

Thurrock

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Comment text:

Related subject: This is the submission of the Thurrock Labour Group

Attached is a letter from the Thurrock Labour Group.

Best Wishes,
Dolapo Akinbolagbe (Political Assistant)

Attached Documents:

- lgbce-letter---labour-group-submission.pdf

LGBCE
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
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13th September 2024

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Dear Boundary Commission,

On behalf of the Thurrock Labour Group, we wish to submit our response to the LGBCE's proposed warding pattern changes in Thurrock. We have consulted extensively with our communities through ward forums and local groups to gather their views on how these changes might impact them. Below is a summary of the concerns raised across several wards:

Aveley and Purfleet

We strongly oppose the proposed southern boundary, which divides the southern end of Purfleet Road and properties along London Road from the rest of the ward. While the A13 may seem like a natural boundary, it does not serve as an effective divider due to its position in a cutting and the bridge over Purfleet Road. This would unnecessarily fragment a long-established community. Residents overwhelmingly expressed opposition, concerned that their strong community ties would be disrupted.

In addition, we recommend renaming the ward to "Aveley and Kenningtons," reflecting the distinct character of both areas and better representing the communities within the ward.

Belhus, North Stifford, and Ockendon

We strongly support retaining the name "Belhus," given its historical significance. Belhus Manor House and Belhus Park are key historical landmarks, and the name is deeply valued by residents for preserving the area's identity.

However, we propose removing North Stifford from Belhus Ward. North Stifford is more aligned with surrounding rural areas and villages, both geographically and in terms of community identity. The green spaces and lack of strong transport links between North Stifford and Belhus further demonstrate the divide. North Stifford's natural alignment is with areas like Chafford and including it in Belhus disrupts community cohesion.

We also oppose the proposed names "Ockendon North" and "Ockendon South," as they could cause confusion. With South Ockendon already existing in Thurrock and North Ockendon in Havering, these names risk creating ambiguity for residents. We recommend keeping the names "Ockendon" and "Belhus" to maintain clarity and preserve distinct community identities.

Grays North and South

The proposed boundaries for Grays North would divide long-established communities, including streets like College Avenue and Tennyson Avenue, which have historically been part of Grays. This would fragment local ties and create confusion around polling districts. Similarly, moving streets such as Richmond Road and Salisbury Road into Little Thurrock Rectory would sever their connection to Grays, particularly their link to Grays Park.

Alternatively, we propose returning all roads west of the A1013 (Whitehall Lane) from Little Thurrock Rectory to Grays North, including Tennyson Avenue, Ward Avenue, and College Avenue. This adjustment will create a logical boundary while preserving community cohesion. To balance electoral equality, we also suggest increasing the number of councillors in Grays North to three and reducing Little Thurrock Rectory to two members.

We also propose changing the ward name from "Grays North" to "Grays Town" to reflect its central role in the community. Additionally, we recommend retaining the name "Grays Riverside" for Grays South to honour the area's connection to the waterfront and its historical significance, particularly Grays Beach, a cherished local landmark.

Tilbury North and South

We propose retaining the names "Tilbury St Chads" and "Tilbury Riverside" instead of adopting "Tilbury North" and "Tilbury South." These names are deeply tied to the community's identity and history. "Tilbury St Chads" reflects the significance of St Chads School, a central institution in Tilbury that was built in the 1930s and served the community for generations. The school not only provided an education but also fostered local pride and unity, until the unfortunate fire of 2009. "St Chads" is a name that not only resonates strongly with residents but memorialise the building that was lost.

Similarly, "Tilbury Riverside" reflects the town's historic connection to the River Thames, symbolising Tilbury's importance as a key port and its enduring role in the area's social and economic life. Changing these meaningful names to generic alternatives risks erasing this rich history and weakening the strong sense of identity within the community. Retaining the original names preserves this connection and honours Tilbury's unique heritage.

Stanford-le-Hope

Although we accept the ward arrangement for the East of the borough, We recommend renaming the ward from "Stanford-le-Hope North" to "The Homesteads, Corringham Town, and Stanford East" to better reflect the distinct identities of these communities. Each area holds historical and cultural significance:

"The Homesteads" a key area in Thurrock with a rich history dating back to the early 20th century. Originally developed as large homes with generous plots of land, The Homesteads area has evolved into a unique suburban community known for its spacious properties, family-oriented character, and longstanding ties to the surrounding rural landscape. "Corringham Town" retains its independent village identity, and "Stanford East" represents the historical and growing community in the eastern part of Stanford-le-Hope.

It is crucial that the councillor representing this ward acknowledges and respects the distinct needs and identities of these different areas. By recognising the unique characteristics of each community, the councillor can ensure more tailored and effective representation, fostering stronger ties between the residents and their local government.

Chadwell St Mary

As a group, we largely support the recommendations for Chadwell Heath but strongly believe that Greyhound Lane and Orsett Heath should be moved into the Orsett, Horndon, and Bulphan ward, with Heath Road serving as the northern boundary. This adjustment would create a clearer, more logical boundary that aligns with local geography and community ties. Currently, Greyhound Lane's inclusion in Chadwell Heath leads to confusion for residents, who naturally identify more with Orsett due to closer proximity and shared amenities. Shifting these areas into Orsett would not only eliminate this confusion but also enhance community cohesion and streamline local governance.

Conclusion

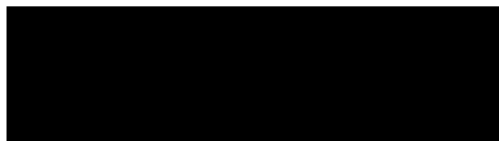
These proposed changes prioritise preserving community integrity and ensuring fair representation. We urge the Boundary Commission to reconsider the proposed ward boundaries and adopt these recommendations, which more accurately reflect the needs and identities of Thurrock's residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Thurrock Labour Group



Cllr John Kent
Leader of the Council and Labour Councillor for Grays Thurrock



Cllr Lynn Worrall
Deputy Leader of the Council and Labour Councillor for Grays Thurrock



Cllr Valerie Morris-Cook
Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships,
Arts, Culture and Heritage and Chair of Boundary Review Working Group