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Review Officer (Guildford)
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31st March 2021

Dear Sirs,

Guildford Electoral Review

Further to the recent on-line consultation with local councils and to the invitation to comment on ward boundaries in the Guildford area, we thank you for the opportunity to input to the Guildford Electoral Review and present here two proposals from Effingham for your consideration.

Proposals from Effingham Parish Council

We wish to make two proposals:

- Effingham should remain a single-member ward of Guildford Borough Council.
- The borough ward boundary should be coterminous with the revised parish boundary for Effingham parish which comes into effect on 1st April 2023.

The explanation and reasoning for these proposals is set out below.

Background to revised parish boundary

Effingham is a civil parish in the Guildford Borough Council (GBC) area. It is both a borough council ward, with a single borough councillor, and has a parish council with ten councillors. The boundaries of the borough ward and the parish council area are at present coterminous, and the parish council would like them to remain so.

In January 2019 East Horsley Parish Council (EHPC), whose Neighbourhood Plan had been adopted by GBC, informed Effingham Parish Council (EPC) that they were going to apply to GBC to change the boundaries between the two parishes. EHPC proposed that four roads in Effingham parish, that were also in the East Horsley settlement area, should move from Effingham to East Horsley parish. After discussions with John Armstrong, Democratic Services Manager, Guildford Borough Council, it was agreed that all the properties in the roads: Heath View, Heathway, Berrington Avenue and Orchard Close would move into East Horsley parish. (All these four roads are partly in East Horsley and partly in Effingham for example out of the 32 homes in Heath View 28 are in Effingham and 4 in East Horsley.) It was felt that this would make the boundary more logical, since the properties involved are the result of 20th century development which has expanded the settlement area of East Horsley into land which was historically part of Effingham parish.

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Two important properties are to remain in Effingham - Huckamore at the southern end of Orchard Close and Brickfield Cottage in Forest Lane. Both of these are physically separated from the other properties on their roads, and have strong historical connections to Effingham Common, which is one of Effingham's natural assets.

Public consultations were held in 2019, and the proposals were agreed by the public, the parishes and GBC - all the parties. The proposals were put to GBC for verifying and the Borough Council approved the proposals in the spring of 2019 with a transfer date of 1st April 2023, just before the next parish and borough elections.

Part of the reason for the change was the convenience of residents and the message to residents was that the boundaries would continue to be coterminous, and that the 'new' East Horsley residents would be in East Horsley for parish, borough, and all electoral matters. It is also intended that the Neighbourhood Plans for East Horsley and Effingham will be amended so that the Neighbourhood Areas for each Plan are consistent with the new parish boundaries.

A further important message was that residents now moved into East Horsley would be able to vote, at all elections, at the polling station located about half a mile away, and not have to travel to the Effingham polling station over 3 miles away. If the boundaries are not coterminous local residents might find themselves voting for the parish council in East Horsley and for the borough, county and national elections in Effingham. This would not be what residents had expected, and it would be confusing and could reduce turnout. For all these reasons, we feel strongly that the ward and parish boundaries should be coterminous.

After the approval by full council at GBC John Armstrong, Democratic Services Manager, Guildford Borough Council, wrote to the Boundary Commission in the spring of 2019 informing you of the decision. He provided accurate maps of the area and requested on behalf of the parishes and the borough council that the Boundary Commission take this decision into account when conducting their Guildford Electoral Review, and that the borough ward boundaries be made coterminous with the parish boundaries.

Case for Effingham to remain a Single Member Ward

The Effingham Community

Effingham has a strong local community identity.

The three churches in Effingham (Anglican, Methodist and Catholic) nurture a strong community spirit and support many leisure and social activities.

The King George V Hall and Fields, managed by the charity Effingham Village Recreational Trust, provides a magnificent open green space in the centre of the parish with sports clubs using the playing pitches, social clubs using the hall, and children's playgrounds, woodland and grassland open for free use by all residents. (See <https://www.effinghamkgv.co.uk/> for more information.)

The parish has the Effingham Housing Association (EHA) providing housing for the elderly needy of the village. The EHA is quite unique for a village.

As well as an active parish council (<https://www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>), there is a vigorous Residents Association (<https://effinghamresidents.org.uk/>) which is closely involved in all Effingham issues.

Effingham residents are proud of their history, as a village dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. There is a flourishing Effingham Local History Group spreading awareness of the

community's history through exhibitions, publications and an extensive web site (<https://elhg.org.uk/>)

Effingham residents feel strongly about protecting their rural environment, and are generally engaged in local government, as shown by the 94% support given to our Neighbourhood Plan at referendum in 2018, and the high turnout at local elections.

Geographical considerations

Effingham is one of the 'spring-line' parishes in the east of Guildford Borough. The ward boundary is based on the historic parish boundary stretching from the woodland and pasture landscape of the Surrey Downs AONB to the south, through the village with its Conservation Area on the spring-line, to Effingham Common in the north, a registered common with extant commoners' rights.

Effingham Common Road, The Street and Beech Avenue together provide a clear north-south route through the parish, with Guildford Road (A246) providing the west-east transport link to Guildford in the west and Leatherhead to the east. Effingham Junction Station on the northern boundary of the parish provides rail links to London, Guildford and beyond.

Effingham's position on the edge of Guildford Borough

Effingham has been a single member ward since its inception and the parish council would like to retain its single member status. As we are on the extreme eastern edge of Guildford Borough, on the boundary with Mole Valley District Council (MVDC), the parish council feel that we need a dedicated member to fully represent the interests of Effingham. For example, we are concerned that the MVDC Local Plan that is being consulted on should have significant inputs from Effingham, since certain of the proposals affect Effingham directly.

Our position on the boundary of GBC and MVDC means our residents use facilities such as GPs and social groups in the two nearby communities of East Horsley and Bookham, as well as the Leatherhead Leisure Centre provided by MVDC. We therefore expect our borough councillor to be aware and engaged with MVDC where appropriate, as well as GBC.

We feel that our own single borough councillor elected by Effingham residents is better able to represent Effingham's concerns than councillors for a multi-member ward. They might be elected from say the Horsleys, which have different concerns and issues, and so would not have the background knowledge to represent Effingham as effectively as our own member can do.

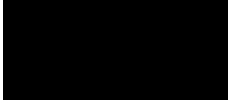
Equality of elector numbers

At present Effingham has approximately 2000 registered electors, which is close to the average number of electors per councillor across the borough.

The recent adoption of the Guildford Local Plan means that by 2025 the number of electors per councillor is likely to increase, if the number of councillors remains at 48. Taking into account the small change in the parish boundary and the extant planning permissions for more than 295 extra homes in Effingham, we anticipate that the number of electors for Effingham's single councillor will remain close to the average for the borough.

Taking all these factors into account, we hope you will agree that Effingham should remain a single-member ward in Guildford Borough, with the ward boundary coterminous with the revised parish boundary.

Yours faithfully,



Jon Short

Parish Clerk

CC

John Armstrong, GBC

Nick Clemens, EHPC

Liz Hogger, Effingham Borough Councillor