

Tandridge

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Comment text:

Consultation Response on the Tandridge Boundary Review for Caterham

I have read the LGBCE report on your proposals to change the District Council Ward boundaries in the Caterham area (Tandridge North West). I have lived in Caterham-on-the-Hill for many years, and I was a Parish Councillor for 21 years, chairperson for 3 of those years. I am totally opposed to the recommendations which you set out in the report.

At present, the District Wards in Caterham are all within our Parish areas. Our Parish Councils are at the heart of our local communities and they are well understood by local residents. That is because the parish areas follow natural boundaries which separate each town or village from the next. Your boundary review seems to have ignored this. If you have assumed that Caterham-on-the-Hill, Caterham Valley and Whyteleafe are just one large suburban area, that is quite wrong.

It is unacceptable that most Portley Ward voters would become part of an enlarged Whyteleafe-Portley Ward and equally wrong that the Stafford Road area of Caterham Valley should be moved into Caterham Hill's Queens Park Ward. The reason the places are called Caterham-on-the-Hill and Caterham Valley is that there's a steep hill between them!

By crossing Parish boundaries, the proposals would make it very difficult to explain to electors where we have to vote. For example, would Portley residents have to go to Whyteleafe? That would be unpopular and many people wouldn't bother. Or would we have a separate polling station? That would be complicated and it would add to the cost of elections. The problems would be even worse in the years when there are both Parish

and District elections.

The LGBCE proposals would be more understandable if the electorate numbers required for each District Councillor didn't fit with the Parish Council sizes. But, as far as I can see, the fit in Caterham Hill, Caterham Valley and Whyteleafe is really good. If the Chaldon electorate is considered too small to justify a District seat, then it could be combined with a revised Queens Park Ward (not Westway Ward, with which Chaldon has nothing in common). Apart from that, there would need to be some local boundary revisions within the Caterham Hill Wards to make the individual ward numbers more similar, as there was at the previous review in the year 2000. These changes would need to be sensitively done; perhaps the Parish Council could help.

The sole reason for the review recommendations seems to be the LGBCE's wish to have three-member wards. But you don't do that for Warlingham East and Woldingham, which you accept are different communities. The Caterham area Parishes are different communities too, and these should override the theoretical 'three member' objective which just doesn't fit our area.

Finally, the four Parishes of Chaldon, Caterham-on-the-Hill, Caterham Valley and Whyteleafe currently elect 13 District Councillors between them. Under the new proposals, there would be only 12 out of an unchanged 42 Councillors in total. That is unfair, particularly as the population of our area continues to grow rapidly, and faster than in some other parts of the District. Tandridge North West should continue to have 13 District Councillors.

Please withdraw the proposals for these cross-boundary District Wards, keep to the Caterham Hill, Caterham Valley and Whyteleafe boundaries and restore 13 District Councillors for our area.

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None attached