

Submission to Boundary Commission

1. Summary of Labour Party Proposal

The existing Tandridge wards are forecast to have a number of electors per councillor within 10%, plus or minus, of the average for the whole council in 2028 with the exception of Felbridge being 116% and Westway 111%. The Commission have ignored the saying “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it” and proposed whole scale changes which split communities, make wards difficult for councillors to work in, have new Parish council wards and still end up with the new Valley ward being above the 10%.

The Labour Party proposal is to move a small number of electors from Westway to Queens Park and from Felbridge to Burstow. After these moves all wards will be within the 10%.

2. History

Tandridge District Council was created by the merger of Caterham & Warlingham Urban District Council and Godstone Rural District Council in 1972. The ward structure was created to give a reasonable average number of electors per councillor and also recognise community links. This led to wards having 3, 2 or 1 councillor depending upon how rural it was and community links. The ward boundaries were changed (minor changes on Caterham Hill switching roads between wards and merger of Bletchingley and Nutfield) in 1998 to equalise the number of electors per councillor. I was a councillor on Caterham Urban District Council in 1972, Tandridge District Council at its formation in 1973 and also at the time of the boundary change in 1998. Although an opposition member I can confirm that care was taken to conserve community links.

3. Detailed Labour Party Proposal

With a view to minimising unnecessary and undesirable change we propose that some houses are moved from Westway to Queens Park and from Felbridge to Burstow.

The Westway moves would be from 47 to 59 Banstead Road (16 electors) and 16 to 32 Westway (14 electors). These houses are all situated between Money Road in Queens Park ward and Livingstone Road in Westway ward. The access to their garages is from Money Road. The new Westway would be 10% above the average per councillor, the new Queens Park 5% below the average i.e. both within the 10% allowance.

The Felbridge moves would be to move West Park Road, Stubpond Lane, Effingham Road, Snowhill Lane and Snowhill from Felbridge to Burstow, Horne & Outwood. From a map it may look as if Stubpond Lane is a continuation of Mill Lane so having some affinity with Felbridge, but this is not a through road so it is several miles from Stubpond Lane and West Park Road to Felbridge. There are already parts of Stubpond Lane, West Park Road and Effingham Lane in the Burstow, Horne & Outwood ward. This moves 125 electors from Felbridge ward to effect Burstow, Horne & Outwood ward leaving Felbridge with 108% above the average per councillor and Burstow, Horne & Outwood 106% i.e. both within the 10% allowance.

4. Why not the Commission proposals?

The Commission proposals attempt a “one size fit all” by having 3 councillors per ward and don’t even achieve that. They make no account that Tandridge is one of the most rural council areas in Surrey whilst also having urban areas each with their own particular problems. The proposed new wards take no account of contours of the area and move villages in with other wards even though they are miles away with no public transport links. There are several areas which would be unworkable or at least not beneficial to the electors and running of the council.

The suggestion that Stafford Road be taken from the Valley ward and put into Queens Park ward ignores the fact that residents in Stafford Road use the facilities in Croydon Road and elsewhere in the Valley and do not use those on Caterham Hill. For example parents walk their children over the railway bridge to the primary school in Croydon Road, similarly they can use the footbridge to access shops, hair dressers , etc. If going by car they would use the shops, community buildings, doctors, chemist, bank at the end of Stafford Road. Why would they drive through Harestone ward to go up the Hill to Queens Park ward where there are few of these facilities. They would not walk up the Hill as it would take a reasonable fit person 20 minutes to do this and many of the residents of Stafford Road live in the several elderly persons residencies. The proposal points out a road link up the Hill in Burntwood Lane but there is no public transport in Burntwood Lane. The public transport up Church Hill does not run in the evening. Queens Park councillors run surgeries in the Hill library in the middle of Queens Park ward, Stafford Road residents would have difficulty getting to that unless they drive.

Whyteleafe has similar issues to Stafford Road, in that there is little public transport up Whyteleafe Hill, none in the evenings, there are shops, pubs, doctors, restaurants amenities in Whyteleafe Village which means that residents see little need to go up the Hill to Portley ward. The Caterham Valley County Councillor links up with the Whyteleafe and Valley District councillors to discuss areas of common concern such as the flooding of the Bourne River, the increased traffic caused the Caterham bypass ending at Wapses Lodge roundabout (linking the two wards), a new LIDL being built at Wapses Lodge. These sorts of issue would not be helped by splitting the Tandridge wards.

Chaldon and Westway wards have totally different interests and no boundary other the gold club which is on green belt land and has not even got a footpath access. To get to Westway from Chaldon you would have to go by road from Rook Lane to Chaldon Road (which is in Queens Park ward) and then into Coulsdon Road. Chaldon ward is largely green belt, has farms, bridle paths and no social housing. Westway ward has no green belt land, no farms, no bridle paths and lots of social housing. This issues affecting the residents of Chaldon are at adverse to those affecting Westway where there are lots of adults with special needs, many single parents and primary age children going to the local primary school. Children in Chaldon will go to the Chaldon primary school. If Chaldon is to be merged it needs to be with Queens Park as there are lots of neighbours in the two wards, there are no houses Westway within 200 yards of houses in Chaldon.

This is no rational to merge Felbridge with Dormansland other than to make a 3 member ward. To get to the centre of Dormansland from the centre of Felbridge involves driving several miles through Mid Sussex Council. If people in Felbridge want to use facilities not available in Felbridge they would go to East Grinstead in Mid Sussex rather than Dormansland.

Adding Tandridge to Lingfield is ridiculous. There are several miles of lanes but most people would go west to the A22 and travel through Godstone ward. There is absolutely no link with Lingfield whereas they are currently linked with Oxted where all the facilities are. If linked to Lingfield they will be forgotten.

Tandridge

Personal Details:

Name: Robin Clements

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: East Surrey Labour Party (Representative of a local organisation)

Comment text:

Dear Commission

Attached is the East Surrey Labour Party response to the proposals of the Boundary Commission for Tandridge District Council.

Regards

Robin Clements

East Surrey Labour Party Agent

Attached Documents:

- Submission to Boundary Commission.docx