Windsor and Maidenhead

Personal Details:

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Feature Annotations

Map Features:

Annotation 2: Expanded Boundary

Comment text:

Given that Old Windsor Ward already contain the vast majority or rural crown estate, we suggest expanding the boundary to include all Crown estate areas and their properties that are not connected with the immediate castle environs. The inclusion of any properties that abut the existing Crown Estates/Great Park boundary would not disrupt existing communities and would have little or no effect on those properties. A reduction of 10 councillors to 47 would result in equality being 5055. We estimate that this proposed ward would be current figures of 3878 plus an uplift of 6% which would bring the total to 4110 plus the additional electors, with their uplift, estimated at 500 giving a Total of 4610. This is within the 10% desired target for equality of a two member ward. Please see uploaded document for justification of our proposal.

Uploaded Documents:

Response to RBWM Ward Boundary Review

Old Windsor Parish Council have reviewed the proposal to reduce the number of Borough Councillors from 57 to 43 and amend ward boundaries accordingly.

We have very grave concerns as to the consequences of this proposal on communities within the borough and consider that this will have an inevitable negative impact upon our representation at borough level.

We believe the figure of 43 seats is completely arbitrary any without any basis in geographical constraints, community or historical connections. As the first tier of local government we were surprised that our views were not sought before a proposal was finalised and would have suggested that the process would have been better served had these issues been considered in the beginning. This would have seen a proposal that would have had the advantage of locating ward boundaries in a way that was more relevant to the distinct communities. We accept a certain reduction is necessary but believe a number of 47/48 makes much more sense.

Listed below are our concerns regarding the proposed ward boundaries;

1. Old Windsor Parish is a geographically large area, designated as a rural village that is bounded by Surrey, Bracknell, the River Thames, urban Windsor, Crown Estate and Green Belt. Most of these are fixed boundaries that are unlikely to be affected by any future development, Old Windsor should not expand into urban Windsor as the issues faced by each community are completely different. Windsor is predominantly a busy tourist town whereas Old Windsor is a village with a strong sense of identity and community. We consider ourselves a ‘detached ward’ as there is no obvious area that would be compatible with Old Windsor Parish other than an expanded area of crown estate to the north and the north-west (only part or which is shown on RBWM proposal).

2. RBWM has recommended that Old Windsor is combined with Wraysbury into one ward. Wraysbury is on the other side of the River Thames with no connecting links. There is no public transport or shared facilities between the two communities. They each operate a different school system. Wraysbury follows the two tier school structure where Old Windsor is part of the Windsor three tier system. We cannot find any instances of interaction between the two communities since the pedestrian ferry was discontinued in the 1960’s. This ignores the criteria that arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government and should reflect community interests.

3. The proposal for Old Windsor and Wraysbury ward to be 3 councillors across two distinctly different communities also ignores’ effective local government’ as it will not be possible to have equal representation within the ward. Due to extensive outsourcing and restructuring the role of Borough Councillor will
therefore considerably more focused on ensuring the quality of service delivery in their ward. We have seen the reduction in direct contact between residents and borough officers and therefore a corresponding increase in residents needing to access their borough councillor and so requiring the ward councillor to be accessible and knowledgeable of their community. Extensive cuts are proven to result in a higher caseload for ward councillors.

4 If the proposed reduction to 43 councillors goes ahead then this will not only impact Old Windsor, many communities east and south of the borough will be negatively affected. We would draw your attention to the North of the Windsor area where Eton/Eton Wick/Datchet and Horton become one ward with 3 councillors and the Ascot area that, although 3 parishes, would be reduced to 2 wards. This could be avoided by amending the proposed number of councillors to 47 or 48. We believe the current proposal will cause significant disruption to community cohesion in the affected areas.

5 The extent of development in many areas of the borough is unknown due to uncertainty as to whether the Borough Local Plan will be accepted and the designated Green Belt sites are released. The timescales are also fluid and we could see ward equality being compromised until 2022/23. It does not seem logical to undertake this exercise in a period of such transition.

6 We would like to bring to your attention that having a higher number of geographically larger wards could lead to a reduction in community representatives putting themselves forward for election as a borough councillor. An effective local councillor knows the ward and its residents, much larger wards with multiple distinct communities will compromise the concept of localism and could see a reduction in local democracy further reducing the likelihood of local working people standing for election.

Old Windsor Parish Council ask that the recommendation of 43 Councillors is reviewed and our alternative is considered as we wish to maintain the current effective representational arrangements in this part of the borough. The proposal to join Old Windsor with Wraysbury can only be seen as detrimental to both communities and their residents.