

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Babergh District Council

Consultation response from Babergh District Council

Babergh District Council (BDC) considered the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft proposals for the warding arrangements in the Babergh District at its meeting on 21 November 2017, and made the following comments and observations:

South Eastern Parishes

Brantham & Holbrook – It was suggested that Stutton & Holbrook should be joined to form a single member ward and that Brantham & Tattingstone form a second single member ward. This would result in electorates of 2104 and 2661 respectively. It is acknowledged the Brantham & Tattingstone pairing is slightly over the 10% variation threshold from the average electorate however this proposal represents better community linkages.

Capel St Mary and East Bergholt – There was general support for single member wards for these areas.

Chelmondiston – The Council was keen to ensure that the Boundary Commission uses the correct spelling of Chelmondiston (not Chelmondistan) in its future publications. There were comments from some Councillors that Bentley did not share common links with the other areas included in the proposed Chelmondiston Ward, however there did not appear to be an obvious alternative grouping for Bentley without significant alteration to the scheme for the whole of the South Eastern parishes.

Copdock & Washbrook - It would be more appropriate for Great and Little Wenham to either be in a ward with Capel St Mary with which the villages share a vicar and the people go to for shops and doctors etc. Or alternatively with Raydon, Holton St Mary and the other villages in that ward as they border Raydon airfield and share issues concerning Notley Enterprise Park.

Sproughton & Pinewood and Shotley – There were no comments from Councillors about these proposals.

Central and South-western parishes

Assington – There were no comments from Councillors about this proposal.

Boxford – There was general support for this proposal.

Bures St Mary & Nayland and Polstead – It was felt that Polstead really does not fit with the rest of this ward from either a community identity or transport access perspective. It is much more aligned with Stoke-by-Nayland and Nayland, and to a lesser extent Boxford. The rest of the ward does have a community identity, and the Wenhams also identify with it. It does seem that the electoral equality criterion has taken precedence over anything else. The following suggestions would cause some additional electoral inequality, but it would be minimal and the community benefits would negate this. The following proposals are therefore suggested:

- A single member ward covering Raydon, Layham, Holton, Stratford, Higham, Shelley, Great and Little Wenham (2023 electoral number: 2003, variance - 13.4%). The 2023 number will be higher due to the new build that will be taking place in Raydon soon.
- A two-member ward covering Polstead, Stoke, Nayland, Bures, Leavenheath, Assington, Newton and Little Cornard (2023 electoral number 5198, variance +12.4%). This is the biggest problem with the proposal it will work and would be better for the parishes.
- There will also be a knock-on impact on Copdock and Washbrook, reducing it (2023 electoral number 2171, variance –6.1%). However, the 2023 number is likely to be boosted by new build.

Hadleigh – The Council did not support the creation of a single three-member ward for Hadleigh and would prefer to see a two ward pattern based around the existing Hadleigh North and Hadleigh South Wards. It was suggested that Hadleigh North be represented by two Councillors and Hadleigh South by one Councillor, however there would need to be a repositioning of the boundary between the two wards to achieve electoral equality.

North and North-western parishes

Bildeston and Whatfield – There was general discontent with the Boundary Commission's proposals for these areas, however the Council was unable to agree a suitable alternative.

Glemsford - There were no comments from Councillors about this proposal.

Lavenham - There were no comments from Councillors about this proposal.

Long Melford – There was disagreement between Councillors about the inclusion of Cockfield parish in the proposed Long Melford ward, which reflected the differing views of the parish councils. However, there was acknowledgment that electoral equality would prevent Long Melford being a standalone ward.

Sudbury and Great Cornard

Great Cornard – The Council could not reach a consensus view on whether a single three-member ward or three single-member wards was most appropriate for Great

Cornard. However there was a general expression of disagreement with three-member wards.

Sudbury – The Council was generally in agreement with the proposed district warding patterns for Sudbury. It would be preferable for the parish ward boundaries to be coterminous with the district ward boundaries. The Council also asks the Boundary Commission to carefully consider the views of Sudbury Town Council in regards to the town ward boundaries.

Ward Names

The Council requested that the Boundary Commission preserves some of the historical ward names within the Babergh District, e.g Cosford, Lower Brett, Samford etc, particularly where the proposed wards largely match existing ward boundaries. Further information can be provided in relation to this point if required.