

Woking District

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Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Woking Borough Warding Consultation

Response from West Byfleet Ward Councillors
6 October 2014

We are the two ward councillors for the existing West Byfleet ward at Woking Borough Council and between us we have 13 years of service to the residents, business, schools and other communities in the village.

We have received many calls and messages from residents who have been "transferred" into the new Pyrford or Sheerwater wards and also from the business community who are anxious to see community cohesion preserved.

We fully appreciate the requirement for the new 10 wards across Woking to have equal numbers of electors (within deviation limits) and thus the existing Byfleet and West Byfleet wards cannot be merged together to form a new super ward. That argument also follows if we take West Byfleet ward as it was prior to the 1999 boundary review.

This response explores the practicalities or not of areas of the current West Byfleet ward being proposed to fall into either Pyrford or Sheerwater being restored to the new ward with Byfleet.

We are taking the centre of West Byfleet as providing retail, health and personal care and education. In addition West Byfleet has become a transport hub with a fast train service to London, Woking and Guildford with connecting bus services to Woking and beyond to destinations in Runnymede and Elmbridge.

We are using data from the current electoral role plus our knowledge of community links with transport, retail, services and education. We are also taking the West Byfleet ward as it was prior to the 1999 boundary review since following that many residents moved across from Pyrford and have never been happy since!

We are taking the revised Commission's proposals where the two surrounding wards have been designated Pyrford and Sheerwater. Zones A to F below are shown on the map at the end of this response.

A Pyrford Road and Closes, The Oaks and the Broadoaks MOD Estate

This zone has been moved into Pyrford. Despite the road name it is completely detached from Pyrford. The residential make up is predominately families and commuters. Within The Oaks there are a large number of retired residents. The Broadoaks MOD estate includes mainly families who attend the local primary schools in West Byfleet.

All these residents look to the centre of West Byfleet for all their needs.

Note this zone excludes Hollybank Road which should remain in Pyrford ward

Number of electors: 357

Recommendation: transfer from Pyrford to Byfleet and West Byfleet ward.

B Elmstead Road and westwards

With exception of Elmstead and Oakcroft Roads, most of the rest of this zone consists of roads transferred to West Byfleet ward from Pyrford following the 1999 review.

Residents are predominately retired, and appear to be happy to be considered as part of the Pyrford ward as proposed.

Recommendation: agree to current BC proposal.

C Brantwood Estate (ie between Old Woking Road and Madeira Road)

This is a very high density housing development and thus has a large number of electors which tips the scales in favour of being part of the new Pyrford ward. Also is consistent in location with Zone B above.

Recommendation: agree to current BC proposal.

D Madeira Road plus Closes including Regency Drive up to Sheerwater Road

This zone has a balance of commuters, families with young children and retirees. All look to the centre of West Byfleet for services and education. They have no connectivity with Pyrford. This zone is also low density (compared with the Brantwood Estate). The number of electors could be absorbed into the new ward.

Number of electors: 221

Recommendation: transfer from Pyrford to Byfleet and West Byfleet ward.

E Woodlands Avenue incl Thistledene and Hollies Avenue

This zone is probably the most difficult one to resolve. There is a mixture of retired residents and families with young children. The residents look entirely to the centre of West Byfleet. They have no connectivity with the communities in either Pyrford or Sheerwater.

The residents in these two roads have arranged a petition which you will have received. Their natural home is within the new Byfleet and West Byfleet ward. This can only come about if the Commission is prepared to allow the number of electors in this new ward to be outside the maximum deviation allowed to ensure the community cohesion and identity which the residents are seeking to preserve.

Number of electors: 349

Recommendation: transfer from Sheerwater to Byfleet and West Byfleet ward (see note below)

F Old Avenue

This road has the lowest housing density, predominately retired professionals with houses on large plots of land. They have no connectivity with the Sheerwater or Pyrford communities. However they are geographically detached from West Byfleet centre. Should the Commission agree to the recommendation for Zone E to be included in the new Byfleet and West Byfleet ward then it follows that Old Avenue should be likewise. Similarly should Zone E be in another ward then Old Avenue should go with it.

Number of electors: 98

Recommendation: transfer from Sheerwater to Byfleet and West Byfleet ward (see note below)

Note

Should the Commission not agree to our recommendations for Zones E and F then they should be part of Woking BC's first proposal and part of the new Pyrford ward. This will mean that the current West Byfleet ward is divided amongst two new wards instead of the proposed 3.

If this is not acceptable and these roads remain in the proposed Sheerwater ward we strongly support the Council's recent recommendation to rename Sheerwater to "Canalside".

Summary

Our recommendations above result in:

Excluding Hollies, Woodlands and Old Avenues (ie North of the railway line Zones E and F):

Byfleet and West Byfleet ward + 578 electors

Pyrford ward - 578 electors

Including Hollies, Woodlands and Old Avenues (ie North of the railway line Zones E and F):

Byfleet and West Byfleet ward + 1,025 electors

Pyrford ward - 578 electors

Sheerwater (Canalside) ward - 447 electors

Either option will enable a larger part of the existing West Byfleet ward to be preserved to include those residents who feel directly connected with West Byfleet as their District Centre rather than being disconnected as part of the proposed Pyrford or Sheerwater wards.

If you need any further information please don't hesitate to contact either of us.

Thank you for considering our response.

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