

Review Officer (Tandridge)
LGBCE
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c/o Warlingham Community Library
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5 July 2023

Dear LGBCE

Warlingham Parish Council - response to draft recommendations for Tandridge District Council ward boundaries

Warlingham Parish Council has reviewed the draft recommendations on ward boundaries and its response is as set out below.

Principles

The Council notes and supports the principles that wards should reflect community identity, support effective and convenient local government and have strong, clearly identifiable boundaries.

It does not believe that the Commission's proposals sufficiently respect these principles as outlined below.

Proposed new Warlingham West ward

The Council is wholly opposed to the inclusion of the area west of the railway line and north of the Godstone/Hillbury Road roundabout in Warlingham West. This area is indisputably part of Whyteleafe and residents there in no way consider themselves to be part of Warlingham. In addition, the type of housing, demography and topography are consistent with the rest of Whyteleafe and very different to the hilly topography and large houses of Warlingham West. Also, the railway line forms a very strong, identifiable boundary.

However, the proposal to move the bottom parts of Hillbury and Westhall Roads and other houses east of the railway line into Warlingham West is acceptable, as community identity there is blurred and it is the Council's view that the majority in that area identify with Warlingham rather than Whyteleafe. Also, as above, the natural boundary is the railway line, which is why the ecclesiastical parish boundary uses it. If this move is made, then Stuart Road, the bottom of Westview and all other houses east of the railway line in that area, that are currently in Whyteleafe ward, should logically also be moved into Warlingham West.

In the interests of "effective and convenient local government", and to avoid much confusion, the areas that are moved into West should also be moved into Warlingham Parish as soon as possible.

Proposed new Warlingham East, Chelsham and Farleigh ward

The Council is opposed to the move of roads to the east of Limpsfield Road and north of Warlingham Green into the West ward. The strong, identifiable boundary in this area is the Limpsfield Road, and the proposed new boundary, which wiggles around at the end of various roads and divides Crewes Lane, is very weak and artificial.

The area proposed to be moved has a similar flat topography and demography to the rest of East, composed as it is of small houses and flats. This is in contrast to West's generally hilly terrain and large houses. The proposal would also separate All Saints Church, Warlingham Sports Club and Hamsey Green Recreation Ground from all the houses next to them, contrary to the principle of effective local government.

Warlingham East, Chelsham and Farleigh ward should remain as it is, as we proposed in our original submission (dated 15th March 2023).

Other Points

It is the Council's view that the recommendations for Warlingham have been compromised by the proposals for changes in other areas and the surprise proposal to keep Woldingham separate, which is contrary to previous advice and inconsistent with what is proposed for the rest of the District. Whilst the Council is not opposed to Woldingham remaining a separate ward, it believes that the same logic that has been applied for Woldingham also applies to Tatsfield and Chaldon, which are similarly distinct. Keeping them as one member wards would address the Commission's difficulties with Caterham and Whyteleafe allowing six two member wards to become four three member wards.

The Council also notes with concern that the overall proposal results in the under-representation of the whole of the North of the District and the over-representation of the South, moving one (and effectively two because of the impact of uniting Limpsfield and Tatsfield) councillor from North to South. This would have unfortunate consequences for the balance between the two parts of the District, which is especially important given the current pressure on the North for more housing. Again, this could be resolved by keeping Chaldon and Tatsfield separate.

Yours faithfully

Simon Bold
Clerk, for and on behalf of, Warlingham Parish Council