

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 140

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 140

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
BOROUGH OF THURROCK 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 borough of Thurrock, 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 borough.
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 Thurrock Borough Council, copies of which were circulated to the Essex County Council, the member of Parliament for the constituency 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. Thurrock Borough 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 comment.
4. In accordance with section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, they had exercised an option for elections by thirds.

5. On 13 December 1974 Thurrock Borough Council presented their draft scheme of representation. They proposed to divide the area of the District into 15 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors to form a council of 39.

6. We considered the draft scheme submitted by the Council, together with comments which had been made upon it. We noted that the draft scheme complied with the rules in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and our own guidelines, and we considered that it provided an acceptable basis of representation for the borough. We carefully considered all the comments, including a request from the Borough Council for an alteration to their own proposals, and decided that, whilst some of the proposed alterations might have merit in the immediate locality, they could not be accepted without producing a scheme which would be inferior to the one originally presented by the Council. We concluded that we should adopt the Council's draft scheme and we formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

7. On 14 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 map 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 25 April 1975.

8. We received comments suggesting that the proposed West Thurrock and Orsett wards should each be represented by an additional councillor, and some requests that the boundaries of certain wards should be realigned.

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 C W G T Kirk as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and report to us.

10. The Assistant Commissioner held a local meeting on 26 September and carried out an inspection of the area. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

11. The Assistant Commissioner recommends that the Commission's draft proposals should be confirmed with the following boundary modifications. He recommends the adoption of the alternative boundary between the Tilbury and Little Thurrock wards put forward by the Borough Council. This would transfer an area, which is to be developed residentially and commercially from the proposed Tilbury ward to the proposed Little Thurrock ward. The Assistant Commissioner also recommends that the boundary between the Corringham and Fobbing, and The Homesteads wards should be realigned so that that part of Corringham Stage 2 housing development in the proposed The Homesteads ward would be transferred to the proposed Corringham and Fobbing ward. Both these alterations are recommended in order not to break local ties.

12. We reviewed our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we had received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner's proposals provided a less satisfactory standard of representation in the Corringham and Fobbing ward than our draft proposals but we decided to accept the advice we had been given and to modify our draft proposals in order to secure a more satisfactory boundary. We therefore accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and, subject to these modifications, we confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

13. Details of these proposals are set out in Schedules 2 and 3 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. Schedule 3 shows our proposals

for the order of retirement of councillors in accordance with section 7(7)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps attached.

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 Thurrock Borough 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 received the consultation letter and 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 4 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

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

13 November 1975

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR
ENGLAND

Proposed Electoral Arrangements
for the
Borough of Thurrock

REPORT

by

C.W.G.T. KIRK

on an informal meeting at
Thurrock on Friday, 26th
September, 1975.

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ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BOROUGH OF
THURROCK

Report of C.W.G.T.Kirk.

1. On 13th August 1975 the Secretary of State, in pursuance of section 65 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, appointed me to be an assistant commissioner to hold a local enquiry or carry out any consultation with respect to the review by the Commission of the electoral arrangements for the Borough of Thurrock.
2. In reference to an invitation from the Commission in a letter dated 3rd June 1974, the Thurrock Borough Council submitted a draft scheme for the division of the Borough into 15 wards returning a total of 39 Councillors. This scheme was duly advertised.
3. By a letter dated 14th February 1975, the Commission announced their draft proposals, which were in effect the Council's scheme with minor boundary adjustments to secure more easily definable boundaries aligned to features on the ground. The electorate of each of the proposed wards remained unchanged. The Commission had decided not to incorporate in their draft proposals amendments suggested by the Borough Council in a letter dated 20th December 1974 proposing that there should be 3 Councillors instead of 2 for each of the Orsett and West Thurrock Wards. The Commission's proposals were duly advertised. Appendix 1 shows these proposals revised according to 1975 figures.
4. The following representations were received about the proposals :-
 - (1) Essex County Council. The County Council "have no comments to make".
 - (2) Thurrock Borough Council.
 - (a) Orsett ward and West Thurrock ward should each have 3 Councillors
 - (b) The boundary between Tilbury and Little Thurrock wards should be extended southwards to incorporate in Little Thurrock the site of impending residential and commercial development.
 - (3) County Councillor Roy Eric Robertson of 163 Rectory Road, Little Thurrock, supports the Borough Council's representation for 3 Councillors for West Thurrock ward.
 - (4) Thurrock Constituency Conservative Association - criticise the proposal by the Commission and the Council for Stanford-le-Hope ward, Homesteads ward and Corringham and Fobbing ward and suggest instead 4 wards to be known as Stanford (Village) ward, Stanford (Barnstable) ward, Corringham (Central) ward and Corringham & Fobbing ward.

App.1

- (5) Councillors G. Bright, D. DeSmedt and P. Woolliams (representing the existing Orsett ward) propose an extension of that ward in its south-west corner.
- (6) The Linford Residents Association support the Commission's proposals.

5. I visited the area on the 22nd September, 1975.
6. An informal meeting was held at the Thurrock Borough Council's Offices on Friday, 26th September 1975. It began at 10-30 a.m. and, after an adjournment of three-quarters of an hour for lunch, ended at 3-45 p.m.

In addition to myself, 16 persons were present. Their names appear in Appendix 2. The points on which representations were made were fully discussed; and the discussion on each is summarised in the following paragraphs.

App.2

7.

GENERALLY

Mr. G.V. Semain, the Chief Executive Officer to the Thurrock Borough Council, explained the considerations which had led the Council to submit their scheme and made the following points :-

- (1) A Council of 39 members was thought to be suitable. The number fell within the Commission's guide of between 30 and 60 members and would provide a worthwhile involvement in Council work for every member.
- (2) Annual elections should be held; one-third of the members should retire each year.
- (3) 11 wards returned 3 members each, 2 wards returned 2 members each, and 2 wards returned 1 member each. This pattern conformed to the criteria in Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (4) No local ties were broken by the scheme.
- (5) Ward boundaries followed the Commission's rules.
- (6) Wherever possible the existing wards had been adopted without change, except where Schedule 11 had made it necessary.
- (7) There was no parish in the Borough.

WEST THURROCK WARD

8. Mr. Semain said that, although by strict adherence to the guidelines, the Council had proposed 2 members for West Thurrock, on further consideration they had decided that this ward ought to have 3 members for the reasons set out in the Council's letters to the Commission on the 20th December 1974 and 5th May 1975. The Council had considered development in the ward by 1979 and had revised their forecast of the electorate for the ward in that year from 5255 to 5597.

The Council felt that an exceptional case existed because the ward contained one of the densest residential and commercial areas in the country, including 3 major cement factories, a large margarine factory, Thames Board Mills, very large oil storage installations and a large power station. This had led to a great deal of air pollution and had caused large areas of land dereliction. There was a large daily influx of workers. The residential areas were interspersed with the industrial areas. All this led to a greater volume than usual of complaints to ward Councillors from residents and workers and had made necessary the establishment of a Cement Industry Liaison Committee and a Joint Advisory Committee on ~~Land~~ dereliction on which one or more of the ward Councillors were expected to serve. In addition these Councillors were continually called upon to spend time in the Council Offices in other meetings to deal with these special problems; and their duties had become very onerous indeed. The ward had an area of 3440 acres or 8½% of the area of the Borough which was 40,250 acres, but less than 5% of the Councillors for the Borough. The only way for the Councillors for West Thurrock to operate as effectively as Councillors for other wards would be for there to be 3 of them.

9. Councillor Edward Bellacott - (Labour - West Thurrock) supported Mr. Semain's statement and the letters from the Council. West Thurrock was a close and ancient community. He had been born there. During his life he had seen what had been a pleasant ~~village~~ ^{diversified} village turned into the present dreadful industrial concentration. This had made him angry and in 1970 he had decided to stand for the Council and had been elected. He had then realised the problems caused by unscrupulous landowners and weak planning ~~pro~~visions; and his previous anger against the ward members turned to sympathy as he came to realise what they had to cope with. This was not a political argument. It was an argument of excessive overload on the ward members. They were compelled by their constituents to act as enforcement officers to detect and bring to notice infringements of planning and other laws. The ward labour party issued a newsletter 3 or 4 times a year; and he produced a copy of two of them dealing, amongst other matters, with bad smells from industrial processes, oil emission, cement dust, danger from carriage of chemicals and explosions, pollution of the Thames, congestion of roads by very heavy industrial traffic and planning blight as well as the more usual matters with which Councillors are concerned. His more formal engagements on Council work were chairman of the Housing Committee, responsible for 14,000 houses (involving one major all-day meeting a week and one committee meeting every 6 weeks); membership of the Planning Committee (once in 6 weeks) and of the Development Committee (once in 3 weeks); Chairman of the Cement Industry Liaison Committee (which met every 6 months); member of the new Joint Advisory Committee on Land Dereliction (which intended to meet every 3 months); and Chairman of the Thameside Joint Committee (which met every 3 months). In addition he served on various working parties from time to time and had to attend numerous site meetings.

10. Councillor Leslie Gay (Labour-West Thurrock) said he had lived in West Thurrock for 25 years and before that in Grays. He substantiated all that had been said by Councillor Bellacott and Mr. Semain. There was a great influx of workers daily to West Thurrock, many of whom raised with the West Thurrock Councillors problems related to that area. He served not only West Thurrock but also the whole of the Borough. The mix up of residential and industrial buildings gave rise to more than usual problems. He was a member of the Council's Executive Committee (which met once a week for an average of 2 hours) and other Committees but he and his colleagues also attended other Committees of which he was not a member, where problems of West Thurrock were discussed. He was also a member of the Essex and Herts Provincial Council for workers which met every 3 months.
11. Councillor Mrs. N.J.Dunn (Labour - West Thurrock) said she had lived there for 33 years. She was now retired. She served on the Road Safety and Public Transport Committee, the Recreation Committee and the Health Committee (all of which met 6-weekly) and the Home Safety Committee, which met every 2 months. She was also a member of the Cement Industry Liaison Committee and a newly formed Battered Wives Committee. She was always being approached by the West Thurrock Community Association on matters concerning the ward. All three ward members held surgeries in different parts of the ward once a month.
12. Councillor G.F.H.Bright (Conservative - Orsett) said he was leader of the Conservative Group on the Council. He had lived all his life in Orsett. On behalf of the Conservative Group and party he agreed that the work-load on the West Thurrock Councillors was very heavy and he fully supported the Council's representation that there should be 3 Councillors for West Thurrock. This was not a political question.
13. Consideration and Recommendation.
- (1) There is no doubt that West Thurrock presents a greater number of problems for the Council than do most wards. It is apparent that the present Councillors for this ward are most conscientious and assiduous in the discharge of what they see to be the duties of their office. These 3 Councillors are fully engaged on their Council work both generally and in relation to West Thurrock; and naturally they view with apprehension the proposal to reduce their number to 2. In this they are fully supported by the Council and their political opponents.
- (2) However, the Council's request for 3 members for West Thurrock comes up against a fundamental difficulty, which the Council themselves recognise. Local Government representation is essentially based on people, not masses of factories or holes in the ground; and, in this context,

people who live in the area, not those who come from outside to work in it. This principle was given statutory effect by article 3(2) of Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which provides that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of Councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same for every ward in the Borough, although this is subject to the desirability that boundaries should be and remain easily identifiable and to localities. Neither of these two qualifications exists in the present case.

(3) It becomes necessary to examine the ratio of representation for the Borough. The Commission's slight modifications of the Council's scheme do not alter the ratio of representation. The number of electors per Councillor in the 15 proposed wards in that scheme varies between 1708 and 2803 with an average of 2326 in 1975 and 1916 and 3238 and an average of 2576 in 1979 (as adjusted at the meeting). The ~~electors~~ ^{electors} in both years are comparatively widely apart, but this is accounted for by the qualifying factors in Schedule 11. In West Thurrock with 2 Councillors the representation would be 1709 in 1975 and 2798 in 1979; with 3 it would be 1140 in 1975 and 1866 in 1979.

(4) In all the circumstances, although I recognise that there is much force from a general point of view in the case made by the Council and the West Thurrock Councillors, I am driven to conclude that to provide 3 Councillors for West Thurrock would not comply with the statutory requirement and consequently must recommend that the number of Councillors for the West Thurrock ward should be 2.

ORSETT WARD

14. Mr. Semain submitted the Council's representation that Orsett ward should have 3 Councillors and referred to the Council's letter of 20th December 1974; and he made the following points :-

- (1) If West Thurrock were large, Orsett was enormous. It contained 11,483 acres or approaching one third of the Borough.
- (2) It was made up of 3 separate Villages - Horndon (1500 electors), Orsett (1300 electors) and Bulphan (620 electors). Each had its own public village hall leased to a management committee, which included the local Councillor who was also one of the trustees for the hall.
- (3) Horndon and Orsett were Conservation Areas. This imposed extra work on the ward Councillors who had to take special care with planning applications affecting those villages.
- (4) The ward was truly rural. The ward members strove to maintain that character.

- (5) The ward was wholly in the green belt with limited development envelopes round the three villages. Pressure was being exerted by the Department of the Environment for the release of green belt land.
- (6) Because of the 3 villages the ward was peculiarly suited for 3 members.
15. Councillor Bright (Conservative) said he lived at Horndon-on-the-Hill and was a Councillor for Orsett. He supported what Mr. Semain had said. The ward was the largest in the Borough and the ward members had to get around it all. Bulphan was not connected by public transport. Various other parts of the ward also were without public transport. This made difficulties for Councillors and residents. By tradition, the ward was Conservative, and the party tried to secure 1 member in each Village. He had previously represented Grays ~~and~~ ^{Wickham} ~~Wickham~~ ward before he was elected for Orsett. There were far more problems in Orsett. The resistance to more development meant an inspection of the site of every planning application. There were 2 active conservation societies. He and his colleagues were protecting the environment for the whole of the Borough. The South-East plan described Orsett as a lung for South-East Essex. This involved ward members in conservation societies and other pressure groups. The 3 ward members were the only Conservatives on the Council. Each member held surgeries. They believed in going to the electorate themselves and tried to visit the small communities and farms to ensure the electors there remembered they lived in the Borough. He spoke not only for himself but for the other 2 ward members as well.
16. Councillor Bellacott (Labour) spoke for himself as a Councillor when he supported Councillor Bright's plea. He was a cyclist and it took him half a day to cycle across Orsett ward.
17. Councillor R.A. Wood J.P. (Labour) supported the proposal for 3 members for the ward. This support was endorsed by the Orsett Labour Party. It was not a political question.
18. Mr. Christopher Thompson said he was a Conservative. He lived in Orsett. It was important that none of the 3 villages should think itself unrepresented, particularly Bulphan which was isolated. If one of the villages were unrepresented the political (not in a party sense) consequences could be great.
19. Councillor Bright (Conservative) referred to another matter affecting Orsett Ward. He considered there should be an adjustment of the South-West boundary of the ward by extending it from the position proposed by the Council and provisionally accepted by the Commission. This proposed boundary ran along the sides and backs of the gardens of houses in Blackshot Lane, Fairfield Avenue, Ashley Gardens and Brookman's Avenue. In the opinion of the 3 present ward members, this part of the boundaries should be moved further east to run along the line of the Central Electricity Generating Board's overhead power lines, as described in more detail in their letter dated 21st April 1975 to the Commission.

The reason for this submission was that the open land in this part of the ward could be developed; and that development should form part of Stifford ward. There was in contemplation, a by-pass which would sever Stifford from Orsett.

20. Mr. Semain explained that the Department of the Environment had proposed a by-pass to relieve the A.13 of heavy traffic. The proposal was still subject to objection and public inquiry. The Council were objecting to the line of the by-pass. It would be premature to alter ward boundary until the line of the by-pass became fixed. The ward boundary proposed by the Council should stand - Councillor Bright's suggested boundary did not comply with the Commission's standards which were normally related to physical features which did not include overhead power lines. Moreover, viaducts and tunnels should not be used for boundaries. The proposed by-pass would be on a viaduct at this point. There was no immediate proposal of development on the open land. There had been several planning applications including a large one for Greygoose Farm - but all had been refused permission. This land was in the green belt. The Council's negotiations for the release of land from the green belt did not extend to this land. The County Council and the Borough Council took a strong line on green belt policy and refusals of permission were generally supported by the Department of the Environment on appeals.
21. Councillor Bright remarked that he was not quite as optimistic as Mr. Semain.
22. Councillor Wood said the land in question was good agricultural land.
23. Mr. Semain added that the area to be removed from Orsett ward by Councillor Bright's suggestion was too large; in any event, if any development did occur by 1979 the position about the by-pass should have been clarified by then and it might be appropriate to re-consider the ward boundary in the next review.
24. Councillor George Watts (Labour) said he was a Councillor for Stifford ward. He had been born in Tilbury and when he was 5 years old had moved to Grays where he had lived ever since. He agreed with Mr. Semain that a revision of the ward boundary would be premature. He could not understand why the proposed by-pass would be a natural ward boundary because if this were so, an essential part of North-West Stifford would be split off from that ward. Stifford ward was the ideal size. There was small development going on North of the A.13 on gardens of big houses. The expansion was gradual.
25. Councillor Bright said the power line was chosen as a boundary because it was the only physical feature across the open-land.
26. Mr. Semain concluded the discussion on Orsett ward by repeating that the change proposed by Councillor Bright covered too large an area. 40 acres had been the subject of the refused planning application. The proposed change was based on conjecture - a similar problem arose with other wards, but one had to deal with the facts as they were.

27. Consideration and Recommendation.

- (1) At first view, it might be thought that the Council's argument for 3 Councillors for Orsett are inconsistent with those advanced to support a similar request for West Thurrock; but further consideration shows them not to be inconsistent, merely different. The existing Councillors for Orsett are as conscientious and assiduous as their colleagues in West Thurrock. The case for 3 Councillors is persuasive from a general point of view, but again it meets the same fundamental difficulty as the case for West Thurrock does.
- (2) The representation by 2 Councillors for Orsett would be 1708 in 1975 and 1916 in 1979; with 3 it could be 1139 in 1975 and 1277 in 1979.
- (3) For the same reason and with the same reluctance which I have expressed in relation to West Thurrock, I conclude I must recommend that the number of Councillors for Orsett ward should be 2.
- (4) A further point was made that there should be a change in the South Western boundary of Orsett ward. It was argued by the present 3 Councillors for the ward that there is a real possibility of residential development on open land in this corner which is remote from the inhabited areas of the ward; and that any such new development should be in Stifford ward. I agree that if such new development were to occur it should be in Stifford. But from what I heard at the meeting I was satisfied that the possibility of development was remote, as the open land is in the green belt which is being preserved as such by the planning authorities supported by the Secretary of State for the Environment.
- (5) After the meeting Councillor Bright wrote to the Commission stating that the Secretary of State had allowed an appeal against refusal of permission to develop about 42 acres adjacent to the Eastern side of Blackshots Lane. This is the large application to which Mr. Semain referred at the meeting. Mr. Semain was invited to comment on Councillor Bright's letter. It seems that Councillor Bright may have looked at the report of the Inspector who conducted the hearing of the appeal and who had recommended that permission be granted. The Secretary of State did not accept this recommendation and dismissed the appeal. The Council have sent a copy of his decision letter to the Commission. A plan of the appeal site is attached in Appendix 3. This letter reinforces the opinion I formed at the meeting that development of the open land is unlikely in the next few years. Even if I felt otherwise, it would not be easy to fix a suitable boundary for the part to be excluded from Orsett ward. The proposed by-pass could not be used because its line has not yet been fixed, quite apart from the proposal that it should be on a viaduct. By the time the ward boundaries are reviewed again, presumably the line of the by-pass will have been fixed and the road itself might have been constructed. It might be that the circumstances which then exist would justify an alteration in the ward boundary at this point.

App. 3

- (6) I recommend that no change be made in the South-Western boundary of Orsett ward shown in the Commission's proposals.

LITTLE THURROCK/TILBURY WARDS

28. Mr. Semain referred to the Council's letter of 14th August 1975 to the Commission seeking an amendment to the boundary between the wards of Little Thurrock and Tilbury. In the Council's scheme the boundary ran along the rear of the houses South of Dock Road. In the Commission's draft proposals this boundary had been moved slightly southwards to run along a drain. In the meantime the Port of London Authority, the London Docks Labour Board and the Borough Council had prepared a scheme to establish a housing association to build about 500 houses immediately to the South of the before-mentioned boundary in the Council's scheme. South of these houses would be ~~front~~^{port}-related development such as warehousing. The new estate would produce ultimately 1250/1500 electors but about 800 by 1979 increasing the forecast electorate then to 8722. The ditch proposed as a boundary by the Commission would run through the site of the houses. In consequence the Council wished to see the ward boundary run South along the Docks Approach Road Tilbury to the railway and then North-east along the railway. The new estate should not be in Tilbury ward because:-

- (1) it was planned socially to relate to Little Thurrock;
- (2) access to and from the estate would be via Little Thurrock;
- (3) Tilbury ward already had a high number of electors for 3 Councillors and should not be increased. The electorate in Tilbury ward was 8,10 and was forecast to be 8510 in 1979, 123 more than originally put forward.

29. Councillor C.M. Bidmead (Labour - Little Thurrock) thought the proposal was not controversial. The site in question was on Little Thurrock marshes, which had never been part of Tilbury. Tilbury was compact and separated from Little Thurrock by open space. If the site remained in Tilbury, it would be out on a limb and Tilbury members would find it difficult to serve in addition to the remainder of the ward where the electorate was already relatively high. It was a natural extension of Little Thurrock. He supported the proposal.

30. Councillor Bright (Conservative) agreed that the Docks Approach Road, Tilbury was a natural boundary but was concerned that the inclusion of an extra 1500 electors would cause imbalance because Little Thurrock was already one of the largest wards. There was a strong case for re-drawing the boundaries so as to create a 1 member ward in the South of Little Thurrock.

31. Councillor Bidmead commented that Councillor Bright's suggestion was interesting, but he did not like single member wards. There might be a case in due course for a complete revision of the wards in this part of the Borough but it would be premature to do so now. At present it would be very difficult to work out satisfactory new boundaries. The present 3 members from Little Thurrock saw no difficulty in serving the ward enlarged as proposed.
32. Councillor Bright replied that Little Thurrock was a marginal ward politically. His party did not want a temporary expedient which emphasised imbalance.
33. Councillor Wood (Labour) thought that at this stage the proposal should be adopted but possibly that in 1979 there could be a review of the whole of the wards in and around Grays centre.
34. Mr. Semain said the Council had tried to cause as little disturbance as possible. The addition of the site to Little Thurrock would not cause unfairness. In 1979, Grays North ward would have 3238 electors for 1 member and the enlarged Little Thurrock would have 2907 electors per member. In any event, the Council had asked for inequality in West Thurrock and Orsett wards; an inequality above the line was no worse than inequality below the line. There was no case for a review now as suggested by Councillor Bright. It was difficult to say whether a review would be justified in the future because of impending changes.
35. Mr. C. Thompson (Conservative) said the case for Orsett had disregarded the general view. Councillor Bidmead and Mr. Semain were disregarding the rules in Little Thurrock. He thought that an equitable view should prevail and there was no case for special treatment for Little Thurrock.
36. Consideration and Recommendation
- (1) By the Council's scheme, the representation per Councillor for Little Thurrock is 2510 in 1975 and 2641 in 1979. With the addition of the new estate it would be 2907 in 1979 and grow thereafter as the Estate was completed. In Tilbury the representation would be 2803 in 1975 and 2837 in 1979 on the scheme as adjusted.
- (2) Both Little Thurrock and Tilbury wards have a relatively high number of electors. If the site of the proposed new houses were to remain in Tilbury, the electors in that ward would number 9310 (or 3103 per Councillor) in 1979 and continue to grow thereafter. I note that in 1979 Grays Thurrock North ward will have 3238 electors for 1 Councillor, which is the highest in the Borough. In view of this, it would be difficult to rule out the retention of the housing site in Tilbury merely because of imbalance. However, Tilbury is clearly a self-contained community separated by open space from the housing site, all the links of which will be with Little Thurrock; and therefore it would be inappropriate for it to remain in Tilbury.

(3) At the meeting, it was suggested that a new 1-member ward be formed in the South of Little Thurrock and the site. No figure for an electorate was put forward. It might be possible, arithmetically, to produce one 3-member ward with in 1979 6540 electors (or 2180 per member) and one 1-member ward with in 1979 2180 electors. To do this would, however, be to ignore the statutory provision about local ties; and it could be difficult to fix a satisfactory boundary. It may be that, when the new housing is nearing completion, there would emerge a case for reviewing the boundaries of Little Thurrock, Grays Thurrock North and Grays Thurrock Town wards with a view to adjusting the balance among these wards, but in my opinion it would be premature to do this now.

(4) Accordingly I accept the submission of the Council and recommend that the area in the Tilbury ward proposed by the Commission, which is to be developed residentially and commercially by public authorities, should be transferred from Tilbury ward to Little Thurrock ward. The detailed effect on the boundary is shown in Appendix 4 and on Map A.

App. 4.
Map A.

CORRINGHAM & FOBBING, STANFORD-LE-HOPE
AND THE HOMESTEAD WARDS

37. Councillor Bridge (Conservative) explained the way the Council's scheme had been prepared. The Labour Group leader had drawn up a rough guide and Councillors had been invited to make suggestions. In response the Conservatives had prepared the scheme now put forward by them but it was not adopted by the Council who preferred proposals by the Labour Councillors from the existing wards concerned. The Conservatives' proposals as set out in a letter dated 21st April 1975 to the Commission were to provide 4 wards for East Thurrock instead of the 3 proposed by the Council. The comparative effects of the two sets of proposals are shown in the following tables :-

TABLE 1

Council's Scheme

Ward	No. of Cllrs.	1974		1979	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Stanford-le-Hope	3	7247	3.15	7676	2.98
The Homesteads	3	5593	2.43	7593	2.94
Corringham & Fobbing	3	7943	3.45	8372	3.25
	9	20,783	9.02 AV.	23,641 1	9.18 AV.

TABLE 2

Conservatives' Scheme

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1974		1979	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Stanford (Village)	2	4151	1.85	4951	1.53
Stanford (Barstable)	3	6821	3.04	7321	2.84
Corringham (Central)	3	5327	2.37	6327	2.46
Corringham & Fobbing	2	4486	2.00	4686	1.82
	10	20,785	9.26 AV.	23,285	9.04 AV

Notes: (1) 1974 figures have been used in these tables instead of 1975 figures as the latter are not available for the Conservatives' scheme.

(2) The total forecast 1979 electorate of the Borough is taken as 100,458 (see Appendix 5)

App. 5.

The Conservatives had tried to follow the Commission's guidelines by using physical boundaries and community loyalty. The most important change in the area was the construction of Manor Way which was a double-carriageway road. It would be wrong to allow this new road to pass through the centre of a ward. He produced the local guide to illustrate this point, as the maps were out of date. He then dealt with each of the proposed wards as follows :-

- (1) Stanford (Village) . Its boundaries were the arterial Road, Manor Way, Springhouse Lane, South to the river and then along the Council boundary. It had 4151 electors, appropriate for 2 members. It was a mixture of private and public housing.
- (2) Stanford (Barnstable) . Its boundaries were the arterial road, Manor Way, Springhouse Road, Thud Avenue and across the railway. It had 6821 electors, suitable for 3 members. Again it was a mixture of private and public housing. Corringham town centre was in this proposed ward.
- (3) Corringham (Central) . Its boundaries were arterial road, Lampits Road, Lampits Hill, Church Road, Manor Way and the Stanford (Barnstable) boundary. There were shops in Lampits Hill. It had 5327 electors for 3 members. While it contained a mixture of private and public housing there was a greater proportion of public housing. More residential development was taking place.
- (4) Corringham & Fobbing . This was the remainder of East Thurrock. It contained 4486 electors, suitable for 2 members. Fobbing village and a rural area were included.

His criticisms of the Council's scheme were :-

- (a) No account had been taken of Manor Way which drove through the middle of a ward.
- (b) The boundary of the Homesteads ward failed to observe the Commission's rules in respect of an area South of the Southend Road. He suggested there was a political motive in taking the Council estate in this area into this ward.

He repeated that the Conservatives' Scheme had been prepared independently.

- (1)
38. Councillor Wood (Labour) explained that/the whole of East Thurrock had been looked at completely as a non-political exercise. The ward Councillors had met together with the area County Councillors who were all Labour. Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham & Fobbing wards as they had existed, had always been marginal. The present area grew up out of three villages - Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham and Fobbing. The former two had grown together with the development which had occurred of later years. Fobbing had remained separate and the Council wanted to keep it so. Fobbing was in the green belt and might be a conservation area.

- (2) Stanford-le-Hope had been a unit including the Homesteads. The secondary school and its catchment area had been sited with this in mind. There was adequate access across Manor Way by a bridge at Southend Road and underpasses at Silvertown Avenue (opposite the junior school) and Abbotts Hall Chase.
- (3) Previous residents of East and West Ham whose houses were located North of Manor Way, looked to Stanford-le-Hope; and used the Community Centre in Hassenbrook Road.
- (4) There were Anglican, Roman Catholic and Non-Conformist churches in Stanford-le-Hope.
- (5) In Corringham Village there was an Anglican Church with a Non-Conformist Church nearby.
- (6) A village hall in Corringham town centre was used as a church; and there were plans for a Roman Catholic church.
- (7) There were shops in Corringham village away from the Corringham town centre.
- (8) Corringham village around the church was a conservation area. An old peoples' hall there was used as a village hall.
- (9) Corringham town centre had its own village hall.
- (10) The Conservatives' plan split known community areas into fragments - e.g. Stanford-le-Hope straddled Manor Way; Corringham township was split down the middle.
- (11) Development was still proceeding in North Corringham. The area had only 6 Councillors at present; there should be 9. The Council had looked at the traditional areas which had voted and associated together. There had been 1 Councillor for Stanford-le-Hope, 2 for Corringham & Fobbing and 3 for the Homesteads. Corringham town centre had been developed and large housing estates had been built. The Homesteads had developed privately over the years. It contained numerous unmade roads which were a legacy of uncontrolled development and had given rise to a Homesteads Road Protection Society.
- (12) The area South of Southend road to which Councillor Bright had referred was part of Corringham Stage 2 development. If it were not to be in the Homesteads ward there would be an imbalance of representation. On the 1975 register, of 1363 electors in Stage 2, 606 were in this area. If they were put into Corringham & Fobbing ward, that ward would have a 1975 electorate of 8685 and the Homesteads 5157,

which was too great an imbalance. However, if it were thought essential, he would reluctantly accept Southend Road as the boundary.

39. Mr. Semain said the Council saw the Homesteads as one area. If Southend Road were to be the South-Western boundary throughout its length, imbalance would result, as the electorate of the Homesteads would be too low. The Homesteads was an identifiable area. 9 Councillors were the right number for East Thurrock. It was difficult to fix boundaries for wards with a total of 9 Councillors. Manor Way had been completed about 4 years ago.
40. Mr. David Awcock said he was Chairman of the East Thurrock Conservative Association. He lived North of Manor Way, which was a cut off. The people who lived North of the road did not leave community with Stanford-le-Hope.
41. Mr. C. Thompson (Conservative) said he was a member of the East Thurrock Community Association who could not get support from the people living North of Manor Way.
42. Mr. Ian Harrison, the Conservative candidate, said he lived in Corringham. It was easier to get from the Homesteads to the Corringham Community Centre than from the disputed area North of Manor Way.
43. Councillor Wood (Labour) said that when the scheme adopted by the Council had been discussed initially, the ward Councillors had explained it at their surgeries and the scheme reflected their constituents' feelings.
44. Councillor T. R. Gildchrist (Labour - Stanford-le-Hope) said that the people concerned had a freedom of choice and he supported the Council's scheme in consequence.
45. Councillor Bright replied to the discussion. The Council had adopted Labour policy. They had not taken into account the school catchment areas to which Councillor Wood had referred. The Conservatives were interested in the flow of people. The community centre was a drill hall which had been bought. Originally a new building on a nearby site had been planned. He denied that people crossed from the North of Manor Way to shop. The location of churches was irrelevant. The Homesteads (as proposed by the Council) had more connection with Stanford-le-Hope than the people from East and West Ham in the area North of Manor Way. The whole area was new in concept. It would be a mistake to relate to what had been there in the past, which had become meaningless to those who lived there at the present time. The communities in East Thurrock should be looked at as they were now not as they had been.
46. Mr. Thompson added that Manor Way had changed everything.
47. Consideration and Recommendation.
 - (1) The schemes submitted by the Council and the Conservatives are quite different and admit of no compromise between them. The Council say their scheme retains long-standing ties and associations which still exist; the Conservatives contend that recent development, notably the construction of

Manor Way, has made those ties and associations meaningless and that their scheme provides for the communities as they see them to-day.

- (2) Both schemes have defects. The Council's scheme:
- (a) although it uses Manor Way as the boundary between Stanford-le-Hope and The Homesteads wards, incorporates the East/West Ham development North of that road with Stanford-le-Hope South of it and ignores any effect Manor Way may have in this part of its length.
 - (b) incorporates in the Homesteads 606 of the electors in Corringham stage 2 although that development is separated from the Homesteads by Southend Road.

The Conservatives' scheme :

- (i) provides for 10 Councillors in 4 wards (as against the Council's proposal of 9 Councillors for 3 wards) for an electorate of 23596 (Conservatives' figure) in 1979, producing a representation per Councillor of 2360 for the former and 2622 for the latter.
- (ii) splits the Homesteads and adds part of it to the East/West Ham housing and the remainder to Corringham Central.
- (iii) splits Corringham township.

The Council's Scheme provides a slightly better balance of electors among 3 wards than the Conservatives do for 4 wards.

- (3) The Conservatives' scheme with 10 members produces a representation per Councillor which is within the maximum and minimum limits of the Council's scheme. Therefore I would not be inclined to reject it, were representation the only factor. However, I must take account of its other defects. I am satisfied from what I heard at the meeting and from what I saw during my inspection of the area that the Homesteads and Corringham township are homogeneous communities. The proposals in the Conservatives' scheme to split these communities is, in my view unacceptable; and thus I am unable to recommend it.
- (4) The Council's scheme is not perfect. The construction of Manor Way will in my opinion play an increasing part in separating the people living North of it from those in Stanford-le-Hope on the South. However, as was pointed out at the meeting, it is crossed by two underpasses, providing access to the shopping centre and the junior school. This should enable the ties and associations between North and South of the road to continue for sometime; and in my opinion the existence of Manor Way is not for the present a bar to accepting the boundary between the Homesteads and Stanford-le-Hope wards as proposed by the Council.
- (5) The objection to the inclusion in the Homesteads ward of part of Corringham stage 2 has more force. This development is clearly part of Corringham and has little in common with The Homesteads; even less, as I see it, than the connection between The Homesteads and the East/West Ham housing. At the meeting it was said that the Council made their proposal simply to secure a balance of the electorate in the two wards.

In 1979 the position would be :-

TABLE 3

Ward	1979 Electorate			
	As scheme		If C2 wholly in C&F	
	Electorate	Per Cllr.	Electorate	Per Cllr.
Corringham & Fobbing	8372	2791	8978	2993
Stanford-le-Hope	7676	2559	7676	2559
The Homesteads	7593	2531	6987	2329

Table 3 shows the representation for all three wards in either event to be within the maximum and minimum limits of representation in the Council's scheme (between 1916 and 3238 in 1979). The wards with the largest representation in 1979 would be:

Per Councillor

Grays Thurrock North	3238
Corringham & Fobbing	2993
Little Thurrock	2907
Tilbury	2837

and those with the smallest:

Per Councillor

Orsett	1916
Aveley	2302
The Homesteads	2329
Stifford	2369

It seems to me that this is an instance where the localities would justify a somewhat greater ~~an~~ balance of representation. In all the circumstances, including the tortuous (and artificial) boundary involved in the Council's scheme, I have concluded that it is right that The Homesteads ward should not include any part of Corringham stage 2.

- (6) I recommend that the Commissions' proposals for the Corringham and Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope and the Homesteads wards be approved, with the modification that the part of Corringham stage 2 in The Homesteads ward be transferred to Corringham & Fobbing ward. The revised boundary is described in Appendix 4 and is shown on Map B.

Recommendations

48. (1) In this report I have made the following recommendations :-
- (a) West Thurrock Ward. That the number of Councillors for West Thurrock ward should be 2 (paragraph 13(4)).
 - (b) Orsett Ward
 - (i) That the number of Councillors for Orsett ward should be 2 (paragraph 27(3)).
 - (ii) That no change be made in the Southwestern boundary of Orsett ward shown in the Commission's proposals (paragraph 27(6)).
 - (c) Little Thurrock/Tilbury Wards. That the area in the Tilbury ward proposed by the Commission which is to be developed residentially and commercially by public authorities should be transferred from Tilbury ward to Little Thurrock ward (paragraph 36(4)).
 - (d) Corringham & Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope and The Homesteads Wards. That the Commission's proposals for the Corringham & Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope and The Homesteads Wards be approved, with the modification that the part of Corringham stage 2 in The Homesteads ward be transferred to Corringham & Fobbing ward (paragraph 47(6)).

App.5.

- (2) Appendix 5 shows the effect of my recommendations on the distribution of the electorate as well as some changes in the Council's forecast for 1979.

App.4.

Maps A & B


- (3) The details of (1) (c) and (1) (d) are shown in Appendix 4 and the accompanying maps A & B.

App.6

49. Appendix 6 contains a copy of a report of the meeting in the Thurrock Gazette.

50.

Finally, I should like to record, first the helpful attitude of all those who spoke at the meeting and, second, my gratitude to the Council's Officers who so readily made available the additional information for which I asked.


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17th October, 1975.

SCHEDULE 2

BOROUGH OF THURROCK : NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO OF COUNCILLOR</u>
AVLEY	3
BELHUS	3
CHADWELL ST MARY	3
CORRINGHAM & FOBING	3
EAST TILBURY	1
GRAYS THURROCK (NORTH)	1
GRAYS THURROCK (TOWN)	3
LITTLE THURROCK	3
OCKENDEN	3
ORSETT	2
STANFORD-LE-HOPE	3
STIFFORD	3
THE HOMESTEADS	3
TILBURY	3
WEST THURROCK	2

THE BOROUGH OF THURROCK

ORDER OF RETIREMENT OF COUNCILLORS

NAME OF WARD	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1st YEAR	2nd YEAR	3rd YEAR
AVELEY	3	1	1	1
BELHUS	3	1	1	1
CHADWELL ST MARY	3	1	1	1
CORRINGHAM & FOBING	3	1	1	1
EAST TILBURY	1	1	-	-
GRAYS THURROCK (NORTH)	1	1	-	-
GRAYS THURROCK (TOWN)	3	1	1	1
LITTLE THURROCK	3	1	1	1
OCKENDEN	3	1	1	1
ORSETT	2	-	1	1
STANFORD-LE-HOPE	3	1	1	1
STIFFORD	3	1	1	1
THE HOMESTEADS	3	1	1	1
TILBURY	3	1	1	1
WEST THURROCK	2	-	1	1
	39	13	13	13

