

The Minutes of the meeting of the Boundary Review Committee, held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford on Tuesday 23 January 2024.

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

Present:

Members of the Committee:

Cllr Tom Cunningham	Chairman
Cllr Lewis Barber	
Cllr Dave Harris	
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
Freddey Ayres	Democratic Services Officer

Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Tom Cunningham, the Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee, welcomed those in attendance including a member of the public. The entire meeting may be found on the [ECC Democracy YouTube Channel](#).

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 had been received from Cllr Lewis Barber, Cllr Mark Durham substituted for Cllr Barber.
- No declarations of interests were made.

2. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on the 27 July 2023

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. 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

A discussion on Epping Forest took place during the meeting, a proposal similar to the original ECC submission was considered and a proposal as follows:

BU (Bumbles Green) – moving from North Weald and Nazeing to Waltham Abbey
BA1 (new Epping Forest Polling district) moving from Buckhurst Hill to Loughton.

The Committee agreed and authorised the Director, Legal and Assurance to finalise the submission on Epping Forest as set out in the resolution below.

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 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 supports the suggestion that the proposed County Division boundary is varied to accommodate this. The area shown edged red below would move from Sewards End to Saffron Walden and therefore from Thaxted to Saffron Walden electoral division.

**Resolved**

That the Committee agreed the 12 submission proposals as presented with minor amendments as agreed and authorised the Director, Legal and Assurance to finalise the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England after consulting the committee, such submission to be made before the deadline of 19 February 2024.

The meeting closed at 14:24.

**Chairman
2024**