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The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

19th June 2006

Dear Sir/Madam

Objections to the future electoral arrangements for NHDC

I am writing as the District Councillor from Offa ward to object to the proposals made by the Boundary Committee and ask that you will not endorse the proposal to combine my ward into a three member ward with the wards of Hoo and Hitchward.

This change does not benefit the electorate to be combined – it creates a large geographic area and puts villages and communities together that have little in common. It is purely being done to satisfy the electoral variance – a numbers game because Offa ward has a –17% variance. However, I note from the report that the Boundary Committee accepts to keep the wards of Weston and Sandon, Ardbury and Ermine as separate wards, on the basis of the number of representations that were received around their initial proposal to combining wards, served no purpose to the individual community identities that exist there.

I would hope that common sense would prevail, and to be consistent, the Boundary Commission would treat **all** the rural communities fairly in North Herts and recognise that within the wards of Hoo, Offa and Hitchward, the villages have their own identities and do not wish to be combined. The circumstances are very similar to those found in Weston & Sandon , Ardbury and Ermone wards.

I have a close relationship with the parish councils of Pirton and Offley and regularly attend their meetings as I live on the doorstep in a neighbouring village. There are numerous clubs and activities in these two villages which I keep in touch with. If the wards are all combined it will dilute the relationship I have and I believe confuse the electorate when they have a need to contact their councillor. I have little or no knowledge of many of the villages I would find myself representing – that cannot be in the best interests of the electorate. I thought the governments agenda was all about strengthening the relationship and having clear accountability to one's electorate?

This proposal does nothing to promote local democracy and I hope that you will reject this part of the proposal and leave the wards of Offa, Hoo and Hitchwood as they are

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. A small white triangle points from the bottom right corner of the box towards the name below.

Claire Strong