

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Personal Details:

Name: Bjorn Simpole

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name: Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party

Comment text:

Please see attached letter

Uploaded Documents:

Download (https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1647852632_Tunbridge+Wells+Constituency+Labour+Party.pdf)

Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party
71a St Johns Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 9TT

Dear Sir/Madam

Local Government Boundary Review for Tunbridge Wells

Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party supports the reduction to 39 Councillors and is pleased this long overdue boundary review is taking place so our ward boundaries can better reflect the communities of the Borough and better electoral equality. In drawing up their proposals we would be grateful if the Commission would consider the following points that we wish to make: -

- We do not believe that the establishment of 13 three member wards is the best way to ensure that there is effective representation of all the diverse rural and urban distinct communities that exist in the Borough.
- The principle of Councillors serving natural communities should be the primary factor in drawing up proposals rather than establishing large wards, covering in many cases, huge geographical areas.
- We believe that this is best achieved by a combination of wards and feel that this can be managed within a structure that has elections by thirds rather than all outs.
- Wherever possible we believe that the parish and town council boundaries of Tunbridge Wells should not be split into different wards.
- The electoral boundaries of Tunbridge Wells town (non-parished) are confusing and illogical in many cases. More needs to be done to ensure that areas are not divided up arbitrarily, ie. currently many parts of Culverden fall into St Johns ward and there are many anomalies and strange boundaries.
- We broadly agree with the electoral forecasts submitted by the Council, but by providing a cut off date of 2027 (as required) there will be a need for a further review within 10 years given the scale of planned development in the draft Local Plan particularly in the Tudeley/Capel area.

In terms of specific proposals to be drawn up the Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party believes that: -

- Rusthall should be maintained as separate ward. Rusthall is a parished area with its own distinctive identity and strong local community ties and should not be paired with any part of the non-parished area of Tunbridge Wells.

- Given the scale of development at Knights Wood, Sherwood ward should be retained as a 3 member ward with some minor amendments to incorporate some neighbouring streets located in St James ward.
- Proposals for the Southborough Town Council area (Southborough and High Brooms and Southborough North) should respect the boundaries of an area which has its own town council and representation at this level. Ideas for this area could be trying to retain the existing wards or using the A26 as the division between a Southborough West and Southborough East ward.
- Paddock Wood also has a Town Council so the same argument applies and it is a distinct urban community which should have its own political representation.
- We believe there is merit in exploring the possibility of a single member Horsmonden ward and question the accuracy of Council forecasts for increased number of electors given the scale of expected development in this parish over the next five years.

We would be grateful when drawing up the initial proposals that you take our views and suggestions into account and look forward to the opportunity of commenting in the next stage of the consultation.

Yours sincerely
Bjorn Simpole
Policy Officer – Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party