

Leader's Office

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

10th October 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Electoral Review of Surrey County Council

A formal response to the Commission's draft recommendations in respect of the electoral review of Surrey County Council has been sent by Mole Valley District Council to the Commission (a copy of that response is attached to this letter for completeness).

We are writing to you as the Leaders of the three Groups on Mole Valley District Council to show cross-party support for the comments made by the District Council and to add some additional comments.

These comments are written in the context of our joint priorities to:

- help residents access the services they need - including therefore accessibility of their democratic services such as polling stations
- protect the character of Mole Valley – including keeping the character of distinct communities in their current and appreciated form
- listen to the residents of Mole Valley – standing up for their views
- deliver value for money – avoiding additional bureaucratic costs

Leatherhead and Fetcham East

The proposal to move the more rural part of Leatherhead into the Dorking Hills Division will result in a split in a well established community. Although more rural in character, residents of Givons Grove, Leatherhead Downs and Tyrrells Wood have strong and well established ties with Leatherhead Town Centre. This is evidenced through active participation with the Leatherhead Residents' Association, the fact that residents send their children to Therfield School in Leatherhead and regard this as their local secondary school as opposed to Ashcombe School in Dorking, as well as using Leatherhead as their primary centre for transport and shopping.

We believe that there is a strong case on community grounds to retain this part of Leatherhead within the existing Division. The size and diversity of the proposed new division will make it difficult for the County Councillor to become fully conversant with all of the local issues affecting three diverse areas – Dorking, Leatherhead and the rural communities.

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Bookham and Fetcham West

The proposals will require the division of one polling district in Fetcham West into two separate areas which in turn will fall between two County Divisions. To accommodate this, electors will be required to attend different polling stations depending on which election is taking place i.e. District or County. From past experience, electors are used to attending the same polling station irrespective of which election is taking place and this could result in some confusion. We would encourage the Commission to revisit this proposal and consider maintaining the Divisions of Leatherhead and Fetcham East and Bookham and Fetcham West in accordance with existing ward boundaries.

Dorking Hills

We accept, as an alternative to the proposal affecting the rural part of Leatherhead, the transfer of Abinger South (Polling District No.'s 1 and 2) from Dorking Rural to Dorking Hills, which would go some way to balancing the numerical differences between County Divisions without creating new polling districts. This would however create an extremely large geographical area.

We trust that the Commission will take these comments into account when it determines its final recommendations.

Yours sincerely

James Friend
Leader of the Council

David Howell
Leader of the Independent Group

Margaret Cooksey
Leader of the Opposition