

RA of E & E

residents associations of epsom and ewell

Treasurer: Keith Lugton, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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

19 November 2010

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell which is a registered political party – [REDACTED] – regarding the review of the electoral divisions for Surrey County Council.

Within the Borough of Epsom and Ewell there are many Residents' Associations. Some are quite small and relate to a single locality. Five Residents' Associations within the Borough are registered as political parties. They are

Ewell Court Residents' Association
Residents' Association of Cuddington
Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association
West Ewell and Ruxley Residents Association
and of course
Residents Associations of Epsom and Ewell.

Currently the majority of Borough Councillors on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are Residents Associations councillors and indeed this has been the case for the last 70 years. All current Residents Association Borough Councillors represent one of the five political parties listed above.

Within the Borough there are currently five Divisions of Surrey County Council. Four of the County Councillors elected in May 2009 represent the Residents Associations, with three representing the Residents Associations of Epsom and Ewell, while the other represents West Ewell and Ruxley Residents Association.

This Association works closely with the other four Residents Associations named and particularly with West Ewell and Ruxley Residents Association with regard to County Council matters. We understand that the views expressed in this letter coincide with the views of West Ewell and Ruxley Residents Association.

Currently there are 80 Surrey County Councillors and the electorate of Surrey is just over 850,000 people. This means that on average each County Councillor represents just over 10,000 people. These 80 councillors are spread over the 11 boroughs which make up the county of Surrey and the average number of electors which each County Councillor represents in each borough and in the county is as follows:

Elmbridge	10603	
Epsom and Ewell		11173
Guildford	10481	
Mole Valley	11137	
Reigate and Banstead		11307
Runnymede	10146	
Spelthorne	10455	
Surrey Heath	10623	
Tandridge	10418	
Waverley	10438	
Woking	10476	
Surrey	10648	

This shows that the present system gives a remarkably even representation over the boroughs and there is no argument on this score for saying that there should be more or less County Councillors.

We are not able to advance any arguments that there are too few County Councillors or that more are needed to perform the various tasks which fall to them. Nor are we able to advance arguments that there are County Councillors sitting around doing nothing. The amount of time and effort which an individual is able to expend will vary from person to person depending on personal circumstances, but we do not advance any arguments that there needs to be a change in the number of County Councillors on this score.

There is an argument that is often put forward, which says "if something is not broken, then don't fix it" and this argument can certainly be applied to the number of County Councillors. We understand that there are significant discrepancies between the number of electors in the various divisions. This may imply that division boundaries should be changed but does not imply any need for a change in the number of County Councillors. It seems to us that the current size of division means that each County Councillor is able to get a good detailed knowledge of the division without having too many County Councillors or too many people involved.

It is possible to advance an argument for reducing the number of County Councillors on financial grounds. Undoubtedly a reduction in the number of County Councillors could lead to a reduction in expenditure. Whether the reduction in expenditure would lead to greater efficiency or would justify the cost of the exercise to achieve it is debatable.

Overall we can see no cogent reason to change the number of County Councillors in Surrey and we recommend that the number of County Councillors should remain at 80.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Lugton, Treasurer