

Gravesham Borough Council

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Comment text:

Firstly, I want to note that the last set of boundaries would be in place from 2003-2023 for twenty years. I thus think it is irresponsible to use figures for 2027 as a guide for boundaries that could be in place until 2043, that would be out of date by 16 years. The last boundary review used population figures for ten years into the future, which seems a lot more responsible. As I will discuss my submission for proposed ward boundaries, I want to confirm that I am doing this based off communities. The current ward boundaries do not represent local communities, except for Higham and Chalk. Whilst my submission is largely focused on local communities, I will make the numbers fit so each ward is within a 10% threshold. Istead Rise is not, and never has been a rural ward, it has always been part of Northfleet. It does not have a Parish Council and it is only in the Gravesham Rural Kent County Council division because of numbers. Until 2005, it was in a Tollgate Kent County Council division, which was a division that took parts of Gravesend and Northfleet. At the conception of Gravesham Borough Council, Istead Rise was listed as "Northfleet: Istead". It has always been part of Northfleet. Istead Rise is a distinct community, and very separate from the neighbouring communities of Meopham and Cobham. Although I cannot predict any submission from Meopham Parish Council or Cobham Parish Council, I suspect both will wish for their parishes not to be linked with Istead Rise because it will not reflect local communities. Istead Rise is predicted in 2027 to be too big for a one seat ward, and too small for a two member ward. It must therefore be paired with the current Painters Ash ward to create a 4 seat Painters Ash and Istead Rise ward. I do note that the A2 does divide the ward into two sections, however Downs Road does connect the two by going over the A2. Painters Ash is a distinct local community as is Istead Rise, and the only way to solve the Istead Rise issue is by acknowledging it is not a rural ward and has historically always been in Northfleet and must therefore be paired within Northfleet. This ward would be a merger of the existing Painters Ash ward and the existing Istead Rise ward. I also note that there might be some opposition to a 4-seat ward, but Painters Ash was in a 4 seat Northfleet Watling ward from 1973-1979 so there is precedent for this area to have a four member ward, moreover, there are four seat wards all over the country. There is a problem within the rural wards where there are very distinct communities from the Meopham Parish, Higham Parish, Shorne Parish, Vigo Parish, Cobham Parish, and Luddesdown Parish. Luddesdown must be part of the same ward as Cobham because the residents of Luddesdown go to Cobham whenever they need anything, the only way to serve Luddesdown properly is if it was within the same ward as Cobham. Both Meopham Parish and Shorne Parish are within a 10% threshold for any ward, but this cannot happen because Higham would be left alone and be too overpopulated, and it would be impossible to put Vigo, Cobham, and Luddesdown in a ward with fair representation. The only way to reconcile this would be to crowd different communities together to create large wards that do not split up community lines, therefore I submit a large Higham, Shorne, Cobham, and Luddesdown three member ward, which encompasses all four parishes as well as a Meopham and Vigo four member ward which encompasses both parishes.. The Meopham and Vigo ward does encompass the two communities, and would represent them well, the people of Culverstone and Harvel (both of which are in Meopham) identify as being within Meopham but also have links with Vigo. However, Luddesdown and Cobham have nothing to do with Higham, but it would encompass all the communities as the only way to make the numbers work, although this would be more quantitative than qualitative, it does enable community ties to be kept, it just means the councillors would have to work harder. In east Gravesend there are three communities, Chalk, Westcourt, and Riverview. Around the boundaries, these communities can be quite blurred. The current T polling district, within Westcourt ward, is part of the Riverview community, the people there would be best represented within a Riverview ward. Therefore, the current Riverview ward should therefore be expanded to consume the T polling district and be a two member ward Riverview Park. The remainder of the Westcourt ward should therefore be combined with the current Chalk ward to create a three member Chalk and Westcourt ward. This would represent the Chalk and Westcourt communities and whilst it is not perfect and does combine two communities, they are communities with close ties, and they used to be in a three member Chalk ward from 1937-1979. The current Riverside ward is a mix of

communities, it has the Denton community to the east, neighbouring Chalk, it has the Milton community in the middle, and to the west it has part of the Town community. The town centre is its own community and should therefore be represented by a three member Town ward which has the polling districts A, E, I, and K. This would encompass the Town community and the Milton community which has strong local economic links to the town. The remaining part of the current Riverside ward, polling districts F, G, and H, are part of the Denton community and therefore should be placed in a two member Denton ward. K, L, and J polling districts currently make up Central ward, K district is distinctly part of the town centre and should be in a town ward. The remaining two districts are part of the Windmill Hill community, however, the part of J district that is south of Old Road East is part of the Whitehill community. The L and J districts should be combined with the current Whitehill ward to create a three member Whitehill and Windmill Hill ward. This would serve the residents of both Windmill Hill and Whitehill well as they share transport, shops, and public houses together. However, Gravesend Grammar School should be removed from J polling district and put into H polling district as it becomes an enclave when driving, and Gravesend Grammar School should then be put into Denton ward. Although Woodlands ward can continue as one ward, it should gain the AA polling district from Singlewell. This would mean that the Kings Farm community would be represented under one ward, instead of being equally split between Woodlands, Singlewell, and Whitehill. This ward should continue as a three member ward and should be titled Woodlands and Kings Farm to better signify to voters the communities it represents. The remaining three polling districts of Singlewell (AB, AC, and Z), should continue to be represented as a two member Singlewell ward. Pelham ward should be minimised to a two member ward consisting of polling districts B and C. These polling districts have the community of Pelham, whereas polling district A is more of the community of the town, and polling district D is starting to be part of the Rosherville community due to the new developments in Rosherville. Polling districts D, BF, BA, and BAA should consist of a three member Northfleet East and Rosherville ward. It is important Rosherville is mentioned within the name of the ward, so it communicates the community it represents. This takes part of the Northfleet community (which is far too excessive to be in a singular ward) and allows it to be represented with the Rosherville community which is in Northfleet. A Northfleet West and Springhead three member ward should also be created, this will consist of polling districts BB, BC, and BD, this will represent the remaining part of the Northfleet community and the Springhead community. The remaining BE, BI, and BJ polling districts should be represented by a two member Coldharbour ward. This will see the current Coldharbour ward expanded to include polling district BE to better represent the Perry Street and New House communities. This submission does not split any polling districts up. Below is a table of wards.

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Electorate 2021	Variance 2021	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027
Coldharbour	2	4433	13%	4568	4%
Denton	2	3666	-6%	4294	-3%
Higham, Shorne, Cobham, and Luddesdown	3	6459	10%	7225	-9%
Meopham and Vigo	4	6934	-11%	8563	-3%
Northfleet East and Rosherville	3	5405	-8%	6740	2%
Northfleet West and Springhead	3	5503	-6%	6727	2%
Painters Ash and Istead Rise	4	7099	-9%	7984	-9%
Pelham	2	4020	3%	4370	-1%
Riverview Park	2	4063	4%	4347	-1%
Singlewell	2	4623	8%	4653	10%
Town	3	4928	-16%	6176	-7%
Westcourt and Chalk	3	5928	1%	6163	-7%
Whitehill and Windmill Hill	3	6674	14%	6929	5%
Woodlands and Kings Farm	3	6335	8%	7255	10%
14 Wards	39	76070	0%	85994	0%

Uploaded Documents:

[Download \(https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1626286320_Boundary+Review.png\)](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1626286320_Boundary+Review.png)

