

Local Government Boundary Commission's draft recommendations for Tandridge District - three-councillor Limpsfield & Tatsfield ward.

This proposal should be resisted for the following reasons:

1 Geography: Despite being served by Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council, the village of Tatsfield is 'out on a limb' geographically.

i Housing at its northern border merges with the built-up area of Biggin Hill in the London Borough of Bromley. There is no obvious natural boundary.

ii A stretch of two miles or more of open countryside separates the village from its nearest settlements in Tandridge – Limpsfield and Woldingham.

2 Local services: Village residents tend to look north for their everyday needs. As the crow flies, Biggin Hill, with its supermarket and shops, is a mile and a half away. Oxted, with its supermarkets and shops, is more than two and a half miles away. Even by road, Biggin Hill is easier to reach than is Oxted. Biggin Hill Valley, with a small supermarket and facilities, including a pharmacy, is only a mile and a half away by car, less than half the driving distance to Oxted.

3 Public transport: Biggin Hill and London are more accessible from the village than Limpsfield or Oxted. A seven day a week bus route run on behalf of Transport for London provides more than 30 journeys a day on weekdays and more than a dozen on Sundays to Biggin Hill and Croydon, allowing frequent connections to Bromley and a direct link with London Trams and therefore trains to London. Buses run from before breakfast until after midnight.

By contrast, there are only four bus journeys a day to Oxted on weekdays and none on Sundays.

4 Health services: Tatsfield residents tend to be registered with NHS doctors in Biggin Hill or Westerham. For many years, both practices had branch surgeries in Tatsfield.

5 Emergency services: The first fire brigade response in the village is usually provided from the full-time London Fire Brigade station in Biggin Hill, rather than from the part-time Oxted fire station.

6 Surrey or Kent? Because of the village's postal address – WESTERHAM TN16 2.. – many people still associate the village with Kent, rather than Surrey.

7 Local representation: Taking into account the above factors has been second-nature to the district councillors who have represented Tatsfield for decades. The Commission puts the total electorate of a combined Tatsfield and Limpsfield ward at 4,444. Tatsfield's current electorate is a third of that. There is a risk that for councillors of a three-member ward, Tatsfield would therefore always be a minority interest. There would also be no guarantee that any one member would be a Tatsfielder with adequate relevant local knowledge.

8 Conclusion: If the current proposals are implemented, the village of Tatsfield would risk losing its own voice within Tandridge District Council.

8 Principle of three-member wards: The Commission suggests that Woldingham's identity justifies retaining a one-member ward with an electorate of 1590 in 2022. The same argument should apply to Tatsfield and Titsey which has a similar number of electors.

For these reasons, I believe that Tatsfield should retain its one-member status.

Tandridge

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Comment text:

Related subject: Tatsfield and Titsey ward

Please see attached, the thrust of which is that I believe that Tatsfield & Titsey ward should retain its one-member status - as is being proposed for Woldingham. It should not be merged with Limpsfield.

Attached Documents:

- Ian Mitchell response to the Local Government Boundary Commission.docx