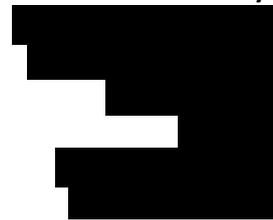


GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL



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Response to the New Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Babergh District Council

Introduction

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has published new draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Babergh District Council (BDC), resulting in a further unplanned consultation period which closes on 30 April 2018.

Council Size

Although the LGBCE is undertaking a further consultation, it has not taken the opportunity afforded by its tacit acknowledgement that the original draft recommendations got it wrong to do what it should have done in the first place: undertake a consultation on the radical reduction in the number of elected representatives from 43 to 32 members, a 25.58% decrease which should be seen as a 'major change in council size' warranting a public consultation. The New Draft Recommendations continue to contain no justification for the omission of a public enquiry.

The new draft number of 32 members continues to have left our urban areas in a poor state. Having been abolished as Babergh's only 3-member ward in 2003, the recreation of Hadleigh as a 3-member ward is a retrograde step. Great Cornard, which has never been a 3-member ward, will become a 3-member ward under these new proposals. We continue to believe that this change will cause wholly unnecessary confusion in the local public mind. It remains our

view that a size of around 36 members would have enabled satisfactory warding arrangements for our urban areas, Sudbury, Great Cornard and Hadleigh, while allowing satisfactory warding arrangements for our rural parishes.

[District Warding Arrangements for Great Cornard](#)

In paragraph 56, the LGBCE say 'it is not possible for the Commission to recommend three single-councillor wards for Great Cornard without also creating new parish warding arrangements', as if we had not spotted that contradiction in our submission on the draft arrangements. The fact is that it is only 'impossible' because the LGBCE will not consult on council size. If a council size of 36 members had been decided upon, it would have possible for there to be two district council wards of two members each, following the boundaries of the two parish council wards, given that the two wards are now of almost equal size. It is perverse of the LGBCE not to have consulted on this option, particularly given that an additional unplanned consultation on warding arrangements is now taking place in tacit acknowledgement that the LGBCE did not get it right first time.

If, notwithstanding the above, the LGBCE again refuses to consult on council size, it remains the view of GCPC that we much prefer that our parish boundaries are not changed, even if that means we have accept one three-member district council ward.

[Cats Lane](#)

GCPC is delighted that the LGBCE has seen sense and has restored the Cats Lane area to its rightful place in Great Cornard.

[New Draft Recommendations for Sudbury](#)

It is disappointing that, having said the LGBCE 'particularly welcome comments on our draft recommendations for Sudbury', the New Draft Recommendations make only 'one small modification' (paragraph 53) to the warding arrangements for Sudbury Town Council, and that one necessitated by restoring Cats Lane to Great Cornard, where it belongs. Why seek comments if it is going to ignore them?

It remains the view of GCPC that the warding arrangements for local councils should be sensible and transparent and are not left in a mess by your inadequate attempts to ward the parish of Sudbury for the purposes of district representation. Unless you now consult on Babergh District Council size, GCPC continues to believe that you might achieve fewer, more coherent STC wards if, instead of three single-member wards and a 2-member ward for Sudbury, you create two 2-member wards and a single-member ward. Our objective would be to retain probably three STC wards with reasonably equal numbers of town councillors, making sense to Sudbury voters.