

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regard to the draft recommendations of the Community Governance Review. Specifically, the proposed boundary between the Easthampstead and Wildridings town wards.

As it exists currently, the boundary runs behind the northern side of Rectory Lane, including Friars Keep and the Rectory Row shops. The draft recommendations would see the boundary run down the middle of Rectory Lane, moving the aforementioned areas into Wildridings town ward from Easthampstead.

As one of the town councillors for the Old Bracknell town ward, I am opposed to this change for the following reasons:

- 1) It is well-recognised that ward boundaries should aim to include amenities that are central to the identity of that community. This is especially so in Bracknell, where the different communities were built around a nucleus of a set of local shops. In this case, the Rectory Row shops, whilst serving both communities, are recognised as the Easthampstead shops.

It is fair to assume the current boundary was drawn for precisely that purpose – to ensure the Easthampstead shops were included in a town ward covering Easthampstead. It is therefore hard to state that these shops, a central part of the community, should be moved into a Wildridings town ward.

- 2) Moving a boundary down the middle of a main road is often a necessary but unwelcome change. Residents down Rectory Lane would be split between their representatives, which is not the case currently. This will lead to greater confusion about who people can turn to on the town council when in need. In this instance, moving the boundary down the middle of a main road is not necessary, as the existing boundary serves its purpose and ensures Rectory Lane has a common set of councillors.
- 3) It is a recognised principle in boundary changes that alterations should be avoided unless there is a compelling reason to do so. This is because residents and other authorities value the stability that comes from this. Whilst concerns have been raised that the boundary runs through back-gardens, functionally this must have a limited impact, as whether under the current configuration or the proposed alteration, Easthampstead & Wildridings will exist under the same borough ward come May 2023. On the other hand, the draft recommendations would represent a major break with the existing setup.

For these reasons, the existing division between Easthampstead (Old Bracknell) and Wildridings town wards should be kept, barring minor technical changes to perhaps ensure it follows individual plots of land.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Guy Gillbe  
Old Bracknell, Bracknell Town Council