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From: O'Connell, Lucy <Lucy.O'Connell@molevalley.gov.uk>
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To: reviews
Cc: Rutherford, Tom
Subject: Mole Valley District Council - Response to the LGBCE Draft Recommendations
Attachments: MVDC Response to draft recommendations - Final Submisison.pdf

Categories: Submissions, Simon

Dear Sirs

Please find attached the response from MVDC to the LGBCE's consultation on its draft recommendations for the electoral review of Mole Valley.

As detailed in the response, given the importance of this review to the communities throughout Mole Valley, the Council urges the LGBCE to give careful consideration to the views of the community directly expressed within their own submissions.

Yours faithfully
Lucy

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Mole Valley District Council

Electoral Review

Stage Two – Response to the LGBCE Draft Recommendations

Methodology

This submission was prepared by a Cabinet Working Group, comprising five councillors (3 Liberal Democrats, 1 Conservative, 1 Independent).

The response was considered by Cabinet, who in turn recommended its submission to Council.

Council met to approve the submission on 23rd May 2022.

In drafting this response, the Working Group paid particular consideration to the questions posed by the LGBCE in its draft recommendations.

All members (prior to the Local Elections in May 2022) were given the opportunity to comment on the draft recommendations through a member survey; a copy of the responses is appended at Annex A.

In considering each of the proposed new ward arrangements members were asked to consider the need for

- improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents
- ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity and
- providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

As the Working Group's work was largely undertaken during the election period, there was no formal opportunity to consult parish councils and residents groups, although regard was had to previous consultation responses. The Working Group urges the LGBCE to give careful consideration to the views of the community, especially on the issues highlighted below.

Ashtead North and Ashtead South

There was general support for the external boundary of the combined Ashtead wards and the majority of members felt that Ermyn Way was best kept within an Ashtead ward as residents saw themselves as part of the Ashtead community. It was recognised that this would place both Ashtead wards at the higher end of the acceptable elector tolerance, but this was considered preferable.

It was felt that the proposed boundary around the Woodfield Lane and Cray Avenue area should be amended to ensure that all residents of Cray Avenue remained, as they are now, in one ward. This would have a negligible impact on the proposed number of electors within the two wards.

When looking at the names for the two wards, members expressed a desire that the existing ward names be retained in some form as these would have far greater synergies with the communities they represented.

Suggestions for alternative wards names were

- Ashtead North – Ashtead Lanes and Common
- Ashtead South – Ashtead Park

Leatherhead North and Leatherhead South

There was some support for retaining the current ward names of North and South, although a number of alternatives were suggested, especially for Leatherhead North. The LGBCE is encouraged to

consider local community views.

It was suggested that the boundary be adjusted to ensure that the boundary line did not split Copthorne Road.

Eastwick Park, Fetcham and the Bookhams

Most members considered that the rural area to the south of the A246 should remain within Fetcham and therefore be placed within the proposed Fetcham ward.

There were a range of concerns raised about the suggested boundaries between the proposed wards. In particular, members were concerned that large parts of Fetcham would no longer be in a ward named Fetcham, and that the proposed boundaries would cut across the boundary between two well-established residents associations. The proposed Eastwick Park name for Bookham East ward was also controversial, and the LGBCE is encouraged to consider local community views.

There was support to retain the whole of Bell Lane within Fetcham and it was suggested that The Glade (including Woodside) could be included in the proposed Eastwick Park ward. However, there was no consensus as to how the boundary could be adapted while still achieving electoral equality, as all the residents affected would regard themselves as living in Fetcham.

Brockham and Box Hill

Members expressed a preference to retain the current boundaries and have one member for Box Hill and Headley and two for Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland.

It was recognised that the proposed ward represented the best three-member alternative. However, members considered that retaining the current split would better reflect community identities and interests, and secure more effective and convenient local government due to the large number of parish councils involved, while also providing good electoral equality.

Concerns were expressed that the proposed ward name was not reflective of the five communities represented. One suggestion for an alternative was North East Rural. The Working Group understands that the relevant parish councils are liaising regarding potential names. The Working Group believes it is appropriate for local communities to have the strongest say. However, there would be some merit in adopting a consistent approach towards the naming of the large rural wards.

Dorking North and Dorking South

Two proposals have been received regarding minor changes to the boundaries in this area.

The first related to the properties on the Westcott and Dorking North boundary in the Milton Heath area. The draft recommendations from the LGBCE included these properties within the proposed Dorking North ward, but it was suggested that they be transferred to the new Leith Hill ward. Amongst these few houses, there is a working farm and it make sense to have a working farm in the rural proposed Leith Hill ward (which has many farms) as opposed to being in the urban town Dorking North ward (which has no other farms).

It is suggested that the LGBCE amend its the recommended boundary line between the proposed wards of Dorking North and Leith Hill to ensure these properties sit within one ward within the rural area. Our proposed boundary line, shown in pink on the map below (figure one) also ensures that the properties at Milton Heath House Milton Heath Lodge are within the same ward as the properties within Milton Heath which are south of the A25 (Bracken House and Milton Brook Cottage).

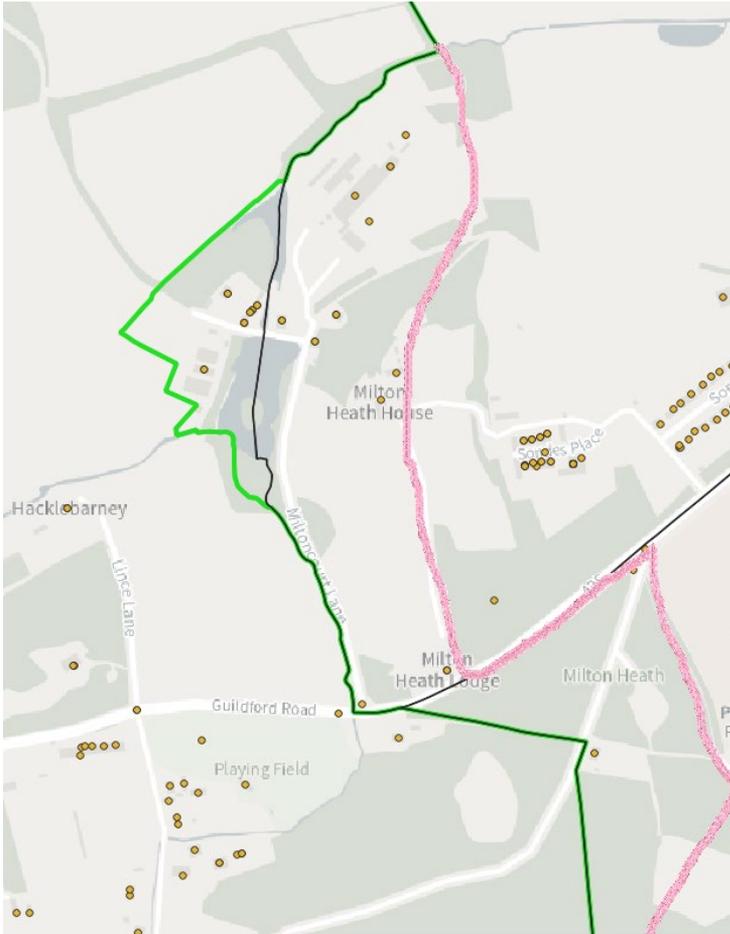


Figure 1- MVDC alternative ward boundary proposal

The second proposal related to the placement of Bradley Lane. This is currently part of the Pixham polling district which the draft recommendations place within Dorking North. It was suggested that the boundary line be adjusted to ensure that Bradley Lane is moved to the proposed Leith Hill ward (approx. 6 properties). The boundary line could follow the edge of the southern boundary to Denbies Vineyard to ensure that the Denbies site sits within one ward.

Additionally, it is suggested that the property 'Ormesdale' in Coldharbour Lane, Dorking be moved from the proposed Dorking North Ward into the proposed Dorking South Ward. This could be achieved by running the ward boundary along the northern boundary of the property to Coldharbour Lane as opposed to the western boundary.



Figure 2- MVDC alternative ward boundary proposal

Given the proposed changes to the boundaries, some felt that the traditional North and South ward names were no longer fitting as parts of the southern ward were now geographically above parts of the northern areas.

Alternative suggestions for ward names, based around the main green space for each ward were

- Dorking Meadowbank (for the northern ward)
- Dorking Cotmandene (for the southern ward).

Holmwoods and Beare Green

Whilst there was general support for bringing the Holmwoods and Beare Green together, concerns were expressed about the inclusion of Coldharbour within the proposed ward. It was noted that, despite it being a parish ward of Capel, along with Beare Green, there was relatively limited community connection.

Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood

Members expressed a preference to retain the current boundaries and have one member for Charlwood and two for Capel, Leigh and Newdigate.

It was noted that this option had been considered and dismissed by the LGBCE in its draft recommendations. However, members considered that retaining the current split would better reflect community identities and interests, and secure more effective and convenient local government due to the large number of parish councils involved, while also providing good electoral equality.

It was noted that there was little option to do anything within the warded area due to the parish boundaries.

Leith Hill

Members share the LGBCE's concerns regarding the geographical size of the proposed Leith Hill ward, and its ambition to find an acceptable segmentation involving smaller wards.

Within the Working Group a number of alternative options were discussed. However, there was not a clear consensus as to where meaningful boundary lines were best placed to create such wards and it was acknowledged any proposal would impact on parish boundaries.

The Working Group considered it was important not to impose an artificial division of communities, and that the LGBCE should consider carefully the responses of parish councils and the local community.

Additionally as referenced above there was discussion as to whether the village of Coldharbour was a better fit with the communities within Leith Hill. However, it was acknowledged that this would increase the size of an already large ward, and add another parish council to those that ward members would need to liaise with.

Other Considerations

Geographical

As indicated in the Council's response to the initial warding pattern consultation, members reiterated concerns that the size of three-member wards in the rural areas would be an unattractive proposition for prospective councillors. Having now seen the LGBCE proposals, these concerns remain, given the lack of direct road networks between some of the proposed wards, poor public transportation links, streetlights or natural connection across the land, about the ability to secure effective and convenient local government. A round trip of the Leith Hill ward equated to approximately 250 miles.

These issues could be lessened by the creation of a few wards of different sizes. As the LGBCE will see from the responses to our Member Survey (Annex A), there was a strong view that in many areas within Mole Valley the communities would be best served in smaller wards with fewer councillors.

Ward Names

There was much discussion about possible ward names in the southern rural wards and it was suggested that there should be a degree of consistency in the approach to naming wards. For example, if the Brockham and Box Hill ward were to be called Rural North East, Capel, Leigh, Newdigate and Charlwood could be called Rural South East, and Leith Hill called Rural West.

However, it was also noted that these names had little synergy with the local communities and could be easily confused, especially as these would be a significant departure from the current ward names.

Annex A

Responses to the Member Survey on the Draft LGBCE Recommendations

Ashtead North and Ashtead South

1. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 43 - *"We would particularly welcome further evidence from residents of the Ermyn Way area as to whether they consider that their community identity lies towards Leatherhead, or within Ashtead."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- While KT22 post code for Ermyn Way is a possible identifier for residents, the residents of Ermyn Way were part of the Ashtead NDP geographic area - which is evidence the officers and councillors thought about this before and concluded this area would be sensible to be within the Ashtead NDP area and was a natural border for the administering of CIL funds. Collectively they benefit from the Ashtead locality of CIL funded activity because they live in close proximity- this doesn't mean they shouldn't call themselves Leatherhead residents at the same time- it's just they are Leatherhead residents within an Ashtead ward. The two things are different. One is identity- one is for administrative and electoral purposes.
- I note that the LGBCE recommendations appear to place the convenience of boundaries above electoral equality.
- The majority of residents would consider this to be part of Ashtead.
- As an Ashtead Councillor there is never any thought from residents in the area mention that they are not part of the Ashtead community and also for local government, although there is sometimes confusion because of the historical post code arrangements. (This type of post code confusion historically exists in north Surrey and local districts in southern Greater London and should not be an excuse to change a local recognised ward or subdistrict.)
Any new developments are only a small proportion. The M25, with the associated green corridor, forms a perfect dividing line between the wards of Ashtead and Leatherhead. This is already recognised by the Inspector.
- No - we need to find a way to access these residents directly.

2. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 45 - *"welcome further evidence as to whether retaining some of the existing names, such as Ashtead Common and Ashtead Park, might better reflect community identity. We retain an open mind on both the names and boundaries of our proposed Ashtead North and Ashtead South wards."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- Park and Common are very traditional names and should be retained. The idea that Ashtead should be North and South has never entered the lexicon of residents. Sometimes I've noticed on road signs 'Lower Ashtead' (referring to business parks I think) but never 'Higher Ashtead' so that doesn't work. North and South sounds urban and not compatible with a village. I personally don't agree with 3 Councillor wards and see far greater benefits and flexibility with 1 Councillor wards in an all out election - for stability and effectiveness.
- Ashtead North and Ashtead South are artificial names and have no local significance

or definition - both have areas further South and North of each other respectively, so to adopt those names is not precise and is likely to lead to confusion. I do not support those names, and would propose that Ashtead North is called "Ashtead Lanes and Common". The Lanes is a well-known area of Ashtead, stretching from Harriotts Lane to Oakfield Lane, and so would help retain a sense of local community to the new ward. I had thought initially of the ward being called 'Ashtead Common & Lanes', to retain the current ward name to a greater degree, but the name 'Ashtead Lanes and Common' flows more readily when spoken.

For 'Ashtead South', I would propose that "Ashtead Park" is retained. The new/additional area between the A24 and Craddocks Avenue (carved out of the existing Ashtead Village Ward) has ready access to Ashtead Park (the parkland, rather than the named ward itself), indeed much better access than much of the current Ashtead Park Ward which is closer to the M25 motorway. Living in this part of Village Ward myself, I and many residents regularly cross the A24, now easily at the new light controlled crossing, and walk around Ashtead Park. So, calling the new proposed Ward 'Ashtead Park' would be a natural progression. It would also benefit the entire population of the existing 'Ashtead Park' ward who, in name at least, would have no change.

- existing names should remain
- The use of "north" and "south" shows no imagination from a group who have no representation in Ashtead. I agree with the inspector that the community identities should be retained with the use of say "Ashtead Common" or perhaps better "Ashtead Lanes and Common" in the northern revised ward, plus retain "Ashtead Park" in the southern revised ward.
- With so many changes the retention of current ward names will be a positive.

3. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- To better reflect a defined boundary between the two Ashtead wards, I think that the boundary in the Woodfield Lane/Cray Avenue area should be amended. The area between Woodfield Lane and Cray Avenue currently shown as a small part of 'Ashtead North' should be moved from 'Ashtead North' to 'Ashtead South'. In this way, Craddocks Avenue will continue (as now) to provide the firm ward boundary and likewise residents in Cray Avenue would (as now) all be in the same ward. It would also to some degree equal up the populations in both wards as the proposed 'Ashtead North' currently has more than 'Ashtead South'.

Leatherhead North and Leatherhead South

4. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 49 - *"We propose a boundary following Copthorne Road and the A245, with both Leatherhead wards having 7% fewer electors than average across the district. We would be particularly interested in further evidence as to whether this adequately reflects community identities in this area."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- If the objective is 'community identities' then single councillor wards would have been a better choice. The only reason we have 3 councillor wards (it seems to me), is to encourage people to vote every year. Nothing to do with identities (because 3 member wards in MVDC create extremely large rural areas) and nothing to do with effective administration.
- Support
- I note that the LGBCE has decided to prioritise the use of the M25 as a boundary over achieving better electoral equality between Leatherhead and Ashted.
- I think it is wrong to have the boundary line leaving the town centre entirely within Leatherhead South and the town centre boundary should run along the line of the High Street. Similarly, I have concerns that the proposed changes will leave the bulk of the new development in the town centre in Leatherhead South, while Leatherhead North retains the more socially deprived areas, whilst losing some the 'balancing' areas which are currently in place, such as Copthorne Road, Upper Fairfield Road, Park Rise etc. I am concerned that this will leave Leatherhead North feeling like the 'poor' party and may result in residents feeling disenfranchised and creating a divide between 'them' and 'us'.
- Cutting down Copthorne Road doesn't seem right.

5. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- The proposed boundary between Leatherhead North & South is unsatisfactory in splitting Copthorne Road - a residential street. A better option would be to follow the railway line from the South-West, up to the Kingston Road, then go along Kingston Rd to the Plough Roundabout and follow the back of the gardens to the West of Kingscroft Rd, before joining the proposed boundary at the junction of Copthorne Rd & ST Johns Avenue. This would be less divisive in its impact on residents of Copthorne Rd
- At the very least, I would propose running the boundary along St John's Avenue, Upper Fairfield Road and Bull Hill. While this does not address the issue of the High Street, it at least keeps more social diversity within the Ward and keep the boundary closer to the Town Centre.
- The whole of the Leith Hill boundary line is 'not quite right'. This Ward has been decided exclusively on a geographic basis, with no thought whatsoever as to the connection between the separate communities. There is no connection in any way, for instance between Mickleham, Westhumble and Westcott and the areas contained by

the boundary in the north of this Ward have affinity with Leatherhead.

- I feel this is too small compared to other areas and that consideration should be made to put Mickleham into Leatherhead and adjust the central split in Leatherhead to balance out the population and make it nearer the current North South split.

Eastwick Park, Fetcham and the Bookhams

6. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 54 – *"Re southern rural section of Fetcham Ward: we retain an open mind and would be particularly interested in further evidence regarding whether the rural area south of the A246 should be placed in Fetcham or Eastwick Park ward. The relatively small number of electors means that the implications for electoral equality are negligible."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- The rural area should be in Eastwick Park as a quasi Bookham area, this rural area is not part of Fetcham. Otherwise Bookham Common would not be in a Bookham Ward, which feels very odd.
- should be in Eastwick Park Road (which is not a name that residents will identify with)
- No change
- I think this should stay with Fetcham.
- Retain in the Fetcham Ward

7. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 55 - *"We welcome any further evidence regarding the wards of Eastwick Park, Fetcham and The Bookhams, and whether our proposed wards reflect our statutory criteria."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- The demand of 3 member wards creates this unwanted dilemmas.
- The Council should have elected to go for single member wards and all out elections on a 4 year cycle, it would be cost effective and allow for more community based representation. Mole Valley as an urban and rural council has failed to provide a satisfactory boundary on the 1/3 election 3 member ward basis. The urban communities are being broken as per Eastwick Park, Fetcham and Bookham, the rural boundaries are too big and no communities are linked.
- The LGBCE proposals cut across the recognised boundary between Bookham and Fetcham, and will cause great difficulty for councillors in working with the existing residents associations. They do not reflect the identities and interests of the separate communities of Bookham and Fetcham. They also cut across the boundaries of the existing NDP. The Bookham-Fetcham boundary should be retained as it is to meet the statutory criteria. The best fit to the statutory criteria is to retain two 2-member wards in Fetcham. To secure electoral equality, I suggest Bookham South becomes a 2-member ward, with the western section of Little Bookham added to Bookham North to create a viable 3-member ward.
- Fetcham residents are very unhappy to see so much of their area excluded from the proposed Fetcham ward. While an East-West split of the Bookham wards, and a neutral name like Eastwick Park, mitigates the inconvenience to some extent, it remains problematic that so much of Fetcham is no longer in a Fetcham ward. The LGBCE comment "there does not appear to be a clear distinction between the communities" is incorrect.
- The proposed geographical/name changes are unnecessary and unwelcome. Changing the boundary from a North/South to an East/West is to be frank a waste of

everyone's time. Not a single resident I have spoken to during the 2022 local election campaign considers they live in Eastwick Park, Bookham East or West. All consider they live in Bookham North, South Little or Great Bookham.

- Eastwick Park cannot be considered as a Ward. People in The Bookhams and the Bookham part of Eastwick Ward all consider themselves to be The Bookhams. It is a proud, well contained village which is currently served well as Bookham North and Bookham South. I would imagine that the community of Fetcham would not take kindly to being in Eastwick (which is a Bookham historical name).
- At the cross party consultation Fetcham councillors expressed a strong view that the residents to the west of the Ridgeway and around the Bell Lane roundabout feel very much part of the Fetcham community - associated with Fetcham Park House and St Mary's Church. A better boundary to accommodate this would be the Lower Road up to Ashwood Park and Keswick Road with dwellings off Highlands/Church Close/Ridgelands to remain in Fetcham. And perhaps extend the Bookhams ward north to the M25 to include the whole of Bookham Common and Bookham Lodge to balance the numbers.

8. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- While ingenious, the creation of the proposed Eastwick ward sadly breaks up the defined Bookham and Fetcham areas and the local communities will no doubt be saddened that this is the social price to be paid (on top of the annual financial cost) in order to follow a groups' desire to retain elections by thirds.
- The boundaries in Fetcham are wrong. To use the Ridgeway as a boundary is dividing a community. St Mary's church is on one side of the Ridgeway and all roads on both sides of the Ridgeway consider themselves to be Fetcham. This is the older and historic village and if there is to be a boundary change, it should be in the newer areas along Copperfields/ The Glade, who already feel part of Bookham. The boundary for Fetcham is therefore completely wrong and should be reconsidered
- I am content with the boundaries of the proposed new Bookham ward
- The homes in Bell Lane should be included in Fetcham ward, not Eastwick Park, and the homes in the rural area off Cobham ward should be included in Fetcham ward, not The Bookhams. In exchange, I would suggest that the whole of The Glade including Woodside should be included in the new Eastwick Park ward.

Brockham and Box Hill

9. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 60 - *"We propose to merge the existing wards of Brockham, Betchworth & Buckland and Box Hill & Headley to create a three- member ward with good electoral equality. Our proposed ward includes the parishes of Brockham, Betchworth, Buckland, Headley, the unparished area of Box Hill, and a small unparished area to the north of Headley."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- It isn't right. single member wards have intrinsic community identity
- Support
- I welcome the proposed amendment to the boundary with Leatherhead South to ensure that any residential development at Headley Court is within a single ward.

Since the ward is not directly connected by road (ie the joining road goes through Reigate & Banstead), an argument could be made for the retention of a 2-member ward and single-member ward. This would reduce the size of a large ward for Councillors to cover and better reflect the community interests over the wish to apply 3-member wards everywhere.

- I think we should keep the existing wards separate. The supposed desirability of wards numbers being divisible by three is far less important than the need to reflect community identities and interests and the need to make the arrangements manageable, especially in rural areas.
- Retain the existing split.
- A significantly larger geography for any councillor to cover from a journey time (climate change/carbon emissions). Also to propose any councillor will now have to attend four parish council meetings/one residents meetings per month is unworkable. The quality of care and support any councillor will be able to offer any resident or organisation/body will significantly reduce.
- Up to the residents and their representatives.
- I think Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland merging with Box Hill and Headley is probably the best we can expect so I'd have to go with that as it can't stay as it is now.

10. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 61- *"We would be particularly interested in further evidence as to the name of this ward. As part of our draft recommendations, we propose to name it Brockham & Box Hill after the largest two settlements, but we retain an open mind as to whether a longer name might be more inclusive of other settlements, or whether a name that attempted to include every settlement within our proposed ward might be too long for convenient use."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- The dilemma of ward names is only created because some outside body LGBCE says the local communities can't have what they always have had and has worked for decades. Somehow, so desk person from a remote office with no affinity for how things have worked in the past has decided something completely contrary to tradition with no democratic mandate. Madness.

- propose "Brockham, Betchworth and Box Hill"- the new 3Bs....
- I haven't yet heard from residents but would consider a name such as "Mole Valley North-East Villages" as more inclusive - especially if it were part of a naming pattern for similar rural wards

11. The BRWG would be interested to know if members have any further comments relating to the proposed ward.

- The Parish Council boundaries limit boundary choices. With 5 Parish/Neighbourhood Councils to attend, this will place quite a load on Councillors

12. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- A case could be made for the boundary with Leatherhead South being shifted to follow the Roman Road of Stane Street which would form a more defensible boundary. However any transfer of properties out of Leatherhead would aggravate its electoral over-representation

Dorking North and Dorking South

13. Whist there were no specific questions posed by the LGBCE, it would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- **Proposal 1**

I would suggest that four houses are moved from the proposed Dorking North ward to the new ward which includes Westcott: The Lodge - Milton Court, Milton Heath Lodge, and New Cottage north of the Westcott Road and Bracken Lodge south of the Westcott Road.

These four homes are not part of urban Dorking but part of the Milton Court / Milton Heath Estate. North of the Westcott Road I would suggest that the boundary runs along the old entrance road to Milton Heath House (and include the main house which is now offices) just to the east of Milton Heath Lodge and south of the Westcott Road along the Priory School boundary.

This straightens the boundary, puts the Milton Court Farm, Milton Brook Cottage, Milton Heath Lodge and Milton Heath House all in the same ward (the connection is in the name and all face the same issues) and unites the Milton Heath area in a single ward.

- **Proposal 2**

Bradley Lane on the Debbie's Vinyard is part of the current Pixham polling district and will become part of Dorking North. This area is a "panhandle" to the rest of this polling district and it will be best if these six rural properties remained in a rural ward and were placed in the Westhumble polling district.

I would suggest that the ward boundary runs down the A24 and along the southern edge of the vinyard so that the whole vinyard was in the ward which includes Westhumble.

(3) The A24 would provide firm boundaries.

Given the general changes to wards and ward names, perhaps the two Dorking Wards need new names to reflect the 'new start' across the District generally - and again, there are large areas of 'Dorking North' which are further South than parts of 'Dorking South'. So I suggest "Dorking Meadowbank" for Dorking North and 'Dorking Cotmandene' for Dorking South. Both provide well known, established, physical and social landmarks for residents to have affinity with their respective wards.

- In respect of the boundaries, although it made sense to put the southern one on the A24, this does take in a big chunk of the previous Holmwood Ward into the Dorking area and creates a boundary which is not near the old one in Dorking.
- I believe that there is a potential for keeping Rough Rew in the Holmwoods. The Holmwood Ward with Beare Green would then be about right in terms of elector numbers should Coldharbour be removed. This also enables the Dorking boundary to move nearer to the current Dorking boundary.

Holmwoods and Beare Green

14. Whilst there were no specific questions posed by the LGBCE, it would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- I do not believe that the community of Coldharbour fits well into this proposed ward with no road link.
- Coldharbour should be included in Leith Hill
- Coldharbour should not be with Beare Green, it has been with Leith Hill for 20 years without problems. There is no advantage of Coldharbour and Beare Green being merged.

They are different types of community (Coldharbour is rural, Beare Green more suburban) they have different problems.

Coldharbour is spread out houses across the APNB, it is 3 miles to get to it through other proposed wards and has no direct road link.

They are house outliers in Anstie Lane in both Beare Green Ward and Holmwood, but as they are within the Parish Boundaries they cannot be moved into the Hills area in which they naturally sit.

Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood

15. The BRWG noted the comments of the LGBCE that, based on the evidence received, it was 'not currently persuaded that a departure from a uniform pattern of wards would be justified. We have therefore not adopted the proposal of Charlwood Parish Council for a single-member ward in this area.' (**LGBCE Draft Recommendations**- Para 74).

The Working Group would welcome further comments from Members on the proposed ward.

- support the proposal
- this is too big and has no community basis
- I think these wards should be kept separate. See my comments on Brockham and Box Hill
- retain the existing split
- A significantly larger geography for any councillor to cover from a journey time perspective (climate change/carbon emissions). Also to propose any councillor will now have to attend four parish council meetings per month is unworkable. The quality of care and support any councillor will be able to offer any resident or organisation/body will significantly reduce.
- The current Capel, Leigh and Newdigate Ward is large enough geographically. They are three very different villages. To add Charlwood just compounds the problems - even with another councillor.

16. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

No comments received in response to this question.

Leith Hill

In its draft recommendations the LGBCE made a number of observations about the proposed Leith Hill Ward;

- Para 83 – *"We are aware that we are proposing a ward which is relatively large geographically."*
- Para 85 – *"We note that any proposal to split this ward would still result in relatively large wards."*

17. In light of the LGBCE comments, the Working Group is keen to hear from members as to whether this ward would be more effective as

- one ward with 3 members
- two wards; one with 2 members and the other with 1 member
- three wards with 1 member each.

If you have an alternative suggestion to the LGBCE draft recommendation please provide further details including possible ward boundaries and community links.

Please note -

Parish boundaries cannot be altered, but parishes can be warded provided there are at least 100 electors within the ward

- three wards with 1 member
- This proposed ward is very large, as the Boundary Commission states, any division of the area into three or a two with a single Westcott ward will still result in a very large ward or a completely artificial boundary within Abinger Parish between the Parish's north and south wards.

Splitting the ward therefore does not bring any significant benefits and creates issues as not every part of the ward will have elections every year.

If the large ward is to be addressed there has to be a more radical redrawing of the proposed rural ward boundaries.

- The proposal is a very large ward and does not reflect local community areas in practice. Unfortunately the administration did not support the idea of single member wards and this vast artificial ward is the natural consequence of that approach.
- this shows that the work to date and boundaries do not work. if the working group was minded to consider 3 wards of 1 members, it should revert to that over the whole of Mole Valley and 4 year elections
- I suggest three 1-member wards would best meet the statutory criteria.
- We should propose a split if we can.
- Three Wards with one member each. As I have already said there is little affinity between communities in this enormous proposed Ward.
- Called Surrey Hills South, Central and North. South should include Coldharbour and probably the adjacent Abinger PC ward – with the other being in central.

The rest of the proposed ward could be one ward (Surrey Hills) or split into two – Surrey Hills Central and North. Split probably as mostly current Westcott, Leith Hill plus Westhumble.

My preference is to make a one Member ward – Surrey Hills and a two Member ward – Surrey Hills South.

18. LGBCE Draft Recommendations - Para 86 – *"As well as further evidence as to potential boundaries, we would welcome further evidence as to a potential name for this ward. As part of our draft recommendations, we propose using the name of Leith Hill, as the dominating geographical feature, but would welcome views on any potential names that strike a balance between including as many communities as possible and being short enough for convenient use."*

Do you have any comments on the above?

- Western Villages
- I note the different criteria used here than in Brockham & Box Hill. The more Northerly settlements in this ward already face geographic separation from this large ward and do not associate with Leith Hill. I would suggest "Mole Valley North West villages" might be more inclusive
- Hopefully we won't have to do this.
- Leith Hill is perfectly acceptable for the southern part of this Ward. Certainly not for the northern part. Norbury Park?

19. The LGBCE would like to know of any areas where the location of the proposed boundary line is 'not quite right' and moving a few properties, would have a negligible impact on elector numbers but be more reflective of the area. For example, a boundary line cuts down the middle of a cul-de-sac.

Please use the free text box below to advise of any minor changes to the proposed boundary lines you would like to be considered, providing as much information as you are able.

- As noted above in the Dorking section, I would propose four homes being transferred from the proposed Dorking North to Westcott and the six homes in Bradley Lane be transferred from the Pixham polling district to Westhumble to place rural properties in a rural ward and to have the historic Milton Heath and Debbie's Estates in a single ward and not split between wards.
- I believe the community of Coldharbour would feel better place within this ward

Ward Names

20. Should you have any suggestions on the proposed ward names not covered elsewhere in this survey, please indicate these below.

- Leatherhead North could be more appropriately named "Leatherhead Patchesham" and Leatherhead South more appropriately named "Leatherhead Thorncroft".

Likewise Dorking North could be more appropriately named "Dorking Meadowbank" and Dorking South more appropriately named "Dorking Cotmandene".

- Leatherhead North has 'Teazel Wood' as a popular nature area to the north, and this name could be incorporated into the ward name. I think it would be popular and provide a break from the sometimes negative connotations that 'Leatherhead North' has.
- The Bookhams and Eastwick Park should be Bookham West and Bookham East - I don't know how the Fetcham element could be included to represent that bit of the proposed Ward. Bookham East and Fetcham West is a bit unwieldy. Maybe Bookham Polesden and Bookham Norbury?
- Capel, Leigh, Newdigate, Charlwood ward should be called Dorking Rural.

Anything else?

21. Please use the space below to provide any further comments on the LGBCE draft recommendations.

- I note that the LGBCE has decided to prioritise the M25 as a boundary over electoral equality (especially across the Ashted/Leatherhead area) and the prioritise enforcing 3-member wards everywhere over stated community preferences for smaller wards in some rural areas. It is not clear to me how these decisions are fully aligned with its charter.
- A higher weighting should be given to the observations and views from the actual local representatives based in wards and subdistricts of Mole Valley, to avoid both political bias and gain coming into play.
- The LGBCE appears to have given priority to the desirability of clear boundaries and wards being divisible by 3, whereas the need to secure electoral equality, reflect community interests and identities, and secure convenient and effective local government appear to have been disregarded in many cases.
- Mole Valley's geographical and population area doesn't lend itself to 13 wards with 3 members each. There are proud individual communities who want to remain that way. Three member wards in the more populated areas will probably work as the distances are less. In the less populated southern areas the large distances are already not helpful to good representation and single member wards are more appreciated by residents - who are the people who matter in all of this!

The current suggestion, not approved by nearly half the current members, is neither good for residents' representation, nor efficient for councillors. It has been decided entirely to facilitate the current 'out in thirds' electoral situation. Mole Valley should have elections every four years, saving money, officer time and serving residents better. The current 'election every year' means that residents are only properly served

for 9 months every year. With the election non-decision making time, officers being taken from their work duties on election duties and new councillors coming in and 'learning the ropes' in April - June we are less than efficient. Administrations' hands are tied because it is possible that there may be less consistency. More Extraordinary Council Meetings need to be held because of this - we do not serve our residents in the best way because of this.