

## **Woking Constituency Labour Party**

### **Comments on draft recommendations published by the Local Government Boundary Commission**

**6 October 2014**

The Woking Constituency Labour Party (WCLP) notes the Commission's draft recommendations report, and is grateful for the detailed consideration that was given to the party's own proposals, which is evident from the report.

WCLP would comment on two aspects of the proposals in particular:

1. Paragraph 71 – area south of Woodham Lane

WCLP supported the Council's proposed "Horsell" ward, which included the area to the south of Woodham Lane. WCLP does not agree with the Commission's proposal to include this area with its proposed "Sheerwater" ward. The Commission cites a lack of transport links between the area to the south of Woodham Lane and the majority of communities in Horsell, and justifies its inclusion with the Sheerwater area based on the A245 Sheerwater Road.

WCLP submits that this rationale seems perverse. When considering the transport links argument, the area to the south of Woodham Lane has direct connectivity and proximity to the area east of Kettlewell Hill (via Woodham Road, Shores Road and Chertsey Road) and Anthonys (via Martyr's Lane/A320), both of which are in the proposed Horsell ward. They are also included together in the existing Horsell East and Woodham ward. In comparison, there are no direct links between Sheerwater estate and Woodham Lane (the canal forming a barrier through the entire north east area of the proposed ward) and the link via the Sheerwater Road is the only accessible route, and itself a route that bypasses rather than links the Sheerwater area. It seems odd that the Commission should disregard the obvious boundary that is offered by the canal in this case, while pointing to other water courses such as the Hoe Stream as natural barriers elsewhere in the Borough (see comments on Barnsbury below). Further, the Commission's report makes no reference to the lack of common community interests between Sheerwater and Woodham Lane.

If Woodham Lane were to be included in Horsell as per the Council's original proposal, WCLP suggests that one answer to the issue of achieving equality of representation would be to include the area of the proposed Byfleet and West Byfleet ward north of the railway line in the Sheerwater ward, this area arguably having better connectivity and shared common interests than Woodham. Further, or in the alternative, a Sheerwater ward based on the draft recommendations without either area, and with a smaller number of voters compared to the average might be justified given (a) the regeneration proposals for Sheerwater estate, and prospects for further significant development near to the town centre which is likely to increase the number of

voters in the near future and (b) the evidence of significant levels of under-registration in the Maybury/Sheerwater areas.

## 2. Paragraph 79 – Barnsbury estate

WCLP continues to press for the incorporation of the Barnsbury estate in the proposed “Hoe Valley” ward, as per its previous submission. The Commission’s draft recommendations report cites the lack of direct transport links between the estate and the other Hoe Valley communities. WCLP would submit that Barnsbury is no better served by transport connections to these areas than Woodham Lane is to the Sheerwater estate, yet the Commission is proposing that these areas are included in the same ward, notwithstanding a clear natural barrier that lends itself to a boundary. Barnsbury estate has common feature and common interests that it shares with neighbouring communities in Kingfield and Westfield and which are not at all apparent with the diverse communities enclosed within the proposed “The Heath” ward. Redevelopment and regeneration in the Hoe Valley will only serve to strengthen these links in the future, and this amenity represents a common interest which links the communities either side of it.