

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW CONSULTATION**

Response to the New Electoral arrangements for Tandridge District Council – Draft Recommendations - May 2023

On behalf of the Independent Group at Tandridge District Council

Our group has reviewed your draft recommendations for new ward arrangements in the District. We have not been persuaded by the recommendations that there should be any changes to Tatsfield and Titsey, Felbridge and now Warlingham East Chelsham and Farleigh. We strongly believe that the reasons submitted to you following our earlier review remain unchanged, and we believe for the reasons quoted that these 3 wards remain as they are.

Our first proposals sought to offer a sensible solution as an alternative should you have to adhere rigidly to the “presumption for 3 member wards “ even though we thought that was not the correct approach to take. But as your draft recommendations suggest that Warlingham East Chelsham and Farleigh change to a 2 member ward and Woldingham remains as a 1 member ward, there is clearly no longer a need for us to be part of the alternative solution. We would therefore like to withdraw our “reluctant support” to any changes to any of the wards quoted above.

### **Our Proposals**

The proposals by the Independent Group to maintain the status quo will not affect any of the three main considerations, and will actually enhance them:

You will not increase electoral quality by going this route, you will actually decrease it, by expecting representations from the “other wards” to be anywhere near as good, as strong or as loyal to their newly allotted electorate. It just will not happen due to the rural nature of the district and because of the loyalty of the Councillors who currently serve and who between them have served over 33 years.

The distance involved from the new recommendations both north to south, some 20 miles and east to west will undoubtedly worsen communication between “newly placed Councillors” and their residents, as they would concentrate on the areas where they would know more people and the problems that need resolving in their wards rather than the newly adopted one. In fact the opposite has been for many years and will continue to be for the future. This is much better for the electors in rural areas with one member councillors who they know and trust and interact with through the constant contact of living in the same ward.

In the case of Tatsfield it is plausible that the electorate could end up being represented by 3 Councillors who live at the far flung area of the Limpsfield Chart or in the relatively urban area of Limpsfield either would have no connection, no links and no knowledge of Tatsfield at all.

Forcing the electorate in to arrangements merely because there has to be a “presumption of 3 member wards” will not reflect community identity. In practice it will produce exactly the opposite effect with new Councillors having little or no knowledge of the ward they would be expected to represent. In your own statement on Page 15 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph you have stated that this presumption (for 3 member wards) will not take precedence over your other statutory criteria ... if not compatible. Yet this is exactly what you are recommending.

You will see the evidence from the affected District Councillors, Parish Councils but more importantly from the many many residents in the wards who want to maintain the status quo of Councillors in the wards mentioned above. That is because they have voted these Councillors in, repeatedly because they are content with the electoral equality they have now because they also fulfil part of your third criteria “to support effective and convenient local government” But more importantly in the current climate of National Politics they vote for people they know and trust.

The third main consideration to provide arrangements that support effective and convenient local government, is the easiest for the Independent Group to counter as we are all local people, serving the people, from living within the people in the wards we represent. We are all local,

therefore it is very convenient for the electorate to speak to us during the times that we are, just like them, in our Societies and committees supporting and volunteering and being part of the local life.

As stated above you will see the reaction from the residents about what they believe in and it will confirm the majority of the electorate want the status quo to remain. It serves local government well now so there really is no need to change it as it has worked for many years and will do for many years into the future.

On a wider note , the Group would support the same claims if represented to you by the people and the Councillor from Chaldon and support the decision to maintain the one councillor ward for Woldingham, as we believe the “ one member ward “ and representation is fundamental to meeting all three of your main considerations.

We have no objections to the proposals in the other wards, as you may recall we recommended in the first submission that the levelling out of the numbers in the more heavily populated areas of Oxted, Godstone, Lingfield, Whyteleafe and Caterham should be undertaken. We also repeat our assertion, believing them to be just as much affected as us that, it looked to us that much of the eastern side of the district, Limpsfield 2 member ward, Dormansland and Felcourt - 2 member ward would also be best left as they are due to the rural and widespread area from the north to the south on the eastern side of the district..

## Conclusions

We remain convinced that:

- a. Tatsfield and Felbridge remain single member wards
- b. Limpsfield and Dormansland remain as two member wards.

If you believe that Woldingham can meet the three main considerations as a single member ward, we would urge you to believe that both Tatsfield and Felbridge and Chaldon can do that also, in the way they have been doing so well since the last review.

In addition, the fact that Warlingham has operated as a 3 member ward since the 1998 review quite successfully returning continuously the same member is surely proof, should you need it that all three considerations are met in that ward.

We would ask you to accept this submission along with the earlier one as the Independent Group response to your draft recommendations and consider it alongside the many many responses you will receive from the Councillors and the Parish Councils in the affected areas, but more importantly the electorates that we serve. We hope that you can see that our proposals are in the best interests of the electorate and on their behalf we thank you for the opportunity to present our submission.

The individual members of the Independent Group are now working with their Parish Councils and their electorate and will offer further and greater detail about their Community Identity and how effective and convenient government works between them.

Martin Allen  
Independent Group Leader  
On behalf of the Independent Group  
31<sup>st</sup> July 2023

# Tandridge

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Tandridge

On behalf of the Independent Group we are objecting to your Draft Recommendations for Tandridge District Council

## Attached Documents:

- LGBCRESPONSE260723.docx