



Essex County Council

Boundary Review Committee

13:00	Tuesday, 23 January 2024	Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
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For information about the meeting please ask for:

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Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

Committee: Boundary Review Committee

Enquiries to: Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: 3)

Councillor Tom Cunningham
Councillor Lewis Barber
Councillor Dave Harris
Councillor Jaymey McIvor
Councillor Stephen Robinson
Councillor Kerry Smith
Councillor Holly Whitbread

Chairman

The Minutes of the meeting of the Boundary Review Committee, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday 27 July 2023

A [YouTube recording](#) of the meeting is to be found online.

Present:

Members of the Committee:

Cllr Tom Cunningham	Chairman
Cllr Lewis Barber	
Cllr Mark Durham	
Cllr Jaymey McIvor	
Cllr Stephen Robinson	
Cllr Kerry Smith	
Cllr Holly Whitbread	

ECC Officers:

Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance
Joanna Boaler	Head of Democracy and Transparency

Present online:

Councillor Dave Harris
Councillor Mark Platt (from 2:15)

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Tom Cunningham, the Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee, welcomed those in attendance.

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that:

- The Membership of the Boundary Review Committee was as shown in the report.
- Apologies from Cllr Pat Reid had been received and that Cllr Dave Harris was joining online to observe and take part in the discussions but would be unable to vote on the recommendations.
- No declarations of interests were made.

2. Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission

Cllr Cunningham as Chairman of the Committee, introduced the work of the Committee and the remit of this particular meeting. He thanked members both present and those who had provided input into the drafting of the submissions for their commitment to Essex making a submission.

He then asked Paul Turner and Joanna Boaler to present the draft submissions as circulated to members and made available on the Council's website.

Basildon: The proposals were presented and discussed and a name change was suggested by Cllr Smith, he suggested that East Wickford and Bowers Gifford should be known as Wickford North East and Bowers Gifford. Members agreed to this suggestion.

Braintree: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Brentwood: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Castle Point: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Chelmsford: The proposals were presented and discussed and a number of changes were suggested by Cllr Robinson. Cllr Robinson suggested a number of changes to the configuration of the boundaries and a name change for one division. Members agreed to rename South Woodham Ferrers division to Woodham Ferrers division. Members rejected the change for boundaries due to the late notice of the change and the deadline that the submission needed to be made. The Chairman reminded members they were able to make their own submissions to the Commission by the deadline of 31 July.

Colchester: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Epping Forest: The proposals were presented and discussed and Cllr McIvor suggested a number of changes, moving five polling districts. The Committee rejected the changes due to the late notice of the changes and the deadline that the submission needed to be made. The Chairman reminded members that they were able to make their own submissions to the Commission.

Harlow: The proposals were presented and discussed, division name changes were suggested by Cllr Smith and it was agreed that these would be reviewed and finalised in consultation with the Chairman. Members agreed this.

Maldon: The proposals were presented and discussed, a division name change was suggested by Cllr Durham, this was to rename Maldon Town to Maldon Town and Heybridge, the Committee agreed this change.

Rochford: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Tendring: The proposals were presented and discussed and the change as circulated in the spreadsheet, but not as presented in the map was agreed. This was to split polling station AA between Clacton North and Clacton West and move polling station BH to Clacton West.

Uttlesford: The proposals were presented and discussed and no amendments were suggested to those previously circulated.

Resolved

That the Committee agreed the 12 submission proposals as presented with minor amendments as above and asked for officers to make the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by the deadline of 31 July 2023.

Members asked their votes to be recorded for the following:

- Cllr Robinson asked his vote to be recorded against for the Chelmsford and Epping Forest district proposals.
- Cllr McIvor asked his vote to be recorded against the Epping Forest proposal.
- Cllr Smith asked for his vote of abstention to be recorded for the Epping Forest proposal.

It was also resolved that Monitoring Officer in Consultation with the Chairman may agree any minor changes to the proposals agreed by the committee.

Next Steps:

The Chairman then asked the Monitoring Officer to set out the next steps, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that ECC officers will make the formal submission before Monday 31 July to the Commission and members are reminded that anyone can make a submission directly.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the Commission will review all submissions, visit the county and make contact with officers, members and individuals as necessary and then draft proposals will be published by the Commission in November for consultation. We will then decide how we will respond to this stage of the consultation and whether to reconvene informally or formally this Committee.

The Chairman and members of the Committee then thanked all members who had supported the process and taken the time to put forward proposals. He then thanked Paul Turner and Joanna Boaler for their work in the previous weeks and

months and he also thanked Louis Yong Yang Yen and Michele Figg for all their work in supporting the process.

Cllr Whitbread then put on record her thanks to the Chairman of the Committee for everything he had done to take forward this work and all members agreed.

The meeting closed at 3:18pm.

Chairman
03/08/2023

Agenda item 3

Report title: Response to Local Government Boundary Commission's Draft Recommendations	
Report to: Boundary Review Committee	
Report author: Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency and Paul Turner Director, Legal and Assurance	
Date: 23 January 2024	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Joanna Boaler email joanna.boaler@essex.gov.uk or Paul Turner email paul.turner@essex.gov.uk	

1. Background and purpose of the report

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) is an independent body established by Parliament in 2010 to undertake local government electoral reviews. An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for the whole local authority. The review looks at the total number of councillors to be elected to the council, known as council size, the names, numbers and boundaries or divisions and the number of councillors to elected to each division.
- 1.2 As previously reported, the Commission decided to review ECC as it meets criteria for electoral inequality as 21 (30%) of our 70 divisions have a number of electors which is more than 10% above or below that of the average ECC division. Four divisions have a variance of more than 20% and one division has a variance of more than 30%. The Local Government Boundary Commission has a responsibility to review local authorities from time to time and Essex's last review took place in 2004. Therefore in 2021 the Commission decided to undertake a review of Essex County Council with the final recommendations being implemented at the May 2025 ordinary elections.

Council size

- 1.3 The electoral review has two distinct parts, Council Size and Division Boundaries. The first part has concluded and ECC's submission of 77 members was approved by Council in December 2022.
- 1.4 In December 2022 Council agreed the draft submission of a Council size of 77 councillors and sought a single member division review. These have been accepted by the Commission. However, following receipt of the finalised expected housing figures, it was agreed at the July 2023 meeting that 78 Councillors would be a better Council size. The Commission accepted our proposal of a revised Council size of 78 councillors.

Division Boundaries

- 1.5 In July 2023 this Committee met and submitted an initial submission to the Commission. This set out proposed boundaries for 78 divisions, each of which would return one member.
- 1.6 Drawing up a proposal is complex in a County Council, particularly one as large as Essex. The complicating factors are:
- Divisions cannot straddle district boundaries, meaning that we cannot achieve electoral equality as easily as districts, because we have to allocate a whole number of divisions to each district.
 - The Commission like to take account of ward boundaries, which has been made more complicated because the Commission has been reviewing the wards of number of district councils in Essex. We did not have access to final proposals for these districts in July 2023, but final proposals for have now been published.
 - Since ECC is not responsible for electoral administration, we do not have immediate unlimited access to the register of electors in a way that enables us to plot new boundaries easily.
- 1.7 Nonetheless a strong submission was made for 78 divisions. We have sought the views of all members throughout the proposal and the time that some members have given up to supporting the process has helped improve the submissions.

The Commission's draft recommendations

- 1.8 The Commission has considered our proposals and those submitted by others and formulated its own draft recommendation which has been published for consultation. ECC, alongside other organisations and the public, are now invited to comment on the Commission's draft proposals.
- 1.9 All ECC members have been invited to attend a briefing, and have been asked to provide feedback to the representatives of this Group or relevant officers by 2pm on 12 January 2024.
- 1.10 The Commission's draft recommendations would see 78 one member divisions. Of the 70 current divisions, only five¹ would remain the same, although many other divisions would remain broadly similar.
- 1.11 The final submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission will need to ensure that it takes account of the views expressed by members and the principles set by the Commission. The Commission gives equal weight to which are mainly that elector numbers should be as equal as possible and boundaries should reflect communities where this is achievable.

¹ Chelmsford Central, Great Baddow, Canvey East, Canvey West, Rochford West would remain the same, though Baddow would be renamed 'Great Baddow and Galleywood' and Rochford West would be renamed 'Rochford North'.

A draft consultation response is being worked on but given the tight time frame, is not ready at the time of issuing the agenda for the meeting. Submissions will be circulated to the Committee and placed on the website at the earliest possible opportunity. That will form Appendix 1 when it is available. Annex 1, included with this report, sets out the position at the time of publication.

- 1.12 Anyone is welcome to view the Commission's draft proposals and submit their own response at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/essex. This can be done independently of ECC.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Agree the consultation response to the Commission for the 12 districts/78 divisions at Appendix 1 (to follow)

**Outline of issues likely to be included in Essex County Council's
submission to the LGBCE consultation on proposals for the
future boundaries of Essex County Council**

Following agreement by the Essex Following ECC cross-party member discussion a final response document is being prepared along the following lines.

Basildon

Further comments will be to follow.

Braintree

The Council's submission will not be raising any objection to the Commission's proposals.

Brentwood

Further comments will be to follow.

Castle Point

ECC are supportive of the boundaries proposed by the Commission and the maintenance of the existing division names.

Chelmsford

ECC are supportive of the boundaries proposed by the Commission.

Margaretting and Writtle do have close ties, Margaretting village is close to the southern edge of Writtle parish and is linked by two roads: (a) Margaretting Road, Writtle becomes Writtle Road, Margaretting at the parish boundary (running north-south), and (b) the A414 also links the two parishes – being Greenbury Way and Three Mile Hill.

Additionally, Margaretting was in the Broomfield and Writtle division until the 2005 boundary changes. Margaretting and Stock have been in the same Chelmsford Council ward since the 1980s.

Colchester

ECC are supportive of the proposal by the Commission and further comments will be included in the final submission.

Epping Forest

Further comments to follow.

Harlow

ECC are supportive of the boundaries proposed by the Commission.

Maldon

Essex County Council do not support a two member division to keep Maldon and Heybridge together in one division and are therefore content with the draft proposals made by the Commission.

Rochford

ECC are happy to leave the High Street as the boundary between the Rayleigh Divisions as it gives a good balance of numbers and the Commission's suggestion would leave the High St as the boundary in places.

ECC are happy with the proposal from the Commission.

Tendring

ECC are happy with the proposal from the Commission for Tendring.

Uttlesford

ECC are happy with the boundary proposals but ask that the division of Walden is named Saffron Walden.

Uttlesford District Council have received a request for a parish boundary to be re-aligned between Saffron Walden Town Council and Sewards End Parish Council to accommodate a large housing development where no existing properties exist. Both Parish Councils support the change and Essex County Council is happy to align the change to the parish boundary and the county division to accommodate this.

The area shown edged red below would move from Sewards End to Saffron Walden.

