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From: Dan Baber [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 August 2021 19:47
To: reviews
Subject: Gravesham - Local Government Boundary Commission for England

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

To The Review Officer (Gravesham), Local Government Boundary Commission for England,

I write on behalf of Gravesham Labour regarding the warding arrangements consultation which closes on the 2nd August 2021.

Gravesham Labour notes that due to the stage of the consultation there are no maps available to offer detailed comment on other than the current arrangements and that the draft recommendations on ward boundaries consultation opens in November when we intend to submit our views on the drafts in full.

However, we wish the following principles, comments and views to be taken into account by the LGBCE at this stage of the review

1. That due to the Government Housing Targets many wards, particularly in the urban area, will see an increase from 2023 onwards on electors which will mean many current wards, again particularly in the urban area, will therefore need greater representation moving forward. It is noted that the projections given on your website <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Item%20%20-%20%20Electoral%20Forecasting%20Proforma.xlsx> indicate this and that while some of the rural wards see an increase the balance of the greater numbers is in the urban wards which therefore should see the greater amount of Councillors ensuring parity of esteem that a Councillor should represent the same amount of residents.
2. While writing the number of Gravesham Borough Councillors being lowered to 39 is something we support.
3. We know that community is another aspect of consideration as well as the amount of people that each Councillor should represent. While much of the urban area and therefore the population of the Borough is not in a village or parish council there are still areas of identity and community that we feel are as important as a village or parish council community. We feel that the parish boundary of Northfleet for example should be maintained as Northfleet with much or at all crossing into Gravesend (much following the old Northfleet Urban District Council and Parish Boundary) is as distinct an area as Meopham or Shorne or Higham all with their own history, family and identity. For absolute clarity Northfleet is currently felt to comprise of the wards of Northfleet North, Northfleet South, Coldharbour and Painters Ash north of the A2 and historically also had Istead Rise south of the A2. Within the Borough there are estates such as Painters Ash, Coldharbour, Riverview, Singlewell (known as Kings Farm normally) and Westcourt that are clear communities in their own right.
4. We feel that the A2 and the High Speed Rail Line represents quite a natural break in the urban/rural split and make up of the Borough and that there is a clear break in ward boundaries and communities now there due to the size of the A2 and the High Speed Rail Line

Thank you for your time in this.

Best wishes

Dan Baber
Agent – on behalf of the Gravesham Labour Party

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