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From: Cllr Finlay, Alison [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 22:16
To: reviews
Subject: Test Valley BC ward review - Submission by Chilworth Parish Council
Attachments: Chilworth Parish Council response to Commission re Wards.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To the Review Manager

Dear Mr Buck

Attached please find a submission by Chilworth Parish Council in respect of Test Valley Borough Council's warding proposals. Chilworth Parish sits within the ward of Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams, which is at the southern border of the Borough and is adjacent to both urban areas of Southampton Unitary authority and Eastleigh Borough.

Because of its proximity to these two other authorities, it is mindful of the need to retain its distinctiveness, a special character supported by the Borough Council which has defined much of it as an Area of Special Character. It is a semi-rural area and wishes to retain its character as such, whilst being surrounded by urbanisation.

Yours sincerely

Alison

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Submission by Chilworth Parish Council in respect of the Local Government Boundary Commission review of Test Valley Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements for 2019.

Executive Summary

Chilworth Parish Council has considered Test Valley Borough Council's proposed alterations to the map of its existing wards and is supportive of almost all of it. The Parish Council's response has concentrated on the Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams ward in the southern part of the Borough, in which Chilworth Parish is situated. Nevertheless, this response has taken account of the impact which its recommendation will have on adjacent wards.

The Borough Council proposes to increase Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams ward by transferring up to 632 electors into it, 501 from Valley Park ward and 131 from the most southern part of the former Romsey Extra ward. The PC suggests that, with small re-arrangements along the borders of adjacent wards, a more cohesive approach could be achieved for the communities affected, whilst reducing the variances of the wards recommended by the Borough Council, to levels closer to those advocated by the Commission..

The Parish Council considers that its suggestion, which would result in increasing its numbers of electors within the ward by 135 above that proposed by the Borough Council (632), thus reducing its variance by 1.8%, would result in delivering more effective and convenient local government.

Introduction

This paper provides Chilworth Parish Council's (CPC's) response to Test Valley Borough Council's (TVBC's) submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's review of the borough's wards. The PC has considered TVBC's proposed alterations to the map of its existing wards. Its response has concentrated on the Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams (CNR) ward, in which CPC is situated and the effects on adjacent wards.

The Borough Council proposal

The Borough Council's proposal is to take 501 electors out of Valley Park ward's south easterly area and tack them onto CNR ward at its north-easterly corner in Chilworth. Unfortunately, when the electors in this part of the newly developed Valley Park were allocated to Chilworth in the 1980's the situation did not sit well with them. They considered themselves to be part of the Valley Park community and did not feel affinity with the CNR community. They preferred to be classified as Valley Park ward. So this was effected by transferring them from Chilworth to Valley Park in the early 1990s. The PC understands that this view still prevails in this part of the Valley Park community. Thus, it considers it unwise to revisit old grievances.

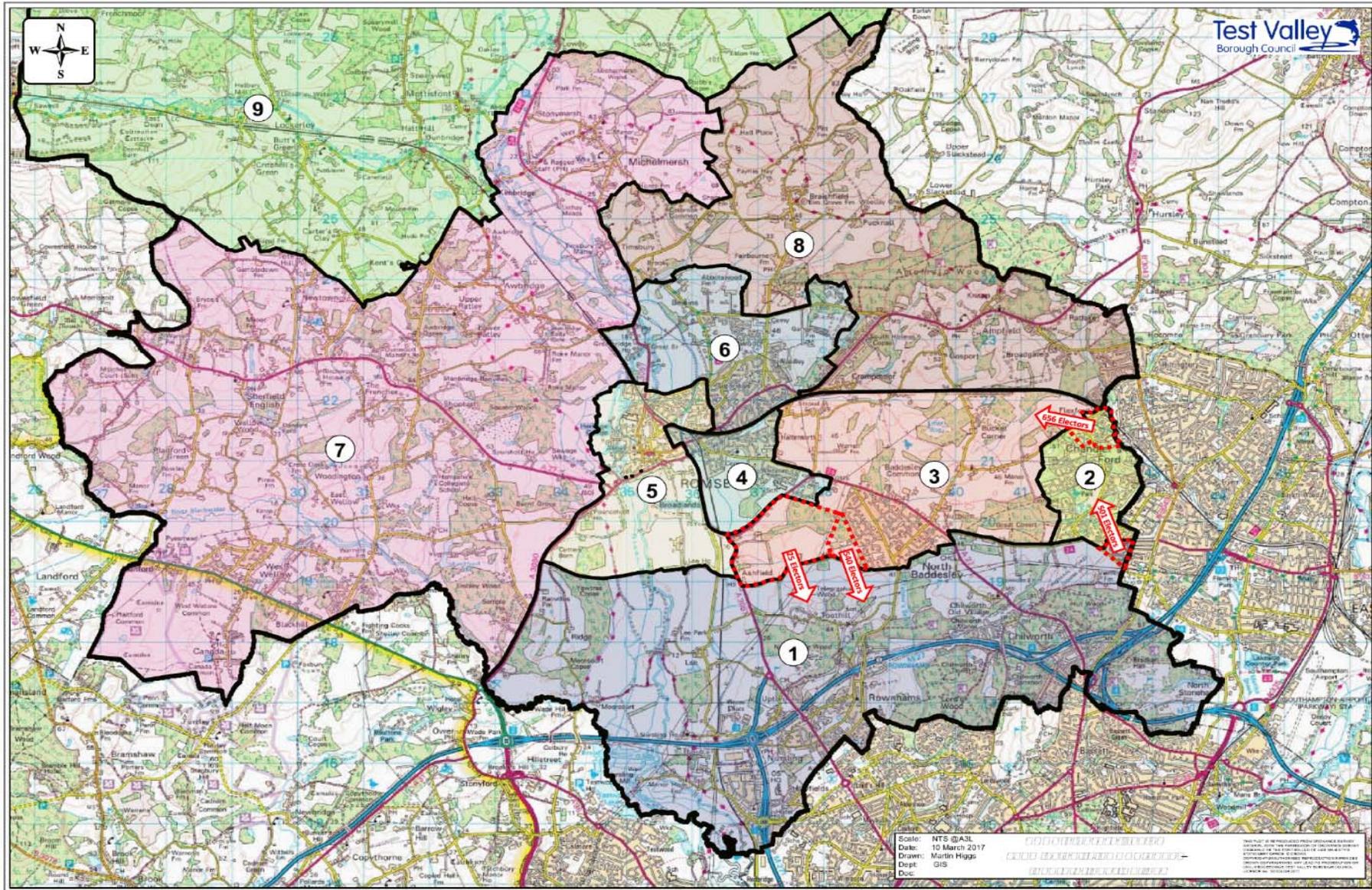
The Parish Council proposal

The PC suggests the following movements be implemented to resolve this situation:

- 1) Move 501 electors back from CNR ward into Valley Park ward.
- 2) Move 656 electors from the northern part of Valley Park ward, to the north-east of Knightwood Road, as shown on the map below, into the neighbouring ward of North Baddesley. These electors consist of 433 to the north west of Katrine Crescent and 223 to the south and east of it.¹
- 3) Move 540 expected electors from the North Baddesley (Hoe Lane) development into CNR ward.
- 4) Move approximately 25 existing electors from the North Baddesley ward into the CNR ward.

¹ Totals provided as approximations by TVBC

The map shows the movements



Further explanations of these proposals are as follows:

1) Move 501 electors back from CNR ward into Valley Park ward.

This is advisable because the community there has shown itself to have great affinity with the Valley Park Community and no affinity whatsoever with the Chilworth community. Children from Valley Park go to schools in Valley Park whereas no children from Chilworth are assigned to schools in Valley Park. Their local Health Centre is in Valley Park, about 200yds from this community of 501 whereas most Chilworth residents use Southampton or North Baddesley surgeries.

2) Move 656 electors from the northern part of Valley Park ward into the adjacent ward of North Baddesley.

The northern section of Valley Park ward, as shown on the map, borders North Baddesley and Ampfield wards, all three of which fall within the county division of Baddesley and are hence served by the same county division councillor. The Ampfield and North Baddesley wards here are the subject of two large planning applications, which although not allocated in the Local Plan, could be approved before the 2019 election. If so, the Ampfield variance would be affected adversely. It is therefore suggested that the 656 electors be moved to North Baddesley ward as a first step. Thus the Valley Park ward boundary would need to be moved to accommodate this. This move would reduce Valley Park's variance to 0%.

The move would also remove the need to re-evaluate the area which would otherwise occur if Ampfield's community were to be increased beyond the current accepted ward variance. Although this proposed move would increase the North Baddesley variance to an unacceptable level, the following move will compensate for this and reduce its variance to below the TVBC proposed level.

3) Move 540 expected electors from the North Baddesley (Hoe Lane) development into CNR ward.

The Hoe Lane development is allocated in the Borough's Local Plan and, according to TVBCs prediction, is expected to deliver 540 home by 2022. As this new development borders the CNR ward, it would be easily subsumed within the CNR ward, without any history of affinity attaching to it. It will reduce North Baddesley's variance from its TVBC proposed variance of -9.5% to -8.3%.

4) Move the 25² electors from the North Baddesley ward into the CNR ward.

The north-western boundary of the Hoe Lane development is shown as cutting through the Luzborough Plantation. It seems logical to continue the boundary along the northern edge of the Plantation until it meets the border with the proposed revised Tadburn ward and then coincides with it, skirting the Whitenap development, until it meets the Abbey ward boundary.

These 25 electors added to the 540 in the previous paragraph give a total increase in the CNR ward of 565 electors at this point, less the 501 from paragraph (1) – that is by 64 electors.

5) In addition to the above proposed increase, the Parish Council agrees with the Borough Council's proposal to increase the number of electors in the CNR ward by 131 at the western end of the ward, formerly assigned to the southern part of the Romsey Extra ward. This will result in the CNR ward increasing by 64+131 electors, i.e. by 195 electors more than the Borough's proposals.

The proposals for CNR, as stated in the above paragraphs have the overall effect of reducing its variance from -6.1 to -3.4%.

The respective movements and resulting decreased variances are shown in the table below:

Av Elect/Cllr	2411										
Ward	Current forecast for 2022	Cclr	Var	CNR to Valley Park	VP to N Baddesley	Hoe Lane to CNR	Ashfield (by Hoe Lane Dev) to CNR	Romsey Extra East to CNR -SW	<< Includes only ticked change		
									New Total Electorate	New Var	
CNR	6,790	3	-6.1%	-501		540		25	131	6,985	-3.4%
N Baddesley	6,545	3	-9.5%		656	-540		-25		6,636	-8.3%
Valley Park	4,977	2	3.2%	501	-656					4,822	0.0%
Old Romsey Extra								-131			
				0	0	0	0	0			

² Approximate number

The advantages of the PC proposal over the TVBC proposal are as follows:

- a) By moving the 501 electors back into Valley Park, it accords with the wishes of the Valley Park community of electors. They continue within their existing ward which they prefer to do.
- b) It accords with the wishes of the Chilworth PC who have confirmed that they do not have an affinity with Valley Park.
- c) It has the support of the three CNR borough councillors.
- d) It provides Valley Park with a 0% variance and North Baddesley & CNR with reduced variances when compensating moves are taken onto account.
- e) It provides a link to Ampfield for northern electors of Valley Park where those communities meet.
- f) Ampfield is likely to expand due to proposed housing, in the near future. It has very little capacity to increase under the present Borough Council proposal. Hence, the PC proposal is to move the northern portion of Valley Park into North Baddesley with which it is also coterminous and has affinity by reason of its common county boundary. In due course, but only if planning permissions are granted, this part of North Baddesley could be subsumed into Ampfield which may then be re-categorised as a 2-Member ward. This proposal goes some way to furthering that possible outcome.
- g) North Baddesley borders CNR at Hoe Lane. Since the Hoe Lane site has yet to be developed, there is no history of affinity within it. So its community is unlikely to be expected to have any strong ward preference.
- h) The Luzborough Plantation is split into two parts under the Local Plan, part being within the Hoe Lane development zone. And part being outside of it. It seems logical to include the remainder of the Plantation within the CNR boundary and continue the boundary around the bordering ward of Tadburn until it meets the Abbey ward boundary, as shown on the map.

Disadvantages

- a) Moving the northern Valley Park electors into North Baddesley ward rather than Ampfield ward with which it has an adjacent community appears to be an unnecessary step as developments have yet to be confirmed. The reasons for doing so are to comply with the requirements of the Commission's variance guidance and to work towards a future community cohesiveness which is very likely to include current electors from northern Valley Park and future electors from Ampfield and from North Baddesley.

Conclusion

It is considered, on balance, that the Parish Council's proposal provides more equivalent electoral numbers than the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams, Valley Park and North Baddesley. If acceptable to the Boundary Commission, this will result in improved variances, the opportunity to increase cohesiveness in the area and in more effective and convenient government at borough and county levels. This proposal can be implemented with minimal upheaval at parish or polling station level.

The PC will continue to monitor the housing applications referred to if and when they are approved and to take an interest in this electoral review, so that it may comment usefully when invited to do so.

The PC is most grateful to Dr Malcolm Joynes for his analysis which has been used to support this submission by the Parish Council.


Signed
Parish Council Chairman (3rd April 2017)