

Elmbridge Electoral Review – Submission by the Elmbridge Liberal Democrats

Introduction

On 30 June 2015 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its draft recommendations for the pattern and names of the electoral wards for Elmbridge borough and it now invites proposals from interested parties on its proposals.

Elmbridge Liberal Democrat Local Party represents the party members living within the borough and wishes to make a proposal for the consideration of the commission.

Comments on the commission's draft proposals

Elmbridge Liberal Democrats fully support the commission's draft proposals subject to two minor changes detailed below. Indeed, the commission's proposals are very close to our own. Because the local party aimed for a lower variance for each ward than the commission, the commission appeared to be able to protect the integrity of the localities better than our own submission; for example:

- The commission's proposed boundary between Molesey East and Thames Ditton is actually closer to what we would have wanted than our own submission.
- Commission's general proposed pattern of wards in Weybridge was along the lines of our original unsubmitted version. However, it did not meet the stringent variance condition that we had set ourselves and so we had rejected it. We are therefore very pleased with the commission's proposals for Weybridge even though they differed from our own submission.

Having said that, we would have preferred that the commission had retained more of the historical settlement boundaries but most of these differences do not affect any electors and only affect a few sheep, for example, the boundary between Walton North and Molesey West. In acknowledging that only those people with strong historical knowledge would know the significance of these differences in ward boundaries we resile from such aspects of the proposal that we submitted last time.

Further suggested changes to the commission's pattern of wards

Having readily accepted the general thrust of the commission's proposals, there are two very minor changes that we like to suggest and they are both internal to the established settlement areas:

- **For access reasons move Marlborough Drive from Oatlands and Burwood Park ward to Weybridge Riverside ward (92 electors).** Marlborough Drive may only be accessed from Weybridge Riverside as Grotto Road south of Marlborough Drive is only a path and not a vehicular highway.



- For access reasons move Rosewood and Hawthorne, Manor Road North from Weston Green and Hinchley Wood ward to Long Ditton ward (10 electors). This would allow access to and from Lynwood Road from the remainder of Long Ditton. These houses, when built, were initially in Long Ditton ward, so would be returning to their original position.



Further suggested changes to the commission's naming of wards

We are happy with all of the names of wards the commission has proposed except that of *Hersham Village* which we would like to shortened to *Hersham*. No other ward has such an addition. We believe the names of wards should be as short as is practicable and as long as wards are clearly

locatable and identifiable then that should suffice. Few of the wards' boundaries are completely coterminous with their historic parishes but we think the pressure to include extra words in a ward name to indicate this lack of coterminosity should be resisted.

Our comments on Elmbridge borough's suggested changes

The borough has suggested a number of changes and we thought it useful to offer our comments:

Marlborough Drive (internal to Weybridge). As we suggested it - we naturally support it.

Walton Hospital (internal to Walton). Although this moves away from our original submission, we are not averse to this change.

Giggs Hill Green (internal to Ditton). Although this moves away from our original submission, we are not averse to this change as long as our requested change to Rosewood also occurs (map above) and that such an alteration does not cause any other changes to the borders of Long Ditton ward.

Esher Lower Green (moving electors from Esher settlement to Ditton settlement). Moving Esher's Lower Green from Esher ward to Weston Green & Hinchley Wood ward goes against a thousand years of history and serves no non-party political purpose - we strongly disagree to the borough's suggestion and trust that the commission maintains its current proposals.

Rosewood (internal to Ditton). As we suggested it - we naturally support it.

Renaming Esher as *Esher and Hershams Riverside*. We believe the names of wards should be as short as is practicable and as long as wards are clearly locatable and identifiable then that should suffice. Few of the wards' boundaries are completely coterminous with their historic parishes but we think the pressure to include overlapping territories in the ward name should be resisted.

Renaming Oatlands Park and Burwood Park as *Oatlands and Burwood Park*. We believe the names of wards should be as short as is practicable and this suggestion is a move in the right direction.

