

1 July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**New electoral arrangements for Tandridge District Council Draft Recommendations May 2023**

On behalf of the Tandridge District Council Liberal Democrat Group, we appreciate the opportunity to provide our feedback on the draft recommendations for ward boundaries and representation. We have carefully examined the proposal and have identified several concerns that we believe require attention and reconsideration.

We would also like you to correct an error in your report where on page 10 item 26 Number of councillors you state, "The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a reduction to 36, but this was principally predicated on a comparison of councillor-elect ratios with other Surrey districts". This is wrong, we compared other districts and gave a detailed break-down of committee memberships and workloads of councillors.

Issues with the new electoral arrangements we consider should be reassessed:

1. Democratic Deficit: We strongly believe that the current proposal presents a democratic deficit, particularly in the northern areas of Tandridge. It appears that there is a lack of sufficient representation in this region, which raises concerns about fair and equitable democratic processes. It is essential to ensure that all areas within the district have adequate representation to uphold the principles of democratic governance.

All the wards with a variance above the average are North of the M25 (with the exception of Burstow, Horne & Outwood with 4%). This is the most built-up area within Tandridge.

Ward name	Variance from average %
Valley	11%
Portley & Whyteleafe	8%
Warlingham East & Chelsham & Farleigh	8%
Westway & Chaldon	4%
Burstow, Horne & Outwood	4%
Warlingham West	3%
Queens Park	2%
Woldingham	2%

2. All of the Wards to the south of the district have below average variances. This is at 2022 figures. Areas in the north of the district are more likely to suffer from speculative development over the period of this plan and therefore will have much higher variances.

It is imperative to rectify this imbalance, additional councillors are allocated to the north of the district.

3. Woldingham Ward: While we acknowledge the desire for balanced ward sizes, we find it difficult to support the designation of Woldingham as a single-member ward. This proposal is contrary to previous advice and inconsistent with what is proposed for the rest of the District. While every effort should be made to consider the unique characteristics and needs of each community, we cannot understand the rationale that Woldingham has any greater uniqueness than Chaldon or Tatsfield.

Both Tatsfield and Chaldon have unique characters, and if it seems the rules and guidance that all wards must be three member is no longer valid - these communities clearly should have their own representation.

4. Boundaries between Whyteleafe and Warlingham: We have observed an issue with the proposed boundaries between Whyteleafe and Warlingham, specifically concerning Godstone Road and the adjacent side roads. It is our belief that these areas rightfully belong to Whyteleafe rather than being included within the Warlingham ward. Residents in this area have a natural affinity with Whyteleafe village – the housing stock all along Godstone Road is very similar with Victorian terraces from the Croydon boundary to Whyteleafe South Station interspersed with post war infill and some flats. We strongly urge a careful reassessment of these boundaries to ensure accurate representation and alignment with the respective communities.

The Northern boundary of Whyteleafe along the A22 Godstone Road naturally sits at the District and County Boundary with Croydon. To make the eastern boundary our recommendation is that Whyteleafe Recreation Ground be included in the Whyteleafe Ward- this will ensure that in any future community council boundary review for Village and Parish councils, Whyteleafe Recreation Ground stays within Whyteleafe Parish.

Whyteleafe Recreation Ground is also a fundamental part of the Caterham, Chaldon and Whyteleafe Neighbourhood Plan – removing it from the Whyteleafe ward and subsequently from Whyteleafe Parish would cause harm to the plan and its impact on planning issues locally.

The residents of Hillbury Road opposite the Recreation Ground, residents of Westhall Road, Oakley Road and Court Farm Road and residents of Tithepit Shaw Lane are currently within the parish and ward of Whyteleafe but often refer to themselves as Warlingham.

This part of the boundary could be either including some of the roads describe above or to the rear of houses along the northern side of Hillbury Road and Tithpit Shaw Lane.

5. Boundaries between Caterham Valley and Queens Park: We have identified an additional concern regarding the boundaries between Caterham Valley and Queens Park. Specifically, we believe that Stafford Road and the adjacent side roads should be included within the Caterham Valley ward rather than being assigned to Queens Park. It is crucial to consider the geographic and community factors that connect these areas to ensure the most effective and representative ward boundaries.

Caterham Hill and Caterham Valley are two separate communities with different centres, and clear community identities. Residents of Caterham Valley would not wish to be part of Caterham Hill- their issues are different. The boundary naturally sits along the ridge of greenbelt land behind Milner Road and Milner Close- this is a physical barrier between Hill and Valley. It means the whole of the Valley is included. Dividing Caterham Valley along the railway line is wrong.

The following roads could be part of a Queens Park Ward - Burntwood Lane and Burntwood Close; and Church Hill, Waller Lane and The Hill.

6. Boundaries between Warlingham East, Chelsham & Farleigh and Warlingham West: This is an additional area of concern: the proposed move of roads to the east of Limpsfield Road and north of Warlingham Green into the West ward. We believe that the existing boundary along Limpsfield Road serves as a clear and strong demarcation. In contrast, the proposed new boundary, which meanders through various roads and divides Crewes Lane, is artificial and lacks the same level of clarity.

We suggest you consider the following actions to improve your plan:

1. Resolving the North Representation Issue: To rectify the issue of inadequate representation in the northern areas of Tandridge, we recommend creating two additional single-member wards. These new wards would be designated as Tatsfield and Chaldon, ensuring that the residents in these regions have dedicated councillors who can effectively address their specific needs and concerns of these villages with unique character.
2. Addressing negative variance in Southern Wards: To achieve better balance and electoral equality in the southern wards, specifically Limpsfield & Tatsfield (without Tatsfield), Lingfield & Crowhurst, and Oxted North, we propose transforming these wards into two-member wards (these wards have the most negative variances from average). This adjustment would provide a fair and proportional representation of residents' interests in the north and whilst ensuring effective governance in these areas to the south. It would also enable the creation of the Tatsfield, Woldingham and Chaldon single member wards.
3. Returning Warlingham East & Chelsham & Farleigh to a Three-Member Ward: Considering the community's needs and interests, we recommend returning Warlingham East & Chelsham & Farleigh to being a three-member ward. This adjustment would ensure comprehensive representation for the residents. Having two members, this ward has a significantly high variance in comparison to the rest of the district.
4. Addressing Boundary Concerns in Whyteleafe and Caterham Valley: We acknowledge the concerns regarding boundary discrepancies in Whyteleafe and in Caterham Valley. Stafford Road and adjacent roads must form part of the Caterham Valley Ward. Godstone Road North and adjacent roads must form part of Whyteleafe along with Whyteleafe Recreation Ground.
5. The boundary dividing the two Warlingham wards needs to be a clearly definable route along the Limpsfield Road.
6. Balancing the size of Whyteleafe and Portley Wards: To achieve a balanced electorate per councillor ratio, we suggest redistributing some of the roads in Portley to the newly proposed Westway (without Chaldon) ward. This adjustment would ensure a more equitable distribution of the population and allow councillors to better address the needs of both Whyteleafe and Portley residents. Buxton Lane would be a sensible boundary. Additionally Stuart Road and Succumbs Hill could transfer to Warlingham as many residents in these roads consider themselves as Warlingham rather than Whyteleafe residents.
7. Balancing the size of the new Caterham Valley ward, roads to the south of Harestone Valley road including Weald Way, Dome Hill Park, Harestone Lane, Underwood Road and Dunedin Drive could be transferred either to Godstone or to Queens Park/Chaldon.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and we look forward to your response and further discussions.

Sincerely,

Tandridge District Council Liberal Democrat Group

# Tandridge

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## Comment text:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached the response to the Boundary Commission's proposals for Tandridge District Council from the Liberal Democrat Group of Councillors.

Kind regards

Cllr David Lee  
Secretary Tandridge Liberal Democrat Group

## Attached Documents:

- TDC Lb Dem Group Boundary Response to consultation.docx