

**PARISH REVIEW WORKING GROUP HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN AT 7.30 PM ON 6 NOVEMBER 2002**

Present:- Councillor A J Ketteridge – Chairman  
Councillors Mrs M A Caton, Mrs S Flack, M A Gayler and G Sell.

Officer in attendance:- P J Snow.

**PRWG1 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs S Flack declared her non-pecuniary interest in the item relating to the periodic electoral review of Essex County Council as a Member of the County Council.

**PRWG2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 5 June 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**PRWG3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute PRWG7 – Parish Review**

The Electoral Services Officer reported that the proposals agreed as part of the recently completed Parish Review had been submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in September. It was, as yet, unclear whether these proposals would be implemented in time for the Local Government elections in May next year.

**PRWG4 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Electoral Services Officer presented options for consideration by Members as part of the periodic electoral review of Essex County Council's electoral arrangements. At its meeting on 22 October, the Council had agreed to extend the Working Group's terms of reference to enable it to recommend a response to the Resources Committee on 21 November. The closing date for representations to be submitted to the Boundary Committee for England was 25 November.

The report included an explanation of the statutory rules applicable to the review. Broadly speaking, these were to secure effective and convenient local government and to provide for equality of representation. The Boundary Committee acknowledged that the achievement of absolute electoral equality was not attainable but recommended that this should be the starting point for any review and only then should any adjustments be made to reflect relevant factors such as community identity. The guidance issued as part of the

review said that particular justification would be required for any electoral imbalances of more than 10%.

In addition, the rules stated that regard should be paid to the boundaries of District Wards. In certain circumstances it might be possible for District Wards to be divided between different electoral divisions but the achievement of co-terminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards was stated as a desired objective.

The County Council had established a member panel to develop proposals for submission to the Boundary Committee. It was understood that the panel had met on the previous day and that a number of proposals had been tabled for consideration. The next stage would be for the various political groups to try to reach an accommodation and agree a way forward.

The review process required the County Council to compile and supply a five year forecast of the electorate as at December 2006. Those figures had only recently become available and officers had now recalculated the various options presented in the report on the basis of the five year forecast.

Members gave consideration to each of the options prepared by the officers together with an option submitted by Councillor Gayler on behalf of Great Dunmow Town Council and a further option submitted by Councillor Mrs Flack. The Working Group discussed the merits of each of the proposed electoral schemes in turn and agreed that the scheme submitted by Councillor Mrs Flack could be recommended for submission to the Boundary Committee subject to a number of minor adjustments. In order to ensure that the proposed scheme was balanced in terms of electorate figures, it was necessary under this option for the district ward of Takeley and the Canfields to be divided between two different electoral divisions.

**RECOMMENDED** that the scheme detailed below be adopted for submission to the Boundary Commission for England to provide for four electoral divisions of Essex County Council to be incorporated wholly within the Uttlesford District:-

Electoral Division/Ward	December 2001 Electorate	December 2006 Electorate
<b>DUNMOW</b>		
Barnston & High Easter	1248	1262
Broad Oak and the Hallingburys	2629	2697
Great Dunmow North	2018	2256
Great Dunmow South	3547	3644
Hatfield Heath	1348	1364
Takeley and the Canfields (part)	536	896
The Rodings	1389	1434
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,715(-7.0%)</b>	<b>13,553(-8.1%)</b>
<b>SAFFRON WALDEN</b>		
Littlebury	1259	1268
Saffron Walden Audley	3784	3865
Saffron Walden Castle	3743	3773
Saffron Walden Shire	3852	3996
The Chesterfords	1316	1332
Wenden Lofts	1201	1223
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,155(+10.8%)</b>	<b>15,457(+4.9%)</b>
<b>STANSTED</b>		
Birchanger	839	1741
Clavering	1136	1146
Elsenham and Henham	2769	2785
Newport	2560	2586
Stansted North	2649	2685
Stansted South	2110	2384
Stort Valley	1189	1203
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,252(-3.1%)</b>	<b>14,530(-1.4%)</b>
<b>THAXTED</b>		
Ashdon	1283	1309
Felsted	2508	3571
Stebbing	1260	1276
Takeley and the Canfields (part)	1896	2504
Thaxted	2556	2619
The Eastons	1245	1259
The Sampfords	1397	1419
Wimbish and Debden	1440	1464
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,585(-0.7%)</b>	<b>15,421(+4.6%)</b>

## **PRWG5 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES IN THE UTTLESFORD DISTRICT**

The Electoral Services Officer presented a comprehensive report, incorporating maps, containing a series of suggestions and recommendations for changes to polling arrangements in the light of the new district wards due to come into operation at the elections in May 2003. The opportunity had been taken to review all polling district and polling place arrangements and all relevant bodies (including political parties, parish councils etc) had been invited to submit comments.

The statutory rules applicable to the process of reviewing polling districts and polling places, detailed in Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, were noted. The rules stated that all electors must be given such reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable and that each parish must, in the absence of special circumstances, be a separate polling district or districts. It was normal practice to designate a particular building as the polling place for each polling district except where circumstances made this impracticable.

The Working Group noted that particular difficulties would be caused by the revised warding arrangements in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted and that the existing arrangements in some rural locations would also need to be considered. Members considered each of the proposals contained in the report in turn and agreed the recommendations listed at the end of this item. As a general principal, it was agreed that a letter should be sent to all electors affected by revised polling arrangements advising them of the agreed changes.

**RECOMMENDED** that the following changes to polling districts and polling places be adopted and brought into effect on 3 February 2003:

- 1 That the polling districts of Bush End and Hatfield Broad Oak be merged, with electors for the revised polling district polling at Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall, and that the polling district description be amended to read "Hatfield Broad Oak (including both Bush End and Village Parish wards)";
- 2 That the parish of Chickney be merged with the polling district of Henham, voting at Henham Village Hall, and that the polling district description be revised to read "Henham and Chickney";
- 3 That the Flich of Bacon Public House continue to be designated as the polling place for Little Dunmow in the absence of any suitable alternative;
- 4 That the revised Great Dunmow North and Great Dunmow South wards continue to be designated as separate polling districts without further division and that the Dourdan Pavillion and the ET Foakes Memorial Hall, respectively, continue to serve as the designated polling places for these revised wards;

- 5 That Saffron Walden Audley ward be divided into separate polling districts known as Audley North and Audley South and that the boundary division be defined as follows:

“a line commencing on the eastern boundary of the ward south of the junction of South Road with Audley Road, and following the rear gardens of properties fronting Audley Road, Station Street and High Street, then crossing the road at the point where High Street and London Road meet, and continuing along the rear gardens of properties fronting the northern side of London Road then in a generally north westerly direction to the east of Beck Road and the north of Saxon Way and then along the line of the Slade to the parish boundary.”

The polling place for Audley North to be designated as the URC Church Hall, Abbey Lane and the polling place for Audley South to be designated as the Friends School, Mount Pleasant Road;

- 6 Saffron Walden Castle ward to be divided into three separate polling districts to be known as Little Walden, Castle South East and Castle South West respectively; the boundary defining the Little Walden district to be as follows:

“That portion of the Castle ward lying to the north of a straight line commencing on the eastern boundary of the ward at the point where it is crossed by footpath 42, and then continuing in a westerly direction to the point where the access road to Rowley Hill meets Little Walden Road immediately south of Rowley Hill Lodge, then continuing westerly in a straight line to the parish boundary immediately to the south of Rowley Hill Farm, polling at Little Walden Village Hall.”

Castle South East polling district to be defined as “that portion of Castle ward lying to the south and south east of a line running in an easterly direction from the western boundary of the ward with Audley ward along the centre of Ashdon Road to a point west of the junction with Highfields, then in a northerly direction along the western edge of 2 Ashdon Road, then along the rear boundaries of those properties on the western side of Highfields, to the junction of Highfields with Sheds Lane, then along the rear boundaries of 10-16 Sheds Lane (evens) and 6-2 Neville Road (evens), to join with Sheds Lane, then in a north easterly direction along the centre of Sheds Lane, then along the rear boundaries of 22-26 Usterdale Road (evens) to join with Bridleway no 1, and then continuing along the line of that bridleway to the point where it meets with byway no 3 at Butlers Lane, and continuing along that byway to the point where it meets the polling district boundary with Little Walden, polling at Dame Johane Bradbury School, Ashdon Road.”

Castle South West polling district to consist of the remainder of Castle ward not included in either Little Walden or Castle South

East polling districts, polling at St Mary's Primary School, Castle Street.

- 7 That the revised Saffron Walden Shire ward be divided into Shire North and Shire South polling districts, the boundary to be defined as follows:

“Shire North polling district – that portion of Shire ward north of a line commencing on the western boundary of the ward where it meets with Audley ward at the junction of South Road with Peaslands Road, and running in an easterly direction along the centre of Peaslands Road to a point on that road, and continuing in a generally easterly direction along the rear boundaries of the properties fronting the north side of Peaslands Road, including Bromfield, then in a southerly direction along the centre of Thaxted Road to a point on that road, then in a generally easterly direction along Footpath 37, Bridleway 19 and Bridleway 18 to the ward boundary west of Cole End Lane.”

Shire South polling district to consist of the remainder of Shire ward not in Shire North polling district, polling at the Golden Acre Community Centre, Ross Close.

(The designated polling place for Shire North to be one of the following buildings: Four Acres Common Room, R A Butler Infants School, Bell College, Shire Hill Pentecostal Church or Fairycroft House, the officers to make further investigations before the Resources Committee meeting on 21 November.)

- 8 That the polling place for Stansted North ward be either the Peter Kirk Centre or the Friends Meeting House and the polling place for Stansted South ward be designated as the Youth Centre Lower Street;
- 9 That the Duton Hill and Tilty polling district be amended to delete reference to the parish of Tilty and the description amended to read:
- “Duton Hill: that portion of the parish of Great Easton included in the Duton Hill parish ward as described in the District of Uttlesford (Electoral Changes) Order 2001 and illustrated on the accompanying maps, polling at the Function Room, Three Horseshoes Public House, Duton Hill.”
- 10 That the polling place for Great Chesterford be changed to the Community Centre Recreation Ground, Great Chesterford;
- 11 That the description of the Broxted and Chickney polling district be revised to delete reference to the parish of Chickney (see recommendation 2):
- 12 That the parish of Tilty be included with Great Easton for polling purposes and that the description be amended to read “Great Easton and Tilty: That portion of the parish of Great Easton

included in the Great Easton Village parish ward as described in the District of Uttlesford (Electoral Changes) Order 2001 and illustrated on the accompanying maps, together with the parish of Tilty, polling at Great Easton Village Hall;

- 13 That the Returning Officer be authorised to change the designated polling place for any polling district in appropriate circumstances, ie where a designated building is not, for any reason, available on a particular day.

Councillor Gayler declared an interest in the item relating to Great Dunmow South polling district as a nearby resident of Grove Court (considered as a possible polling venue for that ward).

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm