

BOUNDARY MADNESS

THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION has now published its proposals for boundary changes across Havant Borough, which can be seen on <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/hampshire/havant>

This shows the process as a classroom paper exercise, which does not analyse or reflect the reality of the situation on Hayling Island. There are so many things wrong with this proposal that it's difficult to know where to start – but we will. In short, the legal requirements are:

- Each Councillor should represent roughly the same number of voters across the Borough
- New Wards should reflect community identities and interests
- Boundaries should promote effective and convenient Local Government

The first point – to even out the voter-to-Councillor ratio – is the only requirement addressed by combining most of HI with Langstone up to the A27, with Eastoke becoming a separate ward. However, the proposed change would work directly against the second two requirements, and with no consideration of the residents of the 2,300 second (mobile) homes being made.

Partnering HI with Langstone makes no sense as the mainland residents do not shop on HI, nor do they school their children there, or use the primary care facilities. In fact, their use of HI is the same as everyone else in the Borough – for the wonderful leisure activities.

The Commission seems to be taking the view that the A3023 represents a common interest. That is true, but – and it's a big but – the A3023/bridge trunk route has no economic option for expansion, and the area which influences the capacity is the road network of the A27 and Havant, neither of which are included in the proposed Ward. Therefore, this argument is moot.

The proposed HI and Langstone Ward consists mainly of mature housing and farmland, with little growth possible. The adjoining harbours are fully administered by Coastal Partners, Environment Agency, Natural England and the Harbour Boards and Conservancies. For any Councillor looking for an easy life, this would be the Ward to choose.

HI and Langstone share similar risks of flooding through Climate Change, but even here Coastal Partners are working on completely independent strategic defence projects, with no interaction between them. Given the unique constraints and issues governing the HI infrastructure, the Island must be represented by its own dedicated, effective and convenient Local Government.

It makes no sense to destroy the existing Local Government and resident-support structures just to satisfy some perceived statistical imperative. Like the Isle of Wight community, which struggled for many years to achieve an Island-wide political identity, we should insist that HI is treated as an exception to the Boundary Commission's rule – by either maintaining the existing Wards (with appropriate adjustments) or establishing a large Ward with six Councillors (heresy?)

The opportunity for Residents to express their views closes on 18 July 2022. Please send your comments and objections to <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/29986>

