

Chiltern Liberal Democrats  
c/o 76 Deansway  
Chesham  
Bucks HP5 2PF

Review Officer  
Buckinghamshire Review  
Local Govt Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnbull St  
London EC1 5LG  
*and by email*  
Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Boundary Review for the County of Buckinghamshire**  
Response of Chiltern Liberal Democrat Constituency Party

**General Points**

1. Whilst we recognise that to save costs it is desirable to reduce the number of Elected Members from 57 to 49, from every other point of view it is a retrograde step. It is essential for a Councillor to canvass electors individually and keep in touch with them. Increasing the number in a Division to nearly 8000 makes this virtually impossible and will weaken representation.  
We are bound to point out that if the area of Bucks County Council comprised one or two unitary authorities then at a stroke democratic accountability and representation could be enhanced and further costs saved. To reduce the number of representatives in the largest spending authority will undoubtedly weaken scrutiny, representation and effectiveness.
2. Increasing the average size of a County Council Division to c 7800 will mean that a Division will be more likely to encompass three and a half District Council wards and therefore cut across them.. There is much confusion already amongst residents as to who does what and which council is responsible for which service: this will worsen the confusion.
3. Single member Divisions might appear to be administratively cleaner but the reality is that councillors work in teams: these teams may comprise members of all 3 tiers of Councils or teams working on issues which cross boundaries. An advantage of dual member Divisions is that residents can approach whoever they feel comfortable with, specialism can develop and mentoring can take place. On balance therefore we consider that the advantages of dual member divisions where pragmatic will outweigh any administrative convenience which may be gained from single member representation.

4. We are concerned that balancing the numbers of electors has in too many instances been achieved by ignoring natural communities, in particular in Chesham, and splicing together communities which have little in common.

### **Comments on Specific Proposals**

#### **1. Chesham**

- 1.1 We are pleased to note that the Commission did not agree with the County Council's proposals for Chesham. However we are unable to entirely support the Commission's own proposals..
- 1.2 There are many communities within Chesham. Some are delineated by the topography and road systems: for instance, Waterside is quite self contained lying along the Chess valley, as is 'Pond Park' at the top of Hivings Hill. Chartridge Lane, the gateway to various small parishes, has also created a natural community of interest along it around the leafy Chilterns – one that has been highlighted by the huge community- based 'anti HS2' campaign.
- 1.3 Within the town itself is the Pakistani community, centred around the Mosque and numbering over 2,000. (c 10% of Chesham). They are well integrated into the town as a whole but at the same time represent a particular strand of interest.
- 1.4 The town's amenities, the Elgiva Theatre, Open Air Swimming Pool in the summer, the leisure facilities at the two Secondary Academies, and Lowndes Park itself, draw predominantly Chesham residents into the centre. All this creates a strong sense of urban identity.

Nevertheless we believe it is possible to find the blend of Town and Parishes which a cut in the number of councillors would require (notwithstanding our comments above on this presumption) and we propose the following:

1. Chesham North	<b>Town Wards</b>	Electors
	Vale	1587
	Hilltop	1396
	Ridgeway	1907
	Newtown	1856
	<b>Parish wards</b>	
	Ashley Green/ Ley Hill	765
	Bellingdon	528
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8039</b>

*We regard Bellingdon as a natural extension of Ridgeway as the Bellingdon Road runs through it.*

*Similarly, Ashley Green etc leads out of Hilltop.*

2. Chesham Central	<b>Town Wards</b>	
	Ash Vale	1524
	Townsend	2100
	St Mary's	1147

Waterside	2478
<b>Parish ward</b>	
Latimer	810
<b>Total</b>	<b>8059</b>

*Asheridge Vale and Townsend wards are adjacent in the town and is the centre of the Paksitani Community with the Mosque at its heart.  
Latimer leads out of Waterside.  
Chenies would move to Little Chalfont.*

3. Chiltern Ridges	<b>Town Ward</b>	
	Lowndes	2162
	<b>Parish wards</b>	
	The Lee	590
	Ballinger + South Heath	1035
	Cholesbury cum St	775
	Leonards	
	Chartridge	1320
	Little Missenden	1931
		<b>7813</b>

*This proposal recognises the communities which lie off Chartridge Lane and into the Chilterns. This comprises predominantly parishes with much in common and significant synergies with Lowndes ward.*

## **2. Amersham and Little Chalfont**

- 2.1 Our comments concerning two member wards are particularly relevant with regard to Amersham. The Commission's proposals do not appear to have sufficient regard to the communities and seem to be based purely on the self-imposed straitjacket of ensuring that the Division numbers are within tolerance.
- 2.2 We can see no community synergies in the Penn Wood and Old Amersham proposal, which has the unfortunate effect of creating less rather than more cohesion between old Amersham and top Amersham (on the Hill).
- 2.3
- There is no apparent merit in splitting Little Chalfont and our Chesham proposals above would enable the 859 electors of Little Chalfont East (comprising Amersham Road, Chessfield Park, Amersham Way, Church Grove, Lodge lane, Oakington Avenue, Oldfield Close, The Retreat, Farm Close, Westwood Drive, Westwood Close, part of Elizabeth Avenue) to move back to Amersham East giving a total of 8208.
- 2.4 We would advocate renaming this Division Amersham East and Little Chalfont as it was prior to the last change.

### **2.5 Town Council ward**

The new Amersham parish ward should be Amersham Town East', which logically it is (the

District wards should remain as Amersham Town)

**3. Other Areas**

3.1 We have no further comments on other areas in the constituency.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Alison Pirouet  
Secretary  
Chiltern Liberal Democrats (Chesham and Amersham Constituency)