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Surrey Review
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Our Ref

Dear Ms. Murphy

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL (FER)

Firstly, thank you for providing us with copies of the review maps which accompanied the County Council's submission for the Further Electoral Review.

As I am sure you can appreciate, it is difficult to visualise the County's intentions from a written description of the boundaries alone, particularly as the County do not use polling districts (e.g. FA or FB) as initial descriptive reference points when only parts of Wards have been included in a proposed Division.

Having said that, the maps are of such poor quality (and produced to different scales) that they add very little to our understanding and it would appear on studying the County's maps that an area of the Borough (part of Town Ward to the North East of the railway line) was not included at all in the County Council's submission (although this apparent omission appears to have been corrected by the Commission on its maps).

The following submission is therefore based on the Commission's detailed maps and our understanding of the County Council's intentions:

Proposed Division boundary between Epsom West and Ewell

Whilst recognising the Commission's desire to improve electoral equality, the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and maintain local ties should not be overlooked.

Whilst it will pose a few administrative problems, we can accept, and welcome, the logic behind the proposal to include the roads to the west of Windmill Lane in the Epsom West division.



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However, we would support the County Council in maintaining that Windmill Avenue, Park Hill Road, Langton Avenue and Hampton Grove are seen to be integral to Ewell and not Epsom and that realigning the Division boundary as set out in the Commission's draft recommendations would not reflect local ties.

We would support the Division boundary running along the backs of the houses on the east side of Windmill Lane because the historic half mile boundary between the towns of Epsom and Ewell still has some resonance.

We believe this is demonstrated by the local dissatisfaction voiced over the Borough Council ward boundary review which came into effect in 2003.

The changes to Borough Council ward boundaries which came into effect in 2003 resulted in Beaconsfield Place, Church Road, Chuters Grove, Dirdene Close, Dirdene Gardens and Dirdene Grove, East Street (92 to 184 evens only), Old Bridge Lane, Providence Place, Windmill Lane (2 to 20 even) and Yeomanry Close being included in Ewell Ward rather than Town Ward. However, by the time of the European elections in 2004, it was apparent that residents in the affected area identified more closely with Epsom rather than Ewell. They objected to having to travel to a polling station being located in the vicinity of Ewell village and this led to the creation of a new polling district and a polling station closer to Epsom.

Ewell is a distinct settlement in its own right. The people in the vicinity of Ewell very much associate themselves with the village, its retail centre and primary schools and not the neighbouring town of Epsom. The character and feel of the area is different with the transition from a more urban to suburban environment quite marked east of Windmill Lane where East Street becomes Epsom Road.

In our view, the Commission's proposals to transfer Windmill Avenue, Park Hill Road, Langton Avenue and Hampton Grove and properties in Epsom Road into the proposed Epsom West County Council Division will compound the issues that have arisen following the implementation of the last Borough Council ward boundary review and create difficulties for any future Borough Council ward boundary review.

We therefore strongly support the County Council's submission as the best balance between community identities and electoral equality along the boundary of the proposed Divisions of Epsom West and Ewell. We recognise, however, that the Commission may then look to redress any potential electorate imbalance elsewhere and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Commission on a possible solution.

Proposed Division boundary between Epsom Town and Downs and Ewell

It would appear that although not highlighted in the Commission's draft recommendations, its recommendations also depart from the County Council's proposals in relation to a field south of college road. We have no strong views on this one way or the other apart from commenting that the County Council's proposals are not co-terminus with ward boundaries



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and we would not wish to see any existing properties along the east side of Longdown Lane South included in Ewell Division.

Discrepancy in the forecast electorate for 2016

On the basis of the Commission's draft recommendations, we can understand why the Commission's projected electorate figures for 2016 for the proposed Divisions of Epsom West and Ewell differ from the County Council's proposal. However, we also note that the electorate figures for the proposed Division of Ewell West and Epsom do not match the County's proposal and it is not clear why.

We note that the County Council's descriptive proposals included a partial re-alignment of the boundary between the proposed Divisions of Epsom West and Ewell West and Epsom on the North-East side of Hook Road between Briane Road and the St Ebba's hospital site.

A copy of the relevant part of the map produced by the Commission accompanies this letter on which a green line has been superimposed where County Councillor Colin Taylor, one of the County Councillors affected by the changes in question, believes the County Council intended the boundary to be drawn. However, I would like to point out that on the map submitted with the County Council's proposals, the boundary did not follow the green line from right to left behind Horton Farm to Chantilly Way but did, in fact, follow the Commission's red line as indicated north up Hook Road to the roundabout and thence turning left (north-west) down Horton Lane.

We have no objection to the suggestion outlined on the map accompanying this letter but would support the Commission's recommendation, however, that the Division boundary between Epsom West and Ewell West and Epsom, once it rejoins Hook Road, follow the natural boundary of Hook Road and the Ward boundary along Horton Lane (subject to comments above in relation to the proposed boundary between the proposed Divisions of Epsom West and Ewell).

Proposed Division Names

We have no strong views on the new Division names save that we believe having neighbouring Divisions called Epsom West and Ewell West and Epsom confusing and would prefer, if these names are to be adopted, that the proposed Division of Ewell West and Epsom be renamed West Ewell and Epsom: there is a recognised local settlement, and postal address, known as West Ewell (although the railway station is known as Ewell West).


Simon Young
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