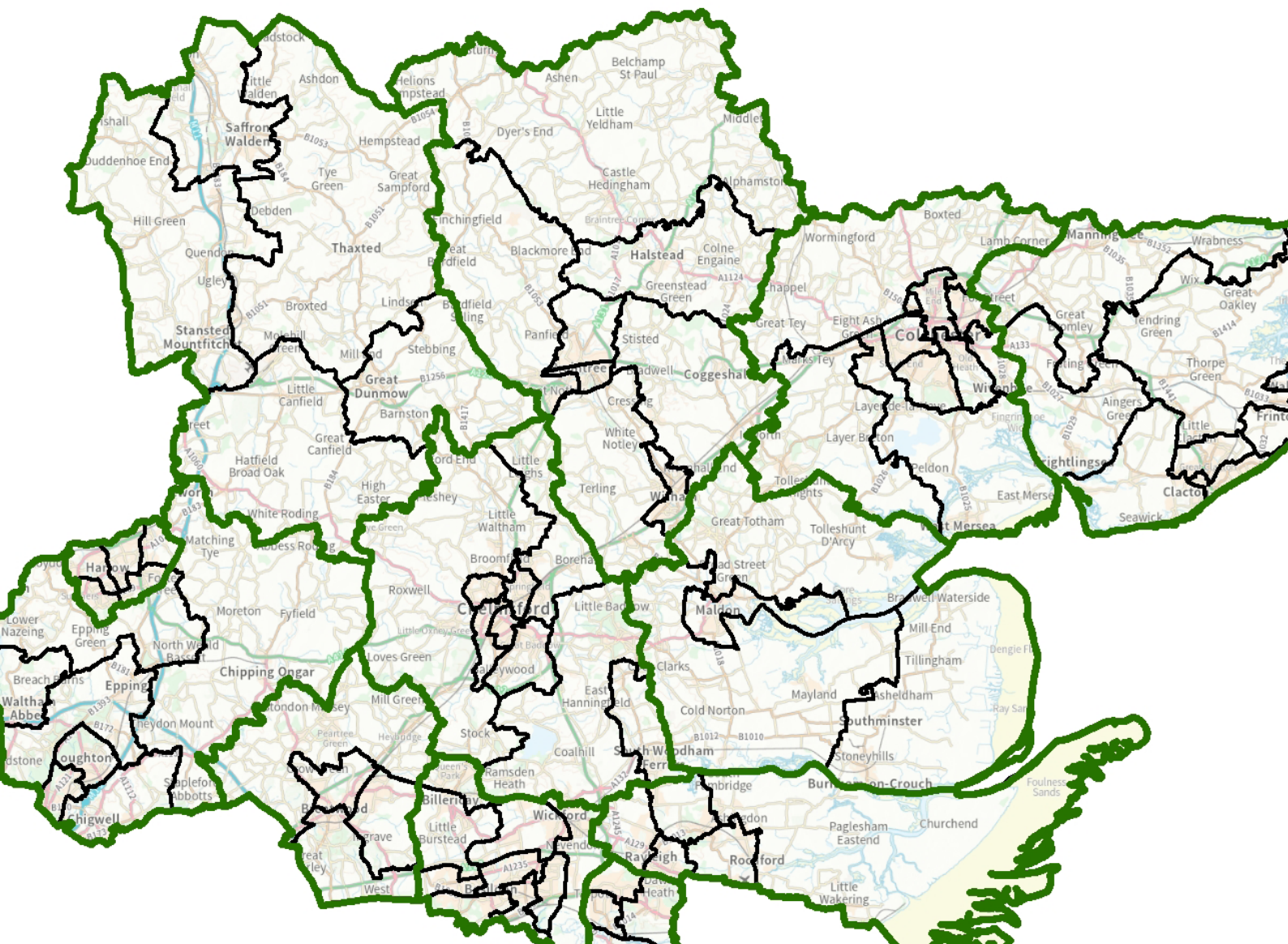


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for Essex County Council Draft Recommendations

November 2023

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Essex County Council

Electoral review

November 2023

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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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Who we are and what we do	1
What is an electoral review?	1
Why Essex?	2
Our proposals for Essex	2
How will the recommendations affect you?	2
Have your say	3
Review timetable	3
Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Councillor allocation and coterminosity	6
Division boundaries consultation	7
Draft recommendations	7
Basildon	9
Braintree	11
Brentwood	15
Castle Point	16
Chelmsford	19
Colchester	22
Epping Forest	24
Harlow	27
Maldon	29
Rochford	31
Tendring	33
Uttlesford	36
Conclusions	39
Summary of electoral arrangements	40
Parish electoral arrangements	40
Have your say	44
Equalities	48
Appendices	50
Appendix A	50

Draft recommendations for Essex	50
Appendix B	58
Outline map	58
Appendix C	60
Submissions received	60
Appendix D	62
Glossary and abbreviations	62

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)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- 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 further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Essex?

7 We are conducting a review of Essex County Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2002, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² 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 divisions in Essex 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 county.

Our proposals for Essex

9 Essex should be represented by 78 councillors, three more than there are now.

10 Essex should have 78 divisions, eight more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of most divisions should change; five will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the county 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 28 November 2023 to 19 February 2024. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed divisions 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 divisions to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 19 February 2024 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 49 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 Essex. We then held a period of consultation with the public on division patterns for the county. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
21 March 2023	Number of councillors decided
28 March 2023	Start of consultation seeking views on new divisions
31 July 2023	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
28 November 2023	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
19 February 2024	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 June 2024	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 divisions.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create divisions 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.

	2022	2029
Electorate of Essex	1,116,845	1,236,124
Number of councillors	78	78
Average number of electors per councillor	14,319	15,848

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a division is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the division as having 'good electoral equality'. Seventy-two of our proposed divisions for Essex are forecast to 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 2029, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2024. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 11% by 2029.

25 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.

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

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

Number of councillors

26 Essex Council currently has 75 councillors. We initially looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded increasing by two would ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of divisions that would be represented by 77 councillors. At the beginning of the review, the Council requested that this review be conducted as a 'single-member division' review.⁵ The Commission agreed to this request, and we invited proposals for divisions that would each be represented by one councillor.

28 The Council, in its proposal on division patterns, proposed that a 78-member division pattern would allow a more even distribution of councillors between the boroughs and districts across the county than 77 members. We have accepted this argument, and therefore propose 78 divisions in these draft recommendations.

Councillor allocation and coterminosity

29 When conducting reviews of two-tier county councils there are a number of rules that we must follow. Firstly, we must not recommend any divisions that cross the district boundary. Secondly, we must have regard for the district/borough wards that exist within each area. Where possible, we try to use the district/borough wards to form the boundaries of the county divisions. The table below shows the allocation of county councillors between the district and borough councils in the county. It also shows the percentage of district/borough wards that are wholly contained within our proposed divisions. We refer to this as coterminosity.

District/Borough	Allocation of councillors	Coterminosity
Basildon	9	36%
Braintree	8	81%
Brentwood	4	85%
Castle Point	5	77%
Chelmsford	9	71%
Colchester	9	59%
Epping Forest	7	72%
Harlow	5	64%
Maldon	4	94%
Rochford	5	69%
Tendring	8	78%

⁵ Section 57 of Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

30 Five district/borough councils (Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Epping Forest and Harlow) are due to have revised ward boundaries implemented for their council elections in 2024 and future years. As these new wards will be implemented before the conclusion of this review of the County Council, we have based our coterminosity calculations on the new ward boundaries, rather than the existing boundaries.

Division boundaries consultation

31 We received 64 submissions in response to our consultation on division boundaries. These included one county-wide proposal from the County Council, which was supported by the Conservative Group as well as Cllr L. Barker, Cllr R. Playle and Cllr L. Bowers-Flint. Proposals for individual districts and boroughs were received from various political groups across Essex in their local areas. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for division arrangements in particular areas of the county.

32 The one county-wide scheme provided a uniform pattern of one-councillor divisions for Essex. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of divisions resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

33 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

34 We undertook a detailed virtual tour of Essex. This tour helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

35 Our draft recommendations are for 78 one-councillor divisions. 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 9–40 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Essex. They detail how the proposed division arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

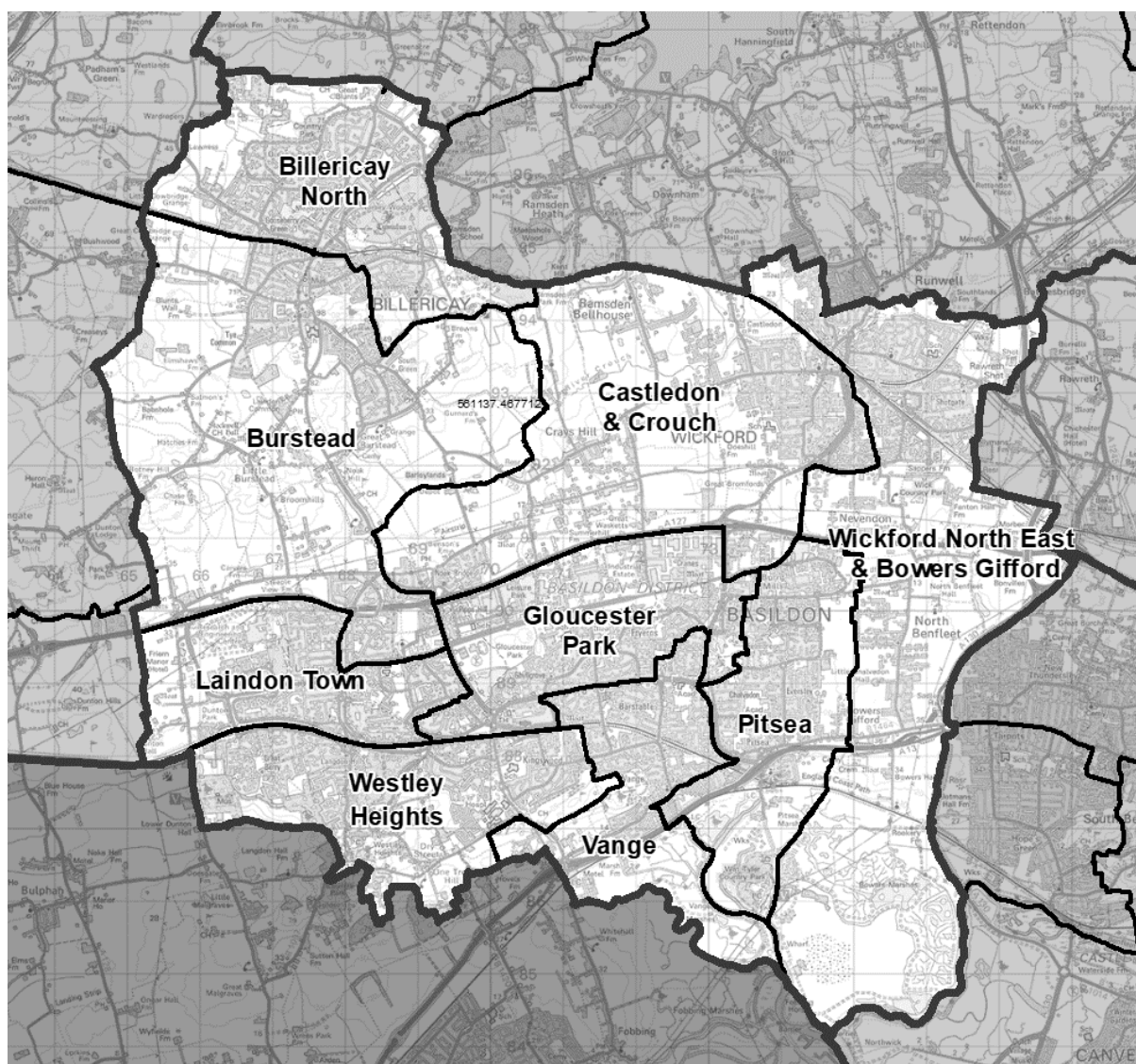
⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

37 A summary of our proposed new divisions is set out in the table starting on page 51 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

Basildon



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Billericay North	1	8%
Burstead	1	11%
Castledon & Crouch	1	-1%
Gloucester Park	1	10%
Laindon Town	1	6%
Pitsea	1	4%
Vange	1	6%
Westley Heights	1	5%
Wickford North East & Bowers Gifford	1	7%

39 Under a council size of 78, Basildon is allocated nine councillors, with each division having, on average, 6% more electors per councillor than the county-wide average by 2029.

40 The majority of material submitted with regard to Basildon focused on the principle of whether single-member or two-member divisions could best reflect the communities across the borough. The Council's proposal, supported by the Conservative Group, was for nine single-member divisions, while alternative proposals consisting of two-member divisions were also received.

41 Given the formal request from the Council for a single-member division review, we have a statutory presumption in favour of single-member divisions. We are able to depart from this principle if evidence shows that multi-member divisions would provide for a significantly better reflection of our statutory criteria, but it would be exceptional for us to do this across an entire borough.

42 A proposal from Cllr L. Mackenzie and Cllr M. Buckley was received for five two-member divisions across Basildon. This would require 10 councillors rather than nine to be allocated to the borough – it was not clear whether it was intended to increase the overall council size further from 78 to 79, or whether another area of Essex should be allocated one fewer councillor.

Billericay North and Burstead

43 We have adopted the Council's proposal for these divisions, which was supported by Cllr. J. Devlin. Little specific evidence as to the community identity of the area was offered in the submissions received. However, in the absence of any other single-member proposals, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the locally proposed schemes where possible.

44 Burstead division is forecast to have 11% more electors than the Essex average by 2029. We considered various alternatives to improve this, while noting that neighbouring divisions also largely have positive variances. We consider that, in the town of Billericay, departing from the relatively clear boundaries of Jackson's Lane, Green Farm Lane, or the railway line in order to improve electoral equality would not be justified.

45 In the south of Burstead division, we considered following the strong boundary of the A127. Placing the area south of this road into Laindon Town division would improve the variance of Burstead to -7%, and allow Laindon Park ward to be entirely within a single division. However, the revised Laindon Town division would have 24% more electors than the average – a significantly higher electoral variance than we are willing to recommend. We considered placing electors on either side of Basildon Road, on Church Road, Buckingham Road, Royal Oak Chase and neighbouring streets into Laindon Town division, but this would merely transfer the poor electoral equality, with Laindon Town division having 11% more electors than average, as well as moving away from the clear boundary of the B148 St Nicholas Lane. We have therefore not adopted this idea as part of our draft recommendations.

Castledon & Crouch and Wickford North East & Bowers Gifford

46 We have adopted the proposal of the Council for these divisions, which largely follows parish boundaries. Some evidence was provided of community links between Bowers Gifford, North Benfleet and Wickford, but this was largely assertion rather than specific links. Again, in the absence of a competing single-member proposal, we prefer to adopt a local proposal as opposed to putting forward boundaries we have constructed ourselves.

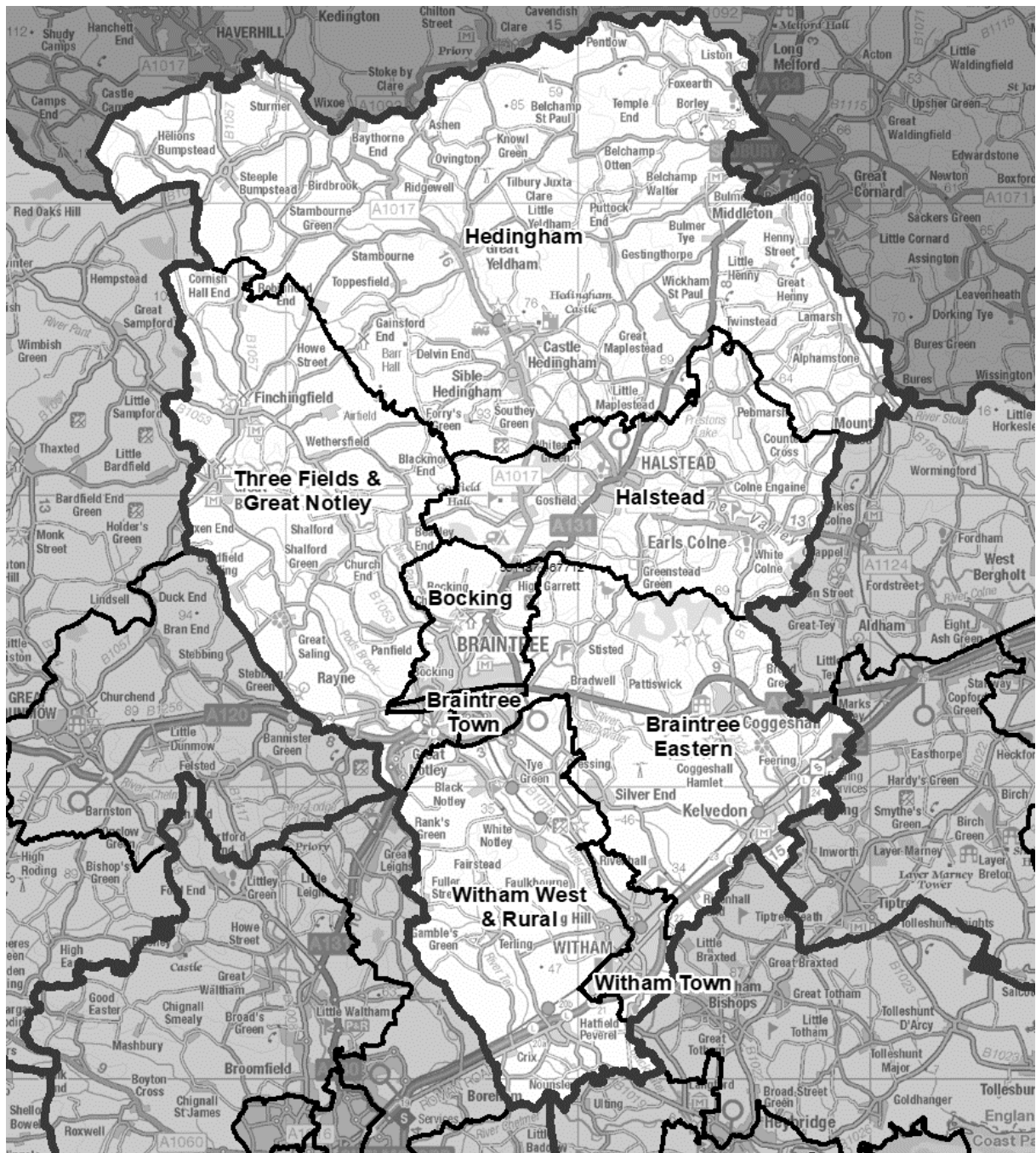
47 The proposed Castledon & Crouch division includes a small section south of the A127, placing electors on Nevendon Road and neighbouring streets in Castledon & Crouch division. We considered placing these electors in a division to the south, but note that they would be somewhat isolated within Pitsea division, and that Gloucester Park division is already at the upper limits of good electoral equality. We would welcome further evidence as to where electors in this area see their community identity as lying.

Gloucester Park, Laindon Town, Pitsea, Vange and Westley Heights

48 These divisions, covering the town of Basildon, are adopted from the proposal of the Council. Some evidence was provided of community identity, noting that Basildon Town Centre was now the hub of a division, as opposed to being in the corner of the existing Basildon Pitsea division.

49 We considered modifying the Council's proposal, in order to place the boundary between Gloucester Park and Pitsea divisions along the A132 East Mayne. This would leave Pitsea with an 11% variance – just beyond the bounds of good electoral equality, but would allow the use of a clear boundary. We would particularly welcome further evidence from electors to the south and east of Burnt Mills Road with regard to whether their community identity lies towards Gloucester Park and the town centre, or towards Pitsea.

Braintree



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Bocking	1	5%
Braintree Eastern	1	-8%
Braintree Town	1	-1%
Halstead	1	7%
Hedingham	1	-6%
Three Fields & Great Notley	1	-3%
Witham Town	1	2%
Witham West & Rural	1	0%

50 Under a council size of 78, Braintree is allocated eight councillors. We received competing proposals for this district, from the Council (supported by the Conservative Group) and Braintree & Witham Labour Parties. The eight divisions proposed have an average variance in line with the county-wide average.

Bocking, Braintree Town and Three Fields & Great Notley

51 The Council and the Labour parties proposed very similar Bocking divisions. We have adopted this proposal, but modified it to place all electors along Halstead Road and Gosfield Road south of the boundary with Gosfield parish in Bocking division. This allows all of Bocking North ward to be within a single division, rather than being split between divisions.

52 The Council proposed a division covering the south of Braintree and Cressing parish, while the Labour proposal placed Cressing in a rural-based division, and expanded Braintree Town division to include electors between Rayne Road and the Flitch Way disused railway line. The Council's proposal was supported by Cllr M. Cunningham.

53 We considered the options carefully, and viewed this area on our virtual tour of Essex. While we consider that the decision is finely balanced, we have adopted a modified version of the Labour proposals as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that the Labour proposals allow Braintree Town Centre to act as a hub of a division, rather than being peripheral as in the Council's proposed Braintree Town & Cressing division. We have modified the Labour proposal, which was based on entire polling districts, to ensure that all electors to the north of the disused railway line are placed within Braintree Town division.

54 As a result of our decisions regarding Braintree Town, we have adopted the Labour proposal for a Three Fields & Great Notley division, extending north to Finchingfield parish. The Council's proposal was for a geographically smaller division, with Black Notley parish joined to Great Notley. Other than the similar names, we are not aware of any specific community links between these parishes, but we would welcome such evidence as part of the response to the consultation on these draft recommendations.

Braintree Eastern, Witham Town and Witham West & Rural

55 The town and parish of Witham is covered by four district wards. A division comprising three of these wards offers good electoral equality, meaning that one ward must be placed in a neighbouring, rural division in order to maintain good electoral equality. The Council proposed that Witham North be placed in a division covering the remainder of the south of the district, while the Labour proposal was for Witham West ward to be placed in a division ranging from Cressing and Black Notley to Hatfield Peverel. The Council's proposal was supported by Cllr K. Bowers.

56 We examined this area on our virtual tour of Essex. On balance, we considered that the western section of Witham was a natural candidate to be placed in a rural division as opposed to the northern section which appeared to include areas particularly characteristic of urban communities.

57 The Conservative Group submission, in support of the Council's proposal, mentioned 'strong community ties' covering the proposed Hatfield Peverel & Silver End division, but did not specify the type or nature of these ties. We would welcome further evidence of these ties during the current consultation. The Council and Conservative Group also noted that their proposed division reflected a new Parliamentary boundary – this is not a factor which we routinely consider.

58 The Labour party proposed a Braintree Eastern division. It noted that many parishes in this proposed division had links through using transport facilities at Kelvedon station, and a shared interest in the future of Rivenhall Airfield. We have adopted the Labour proposal for this division as part of our draft recommendations. Feering Parish Council provided a submission arguing for a further increase in councillor numbers, but did not offer comment on any potential division boundaries.

Halstead and Hedingham

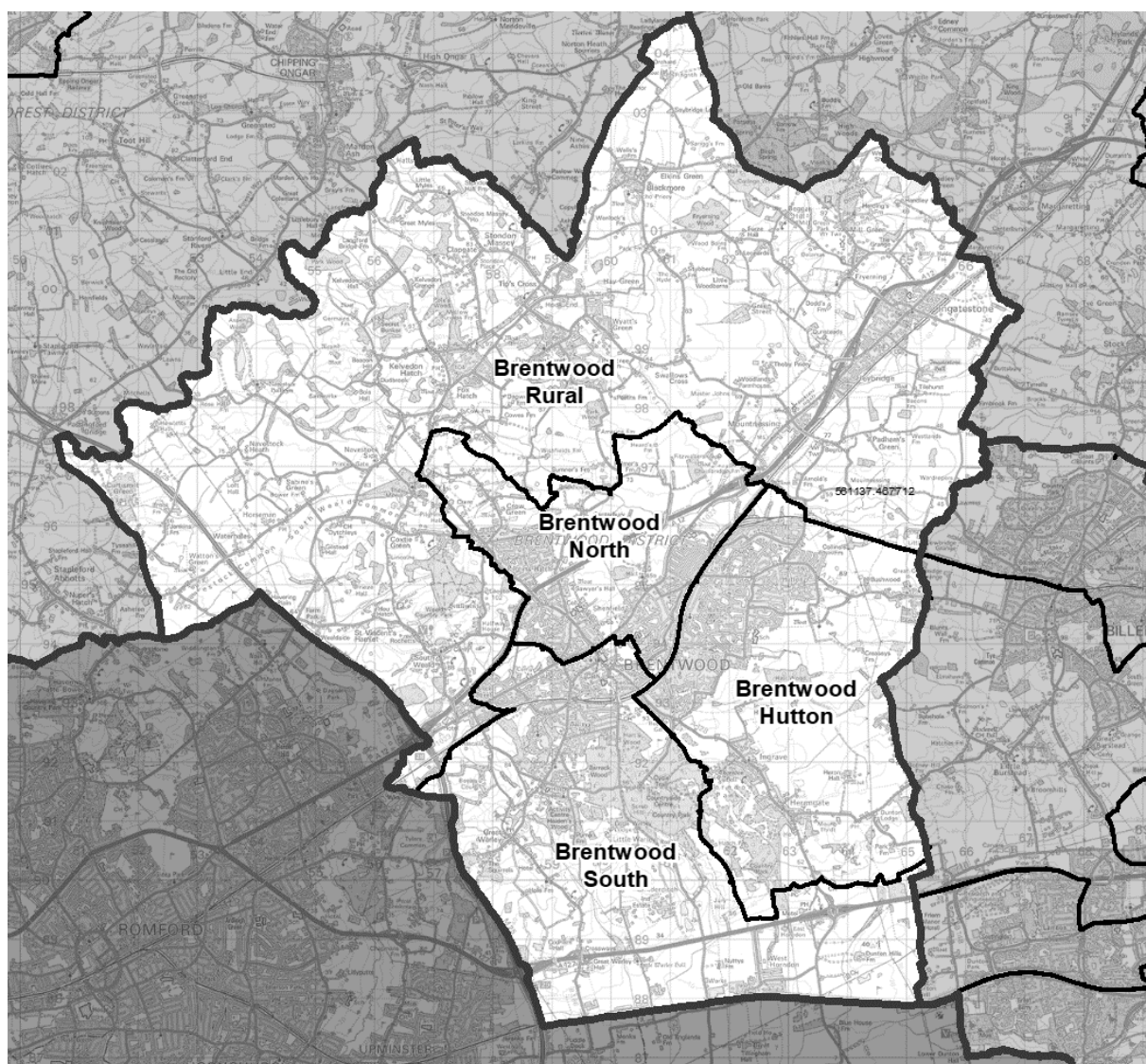
59 We have adopted the Labour proposal for these divisions. The Labour submission provided some evidence of a shared community identity across the rural north of the district, noting that many of the parishes within Hedingham division shared issues around transport and service provision. Cllr I. Parker provided some evidence of the community links in this area, based around education and health facilities, but did not propose any specific boundaries.

60 We have modified the Labour proposal slightly regarding Pebmarsh parish. While Labour proposed to follow the existing division boundary and place Pebmarsh parish in Hedingham division, we prefer to place it in Halstead division in order to allow The Colnes ward to be within a single division.

61 The Conservative submission, in support of the Council's proposal, noted that their proposed Halstead division used the A131 as a spine road. We would be interested in hearing further as to whether this road is a better link between communities than the A1124 which joins the larger settlements in our proposed Halstead division.

62 Cllr J. Beavis proposed that Hedingham division should have an extra councillor allocated to it, noting the difficulty of attending a large number of parish meetings throughout the year. While we appreciate this point, we are obliged to propose divisions based on the number of electors within a proposed division, rather than the raw number of parishes. While we are able to depart from the principle of single-member divisions if compelling evidence exists, we do not consider that, for example, a two-member 'Hedingham & Halstead' division would be significantly easier to represent.

Brentwood



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Brentwood Hutton	1	10%
Brentwood North	1	8%
Brentwood Rural	1	0%
Brentwood South	1	10%

63 Under a Council size of 78, Brentwood is allocated four councillors, with an average variance of +7%.

Brentwood Hutton and Brentwood South

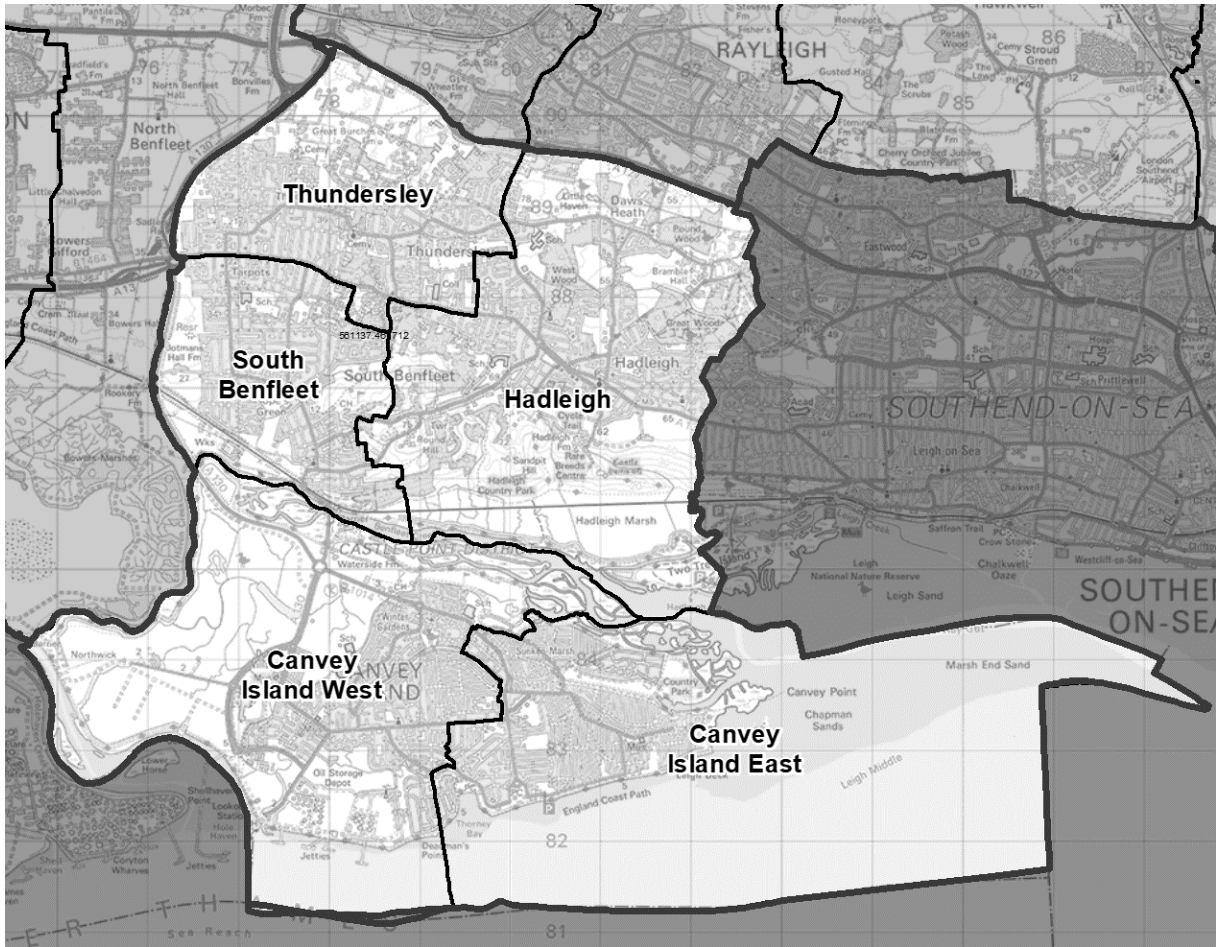
64 We received two separate proposals for these divisions. The Council proposed making no changes to the existing divisions, arguing that the existing boundaries continued to work well for communities, although without providing specific evidence on this point.

65 A local resident provided an alternative scheme, which saw two areas swap between the existing and proposed divisions. The resident suggested moving an area north of Ingrave Road, which comprises the southern section of the new Hutton South ward, into Brentwood Hutton division, and compensating for this by transferring West Horndon and the surrounding area into Brentwood South division.

66 This change allows the two divisions to have good electoral equality, whereas the Council's proposal for an unmodified Brentwood South division would have 12% more electors than average, under an overall council size of 78. The resident's proposal also allows Hutton South borough ward to be unified within Brentwood Hutton division. For these reasons, we have adopted the resident's proposal, in preference to that of the Council, as part of our draft recommendations. We welcome further comments on these proposals as part of the consultation process.

Brentwood North and Brentwood Rural

67 Both the Council and the resident proposed retaining these divisions unchanged from the existing arrangements. We have adopted this proposal with one minor modification. We propose to adjust the boundary between these two divisions in the area of Bellhouse Lane, Coxtie Green Road and Apple Gate, in order to follow the new boundary between Pilgrims Hatch, and Brizes, Stondon Massey & South Weald borough wards.



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Canvey Island East	1	0%
Canvey Island West	1	-7%
Hadleigh	1	-14%
South Benfleet	1	-11%
Thundersley	1	-9%

68 Under a council size of 78, Castle Point is allocated five councillors, with an average variance of -8%. The geography of the borough makes proposing divisions with good electoral equality particularly challenging, with the divide between Canvey Island and the mainland offering a very strong and clear boundary which we would be very reluctant to cross.

69 In addition to the proposal from the Council, we received a proposal from a local resident for five divisions across the borough, two on Canvey Island and three on the mainland. Castle Point Borough Council also provided a submission, arguing for the retention of five councillors, and offering general comments on community identity across the borough, but not submitting specific proposals for division boundaries.

Canvey Island East and Canvey Island West

70 Essex County Council proposed retaining the two existing divisions on Canvey Island. These each have good electoral equality, and offer good levels of coterminosity, with only one of the five borough wards in the area being split between divisions.

71 The local resident provided a very similar proposal, although not enough detail was provided to confirm if the two proposals were identical. Given the broad agreement with the principles of two divisions exclusively on Canvey Island, we have adopted the proposal from the Council as part of our draft recommendations.

Hadleigh, South Benfleet and Thundersley

72 The Council proposed three divisions covering the mainland area of Castle Point. The geography and number of electors means that it is impossible to propose three divisions for this area with good electoral equality. However, we consider that the alternative, which would result in the creation of a division that crosses Benfleet Creek, would not be reflective of either community identity or effective and convenient local government.

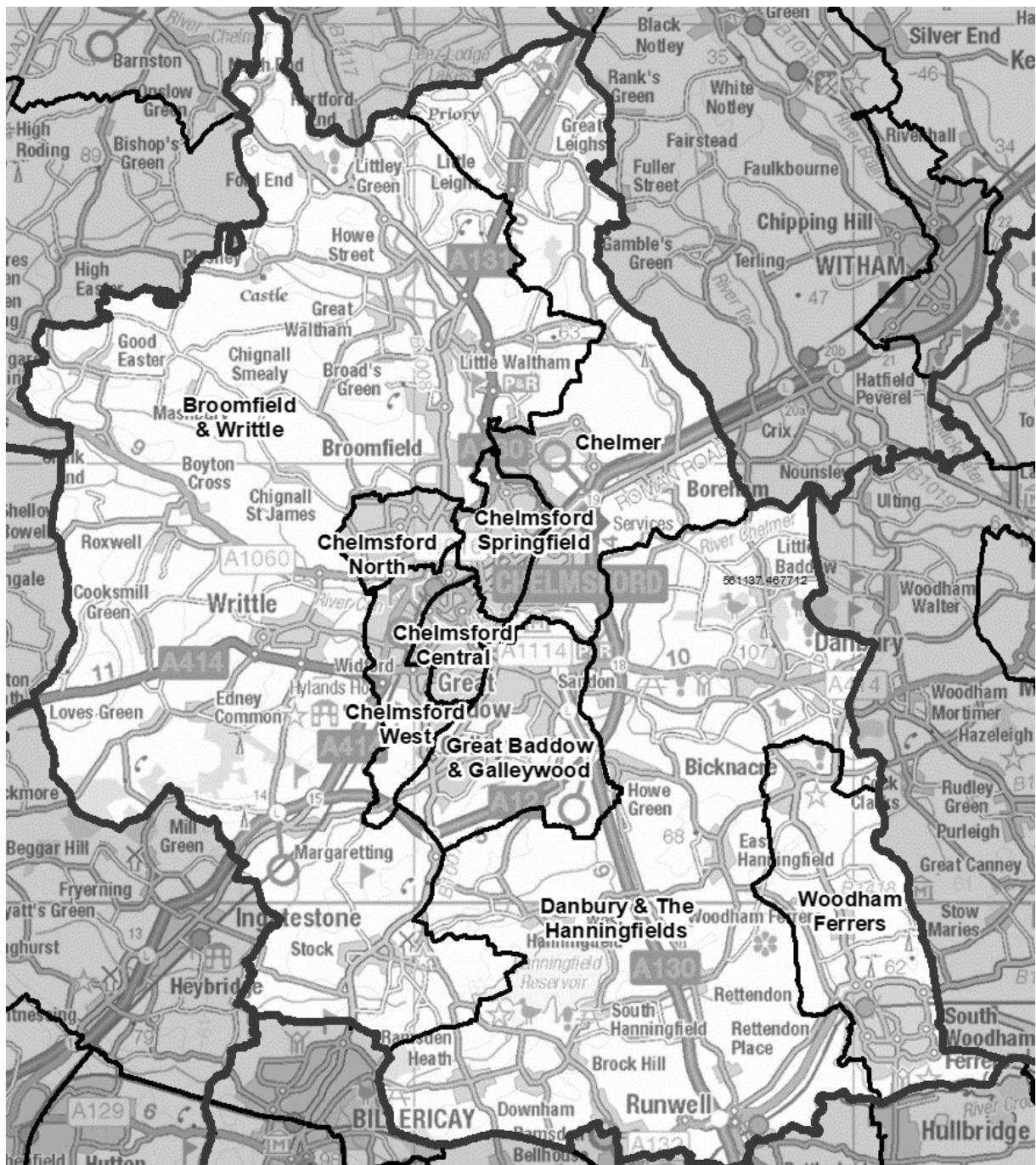
73 The resident's scheme proposed a cross-borough division with an area of North Benfleet in Basildon borough being combined with South Benfleet in Castle Point. However, it is not merely a preference, but a statutory requirement, that every division we propose be entirely within a single district or borough. We therefore cannot adopt this proposal.

74 The Council proposed three divisions, based around the settlements of Thundersley, Hadleigh and South Benfleet. This agreed with the information put forward by Castle Point Borough Council that these areas should be the basis of divisions.

75 We have broadly adopted the Council's proposal with one modification. The Council proposed to have the boundary between South Benfleet and Thundersley run along the A13 London Road for its entire length. While this does offer a clear boundary, we prefer to divert south around Glen Road, allowing all of the new Thundersley North borough ward to be within Thundersley division.

76 South Benfleet and Hadleigh divisions are forecast to have relatively high electoral variances (-11% and -14%, respectively, by 2029). However, given the constraints of the geography and the evidence received during consultation, we consider that our recommendations offer the best available balance of our statutory criteria. In particular, we consider them to be reflective of local communities in this part of Castle Point.

Chelmsford



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Broomfield & Writtle	1	7%
Chelmer	1	9%
Chelmsford Central	1	-4%
Chelmsford North	1	1%
Chelmsford Springfield	1	3%
Chelmsford West	1	-9%
Danbury & The Hanningfields	1	6%

Great Baddow & Galleywood	1	5%
Woodham Ferrers	1	-4%

77 Under a council size of 78, Chelmsford receives nine councillors, with each division averaging a 2% electoral variance. We note that the city ward boundaries in Chelmsford are due for a separate review in the near future, ahead of the city council elections in 2027. We have therefore placed less weight on coterminosity in Chelmsford than in other areas of Essex.

78 We received two substantive proposals for patterns of divisions across Chelmsford, from the Council and the Chelmsford Liberal Democrats.

Broomfield & Writtle, Chelmer, Chelmsford North and Chelmsford Springfield

79 The Council proposed broadly retaining the existing divisions in this area, with the only change being the transfer of a number of streets from the east of Springfield Hall Park into Chelmsford North division. This area comprises roughly the southern half of The Lawns city ward. Having carefully considered this proposal, we were not persuaded that sufficient evidence was provided of shared community identities between these areas. In particular, we noted that travel between the two areas would not be possible without leaving the division, and the proposed boundary, representing an existing polling district, is neither particularly strong nor clear. We have therefore not adopted this proposal.

80 In contrast, the Liberal Democrats' proposal offers a compact Chelmsford North division, expanded to the south, with a boundary running between Swiss Avenue and Westfield Avenue/Maltese Road. It retains the strong boundary of the River Chelmer and Springfield Hall Park. We have modified the Liberal Democrats' proposal slightly, to follow the recently revised boundaries of Chelmer, Springfield and Chelmsford Garden parishes, where possible. The latter community council provided a submission requesting that the existing arrangement, with the parish split between three separate divisions, be revised on the grounds of effective and convenient local government. While it is not possible to unite this parish in a single division while securing good electoral equality, the boundary that we propose ensures that the parish is split between two, rather than three, divisions.

81 Subject to the changes discussed, we have adopted the Liberal Democrat proposal for Broomfield & Writtle division which will expand to include Margarett and Stock parishes. The Liberal Democrats suggested that there were community ties between these parishes and the village of Writtle, but did not offer specific evidence. We would welcome such evidence, or evidence of alternative community links, during consultation on these draft recommendations.

Chelmsford Central, Chelmsford West and Great Baddow & Galleywood

82 Other than the northern boundary of Chelmsford West division, the Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals agreed on the retention of the remaining boundaries of these three divisions. As discussed above (paragraphs 80–81), we have adopted the Liberal Democrat proposal for Chelmsford North division, and hence the Chelmsford West boundary with this division.

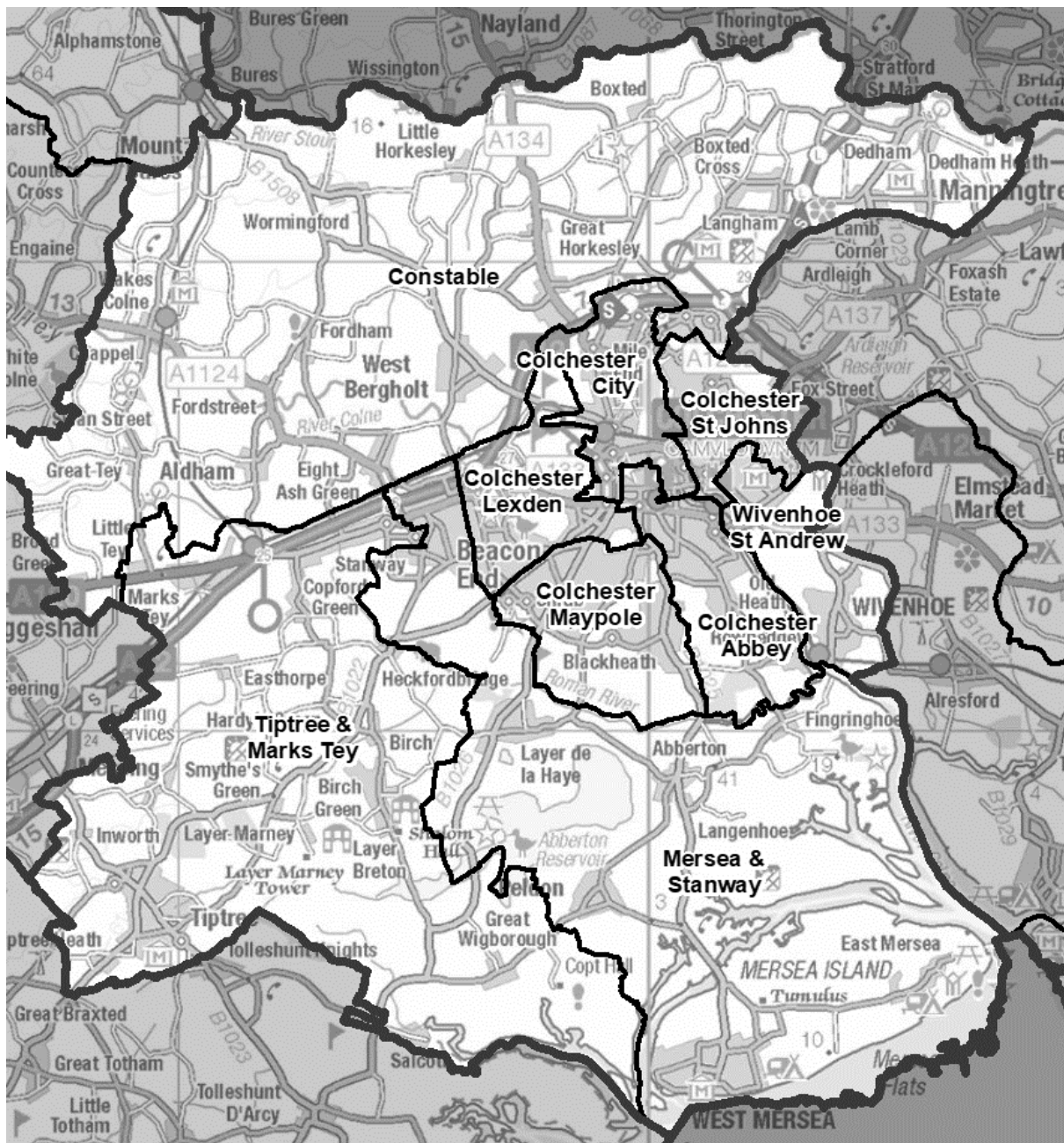
83 Apart from this, we are adopting the identical proposals of the Liberal Democrats and the Council for Chelmsford Central and Great Baddow & Galleywood divisions.

Danbury & The Hanningfields and Woodham Ferrers

84 The Council and Liberal Democrats proposed identical divisions for Woodham Ferrers, adding the parish of Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre to the existing South Woodham Ferrers division. The Liberal Democrats noted that, in an ideal world, South Woodham Ferrers would remain a division on its own, but accepted that it would have poor electoral equality (19% fewer electors than the county average). The proposal was supported by Cllr R. Massey. We are adopting this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

85 The Council proposed retaining the majority of the existing Chelmsford Stock division, with Highwood and Roxwell parishes compensating for the transfer of Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre parish into Woodham Ferrers division. This proposed division would form a U-shape around the south of the urban area of Chelmsford and would require a lengthy journey to travel around. We have instead adopted the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a division named Danbury & The Hanningfields, ranging from Little Baddow parish to the southern boundary of the City Council area.

Colchester



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Colchester Abbey	1	8%
Colchester City	1	8%
Colchester Lexden	1	-2%
Colchester Maypole	1	5%
Colchester St Johns	1	5%
Constable	1	4%
Mersea & Stanway	1	9%
Tiptree & Marks Tey	1	-1%
Wivenhoe St Andrew	1	10%

86 Under a Council size of 78, Colchester receives nine councillors, with each division averaging a 5% electoral variance. The submissions received noted the significant housing growth projected for Colchester, particularly in the urban area of the city.

87 We received only one full proposal for divisions across the city council area, from the Council, which was supported by the Conservative Group and Harwich & North Essex Conservative Association

Colchester Abbey, Colchester Lexden, Colchester Maypole and Wivenhoe St Andrew

88 We have broadly adopted the proposals of the Council in this area, which were supported by Cllr L. Barber, as well as the Conservative Group. The Conservative submission, further supported by Cllr. S. Lissimore, argued that there were strong community links between Braiswick and the remainder of Lexden ward, noting that the areas shared a city council ward. While not affecting any electors, we have adjusted the boundary proposed by the Council to run along the railway line and south toward Colne Bank Avenue, to prevent the division being joined by only a narrow spit of land.

89 Cllr D. Harris noted that, under the existing arrangements, Holt Drive and surrounding streets were in a rural division when the residents considered themselves as living in Colchester. The Council's proposal addresses this, with the area being placed in Colchester Maypole division.

90 We have adjusted the proposed boundary between Colchester St Johns and Wivenhoe St Andrew division slightly, to bring electors between Greenstead Road and St Andrew's Avenue, and Titania Close and Oberon Close, into St Johns division. This improves the electoral equality of Wivenhoe St Andrew division slightly, bringing it to within 10% of the county average by 2029.

Colchester City, Colchester St Johns and Constable

91 Subject to minor changes, we have adopted the proposal of the Council for these divisions. Cllr D. King argued for the retention of the existing division of Mile End & Highwoods, which would have 24% more electors than the county average – well beyond the bounds of good electoral equality. Cllr D. Clouston, of Myland Community Council, supported retaining the parish within a single division if at all possible.

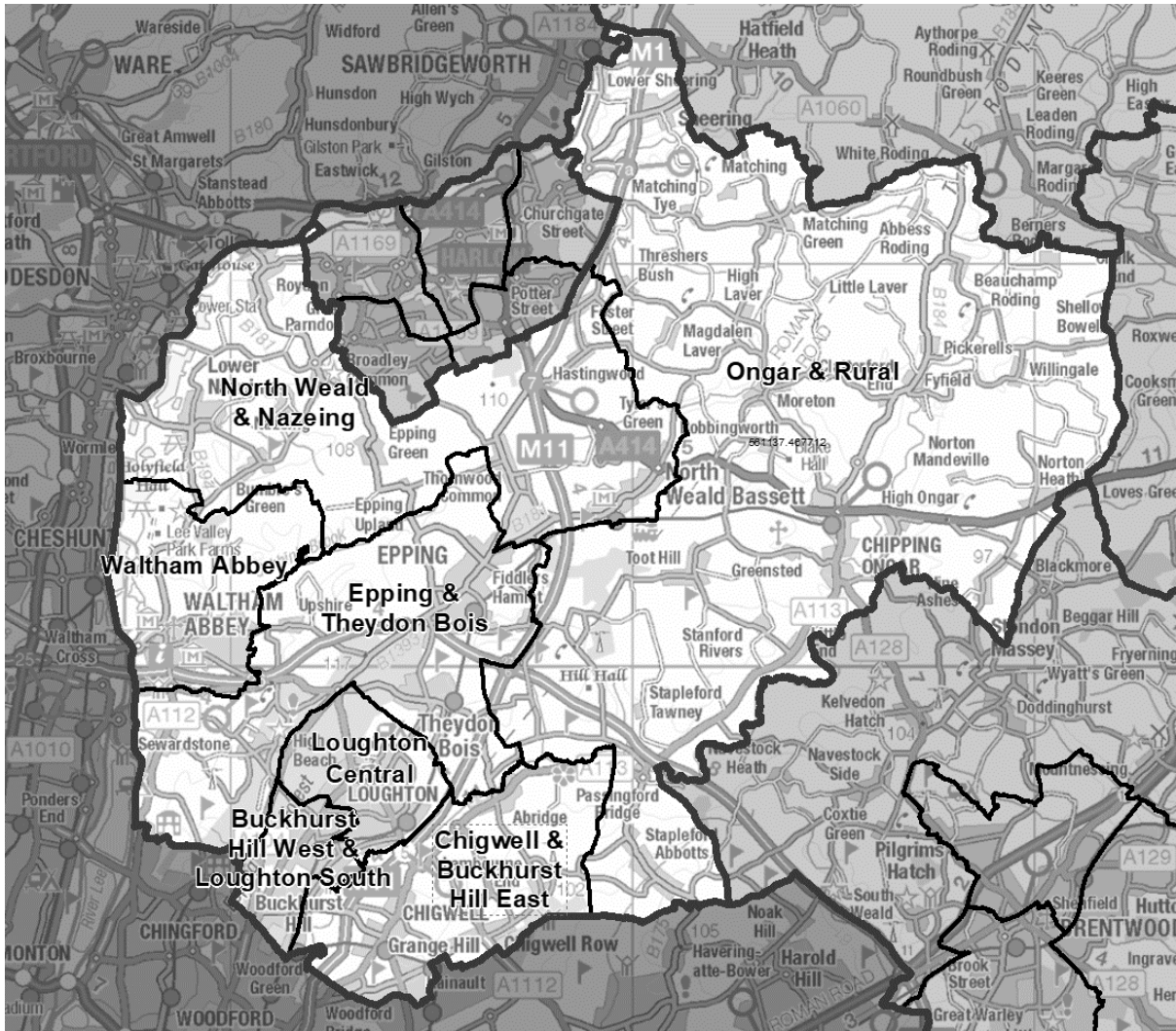
92 The Council's proposals placed the existing Myland East parish ward, containing housing estates either side of Mill Road, into the rural Constable division to the north. While we do not consider this arrangement to be an ideal reflection of community identity, we have been unable to devise a scheme which we consider offers a better overall reflection of our statutory criteria. There are forecast to be roughly 2,800 electors in Myland East by 2029 – more than can be accommodated in

Colchester City division if we are to ensure good electoral equality. We considered making a compensating change to other divisions nearer the city centre, but not only are the divisions in this area (particularly Colchester Abbey and Wivenhoe St Andrew) at the outer range of good electoral equality, we have no evidence as to whether any potential change would reflect community identity. If an alternative pattern of divisions across Colchester that better reflects community identities is available, we would particularly welcome evidence as to this during consultation on these draft recommendations.

93 As discussed above (paragraph 90), we have made minor changes to the proposed boundary between Colchester St Johns and Wivenhoe St Andrew divisions in order to improve electoral equality. This apart, we have adopted the Council's proposal for Colchester St Johns division, covering the north-east of the city.

Mersea & Stanway and Tiptree & Marks Tey

94 We received no alternative proposals for these divisions and have adopted the Council's proposal. The Conservative submission described the existing divisions in this area as 'confusing', while suggesting that the Council's proposals reflect community ties more accurately.



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Buckhurst Hill West & Loughton South	1	-5%
Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill East	1	5%
Epping & Theydon Bois	1	-2%
Loughton Central	1	1%
North Weald & Nazeing	1	-9%
Ongar & Rural	1	-5%
Waltham Abbey	1	-3%

95 Under a Council size of 78, Epping Forest is allocated seven councillors, with each division averaging a -2% electoral variance.

96 In addition to the proposal from the Council, we received detailed submissions from the Independent Loughton Residents' Association (ILRA), Epping Forest District Council Liberal Democrats and a local resident.

Buckhurst Hill West & Loughton South, Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill East and Loughton Central

97 We received a range of proposals for this area. The Council supported keeping the existing divisions in this area, which was supported by the Conservative Group, Cllr M. Vance and Cllr H. Whitbread. The Liberal Democrats proposed similar divisions, with a slightly smaller area of Loughton Broadway added to a Chigwell-based division, and Lambourne parish added to compensate.

98 The ILRA proposed that Loughton be covered entirely by two divisions. However, each of these divisions would have, on average, a -20% electoral variance. Loughton must be joined to a neighbouring area to be covered by two divisions.

99 Several residents, Loughton Town Council and Cllr R. Brookes suggested that there were few if any community links between the Loughton Broadway area and Chigwell, and that any proposal which linked these areas would likely not be reflective of community identity.

100 We viewed the Loughton and Buckhurst Hill areas on our virtual tour of Essex. We consider that Loughton Broadway, particularly the Broadway shopping and leisure facilities, is likely to attract visitors from the remainder of the town but is less likely to act as a draw for residents of Chigwell and other areas to the south. We therefore decided to amend the proposals of the Council and placed the Loughton Broadway area in a Loughton-based division. This allows the entirety of Loughton parish to be covered by two divisions, as suggested by the ILRA, albeit incorporating a neighbouring area as well.

101 With the loss of Loughton Broadway, a Chigwell-based division must take in a neighbouring area to ensure good electoral equality. This remains the case, even after the addition of Lambourne parish (as proposed by the Liberal Democrats) and the need to reflect coterminosity between district wards and county divisions. Given the constraints of the external boundary, the only plausible option is for the area of Buckhurst Hill to the east of the Underground line to be added to a Chigwell-based division. The Underground line offers a strong and clear boundary, with relatively few crossing points, as well as reflecting the warding arrangements in this area. This arrangement was proposed by the local resident who offered a scheme covering the district.

102 We have further modified the Council's proposals in order to improve the coterminosity of district wards and county divisions. Our draft Loughton Central division comprises two entire wards – Loughton Fairmead and Loughton St Johns, together with the bulk of Loughton Roding; while our draft Buckhurst Hill West & Loughton South division consists of the wards of Buckhurst Hill West and Loughton Forest, and the northern section of Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge ward.

Epping & Theydon Bois, North Weald & Nazeing, Ongar & Rural and Waltham Abbey

103 The existing Waltham Abbey division, covering the entire parish of the same name, is slightly too large to remain as a single division with good electoral equality.

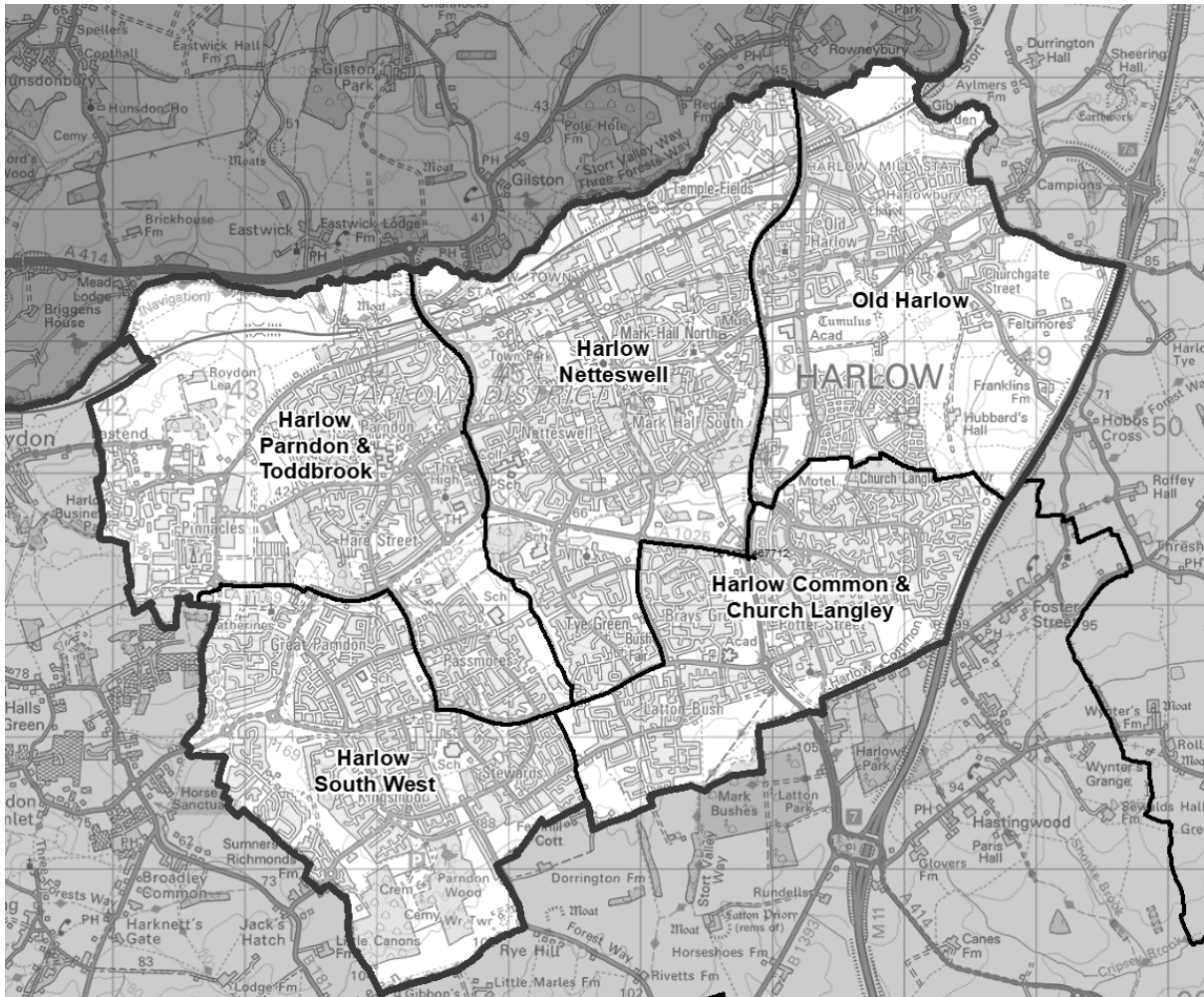
The Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals were for the southern section of the parish to be placed in an alternative division, while the resident proposed accepting the relatively poor electoral variance and keeping Waltham Abbey parish as a single division.

104 In its submission supporting the Council's proposal, the Conservative Group provided evidence that residents of the High Beeches area were as likely to look to Epping for services as they were to the town of Waltham Abbey. We have therefore placed this area in Epping & Theydon Bois division, as opposed to adopting the Liberal Democrat proposal for a Nazeing & Rural West division. The Liberal Democrats' proposal would result in a division that would stretch as far north as Sawbridgeworth, looping around Waltham Abbey and the borough of Harlow. We consider that this division would be challenging to represent effectively.

105 We have modified the Council's proposals for Epping & Theydon Bois slightly. The Council proposed placing the Coopersale area in Ongar & Rural division, whereas we prefer to retain it in Epping & Theydon Bois, in order to retain coterminosity with Epping East district ward. We have also moved the proposed boundary between Epping & Theydon Bois and North Weald & Nazeing divisions to the north, as far as Cobbin's Brook. This ensures that the parish wards which we must create for Epping Upland parish will have a viable number of electors.

106 The Council and Liberal Democrats proposed placing Sheering parish and the bulk of Matching parish in a division with Nazeing. We have modified this proposal, broadly in line with the suggestion of the local resident, to place these areas in an expanded Ongar & Rural division. This allows the village of Matching Green to be in a single division, as well as providing coterminosity with the Rural East district ward. While we accept that our draft Ongar & Rural division is relatively large geographically, the alternative would be a division wrapping around the south of Harlow borough which we consider would be equally challenging to travel around and represent effectively. Nazeing Parish Council provided a submission to the consultation but made no comments on possible division boundaries.

Harlow



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Harlow Common & Church Langley	1	4%
Harlow Netteswell	1	3%
Harlow Parndon & Toddbrook	1	-8%
Harlow South West	1	-3%
Old Harlow	1	-7%

107 Under a council size of 78, Harlow is allocated five councillors, with each division averaging a -2% electoral variance.

108 We received no proposals for divisions in Harlow other than that from the Council.

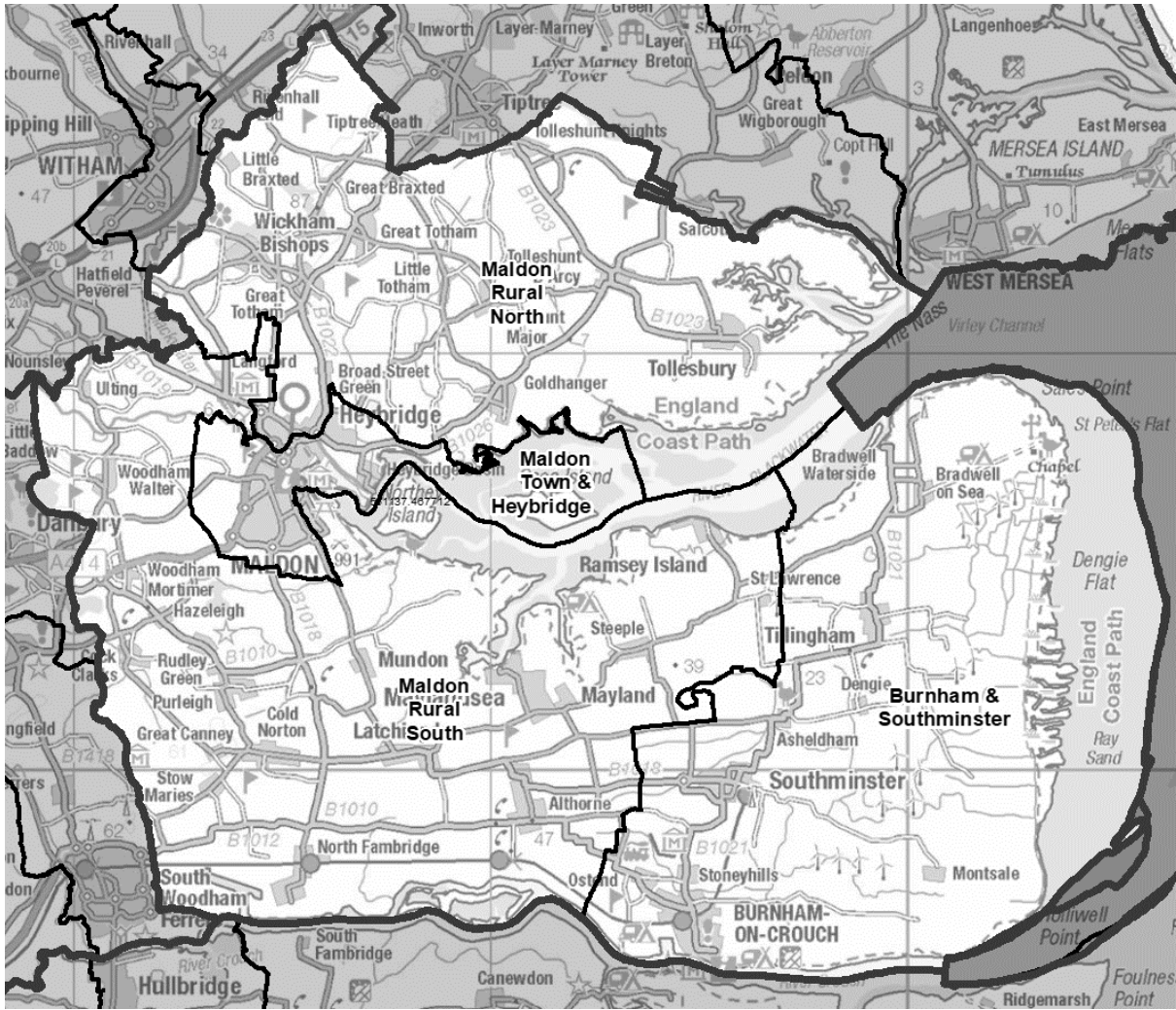
Harlow Common & Church Langley, Harlow Netteswell, Harlow Parndon & Toddbrook, Harlow South West and Old Harlow

109 The Council’s proposals were supported by the Conservative Group and Cllrs S. Barker, M. Garnett and M. Hardware. We have modified the proposals slightly as part of our draft recommendations, in order to improve coterminosity with borough wards and offer a strong boundary.

110 The Council proposed a boundary between Parndon & Toddbrook and Netteswell divisions running to the west of Tripton Road, following the former ward boundary in this area. Given the updated ward boundaries, we prefer to place the boundary to the east of Netteswell Plantation, using the open space as a boundary and ensuring that communities in this area are not divided.

111 Further south, the Council's proposed boundary between Harlow Common & Church Langley and Harlow South West divisions ran along Tysea Road and Commonsie Road. We prefer to shift this to the west, to run behind Fern Hill Lane and The Briars, thus ensuring that none of the housing estates in this area are divided between divisions.

Maldon



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Burnham & Southminster	1	-10%
Maldon Rural North	1	-8%
Maldon Rural South	1	-9%
Maldon Town & Heybridge	1	-7%

112 Under a Council size of 78, Maldon is allocated four councillors, with each division averaging a -8% electoral variance.

113 In addition to the Council’s proposal, we received an alternative scheme for Maldon from Cllr J. Driver, leader of the Liberal Democrat Group on Maldon Council, who proposed an alternative split of Maldon Town.

Burnham & Southminster, Maldon Rural North, Maldon Rural South and Maldon Town & Heybridge

114 The difference between the proposals of Cllr Driver and the Council centred around the town of Maldon, and the area to the north. Both proposals included the district wards of Maldon North, Maldon South and Maldon West in a Maldon division, and placed Maldon East in a rural division to the south. The Council placed Heybridge East division in a Maldon Town division, while Cllr Driver proposed to place Heybridge West ward in an urban-based division, and Heybridge East within a rural division to the north.

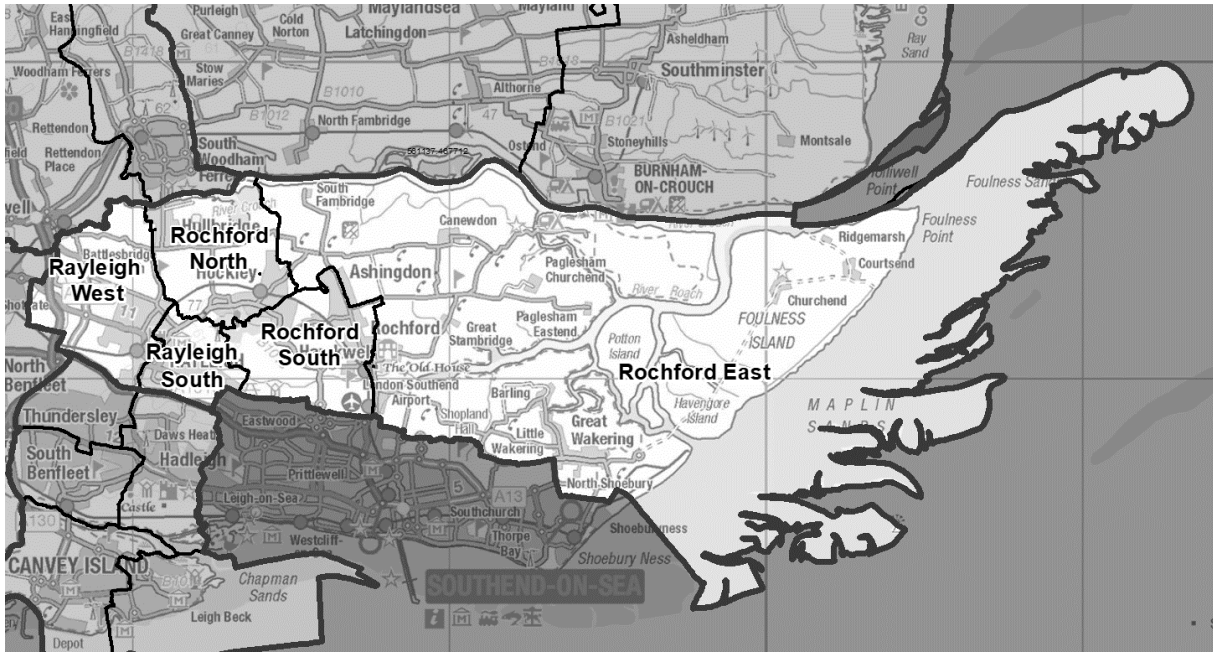
115 We viewed both areas on our virtual tour of Essex and consider that the decision is particularly finely balanced. While no split of the relatively small town of Heybridge would be an ideal reflection of community identity, the requirement to produce acceptable electoral equality dictates that one area of the town must be placed in a rural-based division. On balance, we have concluded that the Council's proposal is a better fit for our statutory criteria, particularly as it allows Heybridge Basin parish and the bulk of Heybridge parish to be within the division of the same name.

116 We considered departing from the principle of single-member divisions and proposing a two-member division combining our proposed Maldon Town & Heybridge and Maldon Rural North divisions. This would allow the neighbouring settlements of Maldon and Heybridge to be mostly combined within a single division. As this was not specifically proposed and we are under the restrictions of a single-member division review, we have not proposed this as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would welcome further evidence as to whether a two-member division could offer a better balance of our statutory criteria.

117 The Council and Cllr Driver agreed on proposals for Maldon Rural South and Burnham & Southminster divisions, which we have adopted as part of our draft recommendations. The Council noted that parishes such as Langford and Ulting, to the north of the River Chelmer, might fit more naturally in divisions to the north, but suggested that the proposed arrangement was the only way to achieve electoral equality.

118 A resident from Tolleshunt Knights proposed amending the boundaries of Maldon to place this parish in the neighbouring authority of Colchester. We do not have the power to amend the external boundaries of districts and boroughs as part of this electoral review of Essex County Council.

Rochford



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Rayleigh South	1	-11%
Rayleigh West	1	-12%
Rochford East	1	-9%
Rochford North	1	-4%
Rochford South	1	-5%

119 Under a Council size of 78, Rochford is allocated five councillors, with each division averaging a -8% electoral variance.

120 We received no proposals for divisions in Rochford other than those of the Council.

Rayleigh South and Rayleigh West

121 The two divisions proposed by the Council do not offer good forecast electoral equality, with 11% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average. We considered bringing in additional electors from neighbouring divisions to improve electoral equality, but this would involve pulling a modest number of electors in from either Hullbridge, or the southern section of Hockley parish, in a way which would not only reduce coterminosity of wards and divisions but would not reflect the community identity of these areas. We have therefore adopted the Council’s proposal, notwithstanding the relatively high electoral variances.

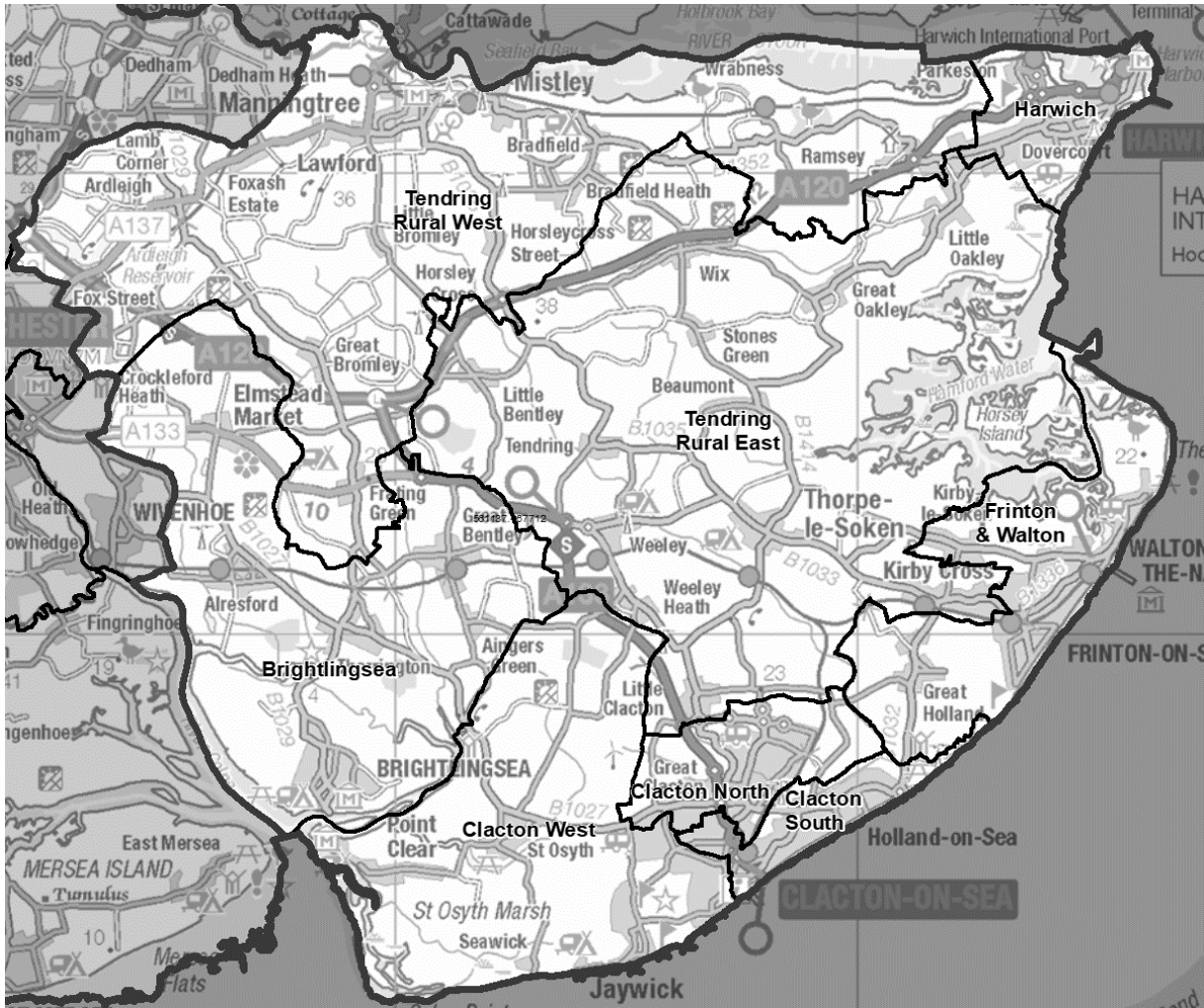
122 The boundary between the two Rayleigh divisions is proposed to run along the length of Rayleigh High Street. While this offers a clear and recognisable boundary, and a major deviation from this would increase the electoral variance even further, we would be interested in evidence as to whether a minor variation – perhaps to run along Websters Way, or Bull Lane and Stile Lane – and thus allow all of the High

Street to be in a single division, would promote effective and convenient local government.

Rochford East, Rochford North and Rochford South

123 We have adopted the Council's proposals for these divisions, which generally follow parish boundaries, and those of district wards. We received no other proposals for this area.

Tendring



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Brightlingsea	1	0%
Clacton North	1	8%
Clacton South	1	12%
Clacton West	1	10%
Frinton & Walton	1	-7%
Harwich	1	-2%
Tendring Rural East	1	-8%
Tendring Rural West	1	-6%

124 Under a Council size of 78, Tendring is allocated eight councillors, with each division averaging a 1% electoral variance.

125 We received no proposals for divisions in Tendring other than that from the Council. However, we have made several changes to the Council’s proposals, in order to bring the entirety of Clacton within three divisions and provide stronger and clearer boundaries in some areas.

Brightlingsea, Harwich, Tendring Rural East and Tendring Rural West

126 We have adopted the Council's proposal for Brightlingsea division with no amendments. However, we are putting forward amendments to the proposed divisions across the north of Tendring, in order to achieve good electoral equality and improve coterminosity with district wards where possible.

127 The Council proposed placing the village of Kirby-le-Soken in Tendring Rural East division. As a result of changes to Frinton & Walton division (discussed below at para 129), we are proposing to place this village in Frinton & Walton division as part of our draft recommendations. This also allows for the entirety of Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford ward to be placed in a single division. In order to balance the loss of electors from Tendring Rural East, we are placing Wix parish, which the Council proposed should be in Tendring Rural West, into Tendring Rural East. Again, this allows an additional district ward (The Oakleys & Wix) to be wholly within a single division.

128 Harwich Town Council suggested that, if it were necessary to enlarge the existing division based on the town, it would be logical to do so by including electors from Parkeston in a Harwich-based division. This was also proposed by the Council, and we have adopted it as part of our draft recommendations. This will mean that Harwich division is now comprised of five entire district wards.

Clacton North, Clacton South, Clacton West and Frinton & Walton

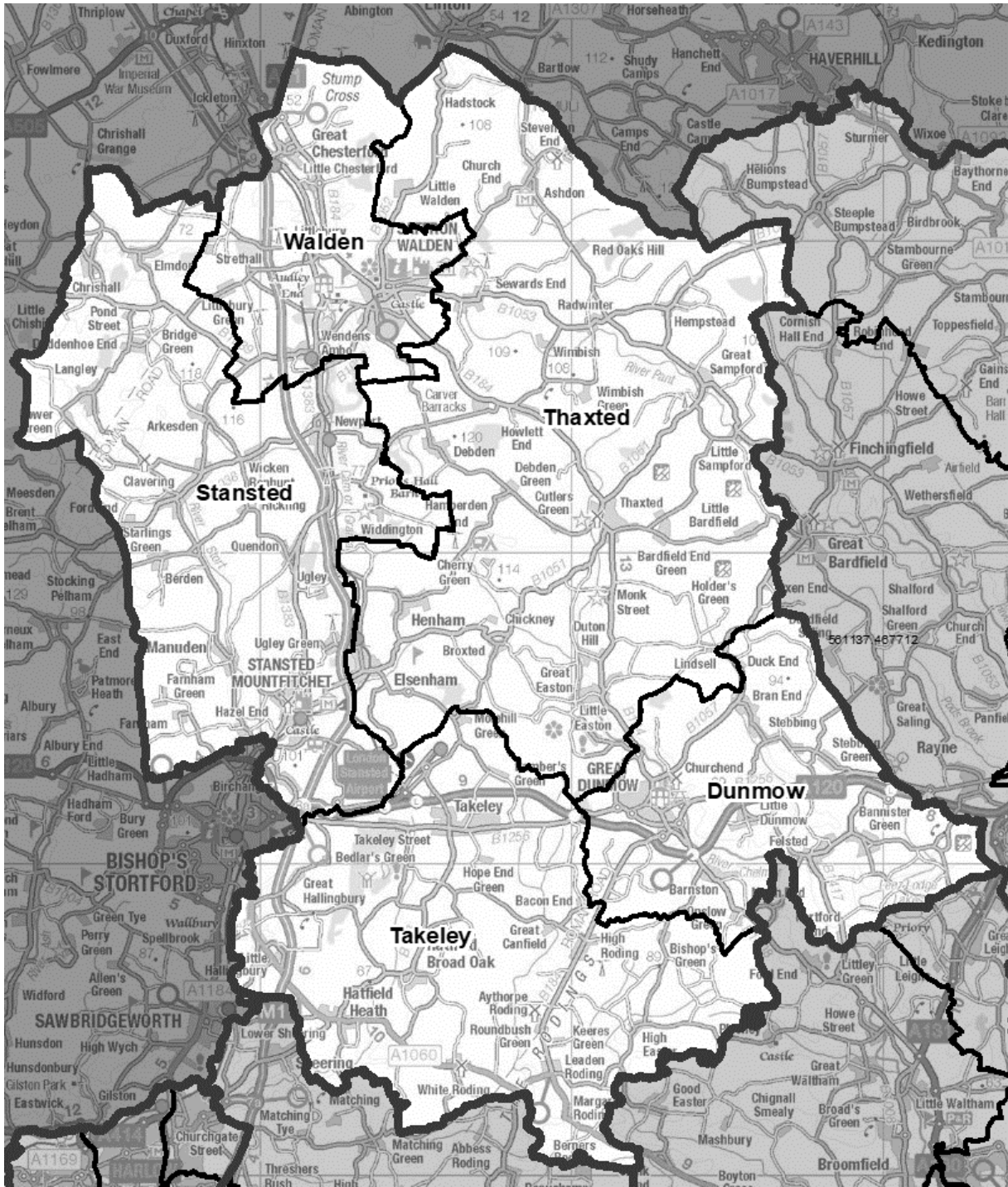
129 The Council proposed a boundary between Clacton South and Frinton & Walton divisions running between Nansen Road and Merrilees Crescent, and behind houses on York Road. Electors to the east of this boundary would be placed in Frinton & Walton division, but no evidence was provided that they shared community identities and interests with the towns to the north. We have not adopted this proposed boundary, preferring to bring electors in this area into a Clacton-based division.

130 The Council's proposal placed electors living between North Road, Valley Road, the railway line and Picker's Ditch into Clacton South division. With the expansion of this division as detailed above, this change is no longer necessary in order to maintain good electoral equality. We have placed these electors in Clacton North division as part of our draft recommendations, allowing the use of the railway line as a strong boundary, and ensuring that all of St John's ward can be placed in Clacton North division.

131 We have further modified the Council's proposed boundary between Clacton South and Clacton West divisions. The Council proposed that electors on Castle Road be placed in Clacton West, while those on Anchor Road, Alton Park Road and neighbouring streets would be placed in Clacton South. We were not persuaded that this boundary was sufficiently clear or that we had received sufficient community identity evidence to justify it. We have decided to adopt a simplified boundary as part of our draft recommendations, which runs along St Osyth Road and Old Road.

132 The cumulative effect of these changes is that Clacton South division is forecast to have 12% more electors per councillor than the average. We considered various options to reduce this variance but noted that this was not possible if we were to ensure good electoral equality for the wider area. We consider that our draft recommendations will achieve the best overall balance of our statutory criteria, but welcome views on our proposed amendments to the Council's proposals in this area.

Uttlesford



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Dunmow	1	0%
Stansted	1	1%
Takeley	1	-6%
Thaxted	1	-5%
Walden	1	5%

133 Under a Council size of 78, Uttlesford is allocated five councillors, with each division averaging a -1% electoral variance.

134 In addition to the Council's scheme, we received a proposal from Uttlesford Council Liberal Democrats for the divisions in this district.

Dunmow and Takeley

135 We received no alternative proposals for these divisions, which were proposed by both the Council and the Liberal Democrats. We have adopted these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

136 We received a number of submissions from residents of the area around Dunmow commenting on proposals to place this area in a Parliamentary constituency with Braintree. Parliamentary constituencies are proposed by a separate body – the Boundary Commission for England – and are not a factor we can consider with regard to division or ward boundaries.

Stansted, Thaxted and Walden

137 Both schemes received for Uttlesford proposed identical Walden divisions, based around the town of Saffron Walden. The Liberal Democrats proposed a Thaxted division wrapping around Walden division to the south, west and east. The Council's proposal, in contrast, was for relatively more compact divisions, with Stansted division covering the north-west of the district, and Thaxted the north-east.

138 The Liberal Democrats' proposal would have allowed Henham and Elsenham parishes to be placed in a division with Stansted Mountfitchet. Evidence was provided regarding links between these areas, specifically healthcare and educational facilities. We considered this carefully, but do not consider that the evidence provided outweighs the disadvantages of a very large rural division, which would include more than 20 parishes.

139 At the suggestion of the Liberal Democrats, we have modified the Council's proposal in order to place Wendens Ambo parish, which includes the nearest rail station to Saffron Walden, in Walden division. We have also modified the Council's proposal in order to ensure that Newport ward is within a single division. We have achieved this by moving Widdington parish from Thaxted division into Stansted division. These changes still allow Stansted, Thaxted and Walden divisions to retain good electoral equality.

140 Saffron Walden Town Council provided a submission arguing for the size of the existing division to be reduced – this has been accomplished in our draft recommendations as a consequence of the move from the existing four divisions covering Uttlesford to five. The Town Council also suggested an amendment to the boundary between Saffron Walden and Swards End parishes. We are unable to change external parish boundaries as part of this electoral review, but if a subsequent Community Governance Review led by Uttlesford District Council

chooses to amend parish boundaries, we can adjust division (and district ward) boundaries to match.

Conclusions

141 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Essex, referencing the 2022 and 2029 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and divisions. A full list of divisions, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the divisions is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2022	2029
Number of councillors	78	78
Number of electoral divisions	78	78
Average number of electors per councillor	14,319	15,848
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	18	6
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	0

Draft recommendations

Essex County Council should be made up of 78 councillors representing 78 single-councillor divisions. 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 divisions for the Essex County Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Essex on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/essex

Parish electoral arrangements

142 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 divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

143 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, the relevant district and borough councils have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

144 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 Billericay, Chelmsford Garden, Epping Upland, Ramsey & Parkeston, Rayleigh, Rochford and Wickford parishes.

145 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Billericay parish.

Draft recommendations

Billericay Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Billericay Central	3
Billericay East	6
Billericay South West	3
Billericay West	8

146 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chelmsford Garden parish.

Draft recommendations

Chelmsford Garden Community Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	2
East	1
North	1
South	6
South East	3

147 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Epping Upland parish.

Draft recommendations

Epping Upland Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Epping Green	6
Pond Field	1

148 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ramsey & Parkeston parish.

Draft recommendations

Ramsey & Parkeston Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Hewitt Road	2
Parkeston	4
Ramsey	5

149 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Rayleigh parish.

Draft recommendations

Rayleigh Town Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Grange	5
King Georges	2
Lodge	4
Sweyne Park	3
Trinity	5
Victoria	1
Wheatley	2
Whitehouse	1

150 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Rochford parish.

Draft recommendations

Rochford Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
King Edmund	4
South	3
South East	3
Waterman	2

151 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wickford parish.

Draft recommendations

Wickford Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Wickford Castledon	6
Wickford Central	3
Wickford North	7
Wickford Park	4

Have your say

152 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 county or just a part of it.

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

154 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say www.lgbce.org.uk

155 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

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

Review Officer (Essex)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

157 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of divisions for Essex 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.

158 A good pattern of divisions 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.

159 Electoral equality:

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

160 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?

161 Effective local government:

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

162 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.

163 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.

164 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.

165 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 Essex County Council in 2025.

Equalities

166 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 Essex

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
BASILDON								
1	Billericay North	1	16,061	16,061	12%	17,183	17,183	8%
2	Burstead	1	16,349	16,349	14%	17,560	17,560	11%
3	Castledon & Crouch	1	14,743	14,743	3%	15,766	15,766	-1%
4	Gloucester Park	1	14,639	14,639	2%	17,376	17,376	10%
5	Laindon Town	1	15,253	15,253	7%	16,813	16,813	6%
6	Pitsea	1	15,427	15,427	8%	16,488	16,488	4%
7	Vange	1	15,420	15,420	8%	16,870	16,870	6%
8	Westley Heights	1	15,061	15,061	5%	16,565	16,565	5%
9	Wickford North East & Bowers Gifford	1	15,636	15,636	9%	16,926	16,926	7%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
BRAINTREE							
10 Bocking	1	14,720	14,720	3%	16,675	16,675	5%
11 Braintree Eastern	1	12,542	12,542	-12%	14,510	14,510	-8%
12 Braintree Town	1	15,025	15,025	5%	15,645	15,645	-1%
13 Halstead	1	16,122	16,122	13%	16,989	16,989	7%
14 Hedingham	1	14,282	14,282	0%	14,896	14,896	-6%
15 Three Fields & Great Notley	1	14,660	14,660	2%	15,386	15,386	-3%
16 Witham Town	1	14,862	14,862	4%	16,192	16,192	2%
17 Witham West & Rural	1	12,980	12,980	-9%	15,879	15,879	0%
BRENTWOOD							
18 Brentwood Hutton	1	16,308	16,308	14%	17,441	17,441	10%
19 Brentwood North	1	14,449	14,449	1%	17,064	17,064	8%
20 Brentwood Rural	1	14,463	14,463	1%	15,916	15,916	0%
21 Brentwood South	1	14,458	14,458	1%	17,483	17,483	10%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	
CASTLE POINT								
22	Canvey Island East	1	15,060	15,060	5%	15,840	15,840	0%
23	Canvey Island West	1	14,123	14,123	-1%	14,681	14,681	-7%
24	Hadleigh	1	13,026	13,026	-9%	13,664	13,664	-14%
25	South Benfleet	1	13,427	13,427	-6%	14,063	14,063	-11%
26	Thundersley	1	13,685	13,685	-4%	14,406	14,406	-9%
CHELMSFORD								
27	Broomfield & Writtle	1	15,718	15,718	10%	16,926	16,926	7%
28	Chelmer	1	14,945	14,945	4%	17,314	17,314	9%
29	Chelmsford Central	1	13,540	13,540	-5%	15,158	15,158	-4%
30	Chelmsford North	1	14,922	14,922	4%	15,972	15,972	1%
31	Chelmsford Springfield	1	14,930	14,930	4%	16,335	16,335	3%
32	Chelmsford West	1	13,087	13,087	-9%	14,364	14,364	-9%

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
33	Danbury & The Hanningfields	1	15,256	15,256	7%	16,856	16,856	6%
34	Great Baddow & Galleywood	1	15,184	15,184	6%	16,649	16,649	5%
35	Woodham Ferrers	1	14,139	14,139	-1%	15,215	15,215	-4%
COLCHESTER								
36	Colchester Abbey	1	15,961	15,961	11%	17,158	17,158	8%
37	Colchester City	1	15,275	15,275	7%	17,114	17,114	8%
38	Colchester Lexden	1	14,317	14,317	0%	15,464	15,464	-2%
39	Colchester Maypole	1	15,122	15,122	6%	16,585	16,585	5%
40	Colchester St Johns	1	15,335	15,335	7%	16,659	16,659	5%
41	Constable	1	14,903	14,903	4%	16,481	16,481	4%
42	Mersea & Stanway	1	16,113	16,113	13%	17,252	17,252	9%
43	Tiptree & Marks Tey	1	13,880	13,880	-3%	15,687	15,687	-1%
44	Wivenhoe St Andrew	1	15,331	15,331	7%	17,458	17,458	10%

EPPING FOREST

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
45 Buckhurst Hill West & Loughton South	1	13,916	13,916	-3%	15,126	15,126	-5%
46 Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill East	1	15,278	15,278	7%	16,592	16,592	5%
47 Epping & Theydon Bois	1	14,516	14,516	1%	15,520	15,520	-2%
48 Loughton Central	1	14,971	14,971	5%	16,041	16,041	1%
49 North Weald & Nazeing	1	11,640	11,640	-19%	14,492	14,492	-9%
50 Ongar & Rural	1	13,867	13,867	-3%	15,101	15,101	-5%
51 Waltham Abbey	1	14,120	14,120	-1%	15,390	15,390	-3%
HARLOW							
52 Harlow Common & Church Langley	1	15,354	15,354	7%	16,545	16,545	4%
53 Harlow Netteswell	1	14,356	14,356	0%	16,335	16,335	3%
54 Harlow Parndon & Toddbrook	1	11,212	11,212	-22%	14,571	14,571	-8%
55 Harlow South West	1	14,419	14,419	1%	15,413	15,413	-3%

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
56 Old Harlow	1	8,356	8,356	-42%	14,775	14,775	-7%
MALDON							
57 Burnham & Southminster	1	12,083	12,083	-16%	14,258	14,258	-10%
58 Maldon Rural North	1	13,006	13,006	-9%	14,611	14,611	-8%
59 Maldon Rural South	1	12,669	12,669	-12%	14,373	14,373	-9%
60 Maldon Town & Heybridge	1	12,946	12,946	-10%	14,781	14,781	-7%
ROCHFORD							
61 Rayleigh South	1	13,395	13,395	-6%	14,128	14,128	-11%
62 Rayleigh West	1	12,799	12,799	-11%	13,999	13,999	-12%
63 Rochford East	1	13,581	13,581	-5%	14,425	14,425	-9%
64 Rochford North	1	14,312	14,312	0%	15,208	15,208	-4%
65 Rochford South	1	13,520	13,520	-6%	15,118	15,118	-5%
TENDRING							

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
66 Brightlingsea	1	13,868	13,868	-3%	15,859	15,859	0%
67 Clacton North	1	16,052	16,052	12%	17,090	17,090	8%
68 Clacton South	1	16,471	16,471	15%	17,735	17,735	12%
69 Clacton West	1	15,982	15,982	12%	17,456	17,456	10%
70 Frinton & Walton	1	13,672	13,672	-5%	14,771	14,771	-7%
71 Harwich	1	14,539	14,539	2%	15,598	15,598	-2%
72 Tendring Rural East	1	12,931	12,931	-10%	14,594	14,594	-8%
73 Tendring Rural West	1	12,787	12,787	-11%	14,825	14,825	-6%
UTTLESFORD							
74 Dunmow	1	14,392	14,392	1%	15,786	15,786	0%
75 Stansted	1	14,787	14,787	3%	16,078	16,078	1%
76 Takeley	1	11,676	11,676	-18%	14,831	14,831	-6%
77 Thaxted	1	13,302	13,302	-7%	15,064	15,064	-5%
78 Walden	1	15,331	15,331	7%	16,708	16,708	5%
Totals	78	1,116,845	-	-	1,236,124	-	-

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Averages	–	–	14,319	–	–	15,848	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Essex County Council.

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

Appendix B

Outline map



Number	Division name	Number	Division name
1	Billericay North	16	Witham Town
2	Burstead	17	Witham West & Rural
3	Castledon & Crouch	18	Brentwood Hutton
4	Gloucester Park	19	Brentwood North
5	Laindon Town	20	Brentwood Rural
6	Pitsea	21	Brentwood South
7	Vange	22	Canvey Island East
8	Westley Heights	23	Canvey Island West
9	Wickford North East & Bowers Gifford	24	Hadleigh
10	Bocking	25	South Benfleet
11	Braintree Eastern	26	Thundersley
12	Braintree Town	27	Broomfield & Writtle
13	Halstead	28	Chelmer
14	Hedingham	29	Chelmsford Central
15	Three Fields & Great Notley	30	Chelmsford North
31	Chelmsford Springfield	55	Harlow South West

32	Chelmsford West	56	Old Harlow
33	Danbury & The Hanningfields	57	Burnham & Southminster
34	Great Baddow & Galleywood	58	Maldon Rural North
35	Woodham Ferrers	59	Maldon Rural South
36	Colchester Abbey	60	Maldon Town & Heybridge
37	Colchester City	61	Rayleigh South
38	Colchester Lexden	62	Rayleigh West
39	Colchester Maypole	63	Rochford East
40	Colchester St Johns	64	Rochford North
41	Constable	65	Rochford South
42	Mersea & Stanway	66	Brightlingsea
43	Tiptree & Marks Tey	67	Clacton North
44	Wivenhoe St Andrew	68	Clacton South
45	Buckhurst Hill West & Loughton South	69	Clacton West
46	Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill East	70	Frinton & Walton
47	Epping & Theydon Bois	71	Harwich
48	Loughton Central	72	Tendring Rural East
49	North Weald & Nazeing	73	Tendring Rural West
50	Ongar & Rural	74	Dunmow
51	Waltham Abbey	75	Stansted
52	Harlow Common & Church Langley	76	Takeley
53	Harlow Netteswell	77	Thaxted
54	Harlow Parndon & Toddbrook	78	Walden

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

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/essex

Local Authority

- Castle Point Borough Council
- Essex County Council

Political Groups

- Braintree & Witham Labour Parties
- Braintree District Labour Party
- Chelmsford Liberal Democrats
- Epping Forest District Council Liberal Democrats
- Essex County Council Conservative Group
- Harwich & North Essex Conservative Association
- Independent Loughton Residents' Association
- Uttlesford Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor L. Barber (Essex County Council)
- Councillor S. Barker (Essex County Council)
- Councillor J. Beavis (Braintree District Council)
- Councillor K. Bowers (Essex County Council)
- Councillor L. Bowers-Flint (Essex County Council)
- Councillor R. Brookes (Epping Forest District Council)
- Councillor M. Buckley (Essex County Council)
- Councillor D. Clouston (Myland Community Council)
- Councillor M. Cunningham (Essex County Council)
- Councillor J. Devlin (Billericay Town Council)
- Councillor J. Driver (Maldon District Council)
- Councillor M. Garnett (Essex County Council)
- Councillor M. Hardware (Essex County Council)
- Councillor D. Harris (Essex County Council)
- Councillor A. Harrison (Basildon Borough Council)
- Councillor D. King (Essex County Council)
- Councillor S. Lissimore (Essex County Council)

- Councillor L. Mackenzie (Essex County Council)
- Councillor R. Massey (Essex County Council)
- Councillor A. McGurran (Essex County Council)
- Councillor I. Parker (Braintree District Council)
- Councillor R. Playle (Essex County Council)
- Councillor M. Vance (Essex County Council)
- Councillor H. Whitbread (Essex County Council)

Parish and Town Councils

- Chelmsford Garden Community Council
- Feering Parish Council (2 submissions)
- Harwich Town Council
- Loughton Town Council
- Nazeing Parish Council
- Saffron Walden Town Council

Local Residents

- 23 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

Translations and other formats:

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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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.

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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