

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.132

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 132

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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The Countess Of Albemarle, DBE.

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Professor Michael Chisholm.

Sir Andrew Wheatley, CBE.

Mr P B Young, CBE.

To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT
OF BRAINTREE IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the district of Braintree, in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that district.

2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 3 June 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Braintree District Council, copies of which were circulated to the Essex County Council, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the district, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of the local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from interested bodies.

3. Braintree District Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. When doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No. 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were also asked to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft

scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comments.

4. The Council have not passed a resolution under Section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. In accordance with Section 7(b) a system of whole council elections will apply.

5. On 21 November 1974 Braintree District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. They proposed to divide the area of the district into 33 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors to form a council of 59.

6. We considered the draft scheme submitted by the Council, together with comments which had been made upon it. We noted the draft scheme complied broadly with the rules in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and our own guidelines but we considered that we should make some modifications to improve the balance of representation between certain wards. We proposed an alteration to the boundary between the proposed Bocking South ward and the proposed Bocking North ward to increase the electorate of the North ward. We also proposed an adjustment of the boundary between the proposed Witham Central and Witham Silver End and Rivenhall wards and increased the representation of the enlarged Central ward to 2 members thus adding a further councillor to the Witham area which we considered to be under represented in the Council's draft scheme. We further decided that the proposed representation of the Kelvedon ward was over generous and should be reduced from 3 councillors to 2 councillors.

7. On 25 February we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals, and the accompanying maps which defined the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their

main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that any comments should reach us by 6 May 1975.

8. We received comments suggesting that boundaries affecting the proposed Witham Silver End and Rivenhall, the Witham Central and the Braintree and Bocking wards should be realigned. There were comments requesting additional representation for the Kelvedon ward, and alternative names were put forward for the proposed Greenstead Green ward.

9. In view of these differences of local opinion we considered that we needed further information before reaching a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2) of the 1972 Act, and at our request, you appointed Mr G F Simmonds as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and report to us.

10. The Assistant Commissioner held a local meeting on 21 August 1975 and carried out an inspection of the area. A copy of his report to us is attached at Schedule 1.

11. The Assistant Commissioner is of the opinion that, in view of the forthcoming development, the electorate of the Kelvedon ward will be large enough to justify 3 councillors. This recommendation increases the size of the total council to 60 members. He recommends that the name of the proposed Greenstead Green ward should be changed to Colne Engaine and Greenstead Green. He also recommends that certain ward boundaries in the urban area of Witham should be realigned; and as a consequence that the representation of Witham North should be increased to 3 councillors and that of Witham Central ward reduced to 1 councillor.

12. We reviewed our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We decided to accept the advice we had been given and to modify our draft proposals accordingly. Subject to these modifications, therefore we confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

13. Details of these proposals are set out in Schedule 2 to this report and on the attached maps. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps.

PUBLICATION

14. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report together with copies of the maps are being sent to Braintree District Council and will be available for inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without maps) are being sent to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards, as defined on the maps, is set out in Schedule 3 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

Local Government Boundary Commission

Electoral Review: Braintree District of Essex

Report

of G. F. Simmonds, Esq., Assistant Commissioner

1. Preliminary

I held an informal meeting at the Town Hall, Braintree, on 21st August 1975 to hear local views on the proposed arrangements for the wards set out in para.2 of the Commission's letter of 4th July 1975 to the Chief Executive Officer of the Braintree District Council. Appendix 'A' to this Report is the list of persons who attended. At the conclusion of the meeting I visited the parts of the areas of the former Urban Districts of Braintree and Bocking and of Witham and the Parish of Kelvedon and Feering, which I had been requested to inspect during the meeting, and met persons who had attended the meeting and who pointed out various physical features to me.

2. Introduction

I opened the meeting by introducing myself, explaining that such local meetings are held where there are significant differences of local opinion or where there are points on which local opinion is at variance with the Commission's draft proposals, and that it was my duty to conduct the meeting on lines as informal as possible, so as to encourage a full exchange of views, but consistent with the need to ensure a fair hearing. I stated that I was willing to receive written statements, provided that they were read aloud, so that everyone could know the contents and be in a position to question and/or comment. I told the meeting that there appeared to be four issues at the outset and that I proposed to deal with them in the following order, viz:

- (1) The representation of Kelvedon Ward
- (2) The name of Greenstead Green Ward
- (3) Ward boundaries in Braintree and Bocking
- (4) Ward boundaries in Witham.

I reminded those present of the appropriate provisions of para.3 of Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972 and explained the practice of the Commission with regard to entitlements as set out in para.23 of my brief.

3. Publicity

Mr Cotton (Chief Executive) stated that the publicity requested in the Commission's letter of 4th July 1975 had been given to the meeting.

4. Population estimates

Mr Cotton stated that the relevant 1979 population forecasts had been rechecked since the first submission was made to the Commission in December 1974 and that the figures shown below were up-to-date. They are based on the 1974 electorate with an addition (at the rate of two electors per dwelling) for each new house built since the last register or expected to be built by 1979 or soon afterwards. The forecast has been derived from planning records, including sites where detailed planning permissions have been issued, together with the Council's knowledge of local building operations and of its own housing programme. The wards are as proposed by the Commission. He considered that the figures were realistic and might be on the conservative side.

Bocking North	-	4,380	
Bocking South	-	4,035	
Braintree Central	-	4,131	
Braintree East	-	4,547	
Braintree West	-	<u>4,412</u>	<u>21,505</u>

/Kelvedon

Kelvedon (and Feering)	-	<u>3,480</u>	<u>3,480</u>
Witham Central	-	2,700	
Witham Chipping Hill	-	2,892	
Witham North	-	2,889	
Witham Silver End and Rivenhall	-	2,420	
Witham South	-	3,554	
Witham West	-	<u>2,739</u>	<u>17,194</u>

Representatives from Kelvedon felt that the figure for the ward was too low; they stated that the village plan provided for an additional 445 dwellings, of which about half would be drained to a private sewage disposal works; that the remainder would be drained to a works to be provided by the Anglian Water Authority and included in its programme ending in 1976; that, as development had been held up since 1972, there was considerable pent-up demand, especially on in-filling sites; and that as soon as the new public sewage disposal works was started development of these sites would commence. Mr Cotton accepted these views and agreed that there was demand from commuters to Colchester, Chelmsford and London, because of the excellent electric rail service (56 minutes to London). Other speakers on population figures, with the exception of Mr Pitchforth, felt that the Council's figures were as reliable as such figures could be, having regard to the uncertain economic situation and to other difficulties of forecasting in a rapidly growing area. Mr Pitchforth felt that they were too optimistic, but did not specify any ward where he thought a shortfall would be concentrated. I have used the Council's figures as the basis for this report wherever necessary.

5. Representation of Kelvedon Ward

Mr Cotton stated that the District Council felt that it would cause great difficulty in the next few years if the membership of the Kelvedon ward were

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reduced from three to two at a time when sizeable residential development is expected. Admittedly, the member-electorate ratio ($3480 \div 3 = 1160$) would be on the low side. The overall average for the whole District was 1450, but several wards had low electorates, e.g. Stour Valley North and Gosfield 1100 and Tanfield 1160. Bocking South (a 3-member ward) averaged 1220. The difficulty lay in estimating the rate of growth and the Council's figures were, as stated earlier, in his opinion, conservative. The present representation of three members for Kelvedon ward has now been accepted throughout the District and it seemed quite certain that if it were now reduced to two there would be a clear case for increasing it again, perhaps in 1979, and certainly early in the 1980's. This was undesirable, especially in a new District which was an amalgamation of several old ones and which especially needed a period of settled representation. The Council hoped that special attention would be paid to the expressed wishes of the two Parish Councils, which were now beginning to work together, in their joint letter dated 1st April 1975.

Councillor Andrews, who is also Chairman of Feering Parish Council, pointed out that Kelvedon Parish was larger in area and population than Feering Parish, and said that, in his view, the Council's estimate of the 1979 electorate was on the low side, because as soon as the sewage works was available (and it was in the Anglian Water Authority's programme for completion by 1976, the site having been acquired) building will commence on many in-filling sites where permission has been refused hitherto, as well as on the two larger sites shown for development in the Village Plan. The third larger site (permission granted by the Minister on appeal) would not await the Anglian Water Authority's works, as a private works would be constructed. It was a happy arrangement that the existing representation consisted of two members from Kelvedon and one from Feering and the growing harmonious relationship between the two

/Parishes

Parishes would be adversely affected if the representation was reduced to two. Councillor Yule associated himself with these remarks. Mr Brewer said that the ward was larger in area than most, although admittedly not so large as four or five of the really rural wards, but it is awkwardly cut by the main line railway, which is the main reason for the accelerating development of the villages of Kelvedon and Feering. Councillor Kentish (also a Parish Councillor) said that he was a non-political and independent member and accepted that, on entitlement alone, the representation of three was in doubt; the doubt was on the precise time when growth would occur and not on its extent. Under such circumstances, in his view, it would be proper for the benefit of the doubt to be given to the "status quo".

6. Recommendation

My inspection of the ward leads me to the view that development will be rapid and I accept the argument that building on "in-filling" sites, many of which were pointed out to me, will proceed as soon as the construction of the sewage disposal works is under weigh and that this kind of development will take place more quickly than development of the larger areas where more civil engineering works will be involved. I agree that it would be unfortunate if the representation of Kelvedon ward were now to be reduced to two and then had to go back to three in 1979, especially as its present over-representation does not appear to have caused difficulty elsewhere in the District. I recommend that the representation of the ward should not be reduced and should remain at three.

7. Naming of Greenstead Green Ward

Mr Cotton stated that Ward 31 (called Greenstead Green Ward by the Commission) was created in 1974 by uniting two parishes of the former Halstead

/Rural

Rural District (viz. Halstead Rural and Greenstead Green Parish and Colne Engaine Parish). Together the two parishes almost surround the town of Halstead, but otherwise have little in common. If any one of the names were chosen, objection might arise. The District Council did not wish to offer formal views and would like local views to prevail. He could not envisage any difficulty arising from a combination of names, but it would not be altogether appropriate to include Halstead, as there were already wards named Halstead 1 and 2.

Councillor Courtauld strongly urged that the name of the ward should be Colne Engaine and Greenstead Green Ward. Colne Engaine Parish has over three times as many electors as Greenstead Green (1000, compared with 300). It was recorded in Domesday, whereas Greenstead Green was a church-less hamlet until the 1880's. The new system of local government is experiencing considerable difficulty in reconciling town and country and the dropping of an old parish name has been taken as evidence that the new District Councils are much more impersonal than those which they have succeeded. If one parish appears to have taken total precedence over the other, the spirit of co-operation which he has been fostering, and which is beginning to appear, will be destroyed. Colne Engaine and Greenstead Green is a name which flows off the tongue; it takes 7 seconds to type, compared with $3\frac{1}{2}$ seconds, so it should not cause great administrative inconvenience. The Clerk to the Colne Engaine Parish Council emphasised the strong feeling which had been aroused in the Parish.

8. Recommendation

I accept the argument of Councillor Courtauld and recommend that the ward be named "Colne Engaine and Greenstead Green", because I believe it will contribute to the task, which must be difficult for councillors and officers alike, of welding this rather scattered and diverse District into a homogeneous local government unit.

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9. Braintree and Bocking

Mr Cotton said that the Council accepted the proposals of the Commission for the five wards of the Braintree and Bocking area. They had regard to the need for an even spread of the electorate and the fixing of boundaries which are easily identifiable. Local ties are not broken and the proposed wards are well based on the natural concentrations of development, both existing and proposed. The ward boundaries generally follow well-known street patterns or through roads and while, in some cases, this results in a division of the larger housing areas, this would be so whatever method of dividing the town into five three-member wards was chosen. The boundary, said to be "un-natural" at the Dallwood Way and Marlborough Road estates, is quite clear, follows existing roads (viz. Dallwood Way, Kent Gardens, Marlborough Road and Bedford Close) and will be well understood by the electors. Polling stations will be easy to provide and convenient for access by the public. Mr Brewer said that the proposal split the Dallwood/Fairview residential estate, the whole of which should be in the same ward. This would involve the transfer of about 1300 electors and thus a "re-jig" of all of the ward boundaries to ensure reasonable equality of representation. He asked that the Commission should examine again the ward boundaries suggested by the Conservative Association in November 1974, as he considered that they were more natural. He was not aware how the figures of electors set out in the letter of 2nd May 1975 had been calculated; probably by the local members of the Association, perhaps after consultation with the Planning Officer. When I inspected the area I was not shown any special problem arising in the Dallwood/Fairview estate; this estate consists of pre-war and post-war houses, but the boundary chosen is clear and unambiguous and similar to ward boundaries traversing similar residential areas elsewhere. I do not recommend any change in the Commission's proposals.

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10. Ward boundaries in Witham

Mr Cotton said that there was great difficulty in dividing Witham, with its peculiar physical features and its historical and communal background, into wards of near equal electorates, while still paying proper regard to the criteria in Schedule 11 with regard to physical features and with regard to local ties. This task became more difficult in an area of fast growing population and it had been assumed that development under the Town Development Act (which was already about double the size of the original town of Witham, viz. 12,000 population as against 6,000) would continue. The issues generally resolved themselves into -

- (a) disquiet about the proposal to take Central Ward to the north of the main railway line;
- (b) divergence of views as to what should happen to the electorate in Rivenhall village and that part of the Forest Road residential area which would be severed from North Ward by an artificial boundary which was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to delineate and describe;
- (c) if Central Ward were reduced in size from that shown in the Commission's proposals, what would be the effect on its representation?

For these reasons the Council originally came to the conclusion that -

- (a) Central Ward should not extend across the main railway line;
- (b) Rivenhall Village should not be divided, but should be included with Silver End;
- (c) If the pattern of even distribution of electorate and of an equal number of members per ward were strictly adhered to, the least objectionable division of the Forest Road estate would have to be found.

Mr Henderson said that he believed that para.3(3)(b) of Schedule 11 meant that close-knit communities should not be split and the Commission's proposals

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were doing this in three cases. The Chipping Hill area was the original Witham, founded about 800 AD; it held the almshouses and is a conservation area; the road tying the original village together remains, but is proposed as a ward boundary, whereas in the area of the original village the River Brain would be a natural boundary and, if adopted, would ensure that all the houses in the village would be in the ward. The Forest Road residential area was clearly part of Witham North and to put about 550 houses from it into the totally different Silver End and Rivenhall Ward along an unintelligible boundary was contrary to the principles of Schedule 11. Rivenhall Village was very old and it remained isolated in a rural area; he could find nowhere else in the District where such a village had been split down the village street and this again was contrary to the principles of Schedule 11. Witham is virtually a New Town; about 12,000 people have been moved into a town of 6,000 and it was essential to build up the feeling of community among the newcomers. The ideal method of doing this was by single member wards, to which Witham lent itself; if this was not acceptable, and he had argued the case for it in his letter of December 1974, ward boundaries should not be adopted which destroyed communities, even if some marginal electoral inequality might result. Councillor Mrs Pitchforth re-advocated single member wards and said that, in a rapidly growing town, it was especially important to retain existing communities, adding to them in suitable cases and creating new ones if adding to existing communities was impossible. It was much easier to divide Witham into single member wards than into multi-member ones; there was general assent from the objectors when she said that it was more important to have wards based on communities than to distort communities in the cause of precise electoral equality, which, in a rapidly growing town, could not be ensured anyhow. Witham Central was clearly a case for a single member ward and Rivenhall End

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would, because of its excellent road communication, naturally go into it.

Mr Pitchford said that Silver End had been developed as a company estate round a Crittall factory after the First World War and had been added to the Witham Urban District in 1933. When he had seen the Commission's draft proposals he realised that his wife's proposal for single member wards was not acceptable to the Commission, although he thought it had many advantages, and he had therefore devised his proposed system of two member wards by amalgamating pairs of single member wards. All of the boundaries were very clear, mainly railways and river valleys, and they complied with Schedule 11.

Mr Willetts said that to join a part of the Rivenhall area with Witham Central across the main line railway was unworkable and unsound because of lack of community of interest and very inadequate communications. The whole of the Forest Road area must come into Witham North, as the latter was an integral whole; any boundary would be purely artificial and would put a highly urbanised area into a large rural ward with which it had no affinity. The Commission should consider the allocation of three members to Witham North and the reduction of the representation of Witham Central to one member (it would have 1,500 electors). The proposal to split Rivenhall Village down the village street showed an unacceptable disregard of the characteristics of the area and would be regarded as arbitrary and unreasonable by the electors, causing confusion and criticism over polling stations. Mr Fennell said that the projected population figures should not be regarded as sacrosanct and to juggle with boundaries solely because of these figures was virtually certain to lead to difficulty. He objected to single member wards because they tended to retain separate communities rather than to integrate newcomers. The splitting of Forest Road estate was an anomaly, but it could be dealt with at

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the next revision of ward boundaries; by that time parish boundaries should have been reviewed. He disliked the splitting of Rivenhall village. Mr Sweeting said that he had not mentioned single member wards in his letters to the Commission, but, in principle, he supported them. He suggested that Central Ward be extended at each end to Sphinx Lane and to the north-eastern boundary of the old Urban District respectively. Mr Kinloch, an ex-Councillor of Witham Urban District, said that he believed that what is of concern is communities and not precise equality of electorate, which, in any event, could not be achieved in an area which is to be the subject of steady growth over the next few years at a rate which can only be guessed at and not forecast, especially having regard to national economic difficulties.

11. Recommendation

The problems of Witham are very difficult to solve and, on inspection of the area which I carried out in some detail by myself during my pre-hearing visit and again after the hearing, when I met most of those who had appeared at the hearing, I realised to the full the extent to which the maps which are generally available are out of date. They do not show the extent of the recent development and its effect on this small town, an effect which will be accentuated by future development.

There was much strength in the arguments which were advanced for single member wards, as the single member principle would have facilitated the creation of wards which would have complied with the requirements of Schedule 11 of the Act of 1972. However, there are powerful arguments against single member wards in the whole of an urban area, and the Council had adopted a general pattern of two and three member wards in their two urban areas, viz. Witham and Braintree and Bocking.

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On my inspection, the criticism of the division both of the Forest Road residential area and of the village of Rivenhall, which was voiced by every speaker at the hearing with a greater or lesser intensity of feeling, appeared to be fully justified. The criticism made had been deeply thought out in the light of detailed local knowledge and was cogently argued, without the kind of prejudice which sometimes appears on such occasions. The Forest Road area has been developed as a whole and I produce a map which has been made available to me by the Council and which is as up to date as possible, showing, marked by a solid green line, the boundary which has been chosen by the Commission (and I was advised that there were certain uncertainties when an attempt was made to delineate it on the map). The dotted blue line shows what appears to me to be a natural N.E. boundary to the Forest Road residential area. This map is marked "G.F.S.1". I understand that a planning decision will be taken soon about the development of some of the land lying between the green and the dotted blue lines. If planning permission for residential development of any of this land is granted, it will strengthen the recommendation which I make for the extension of Witham North ward. The actual development of the Forest Road area has taken the form of an intricate pattern of terraced housing, usually with rear vehicular access, which it is virtually impossible to divide in a manner which will result in a boundary easily identifiable to the electorate or, indeed, to anybody concerned. I was told that in some instances the Commission's line appeared to go through garages or other buildings. The criticism of the splitting of Rivenhall Village again appears to be fully justified on the site, but I do not consider that Rivenhall End is associated with Rivenhall proper. It was cut off when the main line railway was constructed (I assume about 100 or more years ago) and its road access to the centre of Witham has recently been much improved.

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The same map (GFS.1) also shows the small boundary alteration to the Chipping Hill Ward proposed by Mr Henderson (the dotted blue line) along the River Brain. This would increase the electorate of Chipping Hill by 82 and reduce that of Witham West by the same number. However, Witham West is, because of building under the Town Development scheme, the area which is growing most rapidly and will continue to do so. There is a public walk with open space along this river and it is true that it would form a natural and easily identifiable boundary and would, if adopted, maintain the historic boundary of Chipping Hill at this point.

The main line railway presents a formidable barrier and, on inspection, I accept the criticism that it would be wrong for Central Ward to extend across it, especially as the result of so extending it results in the splitting of the Forest Road residential area, placing part in the urbanised Witham North ward and part in the semi-rural Silver End and Rivenhall ward and in splitting Rivenhall Village which I have referred to at some length above. In my view, the best solution to these problems is to be found in extending the proposed Witham North ward to the dotted blue line shown on GFS.1. This would enlarge the electorate of the ward by about 700 and would reduce Witham Central by a similar number. The representation of Witham North would be increased from two to three and that of Witham Central would be reduced from two to one. The whole of Rivenhall Village would go into the Silver End and Rivenhall ward, involving an increase in the electorate of that ward of over 300. These modifications would go far to meet the substantial criticism levelled at the Commission's proposals, and would, in my opinion, comply with the criteria laid down in Schedule 11 better than do the Commission's proposals.

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12. Estimated electoral figures for 1979 arising from changes proposed in para.11

Ward boundaries proposed by Commission	Electorate estimated by Council in 1979 (para.4)	Members	Ward boundaries proposed by myself	Electorate estimated in 1979	Members	Entitlement
Witham Central	2700	2	Witham Central	1617	1	1.19
" Chipping Hill	2892	2	" Chipping Hill	2974	2	2.08
" North	2889	2	" North	3594	3	2.51
" Silver End and Rivenhall	2420	2	" Silver End and Rivenhall	2798	2	1.95
" South	3554	2	" South	3554	2	2.47
" West	2739	2	" West	2657	2	1.85
	17194	12		17194	12	

13. Entitlements

For the purpose of calculating entitlements in the preceding paragraph, I have used the Council's latest estimate of 1979 electors (see para.4) for Witham alone, giving a division of $\frac{17194}{12} = 1433$, because revised figures were not available for the whole District. The entitlements under the Commission's draft scheme showed considerable variations, ranging from 1.70 to 2.42 for two member wards in each case. Under my proposals, the entitlements for the four two member wards lie within a slightly less wide range, viz. between 1.85 and 2.47. I realise that, viewed solely from the point of view of entitlements, the figures for Witham North, 2.51 with three members, and Witham South, 2.47 with two members, are open to criticism. However, I believe that any such criticism may be answered by the following facts:

- (1) Witham South was under-represented in the Commission's draft scheme; no representations were made about this under-representation.

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- (2) There was general agreement among those present at the hearing that, in the peculiar circumstances of Witham, namely the rapid, yet uncertain, rate of growth and the physical obstacles presented by the railways, especially the main line, it was more important to base wards on known communities than to distort communities and break local ties solely in the cause of precise electoral equality.
- (3) The proposed ward pattern over the whole District shows considerable electoral inequality, which is, I think, inevitable.

14. Recommendation

I accordingly recommend -

- (a) that Witham North be extended on its north-east side to the dotted line shown on map GFS.1 and be represented by three members;
- (b) that Witham Central be reduced in size and be bounded on the north by the main railway line as shown by the dotted blue line on GFS.1;
- (c) that Witham Silver End and Rivenhall be bounded on the south-west side by the dotted blue line referred to in (a) above;
- (d) that Witham Chipping Hill be extended on the south-west side to the dotted blue line shown on GFS.1, viz. the River Brain; and
- (e) that With^{am}~~in~~ West be reduced on the south-east side by the area referred to in (d) above.

The proposed boundaries of Witham North and Witham Chipping Hill wards are described in Appendix 'B' hereto.

15. I should like to thank all those who attended the meeting and those whom I met on my inspection for their helpful attitude and general courtesy and kindness, and, in addition, to thank the Council's officers for the excellent

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arrangements which they made and for so readily supplying the additional figures which were needed to complete para.12 above.

G. F. Simmonds

G. F. SIMMONDS

27th October 1975

29 Days Lane
Biddenham
Bedford
MK40 4AD

Braintree District - Review of Electoral Arrangements
held on 21st August, 1975

Chairman: G. F. SIMMONDS, Esq., MA LL.B., Assistant Commissioner

Attending:

P. W. Cotton	Chief Executive
E. G. Willis	Electoral Officer
C. W. A. Pannell	Senior Planning Assistant
G. Courtauld	Councillor
M. R. T. Edwards	Kelvedon Parish Council
Lt.Col. J. DeD. Yule	Councillor
B. W. Kentish	Councillor
J. H. Sweeting	
H. Pitchforth (Mrs)	Councillor, B.D.C.
R. A. Pitchforth	
Barry J. Andrews	Councillor, B.D.C. & Feering Parish Council
D. H. Bacon	Feering Parish Council
Muriel Carrick	Feering Parish Council
Tom Henderson	Witham and Countryside Society
Eileen Bushell	Witham and Countryside Society
C. Norman	Braintree and Witham Times
Ian Kinloch	
Philip Edge	East Anglian Daily Times
Dennis Willetts	Councillor, B.D.C. and Witham Conservatives
Michael Brewer	Secretary/Agent, Braintree Constituency Conservative Association
J. H. Walker	Clerk, Colne Engaine Parish Council

Witham North Ward

Commencing at a point where the London-Colchester Railway meets the Braintree-Witham Branch railway; thence northwards and north-westwards along said branch railway to the eastern boundary of Faulkbourne CP; thence north-westwards and following said CP boundary and the eastern boundary of White Notley CP to the southern boundary of Cressing CP; thence north-eastwards along said boundary to the western boundary of Witham Silver End and Rivenhall Ward; thence south-eastwards along said boundary to a grass road being Parcel No.6834 on OS 1:2500 Plan TL.8117 Edition of 1953 and continuing south-eastwards along said road to its junction with Rickstones Road; thence along Rectory Lane to its junction with Forest Road; thence southwards along Forest Road to the road leading to the Community Hall; thence south-eastwards along the northern boundaries of Nos.13 to 46 Holly Walk and in prolongation thereof to the London-Colchester Railway; thence south-westwards along said railway to the point of commencement.

Witham Chipping Hill Ward

Commencing at a point where the River Brain crosses the London-Colchester Railway; thence north-westwards along the River Brain to Chipping Hill Bridge; thence westwards along the road known as Powers Hall End to Faulkbourne Road, thence north-westwards along the said road to the southern boundary of Faulkbourne CP; thence north-eastwards along the said boundary and north-westwards along the eastern boundary of the said CP to the western boundary of Witham North Ward; thence south-eastwards along the said boundary to the London-Colchester Railway; thence along the said railway to the point of commencement.

DISTRICT OF BRAINTREE: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARDS</u>	<u>NO. OF COUNCILLORS</u>
BLACK NOTLEY	1
BOCKING NORTH	3
BOCKING SOUTH	3
BRAINTREE CENTRAL	3
BRAINTREE EAST	3
BRAINTREE WEST	3
BUMPSTEAD	1
CASTLE HEDINGHAM	1
COGGESHALL	3
COLNE ENGAINE AND GREENSTEAD GREEN	1
CRESSING	1
EARLS COLNE	2
GOSFIELD	1
HALSTEAD ST ANDREWS	2
HALSTEAD TRINITY	3
HATFIELD PEVEREL	2
KELVEDON	3
PANFIELD	1
RAYNE	1
SIBLE HEDINGHAM	2
STOUR VALLEY CENTRAL	1
STOUR VALLEY NORTH	1
STOUR VALLEY SOUTH	1
TERLING	1
THREE FIELDS	2
UPPER COLNE	1
WITHAM CENTRAL	1
WITHAM CHIPPING HILL	2
WITHAM NORTH	3
WITHAM SILVER END AND RIVENHALL	2
WITHAM SOUTH	2
WITHAM WEST	2
YELDHAM	1

BRAINTREE DISTRICT

NOTE: Where the boundary is described as following a road, railway, river, canal or similar feature, it should be deemed to follow the centre line of the feature unless otherwise stated

BOCKING NORTH WARD

Commencing at grid reference TL 7436724055 being a point on the eastern boundary of Rayne CP, thence northwestwards and following said CP boundary the eastern boundaries of Panfield CP and Shalford CP to the southern boundary of Wethersfield CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary and the southern boundary of Gosfield CP to the western boundary of Stisted CP, thence southwards along said boundary to the River Blackwater, thence southwestwards and following said river to Bradford Street, thence southwestwards along said street to Church Lane, thence northwestwards along said lane to Boleyn's Avenue, thence southwestwards along said avenue and Bailey Bridge Road to Pegasus Way, thence northwestwards along said way to its junction with Panfield Lane, thence westwards in a straight line to the point of commencement.

BOCKING SOUTH WARD

Commencing at a point where Rayne Road meets the eastern boundary of Rayne CP, thence northeastwards and following said CP boundary to the southern boundary of Bocking North Ward, thence eastwards and following said ward boundary to a point being the prolongation northwestwards of Bedford Close, thence southeastwards along said prolongation and said close to Marlborough Road; thence eastwards along said road and southwards along Essex Road to Connaught Gardens, thence northeastwards along said gardens to Kent Gardens, thence southeastwards along said gardens and Dalliwood Way to Coggeshall Road, thence southwestwards along said road and Rayne Road to the point of commencement.

BRAINTREE WEST WARD

Commencing at a point where Notley Road meets the northern boundary of Black Notley CP, thence westwards and following said CP boundary to the eastern boundary of Felsted CP, thence northwards and following said boundary and the eastern boundary of Rayne CP to the southern boundary of Bocking South Ward, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to Railway Street, thence southwards along said street to South Street, thence generally westwards along said street to Notley Road, thence generally southwards along said road to the point of commencement.

BRAINTREE CENTRAL WARD

Commencing at a point where the northern boundary of Black Notley CP meets the eastern boundary of Braintree West Ward, thence northwards and following said eastern boundary to the southern boundary of Bocking South Ward, thence northeastwards along said boundary and continuing along Coggeshall Road to Wheatley Avenue, thence southwards along said avenue to Cunnington Road, thence southwestwards along said road, Hay Lane and Chapel Hill to the railway, thence southeastwards along the railway to the northern boundary of Cressing CP, thence southwestwards and following said CP boundary and the northern boundary of Black Notley CP to the point of commencement.

BRAINTREE EAST WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Braintree Central Ward meets the northern boundary of Cressing CP, thence northwestwards and following the eastern and northern boundaries of said ward and the eastern boundary of Bocking South Ward to the southern boundary of Bocking North Ward, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the western boundary of Stisted CP, thence southeastwards and following said boundary and the northern boundary of Cressing CP to the point of commencement.

WITHAM SILVER END AND RIVENHALL WARD

Commencing at a point where the western boundary of Kelvedon CP meets the Kelvedon to Witham railway, thence southwestwards along said railway to a point opposite the southwestern boundary of Parcel No 8400, thence north-westwards to and along said boundary on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plans TL 82/8315 Edition of 1974 and TL 82/8316 Edition of 1971 to Nat Grid ref. TL 828016185 thence due west to and northwards along Forest Road and continuing generally northwards and northwestwards along Rectory Lane to and across Rickstones Road to the path leading through Parcel No 1488, thence generally northwestwards along said path leading through Parcel No 0506 on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan TL 82/8317 Edition of 1968 to and along the path and grass road leading through Parcel No 6834 on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan TL 8117 Edition of 1953 to the southern boundary of Parcel No 4772, thence northwestwards and following said boundary and the western boundary of said parcel to the southern boundary of Parcel No 3182, thence southwestwards and following said boundary and the western boundary of said parcel to the southern boundary of Parcel No 0980 thence southwestwards along said boundary to the point where it meets the western boundary of said parcel, thence northwestwards in a straight line to the northwestern corner of Parcel No 8984 as shown on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan TL 8017 Edition of 1953, thence northeastwards along the northern boundary of said parcel to a point opposite the western boundary of Parcel No 8294, thence northwestwards to and along said western boundary and northeastwards along the northern boundary of said parcel to the western boundary of Parcel No 8399, thence northwestwards along said western boundary and the western boundary of Parcel No 8410 on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan TL 8018 Edition of 1953, thence northwestwards along said boundary to the southern boundary of Cressing CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary and the eastern boundary of said CP to the southern boundary of Bradwell CP thence eastwards and following said boundary and the western boundary of Kelvedon CP to the point of commencement.

WITHAM NORTH WARD

Commencing at a point where the Kelvedon to Witham railway meets the Braintree to Witham railway, thence northwards and northwestwards following said Braintree to Witham railway to the eastern boundary of Faulkbourne CP, thence northwestwards and following said boundary to and generally northwards along the eastern boundary of White Notley CP to the southern boundary of Cressing CP, thence generally eastwards along said southern boundary to the southwestern boundary of Witham Silver End and Rivenhall Ward, thence generally southeastwards following said southwestern boundary to the Kelvedon to Witham railway, thence southwestwards following said railway to the point of commencement.

WITHAM CHIPPING HILL WARD

Commencing at a point where the Kelvedon to Witham railway meets the River Brain, thence generally northwestwards following said river to the road known as Powers Hall End, thence generally westwards along said road to and northwestwards along Faulkbourne Road to the southern boundary of Faulkbourne CP, thence northwestwards and following said southern boundary and generally northwestwards following the eastern boundary of said CP to the western boundary of Witham North Ward, thence southeastwards along said boundary to and southwestwards along the Kelvedon to Witham railway to the point of commencement.

WITHAM WEST WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Hatfield Peverel CP meets the London-Colchester Railway, thence southwestwards and following said CP boundary, the eastern boundary of Terling CP the eastern boundary of Fairstead CP and the southern boundary of Faulkbourne CP to the western boundary of Witham Chipping Hill Ward, thence southeastwards and following said boundary and the southern boundary of said ward to the London-Colchester railway, thence southwestwards along said railway to the point of commencement.

WITHAM CENTRAL WARD

Commencing at a point where Highfield Road meets the eastern boundary of Witham West Ward; thence northeastwards along the said boundary and the southeastern boundary of Witham Chipping Hill Ward; thence continuing northeastwards along the southeastern boundary of Witham North Ward to the southeastern boundary of Witham Silver End and Rivenhall Ward; thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the western boundary of Kelvedon CP thence southeastwards and following the said boundary to the southeastern boundary of the District; thence southeastwards and following the said boundary and continuing southwards along the River Blackwater to the River Brain; thence northwestwards and following said river to the unnamed stream that flows to the rear of the properties in Guithavon Road, thence southwestwards and following said stream to Highfield Road, thence northeastwards and northwestwards along said road to the point of commencement.

WITHAM SOUTH WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of Witham West Ward meets the northeastern boundary of Hatfield Peverel CP, thence northeastwards along said ward boundary to the southern boundary of Witham Central Ward, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the southeastern boundary of the district, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the northeastern boundary of Hatfield Peverel CP, thence westwards and following said boundary to the point of commencement.

HALSTEAD TRINITY WARD

The Holy Trinity North and Holy Trinity south wards of the parish of Halstead.

HALSTEAD ST ANDREW'S WARD

The Halstead St Andrew's North and the Halstead St Andrew's South Wards of the parish of Halstead.

THREE FIELDS WARD

The parishes of Finchingfield, Great Bardfield and Wethersfield.

RAYNE WARD

The parishes of Bardfield Saling, Great Saling and Rayne.

PANFIELD WARD

The parishes of Panfield and Shalford

HATFIELD PEVEREL WARD

The parish of Hatfield Peverel

TERLING WARD

The parishes of Fairstead, Faulkbourne, Terling and White Notley

BLACK NOTLEY WARD

The parish of Black Notley

CRESSING WARD

The parish of Cressing

COGGESHALL WARD

The parishes of Bradwell, Coggeshall and Stisted

KELVEDON WARD

The parishes of Feering and Kelvedon

BUMPSTEAD WARD

The parishes of Helions Bumpstead, Steeple Bumpstead and Sturmer

UPPER COLNE WARD

The parishes of Birdbrook, Ridgewell, Stambourne and Toppesfield

STOUR VALLEY NORTH WARD

The parishes of Ashen, Belchamp Otten, Belchamp St Paul, Foxearth, Liston, Ovington, Pentlow and Tilbury - Juxta - Clare

YELDHAM WARD

The parishes of Great Yeldham and Little Yeldham

STOUR VALLEY CENTRAL WARD

The parishes of Belchamp Walter, Borley, Bulmer, Gestingthorpe and Wickham St Paul

SIBLE HEDINGHAM WARD

The parish of Sible Hedingham

CASTLE HEDINGHAM WARD

The parishes of Castle Hedingham, Great Maplestead and Little Maplestead

STOUR VALLEY SOUTH WARD

The parishes of Alphamstone, Bures Hamlet, Great Henny, Little Henny, Lamarsh, Middleton, Pebmarsh and Twinstead

GOSFIELD WARD

The parish of Gosfield

COLNE ENGAINE AND GREENSTEAD GREEN WARD

The parishes of Colne Engaine, Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural

EARLS COLNE WARD

The parishes of Earls Colne and White Colne