

## **Owen, David**

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**From:** Mayers, Mishka on behalf of reviews  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 5, 2016 10:39 AM  
**To:** Owen, David  
**Subject:** FW: Submission from Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party

**From:** Joe Ferreira [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 April 2016 11:33  
**To:** reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>  
**Subject:** Submission from Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party

### **Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (England) Electoral Review of the London Borough of Bexley**

Dear Local Government Boundary Commission,

Further to your draft recommendations for the London Borough of Bexley, I am writing on behalf of Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party to make further suggestions regarding the electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Bexley.

This response will focus directly on proposed wards within the Erith and Thamesmead Constituency boundaries and the areas immediately surrounding them, and will make further comments regarding the London Borough of Bexley's electoral arrangements as a whole.

#### **Thamesmead East**

Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party are happy to accept the proposed boundary for Thamesmead East Ward. We believe that it reflects the community identity in the area and will provide appropriate and convenient local representation in the area.

#### **Belvedere**

We are disappointed at the proposed separation of Belvedere into two wards.

Belvedere is one community – using the same shops, rail station, parks and facilities all the way across the ward. Belvedere has a rich history as one community and it should not be split.

Belvedere Forum, an active and thriving local forum, operates across both of the proposed wards.

Many who live in the proposed Belvedere Village Ward will commute from Belvedere Station in the proposed Lower Belvedere Ward and will use the shops and facilities in lower Belvedere just as regularly as in upper Belvedere.

Belvedere has many local schools with catchment areas across the whole of Belvedere and it would be beneficial for the community to continue to have representation which covers the whole of Belvedere.

We believe that the two Belvedere wards should be combined into a 3-member ward to provide Belvedere will full local representation which best reflects its community identity.

### **Erith (and Slade Green)**

We are particularly concerned at the proposed new ward of Erith and Slade Green. This ward does not reflect the community identity in either Erith or Slade Green and will not secure convenient local representation.

We believe that Erith and Slade Green are two different communities which both have a proud independent history and community identity.

Erith and Slade Green should be split into individual wards representative of the communities that they encompass. Erith and Slade Green have different local forums, different rail stations, different shops and local facilities.

Erith is a historic town which once had its own town council, in the 19th century it was Erith Urban Council which became the Municipal Borough of Erith in 1938. During that time Slade Green in the 19th century was part of Dartford Rural District then in 1920s joined Crayford District Council; although next door geographically it has never been the same community as Erith and as a result it has a distinct identity.

We share concerns that the majority of Erith is not included in Erith and Slade Green Ward. Erith Station is on the border. The historic Christ Church Erith, one of the focal points of the community, would not be in Erith and Slade Green Ward but in Northumberland Heath Ward – a small community which it does not have any community connection with.

Parts of Erith like Park Crescent and its surrounding roads, the historic heart of Erith will not be in Erith and Slade Green Ward but placed in Northumberland Heath Ward – a small community which it does not have any community connection with.

Alford Road and the roads surrounding it were terraced houses built for the workers of the factories in Erith – neither the industrial area on Fraser Road nor these associated houses would be included in the proposed Erith and Slade Green Ward. They owe their existence to Erith's industrial heritage which is tied closely to the River Thames – which the community of Erith has always embraced. Yet these proposals see much of Erith in a different ward to the riverside.

Erith is a historic area dating back centuries with links to Henry VIII and an important wartime industrial heritage.

The Commission's draft proposals notes that that their proposed boundary reflects how the area interacts with Erith Town Centre. This is not accurate – it neglects the historic parts of Erith placed outside of Erith and Slade Green Ward which interacts directly every day with the town centre through its shops, facilities, and transport links. Indeed it is much more the case that these areas interact with Erith Town Centre than those living in Slade Green.

### **Northumberland Heath**

We believe that Northumberland Heath is a much smaller community than the three member ward which the Local Government Boundary Commission has proposed.

The parade of shops in Northumberland Heath – providing small supermarkets alongside convenience stores, a Post Office, a successful bakery, restaurants provide a focus for a small community in the

surrounding area.

It is rare that those living beyond the immediate vicinity of these shops make use of the parade of shops or identify themselves as living in Northumberland Heath.

Northumberland Heath Forum operates across the community bringing together traders with local residents. While a small forum it is active and gives the small tight-knit community of Northumberland Heath a focus.

Northumberland Heath is ideal for a one member ward focused around the shops on Bexley Road, which we believe would provide appropriate and convenient local representation.

### **Bostall/The Pantiles**

The Local Government Boundary Commission's proposed Bostall Ward has many elements of the community it covers. However, we believe it better reflects the community if it moves eastwards to incorporate further areas which share its community identity. The area to its west – St. Michael's – has a distinct, small community which is separate from the rest of this area.

The Bostall/Pantiles area of suburban residential family housing has a clear identity and community surrounding the parades of shops in the Pantiles and on Parsonage Manorway. The housing is of a similar style and part of the Bexleyheath and Bostall Ideal Homes estate. We believe that this would best reflect the identity and interests of the local community and secure convenient local government.

### **Beyond Erith and Thamesmead Constituency**

We have had sight of Bexley Labour Group's submission which we feel give clear definition to existing communities with reference to existing community facilities, infrastructure and local history. They provide appropriate representation across the London Borough of Bexley and meet all of the Local Government Boundary Commission's specifications – in particular the needs to secure equality of representation, to reflect the identities and interests of local communities, and to secure effective and convenient local government.

I hope you will consider this submission and ensure that Bexley's communities are given the opportunity to be represented appropriately and that community identity is allowed to be reflected in the local government boundaries.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this submission.

Yours faithfully,

**Anne Price**

Chair, Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party

*On behalf of Erith and Thamesmead Constituency Labour Party*