

From: parishclerk@theydonbois-pc.gov.uk
Sent: 18 July 2022 14:39
To: reviews
Subject: Epping Forest District - Ward Boundary Review - Consultation Response to the LGBCE
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Importance: High
Categories: Submissions, [REDACTED]

18th July 2022

Review Officer (Epping Forest)

LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England)
PO Box 133
Blyth NE24 9FE

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Dear Sirs,

Please find attached the response of Theydon Bois Parish Council, in relation to the public consultation on the Epping Forest District Ward Boundary Review, which took place between 10th May and 18th July 2022.

Please acknowledge receipt. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Theydon Bois Parish Council



Theydon Bois Parish Council
Parish Office, The Village Hall, Coppice Row
Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER
Email: parishclerk@theydonbois-pc.gov.uk



15th July 2022

Review Officer (Epping Forest)

LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England)

PO Box 133

Blyth NE24 9FE

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Dear Sirs,

Ward Boundary Review – Epping Forest District Council – Response from Theydon Bois Parish Council

We understand that the Local Government Boundary Commission wishes to recommend that the number of Ward Councillors elected to Epping Forest District Council ('EFDC') is reduced from 58 to 54, as part of a Ward Boundary Review. Two of our Councillors attended a Briefing Session, hosted by EFDC via Zoom, on 9th June 2022, under the guidance of [REDACTED] of the Boundary Commission.

Having also then discussed this proposal at a Full Council meeting of our Parish Council, and continued that discussion within our Planning Committee, the following comments were received:

The present allocation of 58 Councillors, representing a total of 32 Wards, including those referred to as One, Two or Three Councillor Wards, was felt to work well with respect to the existing combination of both urban and rural areas within the District, and that the changes implied by the reduction in the number of Elected Representatives would result in significant change and upheaval, in order to create fewer, and in many cases larger, Three Councillor Wards. A more modest revision may be more appropriate, if the intention is to rectify any perceived imbalances and to accommodate new members of the electorate in areas where housing growth is anticipated by 2028 and beyond.

It was felt that too much focus has been placed on trying to allocate the ideal 'number' of electors per Ward Councillor (said to be approximately 1,975 per elected representative) with less consideration given to established community identity and social cohesion. Theydon Bois is currently represented by Two Ward Councillors, both of whom have either lived in the village for many years or who were raised here. Generally, in the past, this has also been the case, whichever political party has sponsored the candidates, and many residents, including others throughout the District, seek to secure representation from those they perceive know their local area well.

Outside the more densely populated towns, many parishes are likely to wish to retain their own identity and their representation by either an individual Ward Councillor, or Two Ward Councillors, if the total number of the electorate within the Parish boundaries already supports this. Members of our Parish Council, therefore, felt that, at this stage, it would not be appropriate to make direct reference

to other existing Wards, but did contribute the following observations, should the Boundary Commission attempt to amalgamate residential areas within larger electoral Wards:

- Avoid splitting Parishes, as this would dilute communities within already established boundaries. In Theydon Bois, the Parish provides the community focus, and the shared activities of its residents, with its allotments, playing fields, two local churches, and village primary school, its village shops, two public houses, village hall and community centre, all ascribed within the landscape setting of open Green Belt fields.
- Avoid combining Towns with Parishes, since the smaller entities would lose their sense of individual identity and coherent electoral boundaries.
- Avoid creating Wards with large land allocations, as this would be likely to result in a lack of community cohesion, with little sense of affiliation between residents in more distant areas. Administratively, elected representatives would find it more challenging to attend Parish meetings if they are required to travel greater distances to these, making representation less effective.
- Knowledge, and representation, of local issues would become more challenging for Ward Councillors representing any disparate combination of urban and rural parishes where there are few shared interests.
- Residents wish to elect representatives who live within their local area, and are familiar with both the character of their parish and its concerns, based on their personal experience, which would be more difficult to achieve with extended Ward boundaries encompassing wider areas.
- The retention of some Wards with One, or Two, Councillor representation may provide greater flexibility to achieve a coherent pattern of Ward allocations within this District. In addition, it may be helpful to consider a flexible approach with respect to the total number of elected representatives, before determining that this should be restricted to 54.
- Finally, the Boundary Review should seek to retain sustainable Parish boundaries, and Ward boundaries, where these will continue to be clearly delineated even after future housing development has been built.

We hope our initial comments will be taken into account during this early part of the process and understand that a further period of public consultation will take place from 4th October until 12th December 2022. We would, therefore, be grateful if you could contact our Parish Office directly nearer that time.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Jennifer Endean

Clerk to the Council, Theydon Bois Parish Council