

[REDACTED]

From: Ken Leadbeater [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 December 2017 14:52
To: reviews
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW
Attachments: Current Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley Borough ward - Map of parish wards, polling districts and polling stations.pdf

Re-sent with map attached

From: Ken Leadbeater [REDACTED] >
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 4 December 2017, 14:49
Subject: DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW

Dear Sir

**DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW
CONSULTATION ON WARDING ARRANGEMENTS
PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF BOUNDARY BETWEEN HAWLEY AND SUTTON-AT-HONE**

I write as a member of the public and a registered elector in Sutton-at-Hone.

I am copying this e-mail to
Cllrs P.F. Coleman and L.J. Reynolds, who represent Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley ward on Dartford Borough Council
Mrs. K. Gale, Clerk to Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley Parish Council
Ms. S. Martin, the Review Officer at Dartford Borough Council

I have read the report to Dartford Borough Council on 30 November 2017 on their Ward Arrangements Submission and I am writing to take issue with DBC's proposal for the new Wilmington and Hawley and Sutton-at-Hone wards.

Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley ward has been coterminous with the parish of the same name for the last 39 years and the two villages are very close knit. Each village forms a separate ward for parish council elections and a separate polling district. The proposal to place each village in a separate borough ward is controversial and unpopular, but may be inevitable given the electoral arithmetic.

The further proposal, however, to realign the boundary between the two villages makes no sense, is unnecessary and undesirable and is not required for electoral equality.

During the early 1980s the M25 was constructed to the south of Hawley, severing the southern part of Hawley village from Hawley village centre. The links and integrity of Hawley, however, were maintained with a large bridge constructed over the A225, enabling Hawley residents south of the M25 to walk into Hawley village centre in about 5 minutes and to drive to Dartford in less than 10 minutes. Beyond these roads to the south, there is about half a mile of open farmland between the two villages, before reaching the first houses in Sutton-at-Hone.

The boundary between the two villages was unchanged by the construction of the M25 and is clearly understood by residents on the ground, who know definitively which village they live in. It is illustrated on the attached map, showing the current boundary between Hawley and Sutton-at-Hone parish wards, each of which forms a separate polling district. The location of the two polling stations is shown on the map.

The report to DBC has proposed a realignment of the boundary to the centre of the M25, because "this is a physical boundary and the change is in keeping with the principles used across the borough with physical barriers". The projected electorate of DBC's proposed wards is Sutton-at-Hone (2,245 – 1 member) and Wilmington and Hawley (6,255 – 3 members).

This change makes a nonsense of community ties and is anti-democratic. There are about 100 electors in Royal Road and Hawley Road south, so the change is not for the purposes of electoral equality. It does not reflect the interests and identity of the community of Hawley and it does not provide for effective and convenient local government. The community of Hawley will now be represented by a total of four Borough councillors on either side of the boundary. Furthermore, the parish wards and polling districts will also be realigned along the centre of the M25 and the residents of Royal Road and Hawley Road south will have to travel a mile and a half to the polling station at the southern end of Sutton-at-Hone, which may deter them from voting.

This change does not make sense and is in conflict with two of the three statutory criteria. I suggest that the new borough wards maintain the existing boundary between Hawley and Sutton-at-Hone. A transfer of 100 electors back to Wilmington and Hawley will result in projected electorates of Sutton-at-Hone (2,145 – 1 member) and Wilmington and Hawley (6,355 – 3 members), which are well within the electoral tolerances.

Yours faithfully

Kenneth Leadbeater