

# Surrey

## Personal Details:

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**Organisation Name:** (Member of the public)

## Comment text:

As a Thames Ditton resident of almost 40 years, I am writing to object to the radical proposals by the Boundary Commission for new Surrey County Council Divisions.

The proposal to separate Thames Ditton from Long Ditton and Weston Green to form parts of two new divisions goes against the recommendations of both Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council.

This rearrangement is unwarranted and would detract from the long-established cohesiveness of our communities.

These proposals by the Boundary Commission for new Surrey County Council Divisions mean that Weston Green residents will move to a different Division, divorcing them from the Thames Ditton Parish and community of which they have been a part since 1100 AD.

The central Thames Ditton section of the existing Division would be carved out and joined to East Molesey, while Weston Green and Long Ditton would be tenuously connected, via Hinchley Wood, to a new U-shaped Division.

Thames Ditton and Long Ditton are closely linked, the name itself being a good indication. They are mentioned in the Domesday Book. The intention to split them is artificial.

There is a particularly artificial divide between Thames Ditton and Molesey, namely Hampton Court Way, from Ember Court roundabout towards Hampton Court. This is a significant divide and a lack of community not natural boundaries.

This goes against Surrey County Council's own recommendations which did not include any major change for our local area.

The Boundary Commission's role is to consider three main criteria:

1. Electoral equality

2. Community identity and interests
3. Effective and convenient local government

#### Electoral Equality

The Existing split of Divisions actually give MORE electoral equality than the Commission's proposals.

The current Dittons' Division, of which we are a part and in which I reside, is currently 4% off the ideal Surrey average. The proposals would create a new Division which is

11% below the average! This makes no sense whatsoever and does not move us further to equality!

#### Community identity and interests

There is a real strong sense of community within the Dittons, where we have two Residents' Associations who have acted tirelessly on our behalf to aid and protect local interests and are a vital part of our community.

The Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association was formed in 1934 and is the second oldest in the Country. It is the focus of a string and cohesive community.

There have been many examples of significant advantages in Thames Ditton and Long Ditton working together in pursuit of common interests over many years and giving residents of both a sense of pride and belonging, as well as being part of a very special historic link. Any divide would serve no useful purpose, indeed very much to the contrary.

There is a real sense of community within the Dittons, enhanced by a single County Councillor, and the two Residents' Associations work closely together. Splitting the two areas would end a historic link, to the detriment of all residents who feel a strong identity with their community.

There would appear to be no significant positive reason to change the current system, either to the communities involved or to the improvement or, indeed, any benefit in the present boundary system in place.

In regard to any proposed benefit in making change so far as the number of electors is concerned, the electoral numbers for the Division are not improved, indeed to the contrary!

#### Effective and Convenient Local Government

I consider that the overall change proposed to the Dittons would be an immense backward step, and serving no useful purpose, indeed, significant damage.

This proposal would result in two County Councillors serving our Community. The current boundary is clear, easily identifiable, familiar to residents and, most importantly, it works.

The proposals would create a new Division which is 11% below the ideal Surrey average - which is why Surrey County Council themselves DID NOT propose any major change!

I hope the proposed changes are rejected as they are clearly not in the interests of the communities involved, offer a less effective system of local government and will destroy the historic links established which we are rightly proud to be part of. We will become a faceless and disinterested

electorate, and I cannot see any benefit whatsoever in the suggested proposals.  
I hope you will take my comments into consideration when making your final decision.  
Regards.

[REDACTED]

## Attached Documents:

*None attached*