



Surrey Heath Borough Council
Surrey Heath House
Knoll Road
Camberley
Surrey GU15 3HD
01276 707100
DX: 32722 Camberley
www.surreyheath.gov.uk

Service Corporate

Our Ref: LGBCE Review/ERO response

Your Ref:

Direct Tel: 01276 707100

Email: ceo@surreyheath.gov.uk

Jolyon Jackson CBE
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

23 February 2017

Dear Mr Jackson

I write in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendation as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposals. My submissions to you are made in respect of the impact upon existing electoral arrangements, in particular matters affecting the coterminosity with County Council divisions, the administrative implications of the proposals, and the consequent effect upon the electorate.

North Camberley

The proposals in relation to St Michaels Ward recommend the movement of the area north of the A30 to the Town Ward. This will mean that electors within this area will move to the Town Ward whilst continuing to fall with the Camberley West County Division; the remainder of the Town Ward falls within Camberley East County Division. This will require the creation of a new Polling District, which will comprise approximately 21 electors and 13 households. This proposal has been recommended purely to create a more identifiable boundary. It is, however, noted that a number of buildings to the north of the A30, one of which is a residential property, will remain within the St Michaels Ward.

The LGBCE is asked to reconsider the proposal to redraw the boundary between St Michaels Ward and Town Ward as it is my view that the aim of creating a more identifiable boundary, which would not actually be achieved by the proposals, is not sufficient to counterbalance the disruption to existing electoral arrangements. The proposal has no bearing on the LGBCE's primary objectives of electoral equality or reflecting community identity and is in conflict with its objective of providing for effective and convenient local government.

The proposals in relation to Town and Watchetts Wards recommend that the roads in between Brackendale Road and Tekels Park are moved from the Town Ward to Watchetts Ward. These households would continue to fall within Camberley East



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County Division, unlike the remainder of Watchetts Ward which falls within Camberley West County Division; this will require the creation of a new Polling District, which will comprise approximately 209 electors and 82 households.

The LGBCE is asked to re-consider the proposed movement of approximately 200 electors from the Town Ward to the Watchetts Ward. It is my view that moving 200 electors in order to meet electoral equality requirements is not sufficient to justify the disruption this causes to existing electoral arrangements in respect of County Council elections and the administrative complications this will cause. This would not be conducive with the LGBCE's stated objective of providing for effective and convenient local government.

South Camberley

No comments are made in respect of the proposals for Heatherside and Parkside Wards.

Frimley and Mytchett

The proposals involve moving a significant proportion of the settlement of Frimley, including its identifiable centre which incorporates Frimley High Street, Frimley Railway Station and a number of community buildings, to Frimley Green ward. This is in conflict with the Commission's stated aim of recognising and reflecting community identity.

The Commission's proposals for the amendment of the boundary between Frimley and Frimley Green Wards result in further complication for voters as it introduces additional non-coterminous boundaries within the area. Again, this is not in line with the Commission's aims of promoting effective and convenient local government.

Changes to the County Council Divisions prior to the 2013 County Council elections required the creation of the Frimley South (FC) Polling District, as, due to the changes introduced, the electors in this area would be voting in the Frimley Borough Ward, whilst voting in the Frimley Green and Mytchett County Division; the remainder of Frimley Borough Ward continued to vote in the Camberley West County Division. The arrangements for Frimley South would remain the same under the draft proposals.

However, the draft proposals introduce the need to create a further Polling District: the proposed re-drawing of the Frimley Green boundary with the northern boundary at the A325 would mean the electors affected would thereafter vote in the Frimley Green Borough Ward, whilst continuing to vote in the Camberley West County Division.

The current Frimley South Polling District comprises 860 electors and 462 households. It is anticipated that the area which is moved from the current Frimley Ward comprises approximately 1000 electors and 600 households.

I therefore propose that the existing Frimley South Polling District moves to Frimley Green Ward which, in my view, would reflect the Commission's aim of providing for effective and local government whilst maintaining electoral equality requirements and reflecting community identity.

In order to minimise disruption to existing electoral arrangements, whilst maintaining electoral equality and reflecting community identity, the LGBCE is asked to revise its proposals to incorporate the existing Frimley South Polling District within the Frimley Green Ward and retain the existing arrangements for all other properties within the existing Frimley Ward to remain in Frimley Ward.

North East Surrey Heath

No comments are made in respect of the proposals for North East Surrey Heath.

I would, however, ask the Commission to note that, should its final recommendations result in minor anomalies between Ward and Parish Boundaries, I will be minded to advise the Council to conduct a Community Governance Review in order to resolve any non-coterminosity between Ward and Parish boundaries.

I trust the Commission will look favourably on my submission.

Yours sincerely

Karen Whelan
Electoral Registration Officer