

Michael Jones
County Councillor
Southgate & Crawley Central
Electoral Division

T: [REDACTED]



Boundary Committee for England

28 August 2015

Dear Sir or Madam,

BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

I am writing with reference to the boundary commission for England's review of the electoral division boundaries for West Sussex County Council, and attach alternative proposals for the Borough of Crawley.

This letter is based on the views of the West Sussex Labour Group, who comprise the majority (six of the nine) county councillors returned by the residents of the Borough of Crawley to West Sussex County Council.

We are extremely dissatisfied that despite proposals being worked up by council officers for a scheme that would have kept very similar arrangements, well within the requirements for electoral equality, our views have been disregarded and so wish to put forward an alternative scheme. I can confirm that this 9-member scheme for Crawley would be entirely compatible with the 70 member scheme put forward by the county council.

We believe the proposal put forward for Crawley by the County Council, put forward by the Conservative Group, is not suitable for Crawley. We believe it ignores existing arrangements unnecessarily, has odd, contorted boundaries, and entirely ignores the views of the majority of Crawley county councillors.

We can assure the commission that the existing arrangements have worked well, and with some minor amendments could still be made to work so that they satisfy the boundary commission's need for improved electoral equality, and for no division to be over 10% above or below the average size of an electoral division in West Sussex.

As a local member, I can assure you that the current arrangements have worked smoothly and that community groups and residents' forums are familiar with existing arrangements and are happy with them. Some of the areas the county council proposes are actually separated by significant barriers, like the A23, but unlike currently propose uniting areas with very few crossing points. While numbers are important, this cannot be at the expense of putting together community areas largely isolated from each other.

We also believe that the current proposal by the county council fails to take enough account of the population growth which will be occurring right across the Borough, not just in the new neighbourhood of Forge Wood. Because of Crawley's geographical location and favourable economic position, we believe this makes it far likelier that a very large proportion of the projected development will occur, as much in the West of the Borough as it is in Forge

Wood. In particular, we anticipate much more intensive development coming onstream in the Town Centre area, which should be reflected in the figures for projected development that you have been provided by the council's officers.

In addition, we do not believe that you can get stronger community barriers than the north/south Brighton line separating Pound Hill and Maidenbower from the other wards in Crawley, which have very few crossing points. The county council's proposals completely ignore this.

It is for that reason that the county council's proposals, including the rather odd "butterfly" shaped proposed Three Bridges and Pound Hill South division are opposed by members of the West Sussex Labour Group. To our minds as local residents, it is not credible and indeed, beggars belief, that the area proposed at Three Bridges is viable, as this is bisected by a major multi-track railway with sidings and railway works. There are very few crossing points.

I set out in the spreadsheet accompanying this letter (attached with this email), the proposed scheme we are proposing.

The spreadsheet sets out proposals by division. Where, in the few cases I propose splitting an existing ward outside of a current polling district, in an effort to be helpful I set out the precise roads in this letter (together with electoral numbers) for the division being added to, so that the Committee can be completely clear which roads are being moved and which remain in their present division.

Aside from our proposals ensuring the retention of the vast majority of the current divisions largely intact, the proposal in this letter proposes boundaries which bring all of the area popularly recognised as "Old Crawley" into the one division (Southgate and Crawley Central), but also proposes an alternative, in our view more solid, community barrier in the Pound Hill/Maidenbower area based on the Worth Way, rather than being forced to go through, as it currently does in the county council's proposals, The Ridings which is in itself a relatively quiet residential road.

Other than those changes, I believe this scheme leaves the arrangements as they currently are, with an acceptable level of co-terminosity.

In this scheme, the following roads would be moved in from Langley Green and West Green to Southgate and Crawley Central division to address electoral equality.

Road	2015 electorate	2021 Total
High Street (Robinson House)	25	
Pegler Way from High Street to roundabout junction with Ifield Rd	95	
Ifield Rd east of roundabout	8	
Victoria Road	72	
Victoria Mews	30	
Spencers Road	58	
Alpha Road	42	
Prospect Place	13	
Church Street	6	

Albany Road	50	
Princess Road	39	
Leopold Road	39	
Westfield Road	47	
Garden Walk	20	
Cotswold Close	21	
Westfield Road	47	
Houses on southern side of Ifield Road – 36, 38, Crawley Foyer, 60-120 (even numbers only) and Wimbourne House	63	
Horsham Road in LO	54	
Sub-total	729	868

In regards to the alternative proposal for the Pound Hill and Maidenbower divisions, these are the roads which would be transferred from the current Pound Hill division to the Maidenbower division. We believe that our proposal is more suitable than the council's proposed version, which is too elaborate and fails to use the Worth Way as the obvious natural community barrier in this neighbourhood. These are the 2015 figures, but I include the projected effect on 2021 figures in the attached spreadsheet.

Stone Court	191
Fitzalen Place	16
Allyington Way	41
Bethune Close	23
Burdett Close	19
Weller close	35
Fontana Close	38
Saxon Road	93
Edgar Close	22
Osmund Close	22
Athelstan Close	35
Harold Road	31
Alfred Close	26
Maddox Drive	36
Old Orchards	21
Houses on east side of Balcombe Road	34
Church Road	117
Grand total	810

Many thanks in anticipation of your detailed consideration of the proposals in this letter and attached spreadsheet. I sincerely believe the radical and, to our minds, somewhat unsuitable proposals outlined in the county council's submission would risk considerable community opposition in Crawley, if they were to be adopted as the scheme when details are circulated to the residents when the Commission initially consults in the near future, and I hope that you will be able to consider our strong concerns as a Group, as a result.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or follow up questions based on the information that I have provided.

With my best wishes,



Councillor Michael Jones

Southgate and Crawley Central

Enc/attached – Proposed scheme for Crawley, setting out figures for 2015 and 2021 for an alternative scheme

