

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

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Comment text:

I am largely in agreement with the proposed changes to the electoral wards in Bracknell Forest. However, I am a resident of the proposed 1-councillor ward, Central Bracknell, and wanted to highlight a particular reservation about this proposal. The changes to this ward certainly seem to fulfil the first two legal requirements of the boundary review, as laid out by the Commission, in that the Central Bracknell councillor would be responsible for roughly the same number of electors as the other wards, and the ward has a clear identity and boundary that differentiates it from surrounding areas such as Wildridings and Priestwood, for example. Nevertheless, I think that the proposal to have a 1-councillor ward threatens the third legal requirement of promoting 'effective and convenient local government'. The councillor would be entirely responsible for a set of constituents, without the possibility of sharing their workload or or discussions with a colleague in the same area. There would also be extra pressure on this councillor regarding attendance at council meetings and potential absences for personal reasons or illness, as any absence would leave electors effectively without a voice during such council meetings. This could potentially be very consequential when the council is taking important decisions or holding votes. All of this is before considering the effectiveness of the individual councillor in question. A second concern regarding this third legal requirement would be that, due to expected turnout at council elections and the FPTP voting system currently in place, an election in a small, single-councillor ward could potentially result in a councillor being elected on a very small minority of total votes, with a large number of votes for opposing parties being completely discarded and those electors being left without representation. Although this problem may not be fully addressed by a boundary review, I feel that they are at least mitigated when conducting elections in wards with multiple councillors.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded