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Our Ref: LGBCE Review/ERO

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Review Officer (Surrey Heath)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

22nd June 2017

Dear Sir/ Madam

As Electoral Registration Officer for Surrey Heath, I wish to submit the following comments in respect of the Further Limited Consultation on the Draft Recommendations for Surrey Heath.

During the earlier consultation I objected to the proposal to move the area north of the London Road, currently in St Michaels Ward, to the Town Ward. The map you have published with revised boundaries for the Old Dean, Town and St Pauls Wards indicates that you are still proposing to move The Terrace, which falls within the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, to Town Ward.

I recognise that the Further Limited Consultation is limited to revised proposals for the Old Dean, Town and St Paul's wards and this particular boundary may not, therefore, fall within the scope of the further consultation however I believe that the consequences of this proposal warrant further consideration.

The Terrace comprises 13 properties and, at present, there are 18 electors registered, of whom 6 are registered to vote by post.

I continue to raise my objection to this proposal for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would result in the creation of a separate Polling District for 13 properties and, at present, 18 electors. This will be necessary as The Terrace will continue to fall within a different County Division from the rest of the Town Ward. This does not support the aim of effective and convenient local government.

In addition to being ERO for Surrey Heath, I also undertake the role of Returning Officer at elections. I wish to emphasise my significant concern that the small number of votes contained within the Polling Station's ballot box will mean that, during the verification and counting of votes, the secrecy of the ballots cast by the affected electors may not be protected. This is an unnecessary position to be

in for a street which is located in an urban area.

2. The reason given by the LGBCE in the Draft Recommendations consultation for the proposal to redraw the boundary between Town and St Michael's ward was "...to include the area north of the London Road in Town Ward, making a more identifiable boundary." However, your limited further consultation map continues to suggest that the only other residential property north of the London Road, the vicarage for St Michael's Church, will remain within St Michaels Ward. This directly conflicts with the LGBCE's stated aim and your reasons for moving The Terrace to town Ward is not consistent.

This proposed re-drawing of the boundary between Town and St Michael's wards does not affect electoral equality, does not have any bearing upon community identities, and conflicts with the aim of promoting effective and convenient local government. You are therefore asked once again to reconsider this proposal.

I trust the Commission will look favourably on my submission.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Karen Whelan.

Karen Whelan
Electoral Registration Officer & Returning Officer