

20 December 2022

██████████
Review Officer
LGBCE
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

Subject: Proposals for new pattern of wards in Epping Forest - Council Comments

Dear ██████████,

Epping Forest District Council has considered its position in relation to the consultation on the proposed new pattern wards. A Leader's Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PHAG), comprising primarily of the Group Leaders of all the main groups represented on the Council, has been carrying out the work to date in respect of the Boundary review. The response had been considered and endorsed by full Council on Tuesday 13 December 2022.

The overall conclusion was that the new pattern of wards were acceptable, with the exception of the proposed Rural East ward, which the Council felt went against the statutory criteria, creating a ward that was too large and did not reflect community ties and identities in this area of the district.

The Council's comments have been set out below.

Comments

- 1.1 That the Council supports all of the Commission's draft recommendations for the district wards with the strong exception of the Rural East ward.
- 1.2 That Council previously argued that the Rural East of the District would be too large geographically and with too many individual communities which share little or no community identity for the Commission's own tests to be met. The publication of the Consultation draft which dismissed the Council's views and includes a proposed Rural East ward only serves to emphasise just how large and disparate this warding arrangement would be in practice. The ward would be more than 17 kilometres, north to south and 13 kilometres east to west, with elements of 21 individual communities captured within it, this is demonstrably too large and clearly contradicts the Commission's criteria of Effective Local Government (as it is geographically too large) and Community Identity (as the communities largely do not associate with each other). To address these issues the Council strongly believes that this ward should be split into three single member wards as follows:

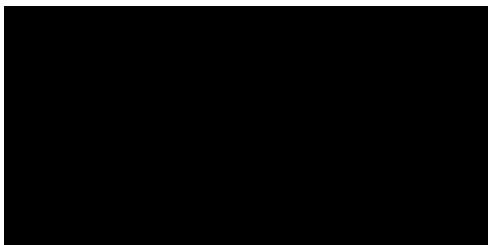
<i>Ward 1</i>	<i>Ward 2</i>	<i>Ward 3</i>
Lower Sheering Sheering	Bobbingworth High Laver East High Laver West Little Laver Moreton Magdalen Laver Matching (1) Matching (2)	Norton Mandeville Paslow Common Willingale AB& BR Fyfield
<i>variance 30% 2022 32% 2028</i>	<i>variance -2% 2022 -7% 2028</i>	<i>variance 14% 2022 7% 2028</i>

- 1.3 This would provide effective local government by creating smaller, more manageable geographical areas for the members. The proposed ward covers nine parish councils therefore splitting this ward into three wards would allow the member to develop connections and good contacts with those parishes, which would not as easily be created and maintained if it was a three-member ward.
- 1.4 Community identity revolves around the various parish wards, primary schools, and community buildings within each of these areas which strengthens the Council argument for retaining the three single member wards.
- 1.5 There is also a distinct difference between the Sheering and Lower Sheering wards which were more populated, urban in style and had clustered housing developments compared to the rest of the parishes, where the housing becoming much more sporadic towards the east of the proposed ward pattern.
- 1.6 The Council notes that the variance for the Lower Sheering and Sheering is above the tolerance but as the room for growth in this area is confined and because it is so different to the rest of the proposed ward, this should be overlooked for the sake of the community identify and effective local government.
- 1.7 If the Commission were not minded to support the above recommendation, the Council proposes that a single member ward and a two-member ward would be preferred to the three-member ward for the above reasons.
- 1.8 The proposed single- and two-member ward proposed would be as follows:

Ward 1 (single member ward)	Ward 2 (two-member ward)	
Lower Sheering Sheering	Bobbingworth High Laver West Moreton Matching (1) Norton Mandeville Willingale Fyfield	High Laver East Little Laver Magdalen Laver Matching (2) Palslow Common AB& BR
<i>variance 30% 2022 32% 2028</i>	<i>variance 6% 2022 0% 2028</i>	

- 1.9 It should also be noted that the Council supported Roydon Parish Council's comments, which argued that the number of Parish ward members required for Hall Green was too large. The developments predicted for this area are reliant on the Local Plan being adopted in good time and master planning for the site being produced to allow for the development to take place before 2028. With the delays in adopting the Local Plan it is now felt unlikely that this development area will be completely built out by the 2028 date.

We hope that you find these comments useful and that the Commission takes the Council's comments into considering when finalising the new pattern of wards.



Andrew Small
Strategic Director