



Local Government Boundary Commission for England
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27th November 2021

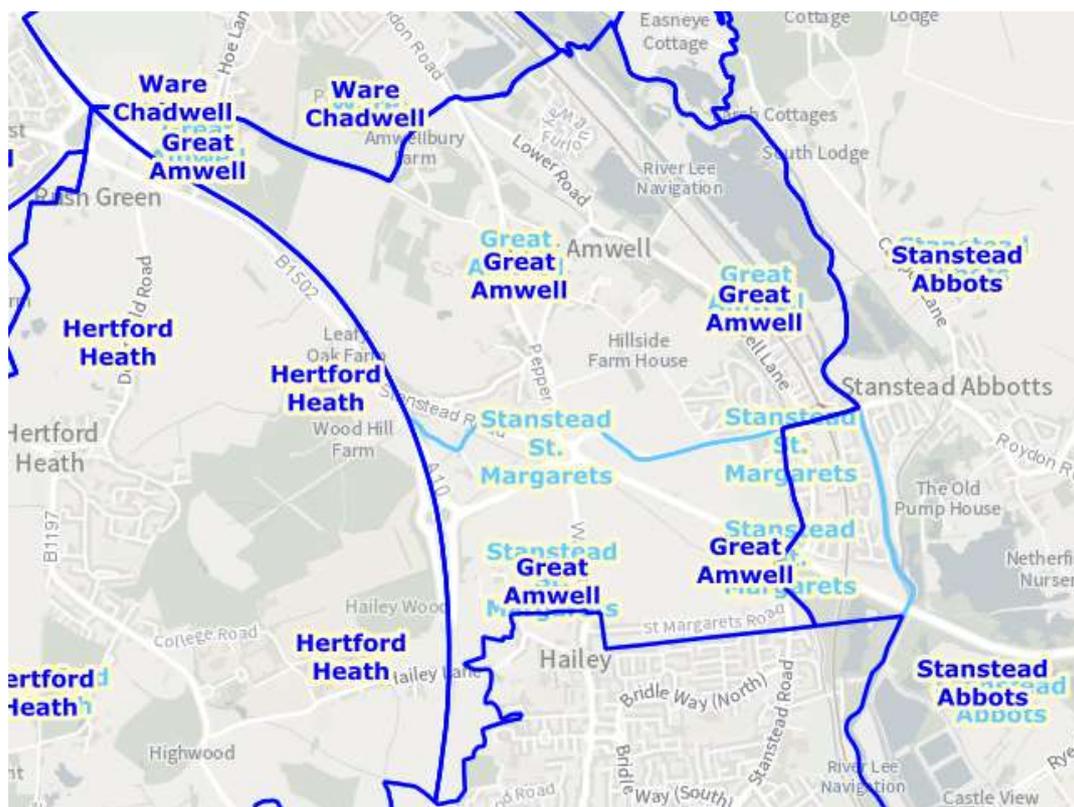
Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation **East Hertfordshire District Council Wards**

This society, which is open to all residents in the village of Great Amwell, has some 300 members, and in addition to our local activities we take an interest in wider issues that may adversely affect the interests of our members.

On behalf of the Amwell Society I would like to make these observations on the LGBCE consultation on the East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) wards.

Current Boundaries

The current Great Amwell ward boundary is shown below in dark blue; this is the area which is currently represented by Councillor Alex Curtis on EHDC. The civil parish boundaries are shown in light blue and the Eastern part of St. Margaret's Parish Council area is in the Stanstead Abbots district ward.



The parish boundary follows the River Lea but the district ward boundary follows the New River; the properties on Hoddesdon Road (including St. Mary's Church) and Lawrence Avenue are in Stanstead St Margarets West.

The current draft proposal is to keep with 50 councillors on East Herts District Council. There are currently 30 wards; some wards have more than one councillor.

Previous Review

The previous review was in 1998. The report can be read here, though the maps are very corrupted:

https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/6097/hertfordshire-east-hertfordshire_6448-6052_e.pdf

That report recommended the division of Stanstead St. Margaret's parish into two 'parish wards', with the West parish ward having 4 parish councillors and being in the district ward of Great Amwell and the East part electing 3 parish councillors and being part of Stanstead Abbots district ward.

This was enacted by Statutory Instrument 1998 No. 2553 "The District of East Hertfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 1998".

Electoral Numbers

EHDC have published current and predicted numbers of the electors per ward on their own web page for this consultation (<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/hertfordshire/east-hertfordshire>).

The current electoral numbers and the predicted average number of electors per councillor across East Herts for 2027 are:

	2021	2027
<i>Average electorate per councillor:</i>	2,273	2,640

These numbers are heavily distorted by very large increases in a small number of wards where the major developments from the 2018 District Plan are happening, notably Buntingford, Bishops Stortford Silverleys (Bishops Stortford North), and Hunsdon (Gilston new town and the Ware North-East development). The district plan can be read here:

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/east-herts-district-plan-2018>

The electorate number projected by EHDC do not correspond to the District Plan in a number of locations, and we submit that without correcting those the ward boundaries cannot correctly set by the LGBCE.

The table at the end is an annotated copy of the electorate figures from EHDC. Specifically:

- The percentage growth projected per polling district is added;
- The Group 2 villages such as Great Amwell are highlighted to show the inconsistent projected growth despite identical planning policies in the District Plan.

The current and predicted numbers for Great Amwell and the adjacent district wards are shown below, with the variance from the averages above:

Name of ward	Number of cllrs per ward	Electorate 2021	Variance 2021	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027
Great Amwell	1	2,191	-4%	2,356	-11%
Hertford Heath	1	2,415	6%	2,512	-5%
Stanstead Abbotts	1	2,339	3%	2,510	-5%
Ware Chadwell	1	2,516	11%	2,646	0%

Clearly there are differences in boundaries between some villages & towns as defined in the District Plan and the electoral wards, but for many of the villages there is a close correlation as the ward includes a village nucleus and then an area of open rural countryside with very low population.

It should be the case in these figures that with the exception of the wards within which the major developments in the District Plan are due to take place, there should be similar percentage growth in each Group 1 village and in each group 2 village.

The District Plan requires Stanstead Abbotts as a “Group 1” village to find space for significantly more new housing than in Great Amwell. As a Group 1 village Stanstead Abbotts is developing a Neighbourhood Plan, involving the Stanstead Abbotts, Stanstead St Margaret’s and Great Amwell parish councils. A minimum of 94 new homes are required in order to meet the target set in the District Plan; it is further expected that these will be built in the near future, although the District Plan covers the period to 2033; and should therefore be included in the forecast of electorate in 2027.

The increase of just 171 electors in Stanstead Abbotts does not correspond to the increase expected from a minimum of 94 homes.

Great Amwell in contrast is a “Group 2” village where new houses will be by “limited infill”; yet the forecast of the electorate shows a very similar increase of 165.

These electorate figures provided by EHDC are not consistent with the planned new housing in the district so are not a sound basis for this review. We submit that LGBCE should require EHDC to review and revise the forecast for the electorate and demonstrate that it is then consistent with the District Plan.

We submit that the number of electors projected in 2027 for Great Amwell is slightly high, and the number projected in Stanstead Abbotts is substantially lower than it should be, and our specific proposals later address this.

Dominance of the Urban Voice

There is a fundamental long-term problem with the way that the number of councillors is set and the way that sustainable development is delivered.

The current process is that new development is concentrated mostly on the edge of existing developments, or wholly new developments are created such as ‘garden villages’. The required minimum housing density in new developments leads to new developments having a much higher population density than older developments.

If the principle is kept that each councillor represents an equal number of electors, it follows that the wards in new developments and existing urban areas are much smaller than in rural and village areas. To keep the fixed number of councillors as more housing is built, over time the only way to keep to this principle is for the rural areas wards to become larger and larger. The proportion of councillors representing rural electors will get

smaller and smaller. Perhaps there will ultimately be a single councillor for all rural Hertfordshire.

This echoes the problem of the dominance of London and the South-East in the national political voice.

Belonging

The public across Hertfordshire (and no doubt in other rural counties) 'look' to particular towns to provide the services that are not available in their villages. This includes secondary education, shopping, banking and socialising. While people may go to other towns for specific shops, services or access to railways they have defined towns that they regard they 'belong' to in the sense of being in the catchment area of.

In Great Amwell this is Ware and Hertford; neither provides a full range of services but collectively they do. Residents are adamant that they do not look to Broxbourne as that is seen part of the edge of London, emphasised by the EN (Enfield) post codes. Hertford and Ware have the character of rural market towns, not shared by the towns boarding the M25.

[There is grave concern over the planned move under the Boundary Commission for England of Great Amwell to the Broxbourne parliamentary constituency, in case it subsequently led to being transferred to the Borough of Broxbourne, as that is seen as threatening the rural nature of the village. That is however outside the scope of this consultation.]

Solutions

An approach that had a greater ability to avoid the dominance of the urban voice with the unavoidable growth of high-density wards is to combine parts of parishes with high projected house construction according to the District Plan with adjacent rural areas when defining ward boundaries.

While this in some cases requires the creation of more parish wards this is the only way to ensure balanced representation of rural and urban voices in the District Council.

Our specific proposals are:

Wareside

Remove the current parish of Wareside from the Hunsdon Ward. This will alleviate the extreme growth projected in the Hunsdon ward by the combination of the Gilston and Ware North-East developments.

Divide the Wareside parish into two parish wards and combine one each of these with the Ware Christchurch and Ware Trinity wards. The precise boundary division with the Wareside parish would depend on the layout of new infrastructure roads in the 1,000 new houses to be built on the North-East edge of Ware. Both these wards in Ware are currently projected to fall 11% below average by 2027, and this change will resolve that.

The new housing is clearly part of Ware, and as stated above it is essential that rural areas are included together with the higher density areas to keep a balanced representation in EHDC.

Great Amwell

Combine Great Amwell ward with the Stanstead Abbots ward and appoint two councillors. This also achieves the objective of aligning the ward and parish boundaries and removing the need for parish wards in St. Margaret's.

By merging the wards the effect of the increase in electorate in Stanstead Abbots is shared across the whole new ward, and the electors per councillor will be closer to the average.

Even using the current projected electorate figures the new ward would be just 8% below the average number of electors per councillor at 2433. If as we submit the additional houses in Stanstead Abbots deliver a higher increase in that parish than projected by EHDC, this deficit would reduce further.

Rename the ward as Stansteads and Great Amwell, or Great Amwell and Stansteads.



William Brown

Chair

What is the polling district code?	Is there any other description you use for this area?	Is this polling district contained in a parish? If not leave this cell blank.	Is this polling district contained in a parish ward? If not leave this cell blank.	Is this polling district contained in a group of parishes with a joint parish council? If not leave this cell blank.	What ward is this polling district in?	What is the current electorate?	What is the predicted electorate?
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Polling district	Description of area	Parish	Parish ward	Grouped parish council	Existing ward	Electorate 2021	Electorate 2027	% Growth
MHA5		Thorley	Rural		Much Hadham	52	52	0.00%
TST1		Standon	Colliers End		Thundridge and Standon	192	192	0.00%
BSS2		Bishop's Stortford	Silverleys		Bishop's Stortford Silverleys	1867	1867	0.00%
BSS3		Bishop's Stortford	Silverleys		Bishop's Stortford Silverleys	2422	2422	0.00%
HHE2		Brickendon Liberty			Hertford Heath	547	548	0.18%
HUN4		Widford			Hunsdon	489	497	1.64%
HCA2		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	596	606	1.68%
SAW2		Sawbridgeworth			Sawbridgeworth	170	173	1.76%
HUN5		Gilston		Eastwick and Gilston	Hunsdon	579	595	2.76%
WSM3		Ware	St Marys		Ware St Marys	1552	1595	2.77%
MCO4		Great Mundens			Mundens and Cottered	280	289	3.21%
BRA2		Braughing			Braughing	1089	1134	4.13%
MHA2		High Wych			Much Hadham	456	475	4.17%
HK2		Hertford	Kingsmead		Hertford Kingsmead	2334	2433	4.24%
HRS1		Bayford			Hertford Rural South	382	399	4.45%
TST4		Thundridge	High Cross		Thundridge and Standon	471	493	4.67%
WCC1		Ware	Christchurch		Ware Christchurch	1290	1351	4.73%
WAL3		Walkern			Walkern	1154	1209	4.77%
HCA4		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	574	603	5.05%
HBE3		Hertford	Bengeo		Hertford Bengeo	2030	2134	5.12%
HHE1		Hertford Heath			Hertford Heath	1868	1964	5.14%
WCW1		Ware	Chadwell		Ware Chadwell	2516	2646	5.17%
TST3		Thundridge			Thundridge and Standon	774	814	5.17%
MHA3		Much Hadham			Much Hadham	1247	1312	5.21%
BSA2		Bishop's Stortford	All Saints		Bishop's Stortford All Saints	890	937	5.28%
LHA2		Fumeux Pelham			Little Hadham	437	461	5.49%
WTR2		Ware	Trinity		Ware Trinity	1779	1877	5.51%
HK1		Hertford	Kingsmead		Hertford Kingsmead	2194	2317	5.61%
BRA5		Meesden		Brent Pelham and Meesden	Braughing	106	112	5.66%
HRS3		Little Berkhamsted			Hertford Rural South	413	437	5.81%
HRN3		Sacombe			Hertford Rural North	136	144	5.88%
WAL2		Benington			Walkern	721	764	5.96%
BSC4		Bishop's Stortford	Central		Bishop's Stortford Central	1289	1366	5.97%
BSO3		Bishop's Stortford	South		Bishop's Stortford South	2051	2174	6.00%
LHA3		Little Hadham			Little Hadham	936	993	6.09%
BSC2		Bishop's Stortford	Central		Bishop's Stortford Central	2148	2279	6.10%
HRS4		Tewin	South		Hertford Rural South	786	834	6.11%
WAS1		Watton-at-Stone			Watton-at-Stone	2044	2170	6.16%
MHA1		High Wych			Much Hadham	162	172	6.17%
HCA6		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	534	567	6.18%
HRN4		Stapleford			Hertford Rural North	464	493	6.25%
DAS2		Datchworth			Datchworth & Aston	1264	1344	6.33%
TST2		Standon	Standon		Thundridge and Standon	1120	1192	6.43%
MCO5		Little Mundens			Mundens and Cottered	761	810	6.44%
WSM2		Ware	St Marys		Ware St Marys	1591	1694	6.47%
HBE1		Hertford	Bengeo		Hertford Bengeo	2396	2552	6.51%
SAW1		Sawbridgeworth			Sawbridgeworth	3689	3940	6.80%
BRA3		Brent Pelham		Brent Pelham and Meesden	Braughing	158	169	6.96%
BRA1		Anstey			Braughing	272	291	6.99%
HRS2		Hertingfordbury			Hertford Rural South	525	562	7.05%
BUN1		Buckland			Buntingford	226	242	7.08%
SAB2		Stanstead Abbots			Stanstead Abbots	1507	1614	7.10%
HRN1		Bengeo Rural			Hertford Rural North	502	538	7.17%
GAM1		Great Amwell			Great Amwell	1771	1904	7.51%
GAM2		Stanstead St Margarets	West		Great Amwell	420	452	7.62%
HCA3		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	1252	1348	7.67%
SAB1		Stanstead St Margarets	East		Stanstead Abbots	832	896	7.69%
WSM1		Ware	St Marys		Ware St Marys	999	1078	7.91%
HSE2		Hertford	Sele		Hertford Sele	690	745	7.97%
HRN2		Bramfield			Hertford Rural North	208	225	8.17%
BRA4		Hormeard			Braughing	590	639	8.31%
LHA1		A bury			Little Hadham	479	519	8.35%
HSE3		Hertford	Sele		Hertford Sele	941	1020	8.40%
WTR3		Ware	Trinity		Ware Trinity	1403	1521	8.41%
WAL1		Ardeley			Walkern	326	354	8.59%
MHA4		Much Hadham			Much Hadham	406	441	8.62%
BSM2		Bishop's Stortford	Meads		Bishop's Stortford Meads	2054	2233	8.71%
WTR1		Ware	Trinity		Ware Trinity	885	963	8.81%
HCA1		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	1761	1918	8.92%
HRN5		Tewin	North		Hertford Rural North	532	581	9.21%
BSA3		Bishop's Stortford	All Saints		Bishop's Stortford All Saints	2158	2358	9.27%
BUN2		Buntingford			Buntingford	5695	6247	9.69%
MCO1		Aspenden			Mundens and Cottered	189	208	10.05%
BUN3		Wyddial			Buntingford	121	134	10.74%
BSA1		Bishop's Stortford	All Saints		Bishop's Stortford All Saints	2953	3283	11.18%
MCO3		Westmill			Mundens and Cottered	241	268	11.20%
WCC2		Ware	Christchurch		Ware Christchurch	3015	3367	11.67%
HBE2		Hertford	Bengeo		Hertford Bengeo	1754	1961	11.80%
PUC1		Standon	Puckeridge		Puckeridge	2236	2511	12.30%
LHA4		Stocking Pelham			Little Hadham	141	159	12.77%
BSC3		Bishop's Stortford	Central		Bishop's Stortford Central	1891	2172	14.86%
HSE4		Hertford	Sele		Hertford Sele	1311	1578	20.37%
BSO1		Bishop's Stortford	South		Bishop's Stortford South	1718	2080	21.07%
BSO2		Bishop's Stortford	South		Bishop's Stortford South	2958	3634	22.85%
HUN2		Hunsdon			Hunsdon	930	1145	23.12%
HCA5		Hertford	Castle		Hertford Castle	2751	3487	26.75%
BSM1		Bishop's Stortford	Meads		Bishop's Stortford Meads	2704	3646	34.84%
SAW3		Sawbridgeworth			Sawbridgeworth	1184	1610	35.98%
HSE1		Hertford	Sele		Hertford Sele	1316	1803	37.01%
SAW4		Sawbridgeworth			Sawbridgeworth	1887	2600	37.78%
MCO2		Cottered			Mundens and Cottered	584	817	39.90%
BSC1		Bishop's Stortford	Central		Bishop's Stortford Central	2217	3244	46.32%
DAS1		Aston			Datchworth & Aston	701	1468	109.42%
HUN3		Wareside			Hunsdon	566	1226	116.61%
BSO4		Thorley	Urban		Bishop's Stortford South	207	938	353.14%
BSS1		Bishop's Stortford	Silverleys		Bishop's Stortford Silverleys	509	3357	559.53%
HUN1		Eastwick		Eastwick and Gilston	Hunsdon	109	1016	832.11%

Key

	Group 2 Village, EHDC District Plan 2018
	Great Amwell
	Wards Adjacent to Great Amwell

Fill in the name of each ward once

Fill in the number of councillors per ward

These cells will show you the electorate and variance. They change depending what you enter in the table to the left.

Name of ward	Number of cllrs per ward	Electorate 2021	Variance 2021	Electorate 2027	Variance 2027
Bishop's Stortford All Saints	3	6,001	-12%	6,578	-17%
Bishop's Stortford Central	3	7,545	11%	9,061	14%
Bishop's Stortford Meads	2	4,758	5%	5,879	11%
Bishop's Stortford Silverleys	2	4,798	6%	7,646	45%
Bishop's Stortford South	3	6,934	2%	8,826	11%
Braughing	1	2,215	-3%	2,345	-11%
Buntingford	2	6,042	33%	6,623	25%
Datchworth & Aston	1	1,965	-14%	2,812	7%
Great Amwell	1	2,191	-4%	2,356	-11%
Hertford Bengoe	3	6,180	-9%	6,647	-16%
Hertford Castle	3	7,468	10%	8,529	8%
Hertford Heath	1	2,415	6%	2,512	-5%
Hertford Kingsmead	2	4,528	0%	4,750	-10%
Hertford Rural North	1	1,842	-19%	1,981	-25%
Hertford Rural South	1	2,106	-7%	2,232	-15%
Hertford Sele	2	4,258	-6%	5,146	-3%
Hunsdon	1	2,673	18%	4,479	70%
Little Hadham	1	1,993	-12%	2,132	-19%
Much Hadham	1	2,323	2%	2,452	-7%
Mundens and Cottered	1	2,055	-10%	2,392	-9%
Puckeridge	1	2,236	-2%	2,511	-5%
Sawbridgeworth	3	6,930	2%	8,323	5%
Stanstead Abbots	1	2,339	3%	2,510	-5%
Thundridge and Standon	1	2,557	13%	2,691	2%
Walkern	1	2,201	-3%	2,327	-12%
Ware Chadwell	1	2,516	11%	2,646	0%
Ware Christchurch	2	4,305	-5%	4,718	-11%
Ware St Marys	2	4,142	-9%	4,367	-17%
Ware Trinity	2	4,067	-11%	4,361	-17%
Watton-at-Stone	1	2,044	-10%	2,170	-18%