

CHASE Residents' Association submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on proposed changes to ward boundaries within the London Borough of Croydon

We wish to draw the Commission's attention to difficulties that would be posed by putting into practice draft recommendations for changes to ward boundaries within the Addiscombe area of Croydon Central. We propose an alternative re-drawing of boundaries, a position we believe is in keeping with the views of a number of neighbouring residents' associations and individuals.

Established communities

The notional boundaries of the "community" of Addiscombe are distinct from the present electoral ward of Addiscombe in that the community includes a sizeable part of the present Ashburton Ward. Addiscombe Road forms the southern boundary, in both electoral and community terms, for both wards. Residents of Fairfield Ward to the south do not identify with the community of Addiscombe.

Within the current electoral wards of Addiscombe and Ashburton there is a more distinct community-based division between:

- The western end, where residents living near East Croydon Station gravitate towards shops, schools, churches and facilities in the area between Cherry Orchard Road and Clyde Road.
- The eastern side, where the Lower Addiscombe Road is the main district centre serving a community extending from east of Ashburton Park to Elgin Road to the west.

Difficulties presented by the proposed boundaries

Creating the proposed new wards of Addiscombe West & Park Hill and Addiscombe East by imposing an arbitrary border between Addiscombe/Ashburton and extending these wards south of Addiscombe Road would include areas with no natural affinity with Addiscombe. This is seemingly for the sake of electoral parity, but parity can be managed in better ways.

The areas of Park Hill and the Whitgift Estate, within the current Fairfield ward, do not identify with Addiscombe owing to understandable differences in the characteristics of these respective neighbourhoods, with pronounced differences in housing type and density. Park Hill and the Whitgift Estate are noted for quiet, sparsely populated residential roads in contrast to Addiscombe's more bustling environment. Forcing a merger of these areas would risk unnecessary tensions between residents and pose challenges to councillors managing distinct, competing priorities.

Also, proposals to move Ashburton Park and Oasis Academy into a newly-created Shirley North Ward, would mean moving these local landmarks out of control of what is understood to be their local communities and into an area represented by different councillors.

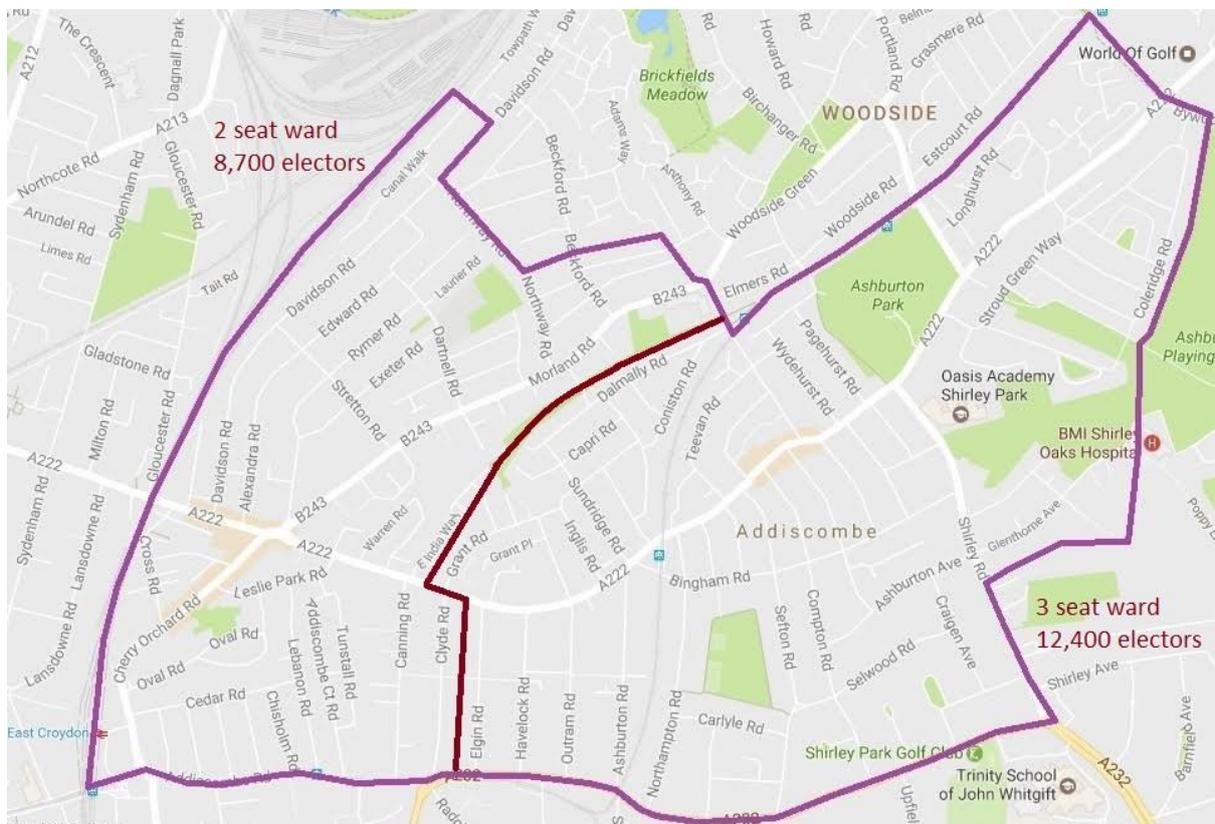
CHASE's view of a more workable solution

In common with other local residents' associations, we believe that a strong sense of local identity and effective representation by councillors can be maintained by keeping together areas with shared characteristics. We would also wish to avoid new boundaries bifurcating current residents' associations that make a vital contribution to a sense of community. This can be done whilst still meeting the Commission's requirements for electoral equality by replacing proposals for Addiscombe West & Park Hill and Addiscombe East wards with, respectively:

- East Croydon Ward (represented by two councillors)
- Addiscombe Ward (represented by three councillors)

Considering the effect this would have on neighbouring wards, a two-member ward could then unite the low-density residential areas of Park Hill and the Whitgift Estate within the current Fairfield ward.

We believe that boundaries proposed by our ward councillors, following consultation with residents' associations, shown in the map below address voter parity as well as community characteristics with minimal impact to surrounding wards. We would like to see these boundaries take the place of those in the current draft proposal.



The committee of CHASE Residents' Association
Via: www.chaseresidents.org.uk