

**From:** Lesley Fletcher <clerk@ockleypc.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 16 May 2022 16:46  
**To:** reviews  
**Subject:** Boundary Review Mole Valley, Surrey  
**Attachments:** locgovbouncommmay22.pdf

**Categories:**  Submissions

Dear Sir  
Please find attached letter regarding the above boundary review.  
With regards

Lesley Fletcher  
Clerk  
Ockley Parish Council

**OCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
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16 May 2022

Review Officer (Mole Valley)  
LGBCE  
PO Box 133  
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NE24 9FE  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

Dear Sir

We wish to object to the proposals for the boundary review as set out in the draft recommendations of March 2022.

We do not see any reason to change the current arrangements which work very well for our parish for the following reasons.

- (a) Our ward of Okewood consists of the villages of Ockley, Okewood Hill, Walliswood and Forest Green. This area is a tight knit community sharing many similar matters of everyday life.
- (b) We have just one councillor who represents our residents and because the area is comparatively small, she is able to understand the issues that concern us.
- (c) The residents know exactly who to contact if they want to speak to their councillor.

These characteristics would all be lost under the proposed new arrangements.

- (d) The new “ward” would stretch all the way from Okewood up to Great Bookham. Residents in Okewood have little or no contact with much of the northern part of this proposed new ward.
- (e) There would be three councillors supposedly representing the area and it seems inconceivable that proper representation could be achieved. How would their responsibilities be shared out. Would we have one councillor looking after say the southern part of the new ward or would all three look after the whole area.
- (f) If those residents in the southern part of the ward voted for a candidate from one political party then what happens if an issue is dealt with by a councillor representing a different political party.

- (g) If a resident took issue with one councillor how could they be sure that that councillor would take that issue forward or would it be passed to another councillor. It seems a recipe for passing the buck.

It appears to us that the process of the boundary review is to make changes for changes sake. The main considerations are stated to be:

- (a) Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- (b) Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- (c) Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

It is our contention that the second of these considerations has, in the case of Okewood failed completely. We have a real sense of community identity in Okewood which is not shared with communities further north. If there has to be some consolidation of wards then the obvious choice would be to combine Ockley and Capel. These two communities share numerous services such as GP surgeries, shops, school and post offices as well as having a combined ecclesiastical parish.

We wonder if those that made these recommendations made a serious study of the neighbourhoods in Mole Valley. Whilst we understand they visited the area it is not clear whether they spoke to residents to understand the links between communities. Had they done so they would perhaps have understood that their recommendations make little sense.

We are also concerned that the views of any of the political parties should have been taken into account or referred to in the recommendations. This process, if required at all, should be completely apolitical.

Finally, we believe that this proposal will add to the cost of servicing the new ward scheme, particularly as a result of the requirement to hold a vote every year in each ward. The costs of individual councillors will also increase due to the much larger distances they will have to cover when visiting their wards. This increase in expenditure will presumably fall on residents as an increase in Council Tax at a time of high inflation. We believe that residents would expect that any proposals for boundary changes should have as its key objective a significant reduction in the costs of administration.

Yours faithfully

Lesley Fletcher  
Clerk  
for Ockley Parish Council