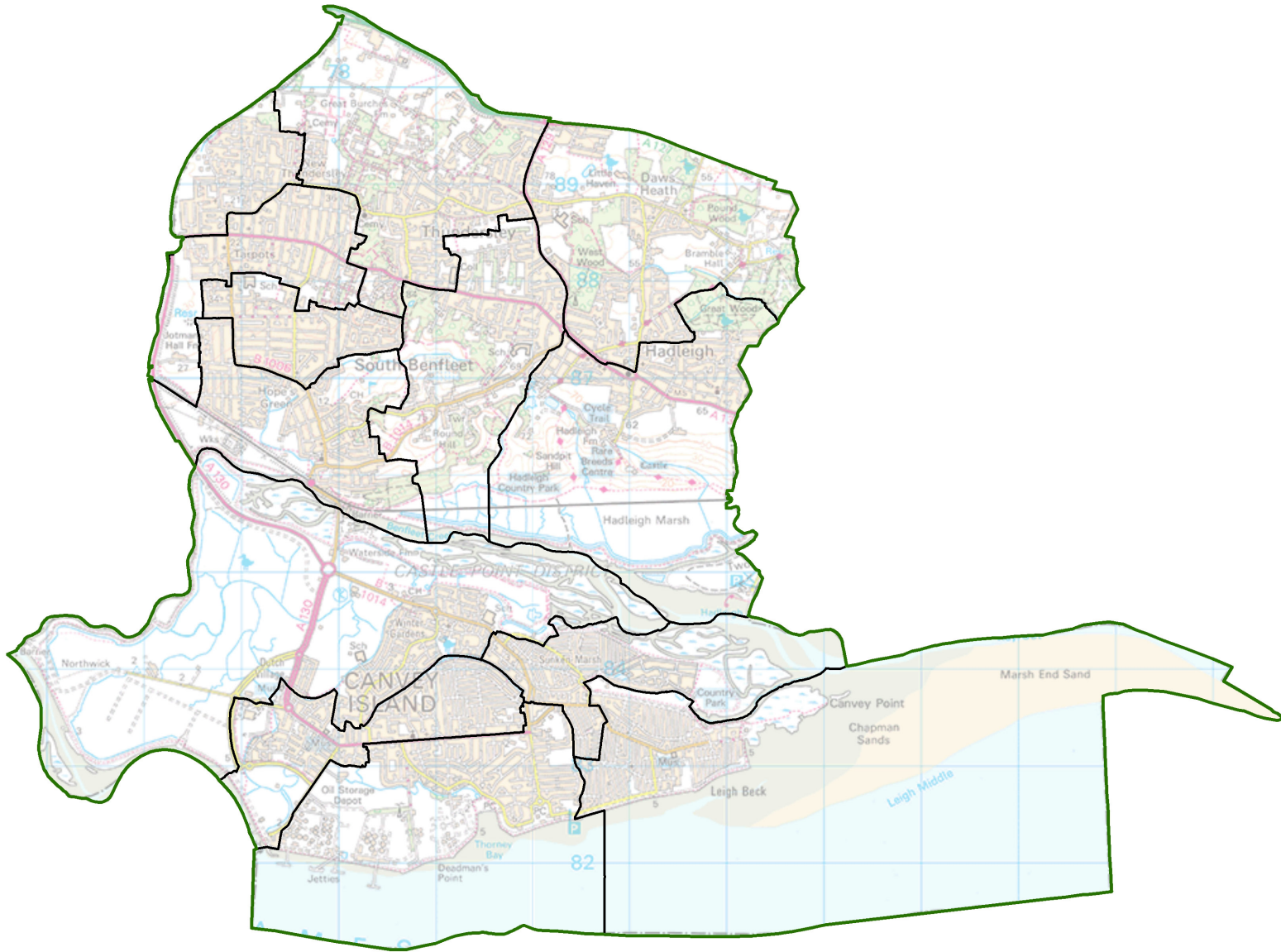


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for Castle Point Borough Council Draft Recommendations

October 2022

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Castle Point?

7 We are conducting a review of Castle Point Borough Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2000, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² Additionally some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Castle Point are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Castle Point

9 Castle Point should be represented by 39 councillors, two fewer than there are now.

10 Castle Point should have 13 wards, one fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 4 October to 12 December 2022. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 12 December 2022 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 17 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for area. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
26 April 2022	Number of councillors decided
10 May 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
18 July 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
4 October 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
12 December 2022	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
28 February 2023	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2021	2028
Electorate of Castle Point	69,666	72,820
Number of councillors	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	1,786	1,867

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Castle Point will have good electoral equality by 2028.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2028, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2023. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 4% by 2028.

25 We received two submissions during consultation that challenged the electoral figures put forward by the Council. These submissions argued that a new local plan might be forthcoming and the review should be paused until this was confirmed. We are of the view that, as the figures had been agreed at the start of the consultation, it

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

is right to continue with the review on this basis given there are few firm details of potential change. Indeed it is likely we would fail in our statutory duties were we to postpone each review in the manner suggested.

26 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 Castle Point Borough Council currently has 41 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing by two will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 39 councillors.

29 As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ that it have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

30 We received seven submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The submissions argued, variously, that the number of councillors should be increased, kept the same or reduced to one or two councillors representing each of the existing wards. None of these submissions provided sufficient evidence as to how their proposal would promote good governance for Castle Point going forward. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 39-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 23 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These did not include any borough-wide proposals, but instead provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

32 We carefully considered the comments received and used these where possible to put together a new pattern of wards.

33 We visited the area in order to look at the various options on the ground. This tour of Castle Point helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

⁵ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

Draft recommendations

34 Our draft recommendations are for 13 three-councillor wards. Our assessment was that wards which combined parts of Canvey Island and the rest of the borough would not promote convenient and effective local government. We therefore drew up a warding pattern for five wards on Canvey Island and eight on the ‘mainland’.

35 We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 The tables and maps on pages 8–13 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Castle Point. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

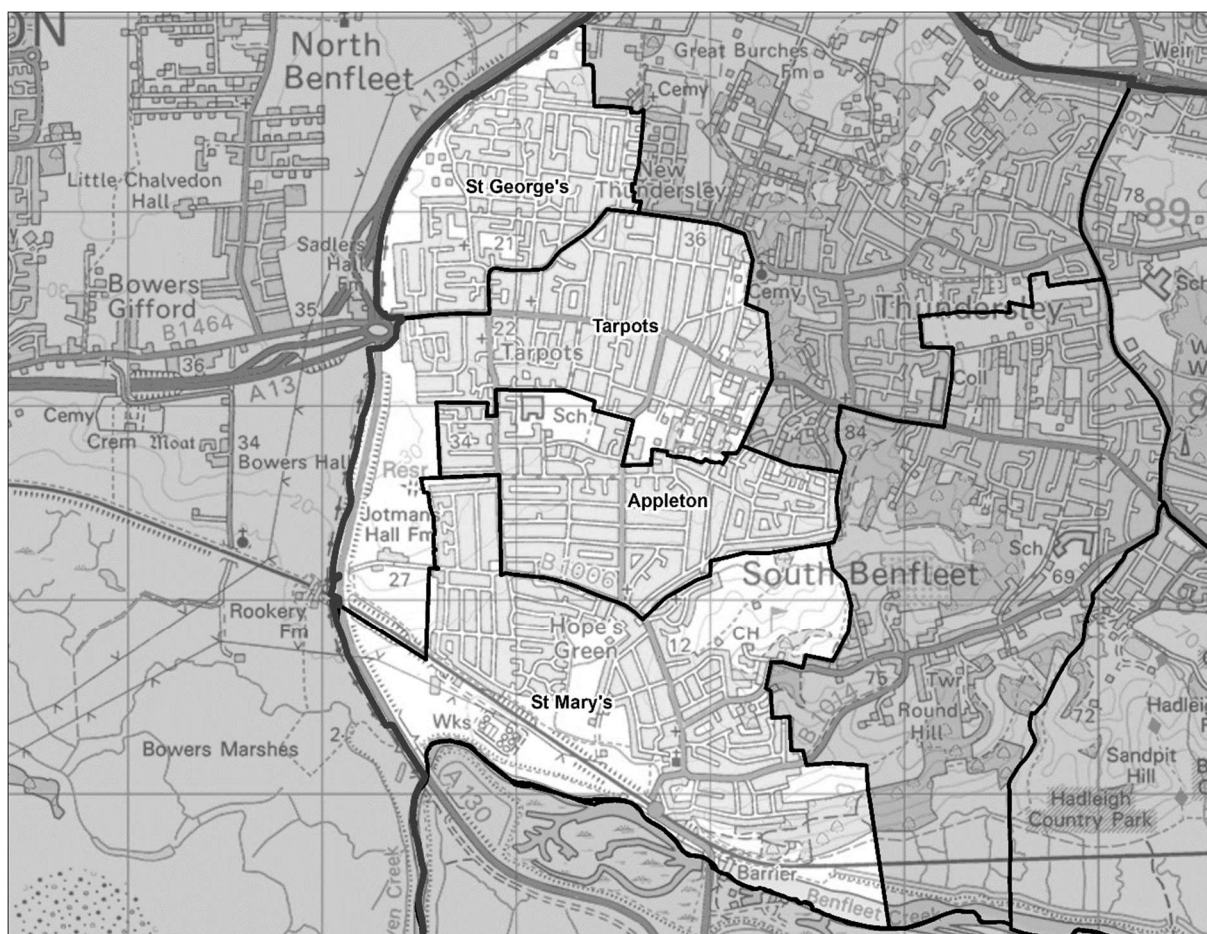
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 23 and on the large map accompanying this report.

38 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

South Benfleet



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Appleton	3	-9%
St George's	3	-7%
St Mary's	3	-1%
Tarpots	3	9%

Appleton, St George's, St Mary's and Tarpots

39 We received only limited comments on the 'mainland' area of Castle Point. As outlined in paragraph 34, we considered how to create a warding pattern of eight three-councillor wards for this part of the borough.

40 While there are currently eight wards in this area, our assessment was that simply adapting these where they had poor electoral equality was not the best course of action. We considered that several of the boundaries were not clear and identifiable, running along small residential streets such as between Appleton and St Mary's. We instead propose a significantly altered pattern of wards. This was informed both by the submissions we received during consultation and our tour of Castle Point.

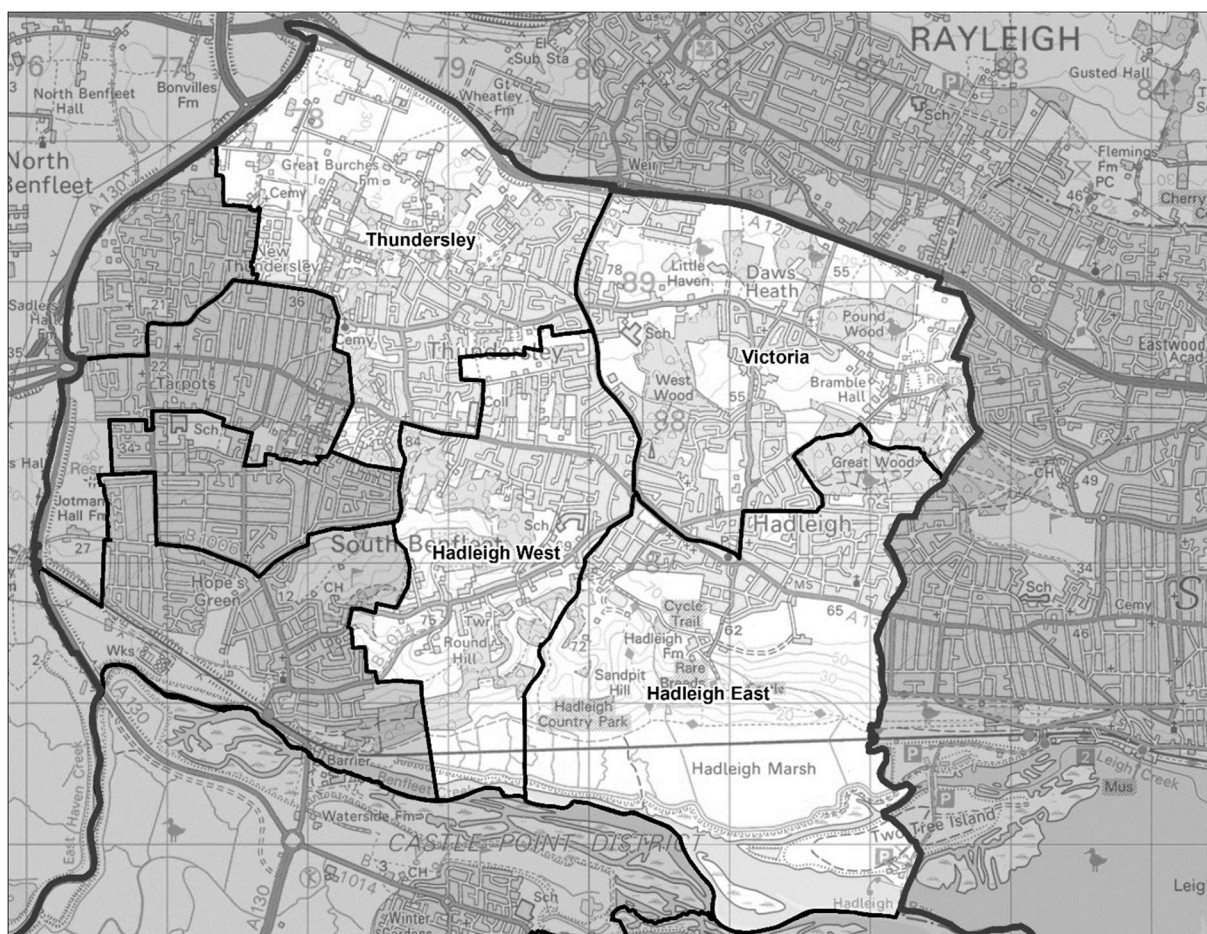
41 The Council commented that warding for this part of the borough should be based on the distinct settlements of South Benfleet, Hadleigh and Thundersley. This coincided with our assessment that wards such as Boyce appeared to combine disparate areas.

42 The other comments we received related to St George's ward and came from two residents. Both argued that the current ward should be extended eastwards to include the north end of Manor Road. They further argued that the ward boundary should not cross the A13 to the south but could be extended up to it. On our tour we assessed that the first change was preferable and would create a clearer and more identifiable boundary. However, we concluded that the other change would require the use of a small residential road as a ward boundary rather than keeping to the existing B-road (Rushbottom Lane).

43 For the rest of Benfleet, we have amended the existing ward boundaries so that they better reflect where communities appear to lie, have more identifiable boundaries and have good electoral equality. We propose to extend St Mary's ward to include those streets on the eastern side of High Road and to the east of Benfleet station. We have amended the boundary of Appleton ward to shift slightly to the south which ensures, where possible, that it follows main roads. Furthermore, we have amended ward boundaries near the western edge of the borough, to allow for the potential residential development east of the A130.

44 We acknowledge that these proposals are based on the limited responses received so far in the review. We would therefore welcome comments on whether this warding pattern reflects community identities in this part of the borough and would provide for effective and convenient local government.

Hadleigh and Thundersley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Hadleigh East	3	-10%
Hadleigh West	3	-9%
Thundersley	3	-2%
Victoria	3	-10%

Hadleigh East, Hadleigh West, Thundersley and Victoria

45 We did not receive any specific comments about this part of the borough. The only comments relevant to this area were those mentioned in paragraph 41 about dividing this area between distinct local settlements.

46 We have based our draft recommendations on this principle, as well as on our observations when we visited Castle Point.

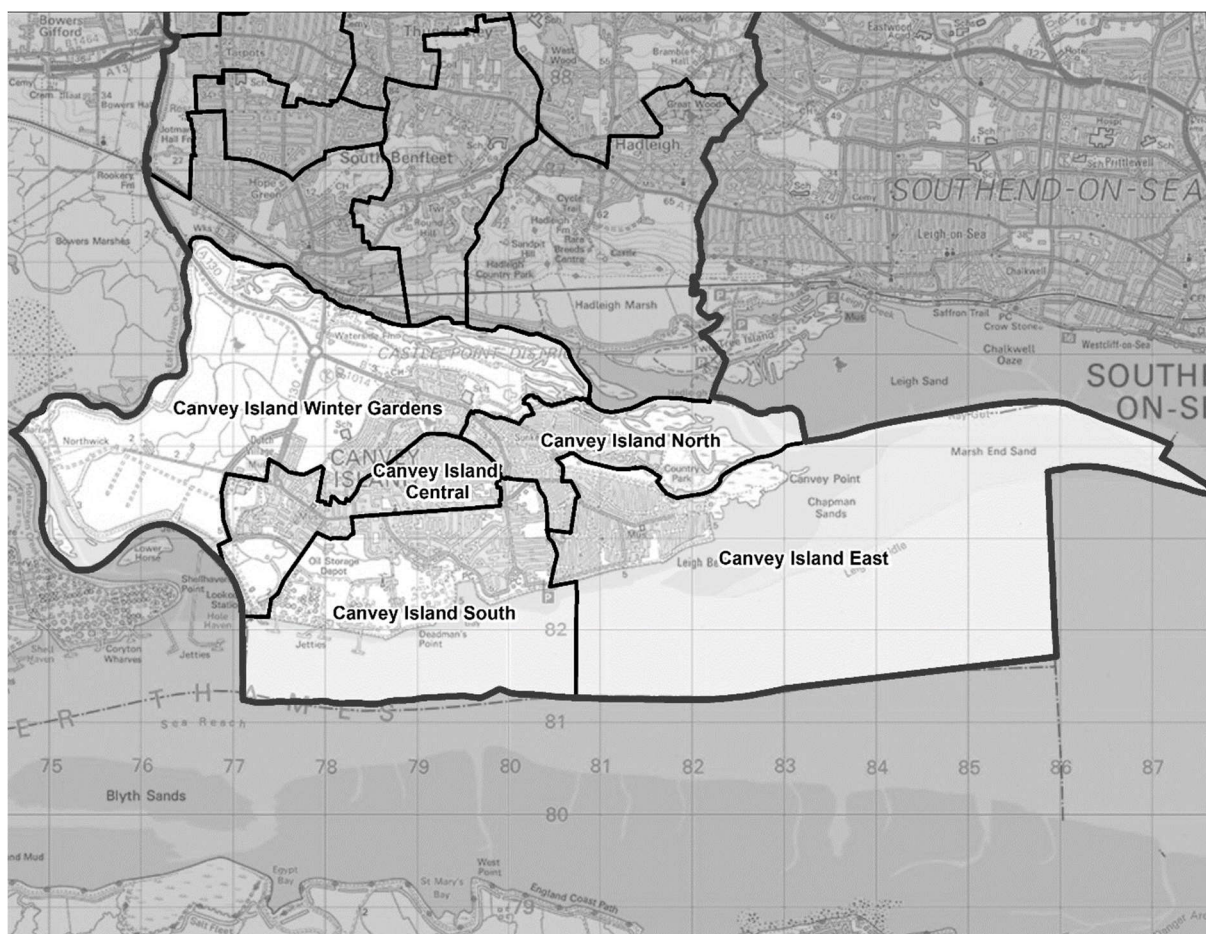
47 We propose to broadly retain the existing Victoria and St James wards, with slight amendments to use more clear and identifiable boundaries such as Rayleigh Road. This also provides for improved electoral equality.

48 As mentioned in paragraph 41, in producing a new pattern of wards which seeks to unite whole communities, the eastern half of the former Boyce ward will become part of Hadleigh West. It will also include the southern part of the existing Cedar Hall ward. Our assessment on our tour of Castle Point was that this provided a better boundary which reflected the break between the Hadleigh and Thundersley communities.

49 Finally, a new Thundersley ward will be created, and we assessed from our tour that this would allow for the majority of Thundersley to be within one ward.

50 Again, we welcome comments on our recommended pattern, as we have thus far received limited local evidence. We would be particularly interested to receive evidence on whether these wards reflect local community identity and would promote effective and convenient local government.

Canvey Island



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Canvey Island Central	3	10%
Canvey Island East	3	7%
Canvey Island North	3	7%
Canvey Island South	3	8%
Canvey Island Winter Gardens	3	7%

Canvey Island

51 Given the change in council size and our decision not to create any wards combining parts of Canvey Island and the 'mainland', we considered how best to create a new pattern of wards for Canvey Island.

52 Given the balance of electors, we considered ways to create a pattern of five three-councillor wards to ensure that our proposed wards would minimise electoral variances.

53 In the responses to our initial consultation, we did not receive any warding patterns for Canvey Island but did receive several specific responses. Multiple

residents commented on the fact that Canvey Island West ward is the only two-councillor ward in the borough. Their proposals differed, however, either proposing to merge it with adjoining wards, or to increase its representation to three councillors.

54 As the latter option would require us to significantly restructure other areas, we assessed that the best option was to do as suggested by a resident and the Labour Party. This was to merge the existing ward with its neighbours.

55 We acknowledge that this goes against some of the comments received, including those from Canvey Island Town Council, which requested no change to the existing boundaries and the retention of the two-councillor Canvey Island West ward. However, when conducting an electoral review of an authority that elects by thirds, there is a presumption that the warding pattern will have uniform three-councillor wards. At this stage, we do not consider that sufficient evidence has been received to justify moving away from this presumption. We would need compelling evidence as to why a two-councillor ward here would meet our three statutory criteria and how a three-councillor ward would fail to balance these criteria.

56 We have therefore redistributed the existing Canvey Island West ward between Canvey Island Winter Gardens, Central and South wards. This was based on the limited evidence we received and the need to ensure good electoral equality. We also took account of the observations made on our tour of Castle Point.

57 We propose to expand Canvey Island South ward westwards, which we consider will provide a more identifiable boundary as it will no longer split the Sandy Bay/Thorney Bay development. This idea was put forward by two residents. We also assessed on our tour that moving the boundary between Canvey Island Central and Canvey Island Winter Gardens wards from between Second Avenue and Third Avenue, to run south of First Avenue, would provide a clearer and more identifiable boundary.

58 In the east of the Island, we have broadly retained the existing wards though we propose some amendments to provide good electoral equality. Canvey Island East will expand westwards from the current boundary of San Remo and Lottem Roads to include all the streets up to and including May Avenue. This will mean an area of similar residential streets will fall within the same ward.

59 Our proposals for Canvey Island are for five three-councillor wards, and these are all forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028. We note that these proposals are based on a small number of comments received in the initial consultation. We would therefore welcome further input on how these proposals meet our statutory criteria, as well as any improvements which could be made.

Conclusions

60 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Castle Point, referencing the 2021 and 2028 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2021	2028
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,786	1,867
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Castle Point Borough Council should be made up of 39 councillors serving 13 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Castle Point.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Castle Point on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

61 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

62 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our

recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Castle Point Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

63 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Canvey Island Town Council.

64 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Canvey Island parish.

Draft recommendations

Canvey Island Town Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Canvey Island Central	2
Canvey Island East	2
Canvey Island North	2
Canvey Island South Central	2
Canvey Island South West	1
Canvey Island Winter Gardens	2

Have your say

65 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

66 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Castle Point, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

67 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

68 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Castle Point)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

69 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Castle Point which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

70 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

71 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in the area?

72 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

73 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

74 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

75 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

76 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

77 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Castle Point in 2024.

Equalities

78 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Castle Point

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Appleton	3	5,093	1,698	-5%	5,125	1,708	-9%
2	Canvey Island Central	3	5,941	1,980	11%	6,159	2,053	10%
3	Canvey Island East	3	5,872	1,957	10%	5,981	1,994	7%
4	Canvey Island North	3	5,937	1,979	11%	6,000	2,000	7%
5	Canvey Island South	3	5,783	1,928	8%	6,070	2,023	8%
6	Canvey Island Winter Gardens	3	5,738	1,913	7%	5,996	1,999	7%
7	Hadleigh East	3	4,699	1,566	-12%	5,032	1,677	-10%
8	Hadleigh West	3	4,802	1,601	-10%	5,101	1,700	-9%
9	St George's	3	4,938	1,646	-8%	5,192	1,731	-7%
10	St Mary's	3	5,476	1,825	2%	5,539	1,846	-1%
11	Tarpots	3	5,554	1,851	4%	6,083	2,028	9%

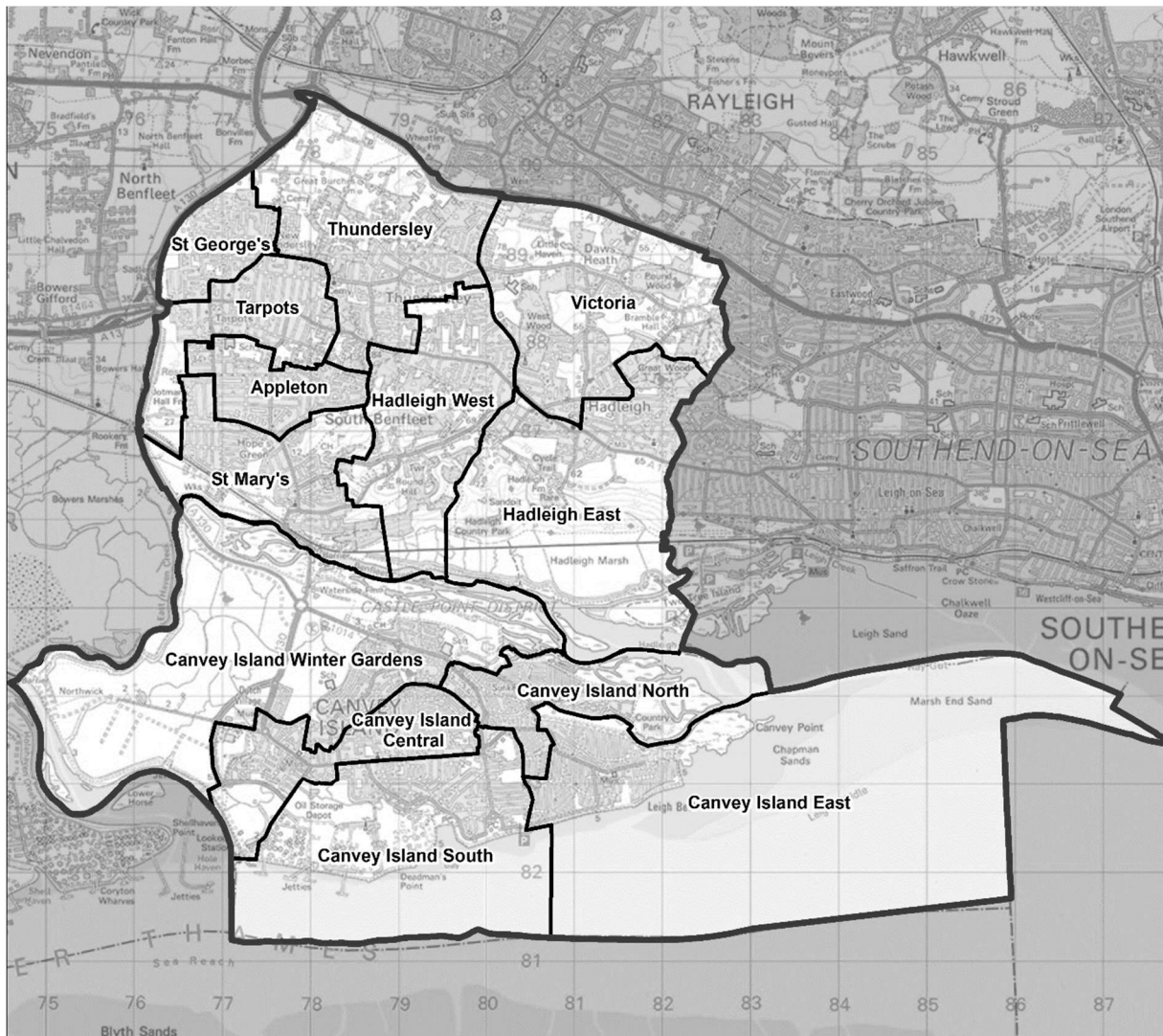
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Thundersley	3	5,437	1,812	1%	5,500	1,833	-2%
13 Victoria	3	4,396	1,465	-18%	5,042	1,681	-10%
Totals	39	69,666	-	-	72,820	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,786	-	-	1,867	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Castle Point Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/essex/castle-point

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/essex/castle-point

Local Authority

- Castle Point Borough Council

Political Groups

- Castle Point Constituency Labour Party

Parish and Town Councils

- Canvey Island Town Council

Local Residents

- 20 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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