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From: Wendy Young (Cllr) <WendyYoung@Maidstone.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 August 2022 13:31
To: reviews
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Draft recommendations for Maidstone by Local Government Boundary Commission
Attachments: Representation by Councillor Wendy Young to LGBC.docx

Categories: Submissions, [REDACTED]

Dear Sir

It would appear that you did not receive the representation by Sutton Valence Parish Council regarding the proposal made by Maidstone Borough Council for the new boundaries and therefore were unable to take into consideration our views.

Considering the draft recommendations for my Ward, I am strongly opposed to the alignment of Sutton Valence with the Rural Service Centre of Headcorn and have attached my reasons for my opposition to this proposal.

I look forward to receiving your decision on this matter.

Yours faithfully

Cllr Wendy Young

Maidstone Borough Councillor for Sutton Valence and Langley

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Representation by Councillor Wendy Young
Maidstone Borough Councillor for Sutton Valence and Langley Ward

After reading your draft recommendations for the new boundaries for my Ward of Sutton Valence and Langley, myself and Sutton Valence Parish Council are dismayed by the proposal to align Sutton Valence with the Rural Service Centre of Headcorn.

The question of electoral equality in this area seems to be a problem with the proposed Sutton Valence/Headcorn alignment giving an unacceptable variance of 13%.

Sutton Valence has always had very strong links with the villages of Chart Sutton, East Sutton and Warmlake and has virtually no community identity with Headcorn.

Sutton Valence has clubs and social groups, such as Cubs, a Tennis Club, Church groups and Parish liaison groups that regularly associate with Chart Sutton and East Sutton and have no connection with Headcorn.

The 3 Suttons Help Group provides voluntary services to the local residents and the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service at Sutton Valence War Memorial is a joint celebration with Chart Sutton as were the Jubilee celebrations.

Sutton Valence Independent School is in Sutton Valence and the associated Preparatory School is in Chart Sutton with the obvious links between the two schools.

At present there is a Climate Change and Biodiversity Group who are in joint consultation with Chart Sutton and East Sutton.

The existing Doctor's Surgery serves the residents of Sutton Valence, Langley, East Sutton, Warmlake, Hawkenbury and Chart Sutton and again has no specific links with Headcorn.

Local residents use the shops in Langley and Parkwood (Morrisons and Aldi) where there is ample parking and a regular bus service in preference to the smaller shops in Headcorn, where car parking is not free.

There are excellent Pubs and Restaurants in Sutton Valence, Langley and Boughton Monchelsea all frequented by the local residents.

Apart from the lack of community identity between Headcorn and Sutton Valence there is also a strong difference between the geological features of Headcorn compared to The 3 Suttons and Boughton Monchelsea.

The Greensand Ridge is an escarpment that runs along the line of these villages and is a very well known walking route used by groups and individuals from all over the country whereas Headcorn lies in the lower Weald of Kent, forming a very different landscape.

The only tangible link between Sutton Valence and Headcorn is the A274, an extremely busy and sparsely populated road, approximately 3 miles long, connecting the two villages.

In conclusion, Sutton Valence does not have a Community Identity with Headcorn nor share its facilities. It is imperative that it retains its connections with the other villages, those being Chart Sutton, East Sutton, Warmlake, Hawkenbury and Boughton Monchelsea.

The residents of Sutton Valence have a strong identity with these villages that must be maintained and to lose this connection would be unacceptable and profoundly upsetting for the residents and the Parish Council.

The realignment of Langley with Leeds and Otham is an acceptable proposal since there are strong Community links between these villages. The inclusion of the new housing developments adjacent to Parkwood is understandable as they are now encroaching on the rural area of Langley and Otham and are using their facilities and engaging with their community groups.

I very much look forward to hearing your views on my comments and anticipate that a satisfactory resolution, acceptable to all parties, is achieved.