

Basildon Borough Council

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Comment text:

The current ward arrangements align fairly well with resident's perceptions of their communities and should not be disrupted except in areas where there is no option to meet to requirements of the review. In order to expand the existing two member wards to allow for three members, Crouch and Wickford Park wards could share sections of Wickford Castledon ward, with Wickford Castledon abolished as a ward of its own. Burstead ward could extend south to take in Steeple View, to improve it's variance from the average elector population, and to eliminate the 'panhandle' that currently exists, which places Dunton & Steeple View residents in a ward alongside very different areas of the borough. This arrangement would preserve the A127 as a boundary between predominantly rural areas to the immediate north, and predominantly urban areas to the south of the road. Any ward arrangement proposing wards crossing the A127 boundary would leave communities significantly divided, both physically, due to the relative lack of crossing points between the two areas of the wards, and also in the character of the wards and their communities. This is likely to lead to ineffective representation by councillors of such wards, given the quite radical differences in the two sections of any such proposed ward. South of the A127, Laindon Park and Lee Chapel North wards both currently match closely with residents perception of where their communities sit, and elector populations are close to the ideal values. Langdon Hills ward could expand into the Lee Chapel South area of Nethermayne ward in order to bring that up to a three-member ward. Both Pitsea South East and Pitsea North West correspond closely with community understanding of their areas, however Vange ward would probably be needed to expand northwards toward the Barstable area in order to accommodate three members. Likewise, St Martins ward could expand into the Ghyllgrove and Whitmore areas, to bring up it's member count. This would result in an abolished Fryerns ward. The two enlarged central Basildon wards may require renaming to reflect their new configuration and to make them meaningful to the residents within those areas. These arrangements would cause the minimum of disruption and confusion to residents, and would result in wards that maintain a cohesive sense of character and community, and deliver effective governance. It would also deliver a reasonable level of electoral equality, depending on the final arrangement, particularly in the central Basildon wards.

Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded