

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Related subject: Macclesfield and neighbouring parishes

Please find below my comments, objections and proposals for your review into Cheshire East Council's borough ward boundaries.

1. I support the LGBCE in its decision to maintain CEC's size at 82 councillors, which is in line with CEC's proposal.
2. Cheshire East Council's proposal for the future borough ward electoral arrangements allows for all 82 councillors in 48 wards. At present we have 82 councillors in 52 wards. A change to 48 wards from 52 appears to me to be travel in the wrong direction and could ultimately lead to a single 82-councillor ward. This would be absurd. Less absurd, but still so, are three and two-councillor wards in which undemocratic election results are possible. My preference is single-councillor wards. The 2023 borough election result for Nantwich South and Stapeley ward illustrates why: Does one one party deserve both seats here?

I recognise that the LGBCE is unable to change the electoral system. However, in Cheshire East, including in Macclesfield, where each borough councillor (and each town or parish councillor, see 10 below) represents between 3,700 and 4,500 electors, it seems possible to draw up boundaries for single-councillor wards that preserve the identities of the communities within those boundaries. Also, more convenient and effective local government would be better served in single-councillor wards by having the closest possible ties between electors and their single one local councillor than in multi-councillor wards.

It seems to me that the LGBCE has the power to work generally towards single-councillor wards. I propose that for the present review of Cheshire East all three-councillor wards are divided into three single-councillor wards and at the next review all remaining two-councillor wards are divided into single-councillor wards. A similar approach should be adopted in the review of all other councils.

The building blocks of all the wards in Cheshire East are the existing polling districts. In Macclesfield these range in size from 600 electors to over 2,000, with an outlier, 4AA4 in Macclesfield Tytherington ward, at only 95. The sizes of some of these building blocks do not always fit a single-councillor ward, but I see no reason for not adjusting some polling districts to suit that goal.

3. I support CEC's intention to ensure close electorate parity between councillors.

4. In the Cheshire East Local Plan (2017) several strategic sites for the present and future development of Macclesfield are located in the neighbouring parishes of Gawsorth, Henbury and Sutton. These are all outside the Macclesfield parish boundaries and Macclesfield Town Council (MTC) has little say in how and when these sites should be developed. In addition, MTC has not prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, possibly because such a plan, that could not include the strategic sites allocated for the future development of the town, would make little sense.

In the recent Community Governance Review of Cheshire East Council (2021-2022) I tried in vain to achieve the objective of moving all the strategic sites inside the boundaries of Macclesfield parish, ie moving the Macclesfield parish boundaries outwards. Only that part of LPS 18 that was located within Henbury parish was transferred into Macclesfield parish.

I still hope that the aim described in the previous paragraph can be achieved but am unsure how the present review can help. Moving Macclesfield parish boundaries outwards will necessarily entail moving some parishioners of rural parishes into Macclesfield parish and to start paying for the facilities they use. While these parishioners use the shopping facilities, services and other infrastructure of the town, they will no doubt claim a strong preference for living in a rural parish.

Perhaps CEC could be asked to include its strategic sites on the maps produced for this review. And asked why the wards outside Macclesfield parish containing strategic sites for the future development of Macclesfield are not proposed to be transferred into our town council (Macclesfield parish) area. And also why this was not done during the recent Community Governance Review.

5. I note CEC's proposal to include polling district 4AE1 in the Macclesfield Tytherington Ward. That polling district is separated from the rest of the Tytherington ward by both the River Bollin and the West Coast Main Line with no direct connection to Tytherington, either by car or on foot. I also note CEC's difficulties here and that electoral parity between wards beats community coherence within a ward.

6. Above I have objected generally to multi-councillor wards. Here I object to CEC's proposal to amalgamate the two-councillor wards of

Macclesfield West & Ivy and Broken Cross & Upton into one three-councillor ward. Three single-councillor wards should be provided here for the same reasons.

7. Does the inclusion of Higher Hurdsfield parish into the Macclesfield Hurdsfield borough ward mean the abolishment of HH parish and its area included into Macclesfield parish?

8. Similarly, does the inclusion of the Gawsworth polling districts of 4GDT and 4BFR into the Macclesfield South borough ward mean that these areas are transferred from Gawsworth parish to Macclesfield parish? A large area of Safeguarded Land, LPS 19, remains in Gawsworth Borough ward. As the local plan runs from 2010 to 2030 it is now appropriate to transfer LPS19 into Macclesfield parish. That would also allow a comprehensive development plan to be drawn up for the string of sites allocated in the local plan south west of Macclesfield for the development of the town.

9. Local Plan strategic site LPS 17 is situated in the Lyme Green ward of Sutton parish. It is likely that the new residents who will shortly occupy that site will affiliate with Macclesfield rather than with Sutton village. It is also likely that the present residents of Lyme Green village look to Macclesfield for their shopping and other services and facilities that the town can offer. Therefore it is proposed that polling district 4CC1 be transferred from Sutton borough ward to Macclesfield South borough ward and from Sutton parish to Macclesfield parish. The opportunity should also be taken, in the interest of convenient and effective local government, to remove a small area of Gawsworth borough ward east of the railway line near Gaw End Lane from Gawsworth parish to Macclesfield parish.

10. When Macclesfield Town Council was set up in about 2015 it was convenient for CEC to choose the existing borough wards for MTC too. And the number of MTC councillors was chosen, in error in my opinion, the same as that for the borough, 12. Other towns have a number of town councillors that is several times the number of their borough councillors. Congleton has 6 borough councillors but 20 town councillors. Macclesfield TC is an outlier with only 12 parish councillors for a current electorate of over 41,500.

In accordance with CEC's proposal, Macclesfield should now have 11 borough councillors. I am in favour of single-councillor wards, see above, and would like to see 11 such wards here. In new elections for MTC each such ward could return 2 town councillors, giving a town council strength of 22 councillors representing about 44,000 electors. Something like this should have been done during the recent Community Governance Review.

11. In recent years an ancient Macclesfield institution, King's School in Macclesfield (since 1502) has moved from near the town centre into the Green Belt in Prestbury, more particularly to the Prestbury parish Fallibroome ward, polling district 4HF2. That ward also includes Macclesfield Rugby Club, 95 electors and it shares boundaries with Macclesfield polling districts 4AF2 and 4AF3 and with Fallibroome College, another Macclesfield institution.

Because 4HF2 makes a bulge into Macclesfield parish, it appears that it would serve both community cohesion and convenient and effective local government to transfer 4HF2 with its two old Macclesfield institutions into either the 4AF2 or 4AF3 polling districts and transfer Prestbury parish Fallibroome ward into Macclesfield parish. Most of the 95 electors affected will look to Macclesfield for the majority of their shopping and other services and facilities that the town can offer.

Moving 4HF2 out of Prestbury borough ward would change the elector deviation of Prestbury ward as proposed by CEC from +3% to +1%. It will hardly affect Macclesfield's new large West ward but it will anyway need an overhaul to create single councillor wards.

Attached Documents:

- image-(14_0.jpg

2023 Election Results for Nantwich South and Stapeley Ward

Election date: May 4, 2023

Candidate	Party	Votes	Share	Elected
Groves, Peter Graham	Conservative Party	1,316	23.20%	No
Martin, Andrew Edwin	Conservative Party	1,395	24.59%	No
Priest, John Richard	Labour Party	1,478	26.06%	Yes
Smith, Geoffrey Kenneth	Labour Party	1,483	26.15%	Yes

Elected:

- Priest, John Richard (Labour Party)
- Smith, Geoffrey Kenneth (Labour Party)

Please use our interactive map of Cheshire East (https://maps.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ce/webmapping?layers=AU_S_Wards_POLY_CURRENT) to view ward boundaries.

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