

# Wokingham Borough Council

## Personal Details:

Name:

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Organisation Name: Individual

## Comment text:

Wokingham Borough Ward Boundaries The Borough Council's Proposal For A Joint Arborfield And Barkham Ward. 1. I live in Barkham, on the western side of Wokingham Town. Arborfield is next door to Barkham to the West. The Council is proposing combining the current Arborfield and Barkham wards, each with one councillor, into one ward with 3 councillors. One underlying reason for this is that what was the Army's Arborfield Garrison has now been developed into a large housing area of, in due course, several thousand homes. 2. Apart from Arborfield Garrison/the housing development, both Arborfield and Barkham are semi-rural areas, Arborfield, less the garrison, being Arborfield Village & Arborfield Cross, with Barkham known to many as Barkham Village. 3. Having 3 councillors per ward, as the Commission's overall policy suggest, may suit administrative convenience but Barkham and Arborfield Cross & Village are both semi-rural areas, whereas the Strategic Development Location at the ex-Arborfield Garrison is a closely developed community of relatively dense housing, almost a townlet on its own. 4. It seems to me to make little sense to combine these distinctly separate elements into one. Each should remain with a single councillor on a four-year term, so that each area with its separate needs is represented by one person, thus reflecting the local community ties and identities. 5. Indeed, I would suggest that your proposal for 3-councillor wards nation-wide lacks merit for 3 reasons: a. 3-member wards with elections in each ward in 3 years out of four may suit administrative convenience and the national political parties but this gravely disadvantages any Independent wishing to stand, having to consider standing up 3 times in four years to get/before being elected against the organization of the national political parties. It should be noted that the Wokingham Borough Council voted on its background report exactly on party lines, the majority Liberal Democrats with Labour voted for the Council's proposal, the Conservative minority abstained and only the two current Independent councillors voted against. b. One of the arguments against proportional representation in elections nation-wide is that the result would not tie elected individuals directly to a small specific area thus reducing the personal representation factor which leads to a closer relationship with voters and a better understanding of local issues. c. For Wokingham Borough, the council's proposal suggests that each ward has about 7,500 constituents, thus claiming in the background report that each councillor represents about 2,500 constituents. As I understand the local council election system, however, with 3-member wards each councillor each time is elected from all the ward voters, thus then representing the whole 7,500 people, which is rather different than supposedly representing 1:2,500 in terms of interactions with them. 6. In conclusion, I would strongly recommend that the Council's proposal of a single ward, Arborfield And Barkham, should in fact be 3 single-councillor wards to reflect better the individual natures of the 3 parts of the proposed ward. I would further recommend that more of the Wokingham wards should be sub-divided into 3 to give each councillor better interaction with the individual nature of similar, discrete, smaller wards.

## Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded