

Gravesham Borough Council

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Comment text:

Opinion from Steve Dyer, Cobham Parish Councillor With regard to physical boundaries, we have the Thames to the North, Medway Towns to the East, and the urban area of Gravesend town centre to the West. The A2 is a physical boundary with the urban area around Singlewell. However, where the A2 divides Shorne and Cobham both are rural locations and the neighbouring villages are closely joined. This therefore makes the A2 as a boundary feel invisible via Brewers Road. Meopham is a very large village and needs to be kept together as a unit and therefore doesn't seem logical to group in with Sole Street for example as a direct neighbour. With a mixture of rural and semi-rural villages across this area, the rationale behind grouping Cobham, Higham, Luddesdown, Shorne and Sole Street together as one ward is as follows: Education. Either no schools or small primary schools only. All secondary education excluding private schools involves the children travelling to Gravesend, Medway Towns or Meopham. Public transport. All have an infrequent bus service generally, and not that helpful for daily transport other than the secondary school bus services. Higham and Sole Street both have a train station, but the service is in line with a small commuting population and therefore many services do not stop at these stations outside of peak hours. Shops. All have very limited shops and requires travelling to Gravesend or Medway Towns for many services. All consist of large areas of green belt and AONB. Concerns for development of the green belt is a common concern for the electorate within these wards. Traffic concerns. These areas are all similar with volumes and speeds and residents concerned with safety. Lower Thames Crossing will be of concern for this area, with a large foot print in these wards and considerable impact during the build phase and once in operation. Road junction designs will all have significant impact on these wards. Medical care. Very little provision if any in this area, needing to travel for any doctors and dental needs. Local employment. Ignoring electorate now working from home, there is very little in the way of employment locations within the area so most will be travelling to be able to work. So with the main goals being electoral equality of 2,205 electoral members per councillor and grouping similar areas together where possible this feels like a workable solution. Shorne, Cobham, Luddesdown - 2 councillors currently Higham - 2 councillors currently Area wise both are huge with only small areas of high density residential, but that will always apply for rural and semi-rural areas. This will help provide one of the proposed reductions in GBC councillors from 44 to 39. A new combined ward of Cobham, Higham, Luddesdown, Shorne and Sole Street - 3 councillors representing instead of 4 currently. 2027 electorate total for these wards gives a total of 6,507. This is very close to the perfect figure of 6,615 working on 2,205 electoral members per councillor. Thanks Steve Dyer Cobham Parish Council – Vice Chair. File also attached as a word document with the same content.

Uploaded Documents:

[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1627943793_2021-08-02+LGBCE+CPC+Response.docx\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1627943793_2021-08-02+LGBCE+CPC+Response.docx)

Opinion from Steve Dyer, Cobham Parish Councillor

With regard to physical boundaries, we have the Thames to the North, Medway Towns to the East, and the urban area of Gravesend town centre to the West.

The A2 is a physical boundary with the urban area around Singlewell.

However, where the A2 divides Shorne and Cobham both are rural locations and the neighbouring villages are closely joined. This therefore makes the A2 as a boundary feel invisible via Brewers Road.

Meopham is a very large village and needs to be kept together as a unit and therefore doesn't seem logical to group in with Sole Street for example as a direct neighbour.

With a mixture of rural and semi-rural villages across this area, the rationale behind grouping Cobham, Higham, Luddesdown, Shorne and Sole Street together as one ward is as follows:

Education. Either no schools or small primary schools only. All secondary education excluding private schools involves the children travelling to Gravesend, Medway Towns or Meopham.

Public transport. All have an infrequent bus service generally, and not that helpful for daily transport other than the secondary school bus services. Higham and Sole Street both have a train station, but the service is in line with a small commuting population and therefore many services do not stop at these stations outside of peak hours.

Shops. All have very limited shops and requires travelling to Gravesend or Medway Towns for many services.

All consist of large areas of green belt and AONB. Concerns for development of the green belt is a common concern for the electorate within these wards.

Traffic concerns. These areas are all similar with volumes and speeds and residents concerned with safety.

Lower Thames Crossing will be of concern for this area, with a large foot print in these wards and considerable impact during the build phase and once in operation. Road junction designs will all have significant impact on these wards.

Medical care. Very little provision if any in this area, needing to travel for any doctors and dental needs.

Local employment. Ignoring electorate now working from home, there is very little in the way of employment locations within the area so most will be travelling to be able to work.

So with the main goals being electoral equality of 2,205 electoral members per councillor and grouping similar areas together where possible this feels like a workable solution.

Shorne, Cobham, Luddesdown - 2 councillors currently

Higham - 2 councillors currently

Area wise both are huge with only small areas of high density residential, but that will always apply for rural and semi-rural areas. This will help provide one of the proposed reductions in GBC councillors from 44 to 39.

A new combined ward of Cobham, Higham, Luddesdown, Shorne and Sole Street - 3 councillors representing instead of 4 currently.

2027 electorate total for these wards gives a total of 6,507.

This is very close to the perfect figure of 6,615 working on 2,205 electoral members per councillor.

Thanks Steve Dyer

Cobham Parish Council – Vice Chair.