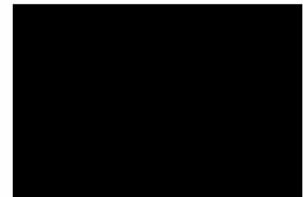




**Ashtead  
Independents**



[www.ashteadindependents.org](http://www.ashteadindependents.org)

[Councillor.Hawksworth@molevalley.gov.uk](mailto:Councillor.Hawksworth@molevalley.gov.uk)

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0TL  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)  
[www.consultation.lgbce.org](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org)

2 June 2022

Dear Commissioners,

We write as the seven Ashtead Independent Councillors, who form the Informal Independent Group in Mole Valley District Council (MVDC).

We wish to explain why we did not vote in favour of the response to your Draft Proposals approved by Council on 23 May 2022. The response was approved on a majority vote, with 22 Members in favour (all Liberal Democrat), 14 against (7 Ashtead Independents and 7 Conservatives), and 3 abstentions (2 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative).

Our main concern is that the proposal to change to a 3-Member ward system has never been the basis of any consultation with residents. The resultant proposals mean that some of the new wards are unacceptably extensive, do not follow natural, historical, or other boundary lines and, further, that residents used to having one or two Councillors representing them will now find they have three.

Along with the Conservative Group, we are convinced that single-Member wards and four-yearly elections would be best suited to the dispersed nature of the population in the District. We have raised this matter, and the failure of the Administration to consult residents, on at least three occasions in full Council, but the Liberal Democrats have rejected this scenario and, furthermore, our repeated requests that an alternative single-Member warding map be produced as a basis for discussion, have been ignored.

We had proposed that the issue be addressed by a Council Working Group with equal representation from all three political groups as this would better reflect the frequent changes between administrations and that any scheme would remain in place for the next 20+ years. Again that suggestion was rejected and the report being sent to you is from a Cabinet Working Group which was therefore essentially a Liberal Democrat view.

Ashtead Independents, 

Reg. No. RPP 3587845

We appreciate that these decisions are those of the Council and not part of your remit, but felt you should be aware of the level of dissatisfaction within the Council and, in our opinion, the inappropriate plan for 3-Member wards.

As regards particular issues in your proposals:

(1) We were pleased to see your proposals accepted the M25 as the western boundary of the two Ashted wards from the Leatherhead wards. As stressed previously the Ermyn Way area is an integral part of Ashted for the following respects:

- It is covered by the adopted Ashted Neighbourhood Development Plan
- It includes members of the Ashted Residents Association
- It is serviced by Ashted Good Neighbours voluntary transport service for the elderly and inform
- Residents in the area have a long tradition of dealing with sitting Ashted Councillors
- Major new developments are proposed in the Draft Local Plan (Section 19 version) which are on opposite sides of the same road and work on these and issues arising from them need to be co-ordinated
- It shares major traffic issues with Ashted, especially at the Grange Road/Ermyn Way/Leatherhead cross-roads
- Residents on both sides of Ermyn Way use the same schools, shopping areas, GP surgeries, pharmacies, bus routes, community facilities (Ashted Peace Memorial Hall), recreation ground, railway station, and enjoy Ashted Common
- Residents on both sides also belong to many of the roughly 90 Ashted-based voluntary, sports, leisure, and social clubs
- The proposed boundary along Green Lane/Ermyn Way is of major local heritage importance as part of the ancient route from Roman Stane Street across Ashted to Leatherhead, with a significant richly biodiverse hedge, and associated TPO-protected woodland strip
- It is possible that the Saxon burial (possible execution) archaeological site on the north side of Ermyn Way opposite the new development in the Exxon-Mobil site extends into the planned Ermyn Fields Developments (trial excavations have not been carried out)
- CIL monies derived from the Ermyn Fields development should be allocated to Ashted and not Leatherhead as it is Ashted as a whole that will be impacted and needs to benefit from this funding in order to ameliorate the effects of development
- Residents throughout Ashted, and not only the Ermyn Way area, use the shopping centre in Leatherhead (though more use is made of Epsom centre than Leatherhead)

With respect to some of the properties being assigned a Leatherhead post code (KT 22), we are advised by the Chairman of the Leatherhead and District Local History Society that this is a code created for a particular factory, Goblin, and this was retained when new offices were built (now Exxon-Mobil), and for housing developed after the original factory was demolished. In this connection, we also note that some properties at the southern limit of Park Ward, primarily along Shepherd's Walk, have KT18 Epsom post codes.

(2) We agree that the names of the two Ashted Wards should be 'Ashted Park' (for Ashted South) and 'Ashted Lanes and Common' (for Ashted North). These retain two of the historic names, and we further feel the use of "Lanes" adds clarity as it is that area of the former Village Ward that now joins the former Common Ward. We would welcome the retention of "Lanes" as these are an area

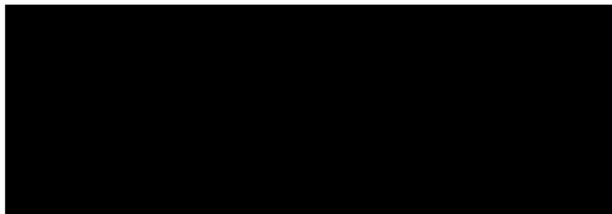
recognized for its special character in the MVDC "Built Up Area Character Appraisal – Ashtead" adopted in 2010,

(3) With respect to the boundary between Ashtead Park and Ashtead Lanes and Common Wards, we would favour a revision to ensure that all residents of Cray Avenue remain in the same ward as at present. We would prefer the Commission to consider retaining the full length of Craddocks Avenue (including Craddocks Parade) as the boundary as it is at present, even though this would add to the size of Ashtead Park Ward.

(4) As the major centre of population in the District, we deeply regret that we will lose one Council seat under the current proposals. We all have considerable workloads already dealing with residents' issues, and the expected new developments under the new Local Plan will add considerable to that task. We find it particularly invidious that we will have the same number of seats as Leatherhead. Should the Commission be minded to deviate from three-Member wards, it should consider having a third one-Member ward in Ashtead, perhaps covering the Ermyn Way/Stag Leys area. The current one 3-member and two 2 member wards system has worked well for Ashtead for over 20 years, and we deeply regret this proposed change. We have discussed options amongst ourselves and are sending a supplemental submission with figures to demonstrate show the basis of our concerns.

(5) Finally, and notwithstanding the geographical size of two of the new wards being configured, i.e. Leith Hill, and Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood, we are opposed to them deviating from the three-Member model unless an exception can also be made for an additional seat in Ashtead as a part of any such reworking.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,



David Hawksworth

Councillor D L Hawksworth CBE (Leader), Ashtead Common Ward  
Councillor M Cooper, Ashtead Village Ward  
Councillor D J Harper, Ashtead Park Ward  
Councillor C J Hunt, Ashtead Village Ward  
Councillor A Reilly, Ashtead Village Ward  
Councillor G A Stansfield, Ashtead Park Ward  
Councillor PEJ Wiltshire, Ashtead Common Ward