

Taylor, Laura

From: Alastair McCraw <Alastair.Mccraw@babergh.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 April 2018 15:45
To: reviews
Cc: Alastair McCraw
Subject: Draft Recommendations for Babergh District Council. March 2018

Importance: High

Dear LGBC,

I would like to make the following submission on the March 2018 recommendations for the Babergh District Council warding pattern.

I will be focussing on two of the proposed wards in South East Babergh, Brantham & Berners. This area is often described as the Shotley peninsula, formed by the Orwell & Stour estuaries. It has a distinct identity of its own, but with some significant sub units within. The Alton Ward I represent includes Brantham, Stutton and Tatingstone and I am concerned that they, and the rest of the peninsula parishes receive proper, practical and equal representation that reflects local interests and identities.

I have held throughout the consultation process that wards based upon the 12 largest communities are the correct approach. The proposed Brantham ward has strong local support, within and without the village. This accords with the above principle and reflects Branthams unique position and concerns.

However the proposed 3 member Berners ward, encompassing 11 separate parishes, is far too large and unwieldy to serve the electorate well. It will not allow for a fair and reasonable division of labour for any serving members. The accountability of those members can also be affected. Most importantly, it contains two of the twelve largest communities within Babergh, Holbrook and Shotley. It is not clear that the interests of those communities coincide. I would suggest therefore that Shotley and Erwarton form a single member ward. With a projected electorate of 2414, this proposal would have a +4% variance on the 2,330 average electorate, fitting the parameters. Shotley and Erwarton are closely related to each other and this has been a previous suggestion of mine. A ward name of Ganges might reflect the local naval heritage based upon HMS Ganges.

That separation would leave a 2 member ward, composed of 9 parishes, to form a central ward based around Holbrook. Projected electorate would be 4561 producing a -2% variance. I have considered including Erwarton in this ward, as it would leave the Shotley ward at -1% variance and the 'Berners/Holbrook' ward at 0%. However Erwarton is a great deal closer to Shotley than anywhere else and reducing the number of parishes in the resulting 2 member ward is desirable.

I still have strong reservations about the size of area covered by this potential Berners Ward and this has been reflected by discussions with local parishes. Single member wards have been the preference of most Babergh councillors throughout this experience. They produce accountability and ensure any workload is evenly shared. In looking at possible ways of producing two single member wards for the centre of the peninsula, it has become obvious that there are some limits due to the relative sizes.

One possibility is a ward composed of Stutton, Holbrook and Harkstead. Essentially this is the current Holbrook Ward with the addition of Stutton. There is a strong local link based upon the southern end of Alton Water. The projected electorate is 2451, giving a variance of +5%, within the desired range.

The resultant remaining ward would then be composed of the 6 parishes of Tatingstone, Belstead, Wherstead, Freston, Woolverstone & Chelmondiston in a slightly peculiar T shape. There are clear road connections between these, although principally to the north. The projected electorate however is only 2110, producing a -9.5% variance and this must be a concern in terms of future proofing. I also have concerns about local links some of these communities may have with Holbrook, which they may not wish to lose. Others may feel isolated at the ends of the three 'arms' formed and I am not convinced that there is sufficient synergy.

In summary, to give the best balance between equality of representation and producing cohesive wards with shared concerns, I believe that the Wards should be as below.

Primary Submission.

Brantham. 2283. -2%. 1 member

Shotley & Erwarton. (Ganges?). 2414 +4%. 1 member
Berners. Based upon Holbrook. 4561 -2%. 2 members

I give a summary of the alternative for completeness.

Secondary Submission

Brantham.	2283	-2%.	1 member
Shotley & Erwarton. (Ganges?).	2414	+4%.	1 member
Holbrook & Stutton.	2451.	+5%.	1 member
T shaped Berners?	2110.	-9.5%.	1 member

I look forward to seeing the final recommendations, but must stress my opposition to the proposed Berners 3 member ward.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this submission. If you have any queries about the submission, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,
Alastair McCraw

Alastair McCraw
Councillor
Alton Ward (Brantham, Stutton & Tattingstone)
Babergh District Council

alastair.mccraw@babergh.gov.uk

Emails sent to and from this organisation will be monitored in accordance with the law to ensure compliance with policies and to minimize any security risks. The information contained in this email or any of its attachments may be privileged or confidential and is intended for the exclusive use of the addressee. Any unauthorised use may be unlawful. If you receive this email by mistake, please advise the sender immediately by using the reply facility in your email software. Opinions, conclusions and other information in this email that do not relate to the official business of Babergh District Council shall be understood as neither given nor endorsed by Babergh District Council.