that the Council's Core Strategy was sound. It was therefore adopted by the Council on 25 October 2012 (Report Ref: WBC12-032). This housing target has also been used to update the Council's 2013-2018 Housing Land Supply Position Statement.

Further details regarding housing numbers and the Core Strategy are set out in Schedule 1. The Council is confident in being able to rely upon the detailed figures of at least 1,460 additional homes to be built by 2018. Indeed, the Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement 2013 indicates that some 1,772 dwellings will be constructed between 2013 and 2018, exceeding the figure within the Core Strategy by 312. Do these figures take account of Sheerwater?

Further projects are planned in the Borough, particularly in the area of the Town Centre; though these have not been included in the Council's calculations as to-date there is no evidence available in the form of planning approval.

My point is this, as a Woodham resident (along with approximately 400 other residents who objected to the proposed Canalside inclusion, Horsell exclusion) without taking into account a proposed major regeneration project in Sheerwater which would result in an additional 900 homes the report figures are irrelevant - predictions in the current Canalside (Sheerwater) area is predicted as Zero! It makes a mockery of the whole report.

I ask the question at what point the LGBC feel that rather than carry out a report based on figures that do not take into consideration plans for a major regeneration when it should seek further guidance from Parliament?

Could you please confirm if the local council had been recommended to carry out this report once planning approval for major regeneration had been established?

As a result the consequences brought about by the commissions current report will be unfairly acted on.

Local Community interests

As importantly the report concludes “**we believe these recommendations deliver electoral equality for voters as well as reflecting the identities of communities in Woking**”.

In the whole of the borough, Woodham was one of the strongest objectors to your proposal. Both the Woodham councilors and Labour councilor from Sheerwater objected to the proposal -all of whom hold seats on the council. The non-elected Liberal Democrat councilor and 1 Sheerwater resident agreed with the proposal.

With such objection could you please verify what consideration with regard to local community interest was given to incorporating Woodham into Canalside and removing it from Horsell (other than number balancing), as this has not been clearly identified in your conclusion?

We live in a democratic country and as a result we have the right to vote and put across a viewpoint. On this occasion I feel that the viewpoints and basis of the report have not been given due consideration and object to being told that the report is final without seeing convincing evidence that shows consideration in relation to the objections you received. The only evidence that is apparent is balancing numbers based on reports that exclude current major redevelopments.

As a result I am of the opinion that opposition in Parliament should be sought to prevent the decisions made by a committee of people who do not live or have experience of this area from being passed. Indeed only yesterday on the Andrew Marr show Phillip Hammond quoted it is a fundamental right to prevent enforced International boundary changes, yet (though I appreciate this is not on the same scale) our boundary of where we live is being changed by force i.e. the majority of the people who live within it are being told that it is being changed despite a majority of objections!

Lastly it should be noted that the LGBC's final summary report shows an error (surprisingly Canalside!) - "Numbers of electors per council (2020 figure) should read 2555 not 2548! Whilst the error will not change the overall figure I feel it should be brought to your attention.

Lastly could I please request under the freedom of information act the costs involved of carrying out this report?

Yours Sincerely



c.c Jonathan Lord MP for Woking

Anne Murray –Conservative councilor Horsell East /Woodham

Mohammad Ilyas Raja – Labour councilor Maybury/Sheerwater

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP – Secretary of State for communities/Local Government

From: [REDACTED]
To: Vallotton.Sarah
Subject: Re: Your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act
Date: 24 March 2015 11:35:20

Dear Mrs Vallotton

Thank you for your email please could you provide the information for the costs involved in carrying out the electoral review of Woking. I am suprised that the costs of the final report are not included as presumably there is no much point in carrying out a review without a final report ?

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

-----Original message-----

From : Sarah.Vallotton@lgbce.org.uk

Date : 24/03/2015 - 10:59 (GMT)

To : [REDACTED]

Subject : Your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act

Dear [REDACTED]

FOI Ref: 02/15

You requested:

The costs involved in carrying out the final report on the electoral review of Woking.

The Commission is seeking clarification of your request. Did you want the costs involved in carrying out the electoral review of Woking, or the costs of producing the final report? If you could let me know as soon as possible, I would be most grateful.

The Commission aims to respond promptly and within the statutory deadline of 20 working days set by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, until we receive clarification of your request, the deadline for our response under the 2000 Act is suspended.

We received your request on 10 March 2015. This means that there are a further nine working days before the deadline for your request is reached. This nine working day period will commence from the date that we receive your clarification. At that point, I

will write to you again to let you know by when you should expect to receive a response from us.

In some cases a fee may be payable and if that is the case I will let you know. A fees notice will be issued to you, and you will be required to pay before I will proceed to deal with your request. However, I believe this will be unlikely in your case.

If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided below. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Kind regards,

Sarah Vallotton

Sarah Vallotton

Business and Committee Services Manager

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

3rd Floor Layden House

76-86 Turnmill Street

London EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8522

Fax: 020 7296 6227

www.lgbce.org.uk

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

7 April 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Our ref: 02/15

Thank you for your letter of 9 March 2015, requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You have requested:

The costs involved of carrying out the electoral review of Woking.

The Commission does hold information relevant to your request.

LGBCE commences around 30 reviews each year and each review follows the same prescribed process, which is described within the guidance published on our website.

Currently, the costs of an individual review cannot be calculated exactly, but an estimate can be reached based on the overall costs of the Commission's work during the relevant period.

In the case of the electoral review of Woking Borough Council, the review began in April 2013, when preliminary discussions were held with the local authority. It ended in January 2015 with the publication of the Commission's final recommendations, and the draft Order was laid before Parliament in March 2015.

The total cost of a review such as this is approximately £77,000. This estimate is based on all the review work undertaken during the period April 2013 to March 2015, and the overall costs incurred on reviews by the Commission during that period.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me, quoting the reference number above in any correspondence.

If you wish to request a review of our decision, you should write to me at:

Sarah Vallotton
Business & Committee Services Manager
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Please note, the Commission will be moving to a new office from 27th April. If you wish to write to me after that date, please use the following address:

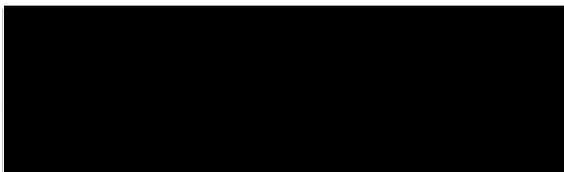
Sarah Vallotton
Business & Committee Services Manager
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

My email address will remain unchanged.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Vallotton
Business & Committee Services Manager
Sarah.vallotton@lgbce.org.uk
020 7664 8522