

Buckinghamshire Council

Personal Details:

Name: Ben Holkham

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Organisation Name: Wycombe Liberal Democrats

Comment text:

Dear Sirs Further to the consultation on new ward boundaries across Buckinghamshire we would like to make the following comments for consideration. Firstly, we are pleased that the commission has chosen to proceed with 98 councillors as this aligns with our manifesto proposal from the 2021 elections and indeed is something locally we have been campaigning on for a number of years now. Local feedback has been very much of the view that 147 councillors was far too many and that a smaller council would have significant cost savings and be able to run more effectively. On how this should be broken down the potential to reduce from three members per existing ward to two would on the face of it be a simple solution however we believe this would have a number of drawbacks and that a hybrid approach would be the preferred option. The reason for this is that rural areas can currently cover quite a wide area presenting more of a challenge to elected representatives along with weakened community links due to electors not as easily able to identify with the area they are part of. In contrast Urban areas do not have this same issue but also often have socio-economic challenges creating a larger volume of casework combined with more complex cases. We therefore believe it would be appropriate for larger and more rural areas to be split into one member wards to help with community and voter engagement and then for urban areas to be represented by two members whereby councillors can help support each other with the split of casework to help provide a better service to the electorate. In practice this would mean two members for Downley, Terriers and Amersham, Totteridge and Bowerdean, Ryemead and Micklefield, Abbey, Booker, Cressex and Castlefield, Hazlemere with West Wycombe, Chiltern Villages and potentially Tylers Green and Loudwater being one member wards (our thinking on the later being within Tylers Green and Loudwater the top and bottom are quite distinct areas and that a split using Hammersley Lane would be a more appropriate boundary). With regards to the boundaries of the wards containing two members we generally feel these existing boundaries work well. We do note however that Wycombe Marsh has gone through a number of changes resulting in it being split between Ryemead and Micklefield / Tylers Green and Loudwater. We believe this would work better as one area within Ryemead and Micklefield that they would have greater identity with. Should this change take place we note that Ryemead and Micklefield is projected to be slightly over the average number of electors in 2027, this could potentially be solved by moving the area where Princes Gate meets Gordon Road into Totteridge and Bowerdean which all use the same shops at the bottom of the hill. We hope the above proposals are helpful for your considerations and are happy to be available for further input as you see fit. Yours Sincerely Ben Holkham Chair - Wycombe Liberal Democrats

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded