

Dear Sirs,

I am an elected District Councillor for Hawkwell West Ward, representing Rochford District Residents.

RDC worked hard on the Electoral Boundary Review and I am pleased the submission made was closely based on a model from the Green and Rochford District Residents Alliance. That said Officers and Working Group Members contributed to the final draft and I am pleased with the final proposals.

The only concerns I have are minor but nevertheless deserve consideration.

With respect to the Boundaries the areas I know well seem to have a positive outcome.

I have heard that Hullbridge residents are both relieved and grateful that their boundaries for both the Parish and District stay the same and will retain the identity of this community.

Hawkwell, which I admit to having a strong interest in, again has had the integrity of the Parish retained and the split into two District Wards is necessary due to the density of the population in this village. Hawkwell used to be split into East and West Wards with a greater representation in the East. The redrawing of the Boundary line incorporating Hawkwell West and some of the existing North and South (old East ward) will have little impact on community identity. The remainder of the existing South and North wards will be in the new East Ward.

As Hawkwell West Ward Councillors, myself and Councillor John Mason, we leafleted all the properties in the existing North and South Ward that are proposed to be incorporated into the Hawkwell West asking for feedback. We have received NO negative feedback, indeed the only feedback received has been residents phoning up welcoming the change. In practice this will not make a great deal of difference as we are asked to deal with problems in these wards anyway as residents see Hawkwell as a whole and tend to take little notice of Ward demarcations.

Some residents of Hockley have expressed concern but this has mostly been over the 3 Member ward issue and the names. Again the Ward boundaries seem to be accepted.

I know that there are some concerns within the detail of some Rayleigh internal boundaries but overall the proposals seem good however it would perhaps be an idea to get greater detail from those with a better knowledge of the concerns expressed as agreement seems to be there amongst members without the time or ability to put the concerns into a realistic proposal.

In response to the names I was surprised that more concern and time seemed to be spent on this rather than the boundary detail.

However I understand the concerns and would like to comment as follow:

I am not sure of the name 'Wakerings' , I have never heard of it before until this suggestion from another Councillor. Would Foulness and Wakering solve the Little/Great Wakering issue?

Hockley and Hockley and Ashingdon names are simple and descriptive. Hockley West and Hockley East and Ashingdon as proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Administration (Councillor Hudson) are, I feel, totally confusing. Although the argument given for this is that

a north south line divides Hockley this is not how residents of Hockley see themselves and will cause confusion.

The new Hockley/Hockley West incorporates Hockley West and part of Hockley Central whereas the new Hockley and Ashingdon Ward includes Hockley North and part of Central. To name this East and West diminishes the Central area and reverts to an old East name but with different boundaries which for older residents may be confusing. I much prefer the plain Hockley for the Ward name.

Ashingdon Parish boundary goes through Hockley addresses and most residents are aware that they have a connection with both areas.

Therefore the simple Ashingdon and Hockley or Hockley and Ashingdon is both accurate and descriptive.

The Rochford North Name diminishes the Parishes incorporated in this ward and the proposed change to Rochford Rural is one I can support and would more truly reflect the new area. As an aside it was the Rochford area that the working group had the most difficulty with and the LGBC proposals that resolved this dilemma are appreciated.

The proposed Grange ward name loses the importance of the name Sweyne/Sweyne Park I understand that this ward was Grange then Sweyne Park to change back to Grange seems change for changes sake. The proposal of Sweyne Park and Grange would fit better for both residents in the ward and be identifiable to those outside the ward. If simplicity is the aim perhaps Sweyne and Grange might be considered. However my preference would be for Sweyne Park and Grange.

The process of incorporating the LGBC requirements into a workable plan with its emphasis on statistics has been a difficult and challenging one that I believe the Council has dealt with well.

Yours faithfully,

Christine Mason (Mrs)  
District Councillor for Hawkwell West