

BOROUGH of ELMBRIDGE



Members Room
Civic Centre
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Councillor Barry J.F. Cheyne
Oatlands Park Ward



Review Officer (Elmbridge)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
London
SW1P 4QP

6th August 2015

Dear Sir

Re: Elmbridge Ward Boundaries Review

I write to you in my capacity as one of the three elected ward councillors for the Oatlands Park Ward within the Borough of Elmbridge and wish to express our disappointment at the way in which the ward boundaries have been redrawn in the Commission's Draft Proposal in total contradiction to the recommendations put forward by us and contained within the Council's proposals document as agreed at a meeting of the Full Council.

We have two specific areas of concern. Oatlands Park is a community in itself with a village commercial centre, two schools (one of which draws its pupils almost exclusively from the Village), its own church, recreation ground and major hospitality provisions including a luxury hotel on the site of the Tudor Palace referred to by Henry VIII as "Our Palace at Oatlands".

Our residents are proud of their village and consider themselves fortunate to be part of it.

Contained within the Commission's Draft Recommendations is a proposal to move some properties in the northernmost part of the ward, primarily along Oatlands Drive out of Oatlands Park and into the Walton Central Ward on the sole premise that this reinstates the 1933 boundary between Walton and Weybridge in the now superseded Urban District Council. We understand that this is a proposal put forward by one councillor ostensibly on behalf of the Liberal Democrats who have a very small representation on the Borough Council, none at all in Oatlands and one in Weybridge – hardly well placed to voice a democratic representation of the views of the local residents.

The representations I and my fellow ward councillors have received from our electorate is virtually unanimous. They are adamant that they wish to remain in the Oatlands Park Ward. They feel a very strong connection with Oatlands and Weybridge but none at all with Walton.

We must therefore ask that you reconsider this proposal prior to the publication of the Commission's final report and recommendations, as it is a matter of great concern to the residents involved.

We now come to the second and potentially far more reaching concern.

The Council's submission to the Commission included proposals to combine a large part of the present Walton South ward with Oatlands to form a new ward referred to in the Council's proposals as the Oatlands and Ashley Park Ward. There were very good reasons for this proposal. It was our contention that the part of Walton South identified to become part of the new ward had a large number of similarities with the present Oatlands Park ward and allowed for natural ward boundaries such as railway lines and major roads.

The Commission has instead proposed that the part of the Hersham South ward known as Burwood Park now be combined with Oatlands to form the new ward. We contend that this is not a natural fit. Oatlands is an area of relatively medium to high density development whereas Burwood Park is a private residential estate containing mostly large, individual designed houses on large plots usually - in excess of a quarter of an acre. The two parts of the new ward would be separated by the main railway line and would be joined by a fairly short stretch of Queens Road producing an "hour glass" shaped ward.

We are fully aware that any review of this proposal would almost certainly trigger a review of a majority of the present proposals for the Borough but we, as ward councillors, do feel that this and the other matter referred to above are of great concern to our electors and should be given further consideration especially as both are a long way from the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.



BARRY JF CHEYNE

Ward Councillor – Oatlands Park Ward
Elmbridge Borough Council