



1st April, 2011

Review Officer (Hart),
Local Government Boundary Commission for England,
Layden House,
76-86 Turnmill Street,
London,
EC1M 5LG.

Re: Review of ward boundaries for Hart District Council

Dear Sirs,

I am the group leader of the Community Campaign (Hart), a resident's association party with five councilors on Hart District Council (and with a county councilor at Hampshire). I am writing to you to express my strong concerns with the boundary recommendation that Hart District Council voted to send on to you at yesterday's Full Council meeting (31st March 2011).

Initially an officer of the council drew up a map which was agreed by all three group leaders (Conservative, Liberal Democrat & myself) as being a fair attempt at defining wards which represented the individual communities within Hart. It had a few imbalances in level of representation between a couple of wards and it was agreed that further work would be needed to make fine adjustments.

At the next meeting the Conservative leader produced a new map that one of his party members had drawn up which had radically altered the wards in and around the major settlement of Fleet & Church Crookham. As Leader of Council he substituted his new map for the original one which we had previously agreed recognized community boundaries. This new map is the one which Hart will have sent you as their response to the 'stage 2' consultation. For ease of reference I describe this as the 'A-K' map, for that is how the wards are labeled on it.

The Community Campaign (Hart) and the major opposition group (Lib Dems) share reservations about this proposal in respect of the ward which is labeled 'E'. The introduction of this peculiar ward was the main change introduced by the 'A-K' proposal.

Our reservation is based on the fact that it fails to recognize the sense of community in the local area. Having recently parished the previously unparished area of Fleet & Church Crookham Hart DC has on record the results of an extensive 'Sense of Place' survey taken in 2007. I assume that Hart DC will have volunteered the report on this survey when furnishing you with relevant supporting material.

Our reservations with regards to ward 'E' stem from the results of this 'Sense of Place' survey – although it would also be obvious from a map that such a sense of place would exist. The 'Sense of Place' survey does confirm this.

As proposed ward 'E' contains some very different communities. There are traditional rural villages; Ewshot, Crookham Village, Winchfield & Dogmersfield. There is an established suburban area; Zebon Copse. Two military estates; Quetta Park & Humphrey Park. There are also anticipated two new communities; Hitches Lane and Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB). Hitches Lane is in the process of being built with 300 dwellings. The QEB is the subject of a current planning application for 872 new homes. The QEB site is identified as a residential development in Hart's saved Local Development Plan.

In the Sense of Place survey Zebon Copse, Quetta Park and Humphrey Park all associated themselves with the suburban area of Church Crookham. Further the QEB development has according to the developer's master plan been designed specifically with a centre of gravity that attempts to merge the new QEB community with the existing community of Church Crookham.

The residents of Quetta Park & Humphrey Park have some of the most challenging needs of any Hart community, because of the stress associated with a military life style in the current world 'situation'. It is therefore important that the residents of these military estates are able to feel that they are included as an integral part of the community which they associate themselves with.

The 'E' ward simply takes this mix of disparate communities and places them in a catch-all ward. This fails to acknowledge the very different nature of these areas and their inherent sense of community.

Therefore, with the agreement of the other two group leaders I went back to the original proposal and attempted to identify adjustments that would bring the level of representation in each ward into better balance. I set myself one restriction (which I thought wise in terms of probity); I did not suggest any adjustment to the boundaries of the two proposed wards that include the area with which my own group is most associated with. I left them as defined by the Hart officer who drew up the original map.

I am grateful to the head of Hart's Democratic Services department who helped by having a new map drawn up based on a very rough but simple 'concept' that I suggested to him. The definition of the actual ward boundaries was produced by Hart officers. This alternative map is included with this letter. I shall refer to this map as the 'L-V' map for this is how the various wards are labeled on it.

This new proposal has addressed the 'sense of community belonging' issues which had been created by the proposed ward 'E'. A further benefit of the proposal, as can be seen from the attached estimated ward size table is that the 'L-V' scheme has been able to reduce the degree of over and under representation between the extreme wards. In Hart's proposed scheme the range is 808 (+414 to -394). In the scheme that we are proposing as an alternative the range between most under and over represented wards has been reduced to 563 (+340 to -223).

At the Full Council debate yesterday evening it became clear that the Conservative group had a party 'whip' to support the 'A-K' proposal and to reject our proposed amendment to recommend the 'L-V' proposal. On discovering that the suggestion to restore community cohesion was being rejected in favour of one which I can only assume the leading group believes has some political advantage for them we asked for a recorded vote. The vote was split firmly along political affiliation lines (as will be seen from the Council minutes).

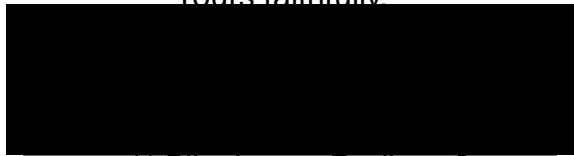
A further amendment for the Council to submit the 'L-V' proposal as a minority report was also sadly thrown out along strict party allegiance lines.

I am therefore writing to you on behalf of The Community Campaign (Hart) to ask you to consider the enclosed map and associated table of projected ward representation as an alternative to the proposal that Hart DC will have sent you. You will notice that our map is drawn up to the same degree of accuracy as Hart's and that our ward representation figures were calculated in an identical way; it was undertaken by the same council officers. This work was readily undertaken as I believe they anticipated that the 'L-V' proposal would be the one taken forward as it is basically the original proposal that all three group leaders had previously supported in principle; with some adjustment to make the level of representation balance out better.

I hope that the Boundary Commission will be able to consider this alternative proposal on impartial grounds and take into account;

- The sense of community (supported by the 2007 'Sense of Place' survey)
- The more even level of representation across all wards which it provides.

Yours faithfully



✓ Cllr. James Radley
Group Leader, The Community Campaign (Hart).

Attached documents;

- [1] Hart District alternative L-V ward boundary proposal map
- [2] Table of projected electorate (2016) for L-V wards

New Ward	Estimated electorate 2016	Variance from mean ward size	% Variance from mean ward size
L	6,370	- 4	0%
M	6,393	19	0%
N	6,337	- 37	-1%
O	6,387	13	0%
P	6,419	45	1%
Q	6,151	- 223	-3%
R	6,527	153	2%
S	6,285	- 89	-1%
T	6,244	- 130	-2%
U	6,714	340	5%
V	6,284	- 90	-1%
Total	70,111	- 0	

Mean ward size	6,374
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MAP 4

