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The Review Officer
Local Government Boundary Commission
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Councillors Pat Tedder and Victoria Wheeler

[REDACTED]

9th October 2016

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Dear Sir,

Boundary Review – Surrey Heath.

It is proposed that Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) reduce the number of Ward Councillors from 40 to 34. It is understood that a number, one either side of this may still be tolerated.

Background

SHBC is an affluent, predominately urban Borough, on the edge of Surrey, bordered by Berkshire to North, Woking Borough Council to East, Runnymede Borough Council to the North East and Rushmoor and Mole Valley to the West. SHBC is currently split into 16 wards. Following the recommendations on the number of Councillors for SHBC, it would be necessary for all Councillors to represent 2078 constituents with 34 Councillors and 2018 constituents with 35 Councillors.

Chobham is closely linked by Church and settlement history to Valley End, a small settlement of houses that lie within part of Chobham common. Valley End School and Chobham St Laurence School are both church schools that lie within the responsibility of Chobham St Laurence Church. St Saviours church in Valley End is served by the same vicar as Chobham St Laurence. The two communities are inexorably linked both by current practice and historical association..

The church acts as a central point for the community and the population relies heavily upon volunteer groups for transport, social activities and welfare support.

Chobham Ward

Chobham ward is currently served by 2 Ward Councillors, representing an average of 1600 voters. We maintain that this number of ward Councillors is essential to maintain a presence and a voice within the wider Borough. After the reduction in Councillors, in order to maintain two Councillors a number of additional voters must be allocated to this ward.

The majority of SHBC voters live within the urban areas, represented by relatively high density housing & urban green space. The wards of West End, Lightwater and Bagshot lie between Chobham and the heart of SHBC, Camberley. These wards are of a semi-rural nature with urban centres and small areas of common land or woodland. All have areas of high density and defined large village communities. They are served by a single Parish Council which allows a strong, conjoined community representation at the Borough, with a joint voice represented by 7 Councillors. Chobham lies in the North East corner of the Borough, it is not linked by transport, clinical commissioning group or area type to the rest of the Borough. A number of our children attend schools outside the Borough and our doctor's surgery is part of NW Surrey CCG and not Surrey Heath CCG.

These factors put at risk Chobham's engagement with Surrey Heath and there is a common voice that the ward is currently under represented (having previously dropped from 3 to 2 Councillors).

Chobham Parish council is a separate council which represents a largely rural area with an acutely aging population. It has three specific areas of housing for the elderly, a permanent traveler site and proportionally a large area of assisted housing (council estate). The population mix, again combined with the rural environment creates a number of challenges within the village which would simply be too much work for a single Councillor. Chobham is washed over greenbelt and houses the majority of listed buildings within Surrey Heath, including a the oldest recognised building within the Borough. The two Borough Councillors currently represent and are responsible for 24% of the geographical space within the borough and hold the voice for over 574 hectares of common land. The largest SANG within the borough is also located within the heart of the village. The village has a small retail High Street and aerodrome, however with the development of the SANG, the attractive high street (an established conservation area) and the recent refurbishment of 3 large public houses, Chobham is slowly becoming known as the recreational centre of the borough drawing visitors not only from SHBC but also from Woking, Runnymede and Windsor & Maidenhead districts. It is hard to maintain compliance within the conservation area as the key priorities and 'major enforcement' objectives of the Borough are out of keeping with enforcement issues within a small village and conservation area.

We have therefore looked closely at the boundaries with neighbouring wards and suggest the reallocation of roads which fall not just geographically at the border of Chobham, but that are also within semi-rural outskirts of other wards and largely out of keeping with those wards. Given the large geographical area already covered by the Ward, the Councillors have established communication means with outlying roads and areas which could easily be extended.

We considered the unpopular possibility of reducing to a single ward Councillor, however with the common and distance separation between other wards and the strong links with Valley End the numbers of voters was too high for a single Councillor.

With local consultation, it was also strongly felt that it was imperative to keep a voice within the Borough to ensure that, with such physically close borders to surrounding Boroughs (Woking, Rushmoor and Windsor and Maidenhead) Chobham didn't lose its voice and identity with SHBC. It was also felt that the responsibility of the common necessitated a voice at the Borough to help drive action at a County level. Chobham is, without question, unique within this Borough.

We therefore looked at how to accommodate the new number of voters per councillor to be roughly in line with other wards. In deciding on our recommendations we considered;

- Transport routes
- Schools/ school catchment areas
- Church locations
- Other community identities and whether these would be negatively affected by moving to Chobham ward
- Housing type and density
- Environment

The roads suggested are therefore on the edge of the other wards and within areas of greenspace with natural boundaries that link them to Chobham and Valley End. It is hoped that by adopting them into Chobham ward they will feel greater affinity to their Community and Councillors and feel represented as a single, predominately rural, group within the Borough. The change of voting location should not present an issue as in order to live in these roads you would need to have your own transport. There is a wide network of footpaths and bridleways which connect these areas to Chobham, its common and its historic village centre.

We suggest that the following roads are moved into Chobham Ward, this gives an additional 648 voters, bring the average per Councillor to XXX and within what we hope is an acceptable variance;

Road	Current Ward	Electorate to move
Bagshot Road (rest of)	West End	132
Beldham Bridge Road	West End	48
Blackstoud Lane East	Lightwater	4
Broadway Road	Windlesham	68
Burnt Pollard Lane	Both W's	0
Chertsey Road (small additional area)	Windlesham	40
Coldharbour Lane	West End	10
Fairfield Lane	West End	27
Halebourne lane	Both W's (but no electorate in Windlesham)	53
Hook Mill Lane	Windlesham	5
Hookstone Lane	West End	13
Kings Road	West End	132
Old house lane	West End	2
Pennypot Lane (Rest of)	West End	8
Rose Meadow	West End	14
Rye Grove Lane	Windlesham	30
Sandpit Lane	Bisley	4
Scotts Grove Road (Bottom of)	West End	6
Streets Heath	West End	12
Windlesham Road	West End	12
Woodlands lane (as far as Heath Park Drive)	Windlesham	10
Re allocated		630
Previous Chobham Electorate		3107
Total		3737
Average per councillor		1868.5
Variance 34 councillors %		-10%
Variance 35 councillors %		-7%

By adopting these recommendations, existing Chobham residents and those moving into the ward will be acknowledged as an important rural corner of the Borough, will have a strength and unity of voice and will feel as though they have the right level of representation at a Borough level.

In order to offset the nett loss from other areas, we would suggest the moves detailed below. Although we have not gone into detail, we have looked at natural boundaries, physical road boundaries and have been mindful of church, school and community groups.

Given the Boundaries stated intent to ‘group’ Wards, we feel that the following groupings may work, we have concentrated on the areas immediately adjacent to Chobham ward and made little comment on the other wards which although poorly covered by the Borough in its submission, could be grouped as detailed further below:

Group Chobham, West End and Bisley with 5 Councillors, 2 for Chobham (based on Figures above), 2 for West End and 1 for Bisley.

This gives the following totals for this pattern of wards.

Ward	Current	Loss	Gain	Suggested Total	No of Councillors	/councillor	% variance
West End	3440	469	1242	4213	2	2106.5	1.371511
Chobham	3107	0	626	3733	2	1866.5	-10.1781
Bisley	2803	725	0	2078	1	2078	0

Recommended moves between Bisley, West End and Lightwater are detailed below

Other Moves	Lightwater to West End	Electorate to move
Blastroud lane West	Lightwater to West End	15
Glebe Close	Lightwater to West End	33
Guildford Road to Lightwater road Junction	Lightwater to West End	50
Hérons Court	Lightwater to West End	56
Marshwood Road	Lightwater to West End	41
Meadowbank Road	Lightwater to West End	81
Parnham Lane	Lightwater to West End	15
Red Road as far as the Lighwater Road Junction	Lightwater to West End	11
Riverside Avenue	Lightwater to West End	76
Springfield	Lightwater to West End	82
The Willows	Lightwater to West End	22
Withy Close	Lightwater to West End	19
Wychelm Road	Lightwater to West End	20
Arethusa Way	Bisley to West End	415
Cottlesloe Close	Bisley to West End	15
Ford Road	Bisley to West End	26
Guildford road (Ford Road to fellow Green)	Bisley to West End	60
Mainstone Road	Bisley to West End	15
Shaftesbury Road	Bisley to West End	54
South Road	Bisley to West End	136

Bagshot, Windlesham and Lightwater grouped as a 6 member ward with the changes below;

Area	Current	Loss	Gain	Suggested Total	No of Councillors	/councillor	% variance
Bagshot	4782	86	0	4696	2	2348	+12.99326
Lightwater	5555	568	0	4987	2	2493.5	
Windlesham	3432	153	133	3412	2	1706	
Total Lightwater and Windlesham (single area)				8399	4	2099.75	1.046679

Lightwater and Windlesham have close links, sharing a doctors surgery, transport and school links and it therefore seems sensible to join this area as a single ward area with four Councillors.

The following single ward changes are recommended.

Other Moves		Electorate to move
South Farm Lane	Lightwater to Windlesham	27
Guildford Road	Lightwater to Windlesham	20
Bracknell Road	Bagshot to Windlesham	86- as recommended by Council submission
Dukes Covert	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Dukes Hill	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Grove End	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Guildford Road	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Hall Grove Bottom	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Holy Bush Track	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Swift Lane	Bagshot to Windlesham	
Bracknell Road	Bagshot to Windlesham	

St Micheals and Watchetts – Grouped as a 4 Member Ward (no Changes recommended)

Old Dean, Town and St Pauls- Grouped as a 6 member ward maintaining an equal split amongst Councillors and not moving northern side of College Ride, Whitehill close, College Close, Fossewood Drive or College Close.

Frimley, Frimley Green, Mytchet and Deepcut – Grouped as a 8 member ward

Heatherside and Parkside grouped as 5 (We are slightly more in favour of increasing Heatherside’s boundaries, being aware of this area)

Although we don't think it is covered by this review, areas on the edge of Chobham Ward, which currently fall into Woking such as the east side of Scotts Grove Road, Chobham Lakes, and Guildford Road all have a postal address of Chobham and in early Neighbourhood Plan consultations view themselves as Chobham residents.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with members of the boundary commission so that they can see the areas of deprivation within Chobham, the spread of the ward and the unusual nature of this ward in relation to the rest of the Borough

Yours faithfully

Pat Tedder & Victoria Wheeler

Victoria Wheeler and Pat Tedder
Ward Councillors
Chobham Ward