

## Surrey Heath Borough Council Ward Boundaries Review – submission by Cllr Rodney Bates

### (Lab member for Old Dean)

#### Ward blocks

Firstly, I agree with the original approach of the Council's Governance Working Group which decided to split the borough into different blocks. I would therefore encourage the commission to look at the following areas (the named wards are from the current boundaries):-

- (a) St.Michael's and Watchetts – to cover 4 Cllrs overall – this would be no change
- (b) Old Dean, Town and St.Paul's – to cover 6 Cllrs from the current 7
- (c) Heatherside and Parkside – to cover 5 Cllrs from the current 6
- (d) Frimley, Frimley Green, Mytchett & Deepcut – to cover 8 Cllrs from the current 9
- (e) Bisley, West End, Chobham, Lightwater, Bagshot and Windlesham – to cover 11 from the current 14

Each block would be within the 10% variance for 34 Cllrs. Taking each of these in turn:-

#### (a) St.Michael's and Watchetts

I have no objection to the current ward boundaries for St.Michael's and Watchetts so that both remain as two member wards. They are currently significantly under represented but a reduction in Cllrs would then put their numbers with minimal variance.

#### (b) Old Dean, Town and St.Paul's

I support most of the Council submission namely that there should be 3 two member wards retaining the same names of Old Dean, Town and St.Paul's. I also agree that there should be a transfer of electors from St.Paul's to Town as well as Town to Old Dean to ensure that all three areas are within the 10% variance and that should be along the lines suggested.

However, I would ask the Commission to make a slight change to the Council proposal namely that the Old Dean boundary should be midway through College Ride with the northern properties remaining in Town Ward. This would mean that 158 less electors would transfer from Town Ward to Old Dean Ward. This is because the northern boundary has more in keeping with the Kings Ride and army accommodation (remaining in Town)

Specifically, this would mean the following roads remaining in Town ward:-

College Close – 30 electors

Fossewood Drive – 9 electors

Whitehill Close – 59 electors

Northern side of College Ride – 60 electors

This would mean that the new totals would be closer to parity as follows:-

Old Dean ward would have 4072 electors

Town ward would have 4191 electors

St.Paul's would have 4081 electors

The names for these wards should also remain the same.

(c) Heatherside and Parkside

The Borough Council have put forward two well argued suggestions which would mean reducing either Heatherside or Parkside by 1 member. I have no preference between either of these proposals but would encourage the Commission to choose one or other as they came from considerable discussion between the relevant ward members reflecting their communities.

(d) Frimley, Frimley Green, Mytchett & Deepcut

The Borough Council proposal should be rejected as it would mean two areas with variances of 19% which is clearly unacceptable.

Whilst I have no firm opinion on the correct approach, the Commission could decide to look at new wards for this area perhaps along the lines of:-

- (1) Frimley being a 2 member ward consisting of the current FA and FB polling districts. This would give 3930 electors.
- (2) A Deepcut ward including the new development. This could be either a 2 or 3 member ward depending on the boundary.
- (3) Separating Mytchett from Deepcut and making that either a 1 or 2 member ward.
- (4) Frimley South (FC) combining with some or all of the Frimley Green area.

(e) Bisley, West End, Chobham, Lightwater, Windlesham, Bagshot

This is clearly a harder area to reduce from 14 to 11 Cllrs but again the Council proposals must be rejected as:-

- The variances from both Bagshot and Windlesham are significantly outside the 10% limit.
- The variance for Lightwater is 10%.
- They recognise Chobham has a variance of 25% but make no attempt to resolve this.

As a starting point, I would encourage the Commission to look favourably at the proposal submitted by the Chobham Cllrs which splits the areas into two blocks of 7 Cllrs (for Bagshot, Windlesham and Lightwater) with 5 Cllrs for the area of Chobham, Bisley and West End. I am mindful that Chobham is a large rural ward on the eastern edge of the borough and therefore needs to add electors from other areas. Their proposal is well argued in my view recognising that every proposal will have to impact on other areas.

My final comment is that whilst the Commission have stated that they are minded to have 34 Cllrs, I agree with the Council submission that the Commission be encouraged to consider the situation for 35 Cllrs as well to help provide flexibility and avoid splitting well established communities. In my view, this additional Cllr should be within the western end of the borough so that this final group has 12 Cllrs instead of 11.

Yours sincerely

Rodney Bates