

Kingsley, Paul

From: Crow, Duncan [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 February 2016 23:56
To: reviews
Subject: Submission for the review of West Sussex County Council

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Sirs,

As the 18 Conservative Borough Councillors for Crawley who also include Crawley's three Conservative West Sussex County Councillors (dual hatters), we object in the strongest possible terms and are deeply disappointed with the draft recommendations for Crawley in the LGBCE review of the West Sussex County Council electoral divisions. We support the revised scheme for Crawley put forward by West Sussex County Council which does take account of some of the feedback received by the LGBCE on the draft consultation.

The LGBCE proposal will create a huge imbalance in Crawley with residents east of the London to Brighton railway being under-represented and left in a wholly unfair and unsustainable position due to the continuing growth of Forge Wood from 2015 to 2026, as evidenced in Crawley Borough Council's Local Plan.

We are also very concerned at Crawley's long-established and much-cherished neighbourhood principle being undermined and eroded, with the LGBCE proposal seeing County divisions not coterminous with five of Crawley's Borough wards. The revised proposal from West Sussex County Council would see only three Crawley Borough wards not coterminous, which is a considerable improvement on the LGBCE recommendation. Furthermore, in addition to the LGBCE recommendation seeing five Borough wards split between County divisions as opposed to only three County divisions in the revised WSCC scheme, the LGBCE proposal regrettably sees two additional neighbourhood splits, namely in Ifield at the Orchards estate and in Worth at the Worth Way.

Crawley as a designated new town was designed with the neighbourhood principle at its heart. It should be noted that Crawley Borough wards have always very strongly matched Crawley's neighbourhoods and that West Sussex County divisions have always maximised coterminosity with Crawley Borough wards. Therefore, we firmly believe that the LGBCE principle of coterminosity should be afforded greater weight in Crawley than in the rest of West Sussex. The revised submission from West Sussex County Council recognises and respects the weight that should be given to Crawley's neighbourhood principle.

The revised WSCC scheme sees three divisions divided by a railway line which is exactly the same as the LGBCE proposal but the revised WSCC proposal sees considerably less mileage of railway line breached for division boundaries in Crawley than the LGBCE proposal.

We feel that the east of Crawley which has entirely Conservative representation, is being unfairly treated with criteria about railway lines being applied inconsistently between the east and the west of Crawley, as well as with both Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath.

It is worth noting that the Labour proposed scheme being recommended by the LGBCE has no other known support outside of the Labour Party. This includes at West Sussex County Council (which is made up of five political groupings) with only the Labour representative at the WSCC Governance Committee supporting the LGBCE proposal, and at Crawley Borough Council (which has a Labour majority of one) where the Labour Chairman's casting vote had to be used to get CBC's Governance Committee to officially support the LGBCE recommendation.

We support the revised WSCC scheme for Crawley which is superior to the LGBCE proposal on all three of the LGBCE's own criteria in qualifying order, of equality of electorate, of coterminosity with Borough wards and of community of interest. It is also an improvement on the existing arrangements and an opportunity to unite neighbourhoods and wards in a town with the neighbourhood principle at its heart should not be wasted. We strongly urge the LGBCE to adopt the revised scheme for Crawley as formally proposed by West Sussex County Council, which is the Authority that these arrangements will apply to.

LGBCE Proposed Divisions for Crawley

Bewbush & Ifield West: We are not unhappy with the LGBCE proposal for Bewbush & Ifield West but do prefer the County Council proposal which enables greater equality of electorate and a more even split for the Ifield ward and neighbourhood.

We do wish to highlight that there is much less movement of people (including no direct road access) across the railway line between Bewbush and Ifield West than there is between Three Bridges and Pound Hill South around Three Bridges Station and Station Hill as well as via Bycroft Way and St Marys Drive. This makes the LGBCE concern with the WSCC proposed division of Three Bridges & Pound Hill South (now revised and renamed Three Bridges) look like criteria being inconsistently applied.

Broadfield: We support this proposal which is the same under both proposed schemes.

Gossops Green & Ifield East: We are opposed to this proposal for this division when stronger alternatives for both Gossops Green and for the east of Ifield have been proposed by WSCC. The east of Ifield would be much better matched with Langley Green as per the WSCC proposal. A map of Crawley clearly shows that the interface between the east of Ifield and Langley Green is far greater than that of the east of Ifield and Gossops Green which is divided by a railway line with limited crossings. In particular, the WSCC proposed scheme has the benefit of 300+ residents of the Orchards estate in Ifield neighbourhood

but in Langley Green ward, being in an Ifield division while still coterminous with their Langley Green ward. The WSCC proposal would mean that the neighbourhood of Ifield is split between two divisions as opposed to being split into three divisions under the LGBCE proposal.

We also believe that Gossops Green would be better matched with Southgate having Goffs Park at the centre of this division as per the WSCC proposed scheme. Gossops Green was previously with Southgate West as a division until 2005. The WSCC proposal of a Southgate & Gossops Green division would have a strong boundary of the railway line separating it from the east of the Ifield and from much of West Green and the town centre, other than the small part of Southgate West that would go into Northgate & West Green to ensure electoral equality.

We wish to highlight that there is much less movement of people, especially pedestrians and cyclists across the railway line between the east of Ifield and Gossops Green than there is between Three Bridges and Pound Hill South around Three Bridges Station. This makes the LGBCE concern with the WSCC proposed division of Three Bridges & Pound Hill South (now revised and renamed Three Bridges) look like criteria being inconsistently applied.

Langley Green & West Green: We are strongly opposed to this proposal which sees the long-established neighbourhood and Borough ward of West Green split in two, as opposed to the WSCC proposal that sees all of West Green ward and neighbourhood kept together.

Langley Green has a much greater interface with the east of Ifield, and West Green has a much greater interface with Northgate. This can clearly be seen on a map of Crawley. The WSCC proposal recognises this and matches these Borough wards accordingly with proposed divisions of Langley Green & Ifield East and Northgate & West Green. Northgate and West Green wards were previously joined together in a WSCC division up to the mid1980s.

Maidenbower: We are opposed to the size of this proposed division which will go into the 2017 County Council election at well over +10% from the West Sussex average electorate. We also believe that the LKA polling district of Pound Hill South looks much more to Three Bridges and the area around Three Bridges Station than it looks south to Maidenbower. We are strongly opposed to the splitting of the neighbourhood of Worth with the Worth Way as a boundary when all of Worth could be all within one County division as per the revised WSCC proposal.

Pound Hill: We are strongly opposed to the LGBCE proposal which will leave the residents of Pound Hill increasingly under-represented and awaiting a future boundary review to correct an entirely preventable problem of electoral unfairness. To knowingly create a division that will be +10% above the West Sussex average electorate in 2021 and still

rapidly growing is viewed with dismay by us, especially when a strong and viable alternative has been proposed by West Sussex County Council that will stop this problem from arising.

The new neighbourhood of Forge Wood will continue to be built up to 2026 and this housing growth is the most certain in Crawley given that it is an entirely new neighbourhood that is being built. Should more piecemeal development elsewhere not be built as quickly as projected, we will see Pound Hill exceed the +10% variance in 2021 or earlier. We do know for sure that Pound Hill will continue to increasingly exceed the +10 variance from 2021 and will be left in an unfair and unsustainable position.

It is obvious that the railway line in Pound Hill will have to be breached as a boundary at the subsequent review and request that electoral fairness be applied now to resolve this. The revised WSCC proposal allows for the growth of Forge Wood and creates a strong and sustainable solution for Pound Hill with the breaching of the railway line as a boundary in the most appropriate location. Namely around Three Bridges Station.

Southgate & Crawley Central: We are strongly opposed to this proposed division that will be made of one entire Borough ward (Southgate) and parts of three other Borough wards (Three Bridges, Northgate and West Green). There has never been a County division in Crawley before made up of four Borough wards and this proposal is a major departure from Crawley's cherished neighbourhood principle.

Pemborke Park in Three Bridges has no connection or affinity to the southern part of West Green or indeed the whole of Southgate. It is a part of Three Bridges and looks to the rest of the Three Bridges neighbourhood. This can be evidenced by the sub 15% turnout at the 2013 County election when as a part of the current Southgate division, but recording a considerably higher election turnout at Borough elections when rightly a part of Three Bridges ward.

We recognise that a viable scheme for Crawley does require either Southgate or West Green to have a split but feel the LGBCE has split the wrong ward out of the two. The northern part of Southgate looks much more towards the town centre and all of West Green than the southern part of West Green looks towards the whole of Southgate. The major Asda supermarket and Crawley Hospital are such facilities in West Green that are within walking distance of the northern part of Southgate. West Green is a much smaller neighbourhood than Southgate and splitting this ward would have a more negative effect on the community spirit in a smaller neighbourhood than in a much larger one such as Southgate.

The LGBCE proposal does not have Crawley town centre at the centre of this division. The town centre which is experiencing housing growth would be much better served by being at the centre and heart of a County division of all of Northgate and all of West Green as per the WSCC proposal.

Three Bridges and Northgate: We are strongly opposed to the Borough wards of both Three Bridges and Northgate being split unnecessarily by the LGBCE proposal, when there is a much better alternative in the revised WSCC proposal that would see all of Three Bridges and all of Northgate neighbourhoods and Borough wards kept together within County divisions.

An opportunity is being lost to bring the Pembroke Park part of Three Bridges back into the same division as the rest of Three Bridges and to bring the town centre back in with the rest of Northgate Borough ward.

A Crawley map clearly shows that Northgate has a much greater interface with West Green than it does with Three Bridges along Northgate Avenue which is a 40mph A-road that has few pedestrians. We support the WSCC proposal of a Northgate & West Green division with the town centre at its heart. The major Sainsbury supermarket in West Green is local to and is popular with Northgate residents.

We support the revised WSCC proposal to keep all of Three Bridges together and to add the LKA polling district of Pound Hill South which looks more towards Three Bridges than it does Maidenbower. Having Three Bridges Station at the centre of a new division makes perfect sense and will enable all the associated issues with it to be in one division with one County Councillor, rather than the area around the Station being split down the middle between two divisions and two County Councillors as it currently is now and is proposed to continue with the LGBCE proposal.

Tilgate & Furnace Green: We support this proposal which is the same under both schemes.

Yours sincerely, Duncan Crow.

Conservative Group Leader at Crawley Borough Council and West Sussex County Councillor for Tilgate and Furnace Green.

On behalf of the Crawley Borough Council Conservative Group of:

Cllr Duncan Crow – Furnace Green and County Councillor for Tilgate and Furnace Green.

Cllr Carol Eade – Furnace Green

Cllr Richard Burrett – Pound Hill North and County Councillor for Pound Hill and Worth.

Cllr Keith Brockwell – Pound Hill North

Cllr Kevan McCarthy – Pound Hill North

Cllr Bob Lanzer – Pound Hill South and County Councillor for Maidenbower.

Cllr Dr Howard Bloom – Pound Hill South

Cllr Beryl Mecrow – Pound Hill South

Cllr Ken Trussell - Maidenbower

Cllr Duncan Peck – Maidenbower

Cllr Kim Jaggard – Maidenbower

Cllr Bob Burgess – Three Bridges
Cllr Brenda Burgess – Three Bridges
Cllr Liam Marshall-Ascough – Southgate
Cllr Jan Tarrent – Southgate
Cllr Francis Guidera – Tilgate
Cllr Lisa Vitler – Gossops Green
Cllr Martin Stone – Ifield

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