

### **Personal comments by Cllr Mark Roberts**

This is my personal submission, I am a resident of the proposed Amersham & Chesham Bois ward and am a town councillor of Amersham Town Council. However these views expressed are my own and not made on behalf of either Amersham Town Council or my political group. They are my views alone made in a personal capacity.

### **A: Overall comments**

The aim of the proposals is to reflect:

1. Electoral quality
2. Community identity
3. Effective local government

In the area of covered by the former Chiltern District Council area, the proposals are an improvement over previous Buckinghamshire Council divisions in relation to those three criteria, and those used previously by Chiltern District Council which covered the same geographic area. From that point of view the proposals are a step forward but further improvement could be made.

At presentations held earlier this year the commission team stated that in meeting the three criteria above that they would not be bound by either existing unitary division boundaries nor by parish boundaries, but would instead draw new boundaries in places that best met the three criteria. That does not seem to have been followed through into these proposals in a number of instances:

1. The new proposed boundaries are drawn on the basis of parish boundaries and existing polling districts with no new boundaries being drawn to meet the criteria - a shuffling of existing pieces rather than a redrawing of the size and shape of the pieces.
2. Proposals include several three member wards despite there being consensus that three member are not as effective as one or two member wards.
3. Some groupings do not reflect 'natural communities' so in some cases community identity does not appear to have been prioritised.

### **B: Amersham & Chesham Bois**

Broadly supportive.

The proposed ward represents a broadly coherent 'town' community that is distinct from Little Chalfont and the Penn Wood area with which it is currently grouped. It is right that this area should have its own representation distinct from those other areas with which it shares few community links.

However, it is not effective for this to be a 3-member ward and consideration should be given to subdividing either into a 2+1 or three 1-member wards.

This could only realistically be achieved by drawing new boundaries within the proposed boundaries, based on:

- Amersham Town - the old town, London Road and lower part of Station Road / Stanley Hill.
- Amersham on the Hill / Amersham Common
- Weedon Hill / Chesham Bois

For the purposes of balancing electoral numbers, consideration should be given to grouping Coleshill with Amersham Town as they are geographical neighbours and share community links, for instance they are both part of the same Church parish. This may enable the creation of two wards:

- Amersham & Chesham Bois - consisting of Amersham on the Hill, Amersham Common, Weedon Hill and Chesham Bois
- Old Amersham & Coleshill

#### **C: Chesham North and South**

Broadly supportive. These two wards represent a broadly coherent 'town' community.

#### **D: Chiltern Ridges**

The villages that make up this strangely shaped proposed ward looping around Chesham share little in the way of community identity other than all being villages, so this proposed ward does not meet the criteria of 'community identity'.

Consideration should be given to moving Hyde Heath, Ballinger and South Heath from The Missendens into Chiltern Ridges as they share a lot of community links and interests with Chesham. This would improve the coherence and natural characteristics of this group of villages all to the North and West and Chesham. To compensate for the electoral numbers added, Ley Hill, Latimer and Chenies should be removed from this ward and grouped instead with Little Chalfont (see below).

#### **E: Chalfont St Giles and Little Chalfont**

This is an inefficient 3-member ward which would be better subdivided.

Consideration should be given to grouping Ley Hill & Latimer and Chenies with Little Chalfont (as described above under B) to create a 1-member ward focussed on Little Chalfont.

The remaining Chalfont St Giles ward would make a more efficient 2-member ward - especially if Coleshill were linked with Amersham Town as described above under A.

#### **F: Chalfont St Peter**

Broadly supportive.

#### **G: Penn, Tylers Green and Loudwater**

Broadly supportive. Part of this area is currently linked to Amersham Old Town as part of the current Penn Wood & Old Amersham division but this makes no sense due to Penn Street, Tylers Green and the outskirts of Beaconsfield having little community connection to Amersham. It is right that they are more properly linked with their neighbouring areas.

#### **H: The Missendens**

If Hyde Heath, Ballinger and South Heath were shifted to Chiltern Ridges (as described above in D) then The Missendens would become a more efficient 2-member ward.