West Berkshire

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Comment text:

Cold Ash Parish Council unanimously expressed strong opposition to the proposed Boundary Review. There are two main reasons: The Parish Council believes a decrease of over a quarter in the number of District Councillors is extremely bad for local democracy. This will mean a quarter less representation of local people’s views, concerns, ideas and, indeed, their lives. Unless the remaining Councillors race around like super people, they will meet a quarter less people, go to a quarter less Parish Council meetings, and discuss local issues a quarter less. Even more problematic, is that they will have proportionally less time to oversee the Council and its Officers, a critical job on behalf of the local community. While Cold Ash Parish Council understands that there would be, on the surface, a small financial saving in cutting the number of Councillor/Representatives by over a quarter, this would have a huge impact on their ability to challenge staffing and spending, thereby, we believe, impacting on financial accountability and potential savings. In a non-competitive, monopoly environment such as local government, less oversight is likely to lead to waste and lax working practices, thereby in the long run costing far more. Secondly, the constituency map put forward for District Council representation makes a nonsense of the actual community of Cold Ash Parish, adding areas that have no logic to be with our parish, and leaving out parts that are part of Cold Ash Parish. For instance, Yattendon and Frilsham, perfectly lovely small villages, have fundamentally different characterises and needs from Cold Ash, and are part of a series of similar villages that should logically be grouped together. It takes some fifteen to twenty minutes by car to drive to Yattendon, whereas Manor Park and Bowling Green Road/Florence Gardens are literally just around the corner. Our strong preference is for a single West Berks Councillor to represent the Civil Parish of Cold Ash, and perhaps another to represent the communities of Shaw chum Donningen, Yattendon and Frilsham. By having our own Cold Ash Civil Parish Councillor, the village and its surrounds would be directly represented by people we know and who know us and our concerns – which is the true meaning of the Government’s aim to enhance ‘Localism’.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded