

## Bracknell Forest

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### Comment text:

Please find letter, attached.

### Uploaded Documents:

**[https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1584291229\\_Boundary+Commission+submission.docx](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1584291229_Boundary+Commission+submission.docx)**

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15 March 2020

Dear Commissioners

**Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC) ward boundaries review by the Local Government Boundaries Commission for England (LGBCE).**

Further to the recent submission from Bracknell Forest Borough Council, I would like to submit my own response, to the proposal to abolish the Old Bracknell Ward, in favour of a combined Easthampstead and Wildridings Ward. This will comprise three (3) Ward Councillors, as opposed to the current four (4), thereby providing one (1) of the proposed reduction of Councillors, from forty two (42), currently, to forty (40), as already agreed.

I understand that my fellow Ward Councillors, Peter Heydon (BFBC) and Stuart Foston, for Bracknell Town Council (BTC) have also submitted a similar response and accordingly, all three (3) elected members for Old Bracknell, reject the recommendations contained within the BFBC Stage 2 Submissions, in relation to the Old Bracknell Ward, specifically, on the following grounds:

**1. Deliver electoral equality for local voters:**

We are mindful that each Councillor should represent 2,537 + / - 10% and we take no issue with this, in principle. However, this purely mathematical exercise has been undertaken, by Officers and a small working group, without fully referring to the other criteria (see below) and accordingly, both maximises change and does not reflect the interests and / or identities of the local community. In fact, both BFBC Councillors currently reside in part of the Ward that is being proposed to be transferred to Hanworth (i.e. Gainsborough and Greenham Wood) but neither of us are taking issue with this unfortunate by-product, either but rather, strongly suggesting that the remaining roads (see below) constitute an historical community (i.e. Easthampstead) that has no community ties or linkage with Hanworth.

In relation to all of the criteria mentioned below, by keeping approximately 700 electors from the southern end of the proposed new Ward, leaving Hanworth on the lower margins but still within LGBCE tolerance, the northern 'triangle' which currently has no electors (some development is planned) could be, much more conveniently and effectively, transferred to the Central Wards.

**2. Minimise changes to existing Ward boundaries:**

The community hubs are the Easthampstead and Wildridings Community Centre, Easthampstead Baptist Church, Easthampstead Shopping Parade, the Golden Farmer Public House and although both the Sports Centre and Brakenhale School are situated in the Ward, these provide for the wider community, as well.

Accordingly, the roads in the immediate vicinity of the Church and Public House, being those connecting with South Hill Road (i.e. predominantly Manston, Lingwood and Cannon Hill) have no direct connection or affinity with Hanworth, whatsoever and would feel isolated from the rest of the long established Easthampstead community, if they were to become part of an alien Ward (i.e. Hanworth).

### **3. Reflect the interests and identities of local communities:**

The new combined Ward also proposes to include an area north of Downshire Way, covering Skimped Hill and Market Street. This area is separated from the proposed new Ward by both a major road (i.e. dual carriageway) and another major obstacle, being the Reading to London railway line, hampering both communication and access.

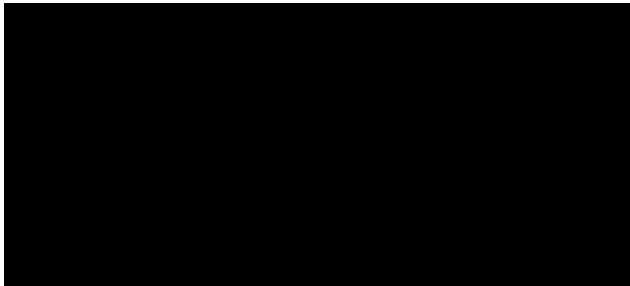
This is totally inconsistent with community interests and local identities of Wildridings, predominantly and Easthampstead (Old Bracknell), less so and clearly, more suited to being part of the Town Centre Ward(s).

### **4. Promote convenient and effective local government:**

In short, it cannot be considered either convenient or effective, if electors must travel 'around' to the rest of 'their' Ward, using the main trunk roads (i.e. Downshire Way and Bagshot Road) and crossing a main railway line, in relation to the northern and southern extremities of the proposed new Ward boundaries, respectively.

Local representation would also be split, across inappropriate and unnecessary barriers, leading to areas feeling of lesser importance and thereby leading to a breakdown in community cohesion.

Kind regards



**Councillor Malcolm Tullett**

Elected Member for Old Bracknell

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