

County Councillor Hazel Watson

Dorking Hills Division

8 October 2023

Review Officer (Surrey)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth NE24 9PE

Dear Sir

Surrey County Council:
Proposals for a New Divisional Configuration for the Mole Valley District in the County of Surrey

I appreciate the proposals put forward by the Local Government Boundary Commission generally reflect the submission that I made at the first stage consultation process. I note, however, that the draft proposals from the Boundary Commission state that my proposals for the Boxhill and Headley area were discounted in the formulation of the draft proposals but this is not actually the case – the proposal that I put forward for these villages was adopted by the Boundary Commission. Furthermore, in the south of the District the draft proposals are consistent with the proposals that I submitted.

It is recognised that the Boundary Commission has a real challenge with developing prospective divisions within Mole Valley due to the distribution of the electorate across the district, the distinct urban areas in the north, the central town of Dorking, and then significant rural areas combined with the fact that the average electorate for six divisions in Mole Valley is significantly higher than the average across Surrey as a whole.

This means that identifying divisions that reflect the statutory criteria is challenging with any “two division” proposal for the Leatherhead, Fetcham and Bookham area having significantly more electors than the average for the county and would not provide good electoral equality. The only way to address this is to move residents of South Leatherhead into a rural-based division but to do so does not comply with / match community identity.

I therefore welcome the Boundary Commission’s proposal to override the criteria for equality in electors for this area and its proposal to retain a Leatherhead-based and a Bookham-based division which will have poor electoral equality given the clear distinction of community identity between these areas and the rural areas of the district to the south.

I also welcome the proposal for a division based on the town of Dorking which has a clear community identity.



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In looking at the proposals for the two rural divisions, I make the comments below on the basis of the confirmations that Tom Rutherford, the Review Officer, has provided during the consultation, including his e-mail of 15 September 2023 which confirmed that the Boundary Commission proposal for the village of Capel is that this village is to be included in the proposed Dorking Hills division.

I welcome this proposal, subject to one very minor amendment set out below.

As I stated in my original submission when proposals for new boundaries were requested, the population across Ranmore Common is very sparse and there are no real road links and no community links across this area. This makes for a clear divisional boundary between the east and the west north of Dorking along the Wotton Parish boundary with Wotton Parish [which cannot be warded] in the west and the villages of Westhumble / Mickleham in the east. Mickleham and Westhumble also link with the Givons Grove and Tyrrells Wood part of South Leatherhead [which are included in the proposed Dorking Rural division] as well as the villages of Boxhill and Headley.

In the south there is also a clear boundary through a rural area east of Holmwoods and Beare Green and then further south between the Parishes of Capel and Newdigate. This will result in all the historic parishes being in a single county division with, in particular, the villages of Capel, Beare Green and Coldharbour which are all within the area covered by Capel Parish Council being in the same county division.

This proposal put forward by the Boundary Commission offers divisions with the clearest possible community identity and unifies all parishes within single county divisions albeit sacrificing coterminousity with District Council wards.

I would further add that the current District Council warding arrangement was opposed by the villages of Westhumble and Mickleham during the recent District Council Boundary Review during which these villages made the case to be joined with the Boxhill and Headley area as is proposed by the Boundary Commission in this Boundary Review. I have attached statements from the Westhumble Residents Association and Mickleham Parish Council from the District Council Boundary Review to confirm this. The reason why their views were not accepted in the District Council Boundary Review was that the consequential adjustment, requiring the Parish of Brockham to be split between wards and warded, was an outcome that would have even less community identity than the proposal adopted. Thankfully, this is not the case with the larger County Divisions and the boundaries with the more appropriate community identity, as set out in the Boundary Commissions proposals in this Boundary Review, can be adopted.

The single amendment that I would propose between the Dorking Hills and the Dorking Rural divisions is to the north of Dorking. The Boundary Commission proposals currently do not reflect the current polling district boundaries following the recent District Council Boundary Review.

The 6 houses in Bradley Lane [Voters LL 22 to 32 on the current register: 1 – 4 Bradley Farm Cottages, Bradley House and Bradley Farm House RH5 6AA] vote at the Westhumble Polling Station and are part of Westhumble village. If they are not in the same County Division as the rest of the Westhumble Village then a new Polling District will have to be created for 11 voters which does not make any administrative sense – the houses cannot be added to the Wotton Parish electoral register as the houses are not in the Parish of Wotton and the residents cannot vote in Wotton Parish elections.

The divisional boundary should therefore be moved to reflect the current Polling District boundaries within the Mickleham, Westcott and Okewood ward ie the Polling District Boundary between

Wotton Parish and Westhumble Village should run along the Wotton Parish boundary from the boundary with Bookham in the north to the boundary with Dorking in the south [ie not deviating across the unparished area] thereby leaving all the unparished area of Westhumble in the same division in order not to complicate electoral administration through creating a new, very small, polling district.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hazel Watson', written in a cursive style.

Hazel Watson
County Councillor for the Dorking Hills

Mole Valley District Council**Personal Details:****Name:** David Allbeury**E-mail:****Postcode:****Organisation Name:** Westhumble Residents Association.**Comment text:**

Due to the rural nature of our current boundaries a combination with other parishes and wards with a similar rural demographic would be preferable. My recommendation in order to meet the number of voters in the new wards required by the Boundary Commission would be a combination with Mickleham and Pixham, as currently, with the addition of Headley, Box Hill and Betchworth.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded

Mole Valley District Council

Personal Details:

Name: Kayleigh Hunter

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name: Mickleham Parish Council

Comment text:

To whom it may concern, I am representing the views of Mickleham parish council. We are not impressed with the new proposal at all. Although we did make it clear in our original proposal that we wanted to be part of a ward consisting of other rural areas/villages, it did not occur to us that we would be in a situation where we were placed in a ward so large that it stretched from Norbury Park all the way down towards Ellen green. This is an 18 mile stretch and would take over 30 minutes to drive between the two areas. This new proposed ward (Leith Hill) covers a vast area geographically, and is not appropriate when a ward is meant to be in place to discuss local politics, and issues we have in our local area. We have nothing in common, nor share any local community links with places 30 minutes away. We be much suited to be in a ward with Box Hill. The box hill estate forms a large part of our local/surrounding green spaces. We already have links with the Box hill community, and issues we have in Mickleham is also shared with those living in box hill e.g. traffic congestion on Bank holidays, speeding vehicles, litter etc. Sharing a ward with villages such as Paynes Green, Okewood hill and Walliswood is of no benefit to us what so ever. We require to be part of a ward that represents our local views. We appreciate that perhaps we may have more in common with other rural villages that Dorking North or Fetcham as these are much large urban areas in comparison, but even with this in mind the ward needs to be reduced in size.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded