

## Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

### Personal Details:

Name:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Organisation Name:

### Comment text:

Concerns about the ward I live in which is Speldhurst - currently joins with southborough but will instead be Rusthall. I think the needs of Rusthall, which is quite urban in nature are very different to the needs of most of Speldhurst which is very rural (more like southborough). The proposed ward would have highest population of any Tunbridge wells ward and yet still only three councillors. I believe representing both populations with such different characters and needs would be a very tough job for those councillors. For example, Speldhurst and Bidborough is often concerned about how to preserve very local services (shops, gp, buses, social community groups) particularly for elderly population and children - eg now community run shop/post office, preserving school buses, Langton community lunches for the elderly at pavillion cafe, road safety on rural roads. These things are to ensure people have support and local facilities to continue living in the villages they love as their lives change over time. I don't know Rusthall so well, but I have seen campaigns about parking issues in the high street, community food larder for those in need, anti-graffiti measures, it has thriving shops and a much more successful commercial heart - but too far away for Speldhurst etc village dwellers who don't drive. Another example of the differences is in the applications to the Langton/Speldhurst/bidborough primary schools compared to Rusthall - the particular challenges of the rural schools are often about road chaos in school run time but otherwise busy, popular schools that have seen recent expansion. Rusthall shows it's different character in being a recently shrinking intake school even set in walking distance of a much larger population - population living in rusthall can make choices about school because it is more urban and has easy access to transport and Tunbridge Wells town to use those facilities more easily. There are overall differences in wealth across the two areas too and, as the costs of living go up, this will become more apparent and people's needs from their councillors will reflect this. It will be challenging for a councillor to focus equally on how well maintained a rural footpath is (which perhaps allows two elderly but wealthy residents to get to their gp and community club) when a larger chunk of the ward population is struggling to feed their children and asking for investment in say subsidised child care. I think the area's differing needs and higher total population needs either an increase in councillors to adequately serve all the population, or a slight rethink of the boundaries so that wards remain either rural or urban, not trying to mix the two. I will admit that my concern is that the needs of the smaller and maybe less cohesive rural populations will get lost in favour of the urban side which will be easier to hear and higher numbers asking.

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded