

## Croydon London Borough

### Personal Details:

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### Comment text:

I strongly believe the revised ward boundaries should reflect the 'places' of Croydon. These were areas that were developed after a comprehensive cross-party consultation at the start of the process for the Local Plan. The original places were put together after this consultation whilst the Conservative administration was running the Council. Since the Labour party became the ruling party, they have not changed the boundaries. Indeed the Places are still forming the backbone of the ongoing work on the Local Plan. There has never been any dispute about the Places. They are felt to reflect the Places of Croydon so are now part of all spatial planning in Croydon. I believe that it is possible to redraw the ward boundaries and still respect the 'places' of Croydon. This should be the approach taken because it would bring together neighbourhoods that share common features. The opportunity should be taken to align the ward boundaries with these places and this will enable councillors to represent their constituents in a coherent way. It would also increase confidence in the democratic process as wards that don't respect the 'places' are disjointed. I come from a position of knowledge as I was the ward councillor for Heathfield ward in Croydon for 8 years. This was a ward made up of an odd selection of areas that didn't fit in to neighbouring wards. This meant that I was representing groups of people with very different perspectives. It was sometimes hard to represent one group without undermining the position of another group. I know this a feature of many wards, but it is made more difficult with an oddly made up ward. It is hard to explain to people that they are in Heathfield ward when most don't recognise the place of Heathfield. It was a name adopted from a big house which was distant from the homes of most Heathfield residents. My current ward of Fairfield also suffers from having some very different communities and it is hoped the boundary review will address the issues in both Heathfield and Fairfield. I have reviewed the Council submission and I fear their submission will not overcome the issues with Fairfield and Heathfield as described about. The submission creates a new ward 'Coombe' which does not in any way reflect a local community. No one will know what Coombe signifies. It is certainly not a 'place' in Croydon. It appears to be another 'fudge' to gather together leftover parts of other wards. What's more, it comprises chunks of three of the agreed 'Places', splitting up communities. I am very concerned about the way the South Croydon Place has been carved up. The Council submission does not seem to respect either South Croydon or the Croydon Opportunity Area, which is split into 7 pieces. In the Council submission the old Heathfield ward has been replaced with a similarly odd assortment of places in the same way as the old ward. This would be a missed opportunity to align the area with the Places of Croydon. I live in Sanderstead ward, and I note that the Council submission for Sanderstead does not reflect the place of Sanderstead, instead carving off a piece and putting it in another ward. The Council submission for boundaries does not seem to fully address the disparities in ward size. There are still too many wards with variances of 5-10%. I would urge the Boundary Commission to use the Places as a basis for deciding ward boundaries so that the people of Croydon are fairly and effectively represented by their councillors.

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