

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Stoneleigh & Auriol wards although covered by the same Residents Association are two very distinctive wards who see themselves as quite separate communities. There is a very clear boundary in the form of a railway line that is the dividing line between these two wards and access across the boundary is either across the railway footbridge or under the railway line itself. I think it is very important that in reaching a decision about the warding patterns and councillor numbers that this distinction is preserved. As a resident of Auriol ward, I identify with other landmarks such as Auriol park another distinguishing feature and difference between the two wards, secondly we have a junior school Auriol which shares its site with the Mead Infant and Nursery school which is a linked school for parents and carers, and its catchment is the Auriol ward.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded

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Workload- unlike industry local government has not embraced the technological age and the concept of smart working. A net reduction of three councillors will only result in the workload increasing and quality decreasing and lead to communities being served by elected representatives who are not representative, as those with full or part time jobs and/or caring responsibilities will be unable to commit the necessary time. Democratic deficit The gap between local representatives and the communities and residents they represent will only increase under this proposal. Fewer councillors means the shift of time and focus will inevitably be to the LA rather than addressing issues of concern to their residents. This feels like part of a longer term plan to continue to water down the availability of local councillors and create the case for a unitary authority as it will becoming increasingly harder for voters to experience the difference having dedicated ward councillors will make. Currently, each Borough Councillor represents 1559 voters. Given the projected population increase by 2027 and assuming the number of Councillors is reduced to 35, this will rise to 1835 voters in 2027 Identity crisis- The ward boundary issues and where they are redrawn needs careful consideration, there is only value in redrawing or creating new boundaries if residents are likely to have a natural affiliation and sense of belonging to these already. Simply redrawing or creating new boundaries will not resolve an existing identity crisis, particularly if there are fewer elected representative to actively engage in these wards. Examples of where this is a risk are the creation of a new ward from Stamford and Court Wards to include some (or all) of the hospital cluster group of housing developments (Noble Park, Manor Park, Livingston Park and perhaps Parkviews and Clarendon, currently in Ruxley Ward) looks superficially attractive and a move in the right direction, there is in fact no rationale for doing this. There is no natural centre or heart to such a construction, apart from perhaps the Horton Lane retail centre. Equally there should be no attempt to create a single ward which combines Stoneleigh & Auriol into one "super ward". These are two distinctive communities separated by a railway line, the station footbridge is the only means of accessing either ward.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded