

Essex

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Organisation Name: Braintree District Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Hedingham Division, Braintree District.

The Hedingham Division is a large rural Division with over 25 parish councils and a multitude of small hamlets and isolated and extremely rural communities.

Unlike Braintree and Bocking the Hedingham Division is a parished area where the local parish councils are the structure most close to people, communities and businesses.

The work of the county councillor requires frequent engagement with all parish councils which means with the amount of parishes in the Hedingham Division this is huge work load which requires great commitment above and beyond the role of most other County Councillors.

Once a year all the parish councils have an Annual Parish Meeting - a legal requirement and takes place in the spring. The APMs are well attended by the local parishioners who expect their County Councillor to be present. This means approximately 60 meetings in a small window of time.

Historically local residents have frequently complained about the number of parish councils attached to the Hedingham Division, particularly as it is a one seat ward.

The Hedingham Division would be better suited to a two seat councillor division to allow for the work load to be shared. This would ultimately lead

to better engagement and communication with people, communities and businesses.

Due to the vast geographical area of the Hedingham Division and the remoteness of the parishes and hamlets a two seat councillor divisions would mean a greater opportunity to have a County Councillor presence at the parish meetings and community meetings and gatherings within the Hedingham Division.

Other areas of Essex have a multiple seat Divisions. Currently the Braintree District does not.

The uniqueness of the Hedingham Division is such that serious consideration should be given to agree that the Division becomes a 2 seat Division.

Highways, adult social care, rural education placements into the larger feeder schools, transportation, fuel poverty and the voluntary sector support in such a large Division are key priority areas that deserve better attention and outcomes for local residents.

A new 2 seat Division would give residents a greater opportunity to engage with and communicate issues to 2 County Councillors.

Thank you.

Jo Beavis.

Attached Documents:

None attached