

## Mole Valley District Council

### Personal Details:

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### Comment text:

I have uploaded a file with comments on behalf of the Ashtead Residents Association.

### Uploaded Documents:

**Download ([https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1654454703\\_LGBCE+draft+rec+ARA+comments.pdf](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1654454703_LGBCE+draft+rec+ARA+comments.pdf)).**

This response is provided on behalf of Ashtead Residents' Association (ARA) whose membership spreads across the whole of the geographically delineated conurbation of Ashtead. We have reviewed the draft recommendations and have the following comments on them:

1. We strongly agree with the recommendation that the boundary in the south of the Ashtead wards remains the M25 as that is a strong, clear and recognisable boundary.
2. We note that the number of electors per councillor and the variance from average in Appendix A are based on estimates for elector numbers in 5 years hence – 2027. The overall increase in electors for Mole Valley is estimated at 10.3% and whilst Ashtead's increase at 10.7% is close to this, the estimated increase for Leatherhead is 19.8%. Even based on these estimates, with almost double the increase of electors in Leatherhead compared with Ashtead, the number of electors in Ashtead per councillor is 17.1% higher than in Leatherhead. We consider that this does not meet one of the Commission's three statutory criteria of equality of representation.
3. The recommendation to have 3 councillor wards is at odds with the main considerations of the Commission. As noted above, it results in larger discrepancies between the number of electors that each councillor represents. Also, as the number of electors in wards change with time the variance from average will move beyond the 10% limit. For instance, if there was a large increase in electors in, say, Dorking South then it would not be possible to increase the number of councillors from 3 to 4 to reflect this change. Either the ward is split into 2 to create 3 new councillors, or the ward boundary has to be changed.
4. We understand that 3 councillor wards may be desirable but are not the main consideration of the review. We therefore propose that the number of Ashtead councillors remains at 7 with 4 in Ashtead North and 3 in Ashtead South. The boundary between Ashtead North and Ashtead South could then either be Ottways Lane and the A24 towards Epsom (a strong, clear and recognisable boundary) or revert to the previous proposal with the boundary running along Ottways Lane, Woodfield Lane and Bramley Way before following the A24 towards Epsom. The exact boundary could be selected to provide approximately equal number of electors per councillor in both Ashtead Wards.
5. The report refers to the Ashtead wards as North and South. We would like to propose that the names of the new wards are Ashtead Common and Ashtead Park.

In summary, ARA considers that the reduction in Ashtead wards from 3 to 2 is acceptable. However, the number of Ashtead councillors should remain at 7 in order to meet the 'equality of representation' criteria for the residents of Ashtead. We propose that the Ashtead North ward is called Ashtead Common ward and has 4 councillors. Ashtead South would have 3 councillors and be called Ashtead Park. The boundary between the new Ashtead Common and Ashtead Park wards should be selected such that there is a fairly equal number of electors per councillor in each ward. The number of electors per councillor for the two Ashtead wards will then be closer to the average for Mole Valley as a whole than is currently proposed in the draft recommendations.

David Knogle

Hon. Sec. of Ashtead Residents' Association.