Local Government Boundary Commission

Electoral Review of West Berkshire

Comments from Brimpton Parish Council on the Draft Recommendations

Brimpton Parish Council supports the goal of reducing the number of District Councillors, and improving the equality of voter numbers. However, we object to the proposal that the parish of Brimpton should be merged into an enlarged Ward called Aldermaston & Bucklebury, which would return three District Councillors.

Our reasons for this objection are two fold:

- On principle, multi-member wards do not provide a single member who is solely accountable to the residents of the Ward. This results in reduced democratic accountability and removes the link between the local councillor and the Ward.

- In terms of geography, the parishes of Brimpton, Aldermaston, Beenham, Padworth and Wasing form a natural cluster. We believe Midgham and Woolhampton have more of an affinity with Bucklebury.

Instead of the recommended large three members Ward, we propose three separate wards each with their own directly elected and accountable councillor as follows:

- Largely to the north of the A4, a single member ward covering the parishes of Frilsham, Stanford Dingley, Bucklebury, Woolhampton and Midgham; this would have a projected electorate of 3243.

- In the east, a single member ward covering the parishes of Bradfield, Englefield, Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet; this would have a projected electorate of 3093.

- Largely to the south of the A4, a single member ward covering the parishes of Brimpton, Aldermaston, Wasing, Padworth and Beenham; this would have a projected electorate of 3138.

We believe these proposals meet the criteria the LGBCC has set for this review. Whilst the three Wards would not have precise equality of numbers, the difference in reality is minimal, and with small residential developments, will change over time. Our proposal has many advantages over the draft recommendation: it allows each ward to elect a local councillor who is directly accountable to the local electorate; it reflects local coherence and traditional links; and still achieves the required reduction in councillors.

John Hicks
Brimpton Parish Council
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