

Response to the LGBCE Proposal for County Council Divisions in Crawley

In my capacity as Chairman of Crawley Conservative Association I am writing to you to express my support, and that of the association, to the County Council response to the LGBCE proposal for Crawley.

One of the fundamental aspects of any proposed boundary changes is that they must be fair to all concerned, not least the residents of the constituency.

It is essential that if equity and fairness is to be in place then certain basic principles should be present.

These include

1. Equality of the electorate. Each division should, as best can be arranged, be of approximately the same size.
2. Provision for any major housing development needs to be factored in.

In the LGBCE proposals there are several anomalies which need to be addressed.

1. The neighbourhood principle, which is much valued in Crawley, is better maintained by the County Council proposals rather than the LGBCE proposals as they currently stand. In the County Council proposals there is more provision for wards to be co-terminus with the electoral divisions at County level. This naturally leads to greater community interest.
2. Within the Pound Hill electoral division there is major housing development taking place and by the time the development is completed there would be a considerable electoral imbalance. The LGBCE proposal does not reflect this changing situation but adopting the suggestion made in the County Council proposal would mean that further small changes would not have to be made going forward.
3. The major development at Pembroke Park is in the Three Bridges ward and yet at County level it resides within the Southgate and Crawley Central electoral division. Such positioning does not make sense. Crawley is a town built on the neighbourhood principle and the residents of Pembroke Park have a natural affinity to Three Bridges rather than to elsewhere in the town.
4. An inspection of a map of Crawley shows certain natural dividing lines. Currently Northgate and Three Bridges form an electoral division and yet there is little or no resident interaction between the two wards. There is more affinity for Northgate towards West Green ward.
5. The apparently natural division of the town by the railway line to London is not really a division at all. The wards of Pound Hill South and Three Bridges meet at the railway station and so places it at the heart of any division involving

Pound Hill South and Three Bridges. Residents of Three Bridges have far greater affinity with Pound Hill South because of greater interaction between residents of the two wards than with Northgate. The Northgate/Three Bridges boundary is primarily at the Town Centre where there is little or no interaction of residents from the two ward.

6. In the Southgate/Gossops Green area of the town there are strong links between the two wards with the popular Goffs Park at its heart. Historically these two wards have been part of the same division. Removal of Pembroke Park from Southgate and Crawley Central division and placing it in Three Bridges along with minor adjustments at the northern end of Southgate to place those residents in a proposed Northgate/West Green division would provide a better and more logical fit
7. The areas of worth and Maidenbower have a natural affinity and community and so placing them together achieves a better electoral fit.
8. A more equitable electoral fit is also achieved if the part of Pound Hill South that looks towards Three Bridges is transferred to the proposed Three Bridges division.

There is much to commend the revised County Council proposals for Crawley and I trust the LGBCE will consider the points made very seriously before they come to any final decision.

As I said at the beginning fairness and equity are key so as to give the electorate a sense and feeling that they matter.

Regards

Bob Burgess

Chairman

Crawley Conservative Association