

## Guildford Borough Council

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### Comment text:

Overall I welcome and support the proposals. BURPHAM AND MERROW I especially welcome the boundaries for the ward of Burpham, which I represent as a borough and county councillor, and for Merrow which I represent as a borough and county councillor. It is important to note that the area of Boxgrove, which is proposed to be moved into Merrow, is one with a strong local identity distinct from Merrow's, but the current boundaries split it in two so the proposal to move the entire area within one ward is probably preferable to dividing it between wards. I do, however, have some concerns/comments about other elements of the proposals: CHRISTCHURCH AND HOLY TRINITY The name of the proposed ward of Christchurch and Holy Trinity is rather long, and it is somewhat anomalous to name the ward after two CofE parishes when the ward's boundaries are significantly different from those CofE parish boundaries. I would therefore suggest that the ward be renamed after a suitable local landmark, or core community. The ward contains Guildford Castle, and therefore could be renamed as Castle ward, but the ward is also centred on the 1870s-built suburb of Charlottesville and could therefore be renamed after that instead. Alternatively, since the ward contains far more of Holy Trinity parish than Christchurch parish then the simplest solution might just be to rename the ward as Holy Trinity given that that would provide some continuity for civic society institutions which are already names after the existing Holy Trinity ward. ASH SOUTH AND TONGHAM In the case of this ward, and the wider proposals for the Ash area, I disagree strongly with the commission's proposals and rationale. The commission's proposals for the Ash and Tongham area result in three wards which are collectively significantly underrepresented with two of the wards being 10% above quota - the absolute maximum permissible - and the other ward being 3% above quota. It does not seem reasonable that residents in this area as a whole should be systemically underrepresented compared to the rest of the borough. It is undoubtedly the case that Ash parish itself could be split into two wards with sufficient councillors to ensure correct representation for the number of residents and without requiring maximum variance. The reason why the commission has rejected this approach is because it has deemed the following: 1) A single member ward for Tongham parish would have an unacceptably high variance of 11% 2) Linking Tongham parish with another area to create a two member ward would be inappropriate due to the A331 representing a hard barrier between communities Whilst the committee's rationale for 1) is completely correct, the rationale for 2) is questionable. The Runfold Manor part of Tongham parish is already located south of the A331 and Tongham's main road (The Street) runs right under the A331 and continues on the other side, with houses located both immediately before and immediately after the A331. Runfold Manor is just as connected to Sandy Cross as it is to the rest of Tongham, and Runfold Manor and Sandy Cross effectively form a conjoined settlement. This, and numerous other communities along the A331 (including the parishes of Wanborough and Compton which crosses the A331 entirely) demonstrate both that the A331 is not inherently a hard barrier and that any conclusion that there is a hard barrier between Tongham parish and Seale and Sands parish requires a more substantive rationale in order to stand up. When one looks at Tongham parish and Seale and Sands parish it quickly becomes apparent that there are some striking similarities. Tongham parish, whilst containing an urban core adjoining Ash, covers a large rural area containing multiple small hamlets which are quite distinct from the overwhelmingly urban Ash parish. Seale and Sands, similarly, covers a large rural area containing multiple small villages and hamlets in addition to one large, principal (if sprawling) settlement in the form of The Sands, which is adjoining to the more rural edge of the Farnham urban area. Seale and Sands is far too small to be able to support a single member ward in its own right, but would, if combined with Tongham (in a single member Tongham and Sands ward) provide a demographically similar, and geographically linked, area consisting of multiple small rural settlements and two principal villages (Tongham and The Sands). Although one of those principal villages would be more suburban and the other would be more rural, the ward would be balanced in terms of the different communities,

would not be dominated by either one of the principal villages, and could be effectively represented by a single councillor (and be well within acceptable variance). The benefits of such an arrangement to Tongham parish would be that its residents would not find their interests subsumed, and made secondary to, the interests of the larger Ash urban area (whose identity would cross multiple wards). The benefits of such an arrangement to Seale and Sands parish would be that its own residents would not find their interests subsumed, and made secondary to, the interests of those parishes within the proposed Shalford and Pilgrims ward with much larger populations. Seale and Sands would be on the westernmost edge of the proposed Shalford and Pilgrims ward and its residents look far more towards Farnham and Aldershot than they do towards Guildford. By contrast, the vast majority of the population of Shalford and Pilgrims ward look towards Guildford and Godalming. Furthermore, in the case of the Shalford and Artington areas, much of the population of the proposed ward actually form part of the wider Guildford urban area. As such, the combination of Tongham and Seale and Sands parishes into a single member ward, would represent a significant improvement, in terms of balance, proper representation and community cohesion, than the commission's proposals. Doing this would have the additional benefit of ensuring that the Ash urban area had representation, across multiple wards, entirely to itself rather than part of Ash parish having to share borough representation with a significant minority of residents from a distinctively different community. I hope the commission will reconsider this aspect of their proposals.

**Uploaded Documents:**

None Uploaded