Further to your Information request FOI64034, please find your question and our response below:

I have been recently researching local government boundaries in England and I appear to have stumbled across an anomaly. I was interested to find a claim in an Ordnance Survey guidance document to its boundary data product (on p19 of this PDF http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/docs/user-guides/boundary-line-user-guide.pdf) which states that:

"The Upper and Middle wards of Windsor Castle do not form part of the district of Windsor and Maidenhead but have been included for the purposes of this dataset."

This would presumably make the relevant parts of the Castle the only part of England not to fall under a local authority area.

However, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England appears to have no knowledge of this, telling me:

"Windsor Castle lies in its entirety in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead... The last electoral review of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead was completed by the Boundary Committee for England in April 2002. As a consequence of that review, Windsor Castle is entirely contained within the electoral ward of Eton and Castle. The reference to the Upper and Middle wards of Windsor Castle in the Ordnance Survey document you referred to is misleading. I understand that the relevant text may be amended when the document is next revised."

However, this does not appear to be the whole story. Since their reply failed to explain in what regard the document was misleading, I then asked Ordnance Survey for further information and they told me:

"I confirm Ordnance Survey does hold information in relation to your request. We hold this information within a publication titled Public Boundaries and Ordnance Survey 1840 – 1980 by J R S Booth MBE. Mr Booth was a former Superintendent of the Boundaries Department of Ordnance Survey and a recognised expert on administrative boundaries. The information states:

**Windsor Castle, Upper and Middle Wards are a misnomer. These 'wards' are nothing to do with local government wards of any kind, consisting of an area of Windsor Castle which is still in essence, not included within a local government place and is probably better described as a 'place'. Originally Windsor Castle was classed as 'extra parochial' (not in any parish or a place for which an overseer could be appointed.) The Acts (including the Extra Parochial Places Act 1857) disposed of all the 'Extra Parochial' places of repute but did not apply to the personal apartments of the Sovereign and their staff in the Upper and Middle Wards of the Castle.**

As Ordnance Survey is not responsible for the Wards in Windsor Castle we do not hold any data other than this, nor do we have any mapping."

While the word 'wards' refers to physical areas of the castle and not local government wards, this information certainly appears to state that this area is (or was) outside any local authority boundary.
Since the Ordnance Survey and LGBCE positions presumably cannot both be correct, I was wondering whether RBWM could shed any light on:

(a) the current administrative status of the Upper and Middle Wards of Windsor Castle; and
(b) if the castle is now a part of Windsor & Maidenhead Borough, any details of when this change occurred (presumably since 1980?), and whether any documentation - including legislation - exists relating to this change; or (c) if the council is unable to help, which body would have responsibility for this issue?

I would be extremely grateful of any information you could provide. I am also contacting the Communities & Local Government department with the same enquiry.

Response: I have been advised that our electoral records show that Windsor Castle is within the boundary of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This is confirmed in documents produced as part of the last electoral review in 2002. My understanding that it has been within the administrative area of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead since 1974 following local government reorganisation.

This concludes your request FOI64034.

If you require translation of the information you have been sent please do not hesitate the contact us.

If you are unhappy with the information we have provided in response to your request please write to:

    Information Management Team Manager
    Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
    Town Hall, St Ives Road
    Maidenhead
    SL6 1RF

or send an e-mail to martin.tubbs@rbwm.gov.uk

We are proud to be one of the leading authorities in England for consistently responding to information requests within the 20 working days set down by statute. Information about our performance and summaries of requests received can be found on our website:

    http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/foi_information_request_statistics.htm

We are keen to hear about your experience with the Information Management Team here at the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and look forward to receiving any comments you have about the way your information request was processed.

Please send any feedback to the Information Management Team Manager either by e-mail martin.tubbs@rbwm.gov.uk or in writing to the address above.

Yours sincerely
Chris Daniels
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