

## **1. The formal ECC 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 per Appendix 1.

The following was agreed as the Council's response to the Commission:

### **Basildon**

The proposed changes by the Commission have been considered by the ECC Boundary Review Committee. ECC oppose your draft proposals. ECC support the original proposal that it submitted in July 2023 and ask the Commission to reconsider our original proposal. This submission allows good electoral equality and maintains community identity as far as possible within the numbers.

### **Braintree**

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

### **Brentwood**

The proposed changes by the Commission have been considered by the Boundary Review Committee. ECC oppose your draft proposals as they affect Brentwood Hutton and Brentwood South divisions and support the other proposals.

### **Brentwood Hutton and Brentwood South**

We restate our original proposal to maintain these two divisions largely as they currently are, on the grounds that this better reflects community ties and effective local government. Specifically, therefore, we propose that you move BC-Three Arches and BD-Thrift Park (back) to South and EC-West Horndon (back) to Hutton.

We relate this proposal to your three criteria as follows:

#### **1. Electoral equality**

This would increase South by 249 and reduce Hutton by the same amount. Although this would make South more than 11% above the county average, three of the four divisions in the Borough have to be above the average anyway. Hutton would then only be 8.5% above the average.

We believe that the arguments under criteria two and three are stronger in favour of this change than the electoral equality criterion.

## 2 (a) Community identity: West Horndon with Herongate and Ingrave

- West Horndon is a rural and semi-rural parish with its own identity and issues, and has no historical links with the more urban Warley, Brentwood South and West Wards.
- It should continue to be linked with the rest of the Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon Borough Council ward, with which it has historical and cultural links and is equally rural.
- Over 90% of the West Horndon electorate is in a collection of streets near the station, in the eastern half of the ward (i.e. near to the A128 and much nearer to Herongate than Warley). When the new housing is built in the “Dunton Garden village” that will all be at the far eastern end of the parish/ward, much nearer to Herongate than Brentwood.
- The A128 runs north-south between West Horndon and Herongate, whereas the links to Warley are via an unclassified road and the B186.

## 2 (b) Community identity: Three Arches / Thrift Park with Brentwood South

- Three Arches / Thrift Park is primarily a post-World War Two housing area, known as the East Ham estate (built for relocated London families). It is more urban in nature and thus has more in common with south Brentwood than with Hutton.
- Although the estate was recently added to the Hutton South ward for the 2024 election, this was more about equalising electorates than strong community ties. The rest of Hutton South ward is much newer and more suburban.

## 3. Effective government

- West Horndon has been part of the Hutton Division for many years and there is already a strong relationship between the West Horndon Parish Council and the County Councillor for Brentwood Hutton, enabling the best support to the area for issues affecting this village.
- Equally, the East Ham estate has always been in the Brentwood South division.
- The 2022 to 2029 electorate figures show a 944 increase in West Horndon, primarily due to the Dunton Garden Village in the Local Plan. However, the eventual growth allocated in the Local Plan at this location (beyond 2029) will be significantly more. So it makes more sense for this further growth to be added to the workload of the smaller (Hutton) division.

### **Castle Point**

ECC support 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 northsouth), 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. The Council requests that the proposed Lexden Division is named Lexden and Braiswick. This is because these two places are geographically distinct.

The Council requests that the proposed City Division, which includes many places which are not in the City Centre and excludes many parts of the City Centre, is named 'Colchester North'.

There are many historical community ties between Highwoods and St Johns – so the St Johns division is a logical alignment of wards.

The City division brings the logical communities of Mile End and the majority of Castle ward together.

The Constable division including Myland East polling district is a logical coalescence of rural communities. Considering the difficulties in dealing with the growing urban area of Colchester City, this is the best arrangement that can be achieved.

The inclusion of the roads in Holt Drive in the Maypole Division will ensure that the residents who live on the estate feel part of Colchester, as the last urban area of the City before the rural areas begin. Residents there have a strong community link with other estates in the Berechurch area.

Inclusion of the village of Rowhedge in the Abbey Division would mean that the communities on the west bank of the river Colne would be united, so we support this.

## **Epping Forest**

Epping Forest has seven divisions, with an average forecast electorate of 15,466 –slightly smaller than the ECC average of 15,848. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposal for Epping Forest was significantly different from that advanced by Essex County Council (ECC).

The Committee do not believe that the draft recommendations are as good as those submitted by ECC in terms of reflecting community boundaries.

They have considered their original submission and the LG BCE draft proposals and have decided that they wish to make a third submission.

The issues that some had with the LGBCE proposals are:

1. The geographical size of the proposed Ongar and Rural division – members felt that the northernmost part of the district, including the parishes which curl around Harlow, can be represented as part of North Weald and Nazeing. The villages which border Harlow have a great deal in common.
2. Too much weight had been given by the Commission to keeping the town of Loughton in two divisions. Loughton may be a single parish with a single town council but it is not a single place. For example, many people view Debden as separate to Loughton, even though both are in the same parish. The Commission proposes to divide other similar sized towns into more than two divisions, so the Council does not consider that this .
3. Not enough weight being given to keeping Buckhurst Hill together – this is a single coherent community which can be kept together and, in the views of many members, should be. The Committee does not consider that the railway line divides the communities – people use the same services and facilities and there are several crossing points.
4. Not paying due regard to the fact that both Buckhurst Hill and Loughton are separated from Chigwell by a river and the M11.
5. Bumbles Green (BU) shares part of the Crooked Mile with Waltham Abbey and yet is in a different division.

The Council would therefore wish to make a counter proposal, which is set out on the attached spreadsheet.

The differences between ECC's original submission and the one now proposed are as follows:

BU (Bumbles Green) – moving from North Weald and Nazeing to Waltham Abbey  
BA (new Epping Forest Polling district) moving from Buckhurst Hill to Loughton  
Central

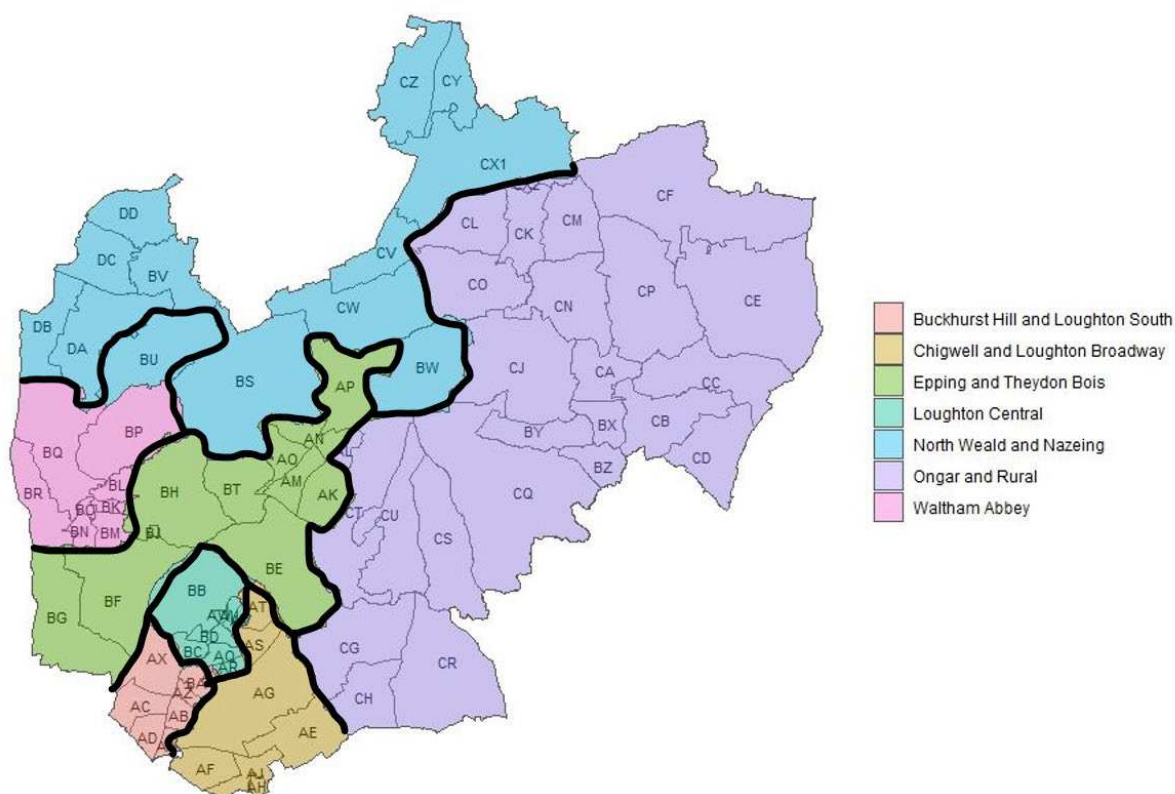
BA1 to remain in Buckhurst Hill.

We believe the split is along Roding Road with BA1 on the Southern Road side and BA the Oakwood Hill side as shown on the map below.



Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South	Chigwell	Epping and Theydon Bois	Loughton Central	Waltham Abbey	North Weald and Nazeing	Ongar and Rural
15939	14716	15584	15260	15890	16126	14604

This map shows the original ECC submission (colour shaded) with the revised ECC proposals shown with a thick black line.



Members also wished to submit additional justification for retaining Thornwood (AP) in Epping and Theydon Bois and retaining Coopersale (AL) in Ongar and Rural.

The Commission had proposed to put Thornwood in North Weald and Nazeing and AL in Epping and Theydon Bois Division .

Thornwood (AP) has much stronger links with Epping than to North Weald, although it is in the parish of North Weald Bassett. Epping is its post town. People in Thornwood Shop in Epping and children go to school in Epping. The road network in Thornwood is more focussed on Epping rather than North Weald.

A majority of the Committee felt that AL has stronger links to Ongar and Rural than it does to Epping given that Coopersale and Fiddlers Hamlet are to some degree physically separated from the town of Epping. The primary school in Coopersale is called 'Coopersale and Theydon Garnon School' – Theydon Garnon is proposed to be

in Ongar and Rural, which means that putting AL in Epping and Theydon Bois would divide the 'priority admission area' for this school between two divisions.

## **Names of Divisions**

We hope that the Commission accept the above proposal, but concerns have been expressed about the names of the divisions in the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations. These issues only arise if the Commission rejects ECC's proposals.

The Buckhurst Hill West division should be named 'Loughton South and Buckhurst Hill West' as most residents would be in Loughton.

The 'Loughton Central' division would be a misnomer under the Commission's proposals as it doesn't include the centre of Loughton. It should be Loughton North.

## **Harlow**

ECC are supportive of the boundaries proposed by the Commission.

## **Maldon**

Essex County Council supports the draft proposals made by the Commission. The Council noted the Commission's separate question about a possible alternative suggestion of a two member division covering Maldon and Maldon Rural North.

ECC requested a single member review and does not support this possible alternative suggestion. ECC believes that the draft proposals meet the statutory tests well and they have requested a single member division. It would be anomalous and unnecessary to have a two-member division in here.

## **Rochford**

ECC are happy with the proposal from the Commission. They noted the Commission's separate question about the boundary between the two proposed Rayleigh Divisions, and whether or not this should be alternative named roads.

ECC believe that the boundary between the two Rayleigh Divisions should be the High Street as it gives a good electoral equality and the Commission's possible alternative suggestion would still leave the southern part of the High St as the boundary between the two divisions.

## **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'.

There is one small further change that ECC would like to see. Uttlesford District Council have received a request for a parish boundary to be re-aligned between Saffron Walden Town Council and Swards End Parish Council to accommodate a large housing development where no existing properties exist. Both Parish Councils support the change and Essex County Council supports the suggestion that the proposed County Division boundary is varied to accommodate this. The area shown edged red below would move from Swards End to Saffron Walden and therefore from Thaxted to Saffron Walden electoral division.

