

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

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Organisation Name: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (and Chair of Capel Parish Council)

Comment text:

These comments relate to the proposed Pembury and Capel Ward and reinforce the key point made in the submission made by Capel Parish Council and by me as Borough Councillor for Capel. Unlike other proposals this ward links a small but substantial settlement Capel (Five Oak Green and its surrounding hamlets) with a much larger, distant parish which is effectively a suburb of Tunbridge Wells. It is difficult to see how the parish of Capel will have effective representation in this context when Pembury parish has two and a half times the voters (4381 to 1793) on 2022 figures. If we look at the combined new ward Pembury would have 64% of the voters and Capel 26%. As there are few community and no transport links between the two parishes Capel will struggle to have effective representation. The recommendation is also seen as perverse when the Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan has proposed extensive development in Capel Parish at Tudeley and west of Paddock Wood in East Capel. If approved by the Inspector, this will present considerable challenges to the community in the plan period up to 2038 and beyond. It would require a borough councillor familiar with the community and who understands its issues to give effective representation to residents whose lives would be disrupted by the extensive building and infrastructure works planned within the parish. Given Capel residents will have only a little over a quarter of the votes in the proposed combined ward, this is far from guaranteed to happen. Even the relatively high turnout in Capel compared to Pembury at their respective last Borough elections (53% in Capel and 40% in Pembury) would only marginally correct this imbalance. The conclusion is that Capel would lack effective community representation. An alternative proposal designed to overcome is presented to you in the submission from Capel Parish Council.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded