

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Dear Sir or Madam, please find attached the comments and observations from Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths Parish Council for Cheshire East's electoral arrangements..

Attached Documents:

- observation-to-local-gov-boundary-review-1_0.pdf



**Hulme Walfield
and Somerford Booths**
Parish Council

**Observations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for
England review of Cheshire East's electoral arrangements**

Summary of Views

At its meeting on the 21st March 2024, Parish Councillors considered the proposals made in the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review 2023-24: (Dated Warding Proposal Report : v4 : 18th Feb 2024). These following comments are made on the basis of the proposals made in that documents and supporting maps.

The Parish Council notes that the LGBCE remit at this review as it affects them is strictly in respect of the need to modify the existing Cheshire East (CE) Brereton Rural Ward which is no longer appropriate given the extent of new housing development that is either completed, or substantially approved for construction over the next 5 years.

It does not anticipate that any recommendations will be made regarding the boundaries of the joint parish boundaries of Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths PC which were confirmed at the at the last CE review of Parish Boundaries. At that time, the Parish Council made a robust, substantiated argument following consultation with its electorate that the current boundaries should remain (reflecting a rural facing area) until such time as occupants of the new developments could express their views. This will not be until 2025/6 at the earliest.

There are two distinct elements to the proposals contained in the CE Ward Review Documents)

1. The area of Hulme Walfield Parish- part of AST4 (Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council's Hulme Walfield parish ward) that lies to the east of Giantswood Lane and south of the Congleton Link Road. (p 31 of report)

The Parish Council accepts the logic of this element of the proposals and notes that implementation of any proposals will not be until 2027 by which time many of the houses now under construction will have been completed and occupied

2. The balance of Hulme Walfield Ward and Somerford Parish outside the link road including the area between Giantswood Lane and the River Dane to the west (Polling districts 4GC1, 4GD1, 4GE1, 4GF6, 4GJ6, 4GN1, AST4 (part only), AST5, DAN4. (page 48 onwards)

The Parish Council recognise the key criteria upon which the Commission makes its recommendations but feels that the current proposal does not satisfy these in respect of :-

- A) Effective and convenient local government
- B) Community identities and interests.

In respect of A. it considers that the proposed ward of Gawsworth is too extensive to be effectively represented by a single Councillor who, if they were to represent effectively would need to report to in excess of 8 Parish Councils (possibly more)

In respect of B. it considers that the logic which applies to the inclusion of the Hulme Walfield area within the link road should also apply to that area bounded by the River Dane to the west and the link road to the north, with Barn Road/Viking Way as its spine.

Detailed Comments : Part A : East and South of Congleton Link Road

[The Parish Council supports this proposal with the caveat noted above.](#)

Until such time as the new residents of this area can express their wish to be part of either the Parish of Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths , or the extended area of Congleton Town Council the PC is committed to an ambitious programme. This intends to apply its increased precept revenue to measures which will improve community facilities, local amenity and build effective relations with its new residents. It will be willing to do this in consultation with Congleton TC where there are areas of common interests.

Detailed Comments : Part B : Extended Gawsworth Ward

The Parish Councils urges the Commission to look further at this proposal based upon the following concerns : Effective and convenient local government

The proposed Ward of Gawsworth covers an extensive rural area from the western edge of Macclesfield to the east to the eastern edge of the expanding Holmes Chapel and Chelford. Though very rural in character, it suffers the same issue as that of the present Brereton Rural Ward . There are in excess of 8 parish councils within the area, putting considerable pressure on a single County CE Councillor to adequately be active in understanding and acting as an advocate for their individual and sometimes diverse rural concerns. In addition, the road network tends to only facilitate easy of access between the main towns of Macclesfield, Holmes Chapel and Congleton. The rest of covered by a network of relatively narrow, rural

roads and country lanes. The only bus services are those linking the periphery, with no services between Congleton and Alderley Edge/Manchester.

All in all, it is suggested that a single CE Councillor may struggle to be effective in serving these areas and that the division should take greater account of this, rather than concentrating on the balance of population for each CE councillor

Community identities and interests.

While this area has a commonality through its rural character, it can be divided into four distinct areas :-

- The enlarged rural settlement of Gawsworth, abutting the town of Macclesfield along with the western fringes of Macclesfield including Broken Cross and Henbury
- The 'Withingtons' and Twemlow Green which are more closely associated with Chelford/ Alderley edge and Holme Chapel
- The Parishes of Siddington, Marton and Eaton. The latter do have an element of cohesion because of the Ecclesiastical Boundaries of the The United Benefice of Marton, Siddington with Capesthorne, Eaton with Hulme Walfield and Swettenham is known as the Rural Daneside Churches. (<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/09-176D/>)
- The area of new development within the boundary of the Congleton Link Road and bounded to the west by the River Dane and the East by Giantswood Lane. This is an area with around 1000 new dwellings likely to be constructed in the next 3-4 years, significant commercial development and a small retail centre and large new ALDI store.

The Parish Council does not oppose the inclusion of the balance of Hulme Walfield (including the village and adjacent hamlets) and Somerford Booths within a single rural ward. The affinity of this area is certainly with Congleton, and it would not support anything other than their combining with Gawsworth so that the legitimate rural interests of this area can be adequately represented.

The collective group of Churches known as Rural Daneside Churches does give a commonality for the balance of Hulme Walfield/Somerford Booths joint parish, but this area has little affinity with the parishes abutting Macclesfield or Chelford/Alderley Edge and Holmes Chapel. There is also no public transport service for this group other than the services from Congleton to Macclesfield and Holme Chapel.

Turning to the fourth area (Barn Road and Viking Way), it rejects the current proposal. This area will contain upwards of 1000 new homes (and potentially 2500 residents) and a significant amount of commercial and retail development (along Barn Road) . These communities have been designed to have strong physical identities and, ultimately will regard themselves as distinct residential area within the

greater 'Congleton' area. The area will have little affinity with Gawsworth or the surrounding rural parishes.

For this reason it considers that far greater weight must be given to community identity and interests than to population balance. This area is likely to remain part of the the combined Hulme Walfield/Somerford Booths parish at least until the next parish boundary review.

Given that a review of Parish boundaries is unlikely within the next 5-10 years, it recommends that the entire area within the link road should become a single new ward, with elected CE councillors. It's anticipated population is in the region of 2500 people. This would have the added advantage of a single CE councillor as its representative (with a second CE councillor for the balance of Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booth which would be in the Gawsworth ward.

For this reason, the Parish Council rejects the current Gawsworth ward proposal based upon both effective governance and community identity and urges the Commission to reconsider this subdivision for the reasons noted above.

ATTACHMENTS

Extracts from CE Review Proposals

Gawsworth

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4.18 Gawsworth

Proposed ward name Gawsworth

Proposed number of seats 1

Electoral statistics (for 2030)

Electors Electors per seat ratio Ratio's variance from Borough

average 4,324 4,324 +5% Summary of any changes proposed

to the current

(pre-Review) ward boundary

Addition of the following (all from the current Brereton Rural Borough ward):

- The parish of Swettenham (polling district DAN4).
- AST5 (Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council's Somerford Booths parish ward).
- All of AST4 (Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council's Hulme Walfield parish ward), except the part that lies south of Congleton Link Road and east of Giantswood Lane.

Transfer (removal) of:

- The parishes of North Rode (4GH6) and Bosley (4GA1), to the proposed Sutton Boroughward.
- 4GDT (Local Plan site LPS 15) to the proposed Macclesfield South Borough ward.
- 4GET (the part of Local Plan site LPS 18 that moved into Macclesfield Town Council as part of the Community Governance Review [CGR] changes), to the proposed Macclesfield West Borough ward.
- 4GCT (the parts of Local Plan sites LPS 29 and LPS 30 that moved into Congleton Town Council as part of the CGR changes), to the proposed Congleton West Borough ward.

- 4GCT2 (the part of Buglawton that moved into Congleton Town Council as part of the CGR changes), to the proposed Congleton East Borough ward. Summary of area covered by proposed ward

The following areas:

- Gawsworth Parish Council's Gawsworth Village parish ward.
- The parishes of Eaton, Henbury, Lower Withington, Marton, Siddington and Swettenham.
- All of the parish of Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths, except the part that lies south of Congleton Link Road and east of Giantswood Lane.

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Details of area covered by proposed ward

Polling districts 4GC1, 4GD1, 4GE1, 4GF6, 4GJ6, 4GN1, AST4 (part only), AST5, DAN4. The part of AST4 to be included would be all of this polling district, except for the area that lies to the east of Giantswood Lane and south of the Congleton Link Road (namely Local Plan site LPS 28, the part of site LPS 29 that falls within this polling district, and the properties on the east side of Giantswood Lane that lie immediately southwest of the LPS 28 development).

A map showing a close-up of the proposed division of AST4 and the resulting boundary line can be found in Appendix A ('Maps of the proposed wards'), the separate document accompanying this main report. This map is the one titled 'Congleton West: close-up of Link Road area'. Rationale for the proposed boundary and for any changes to current warding

As noted in the section covering the warding proposals for Sutton, the current Sutton ward is expected to have an electors per seat ratio that will be too high by 2030 to fall within the range that the Commission usually requires. As the same section notes, the only parish that could practically be removed from Sutton in order to bring this ratio close enough to the Borough average is Rainow. However, a knock-on consequence is that one or more parishes have to be transferred from Gawsworth Borough ward to Sutton, to avoid Sutton's electors per seat ratio then being too low to satisfy the Commission's electoral equality criterion. Therefore the Borough Council also proposes that the parishes of Bosley and North Rode be included in the redrawn Sutton ward. These two parishes have a rural character that fits with the rest of the proposed Sutton Borough ward and the road network provides a convenient connection between them and Sutton's other settlements. Moving only Bosley from Gawsworth to Sutton would, in tandem with the other proposed warding arrangements for Gawsworth, leave Gawsworth with a ratio 10% above average, while Sutton's would be 8% below. Moving both Bosley and North Rode produces a more even balance between these two very large, rural wards' ratios (plus 5% and minus 3% respectively).

4GET is a Local Plan site that is intended to cater for Macclesfield's housing needs and the area covered by this polling district was therefore transferred from Henbury parish to Macclesfield Town Council under the recent CGR changes. Residents on this site will look to Macclesfield for key services and it is appropriate for it to be included in a Macclesfield ward. Cheshire East Electoral Review 2023-24: Warding Proposal Report (V4, 18 Feb 2024)

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4GDT is another Local Plan site (LPS 15) intended to meet Macclesfield's housing needs. Along with the established properties in 4BFR, it forms part of Gawsworth Parish Council's Gawsworth Moss parish ward. The CGR generated extensive evidence that the residents of the established properties in 4BFR identify closely with Gawsworth and participate in many communal activities in the other (Gawsworth village) part of the parish. However, 4BFR is part of the same urban conurbation and is dependent on Macclesfield for a number of key services; it is in fact already warded with Macclesfield South. Given this, together with the intended purpose of LPS 15, the Borough Council proposes that Gawsworth Moss parish ward should be warded with Macclesfield South. This warding arrangement for Gawsworth Moss, together with the other boundary changes proposed above and the proposals (detailed below) for the Congleton-Gawsworth boundary, also achieves good electoral equality, with the would-be Gawsworth ward having an electors per seat ratio fairly close to (5% above) the Borough average.

The housing on 4GCT (parts of Local Plan sites LPS 29 and LPS 30) was developed to meet Congleton's housing needs and residents there are adjacent to other residential areas of

Congleton and dependent on the town for key services. (This area was transferred from Eaton Parish Council to Congleton Town Council as part of the CGR changes in 2023.) Therefore It is proposed that 4GCT be included in the Congleton West Borough ward.

The current boundary between Gawsworth and Congleton East Borough wards divides two streets in Buglawton: Crompton Close and Malhamdale Road, with 4CGT2 containing the properties on those streets that are currently in Gawsworth Borough ward. The parish boundary divided these streets in the same way up until the recent CGR changes in 2023, which brought the northern (4GCT2) part within the Congleton Town Council boundary. It would better reflect local communities' identities and interests for 4CGT2 to be warded with Congleton East, to reflect the fact that all the properties on Crompton Close and Malhamdale Road are part of the same Buglawton community and all now fall within Congleton Town Council.

The reasons for including the part of AST4 described above (and excluding other new housing development areas outside the Town Council boundary) in the Gawsworth Borough ward are as follows (and are also set out in the subsection on Congleton West):

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- LPS 28 (where construction is now complete) and LPS 29 are adjacent to residential areas that are already part of the Town Council. There are no physical barriers in this area that prevent residents of the LPS 28 and LPS 29 developments from engaging in the same community activities and using the same local services in the adjacent part of the Town Council. Residents on these new housing sites will be relatively dependent on Congleton for key services, as the village of Hulme Walfield to the north has no such provision.
- The situation is different in some respects for the LPS 27 site (the part of AST4 that is south of the Link Road but west of Giantswood Lane). At the time of writing, construction in this location has not yet started, but the areas of LPS 27 set aside for housing development are separated from the nearest Town Council residential areas because Congleton Business Park and other non-residential development and the River Dane (and Westlow Mere, which will remain as a protected green space) are in between.
- The number of electors in the LPS 28 and LPS 29 and established (east side) Giantswood Lane properties is forecast to be 790 by 2030, whilst the number on the west (LPS 27) side is forecast to reach 1,113 by then. Including the properties on the west (LPS 27) side in the Gawsworth Borough ward ensures that Gawsworth's electors per seat ratio is high enough to be within the range usually sought by the Commission. However, if the properties on the west side were included in a Congleton ward, Gawsworth would have to cover a much wider rural area in order for its ratio to be within the required range – but this would mean including parishes in the Gawsworth ward that are relatively distant and have no community links to the rest of that ward.

Looking at the area of the proposed Gawsworth ward more broadly, it reflects local community identity and interests by warding together a group of rural areas that are generally of similar character, well connected by road and that have links with each other. In particular: • Lower Withington, Siddington, Swettenham, Eaton and the part of Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths proposed for inclusion in Gawsworth are all in the catchment for Marton's primary school.

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- Eaton and Gawsworth are both on the A536 and on the same bus route, while Marton, Siddington and Lower Withington are connected via the A34 and B5392 and Hulme Walfield is relatively accessible, being close to the Congleton Link Road.
- Swettenham is linked to the other parishes in the proposed ward by more minor roads. However, the natural barrier of the River Dane (with no road crossings in that location) limits community links between Swettenham and Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths on the east side of the river and Somerford on the west. The responses to the CGR draft recommendations consultation provided persuasive evidence that Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths has no significant links to Somerford, so warding it (minus the LPS 28 and LPS 29 area) with Gawsworth is considered to be a better reflection of community identity and interests than its current inclusion in Brereton Rural.

Congleton West

Proposed ward name Congleton West

Proposed number of seats 3

Electoral statistics (for 2030)

Electors Electors per seat ratio Ratio's variance from Borough

average 12,386 4,129 0% Summary of any changes proposed

to the current (pre-Review) ward boundary Addition of:

- 4GCT (the parts of Local Plan sites LPS 29 and LPS 30 that moved into Congleton Town Council as part of the Community Governance Review [CGR] changes), from Gawsworth Borough ward.
- The part of AST4 (Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council's Hulme Walfield parish ward) that lies to the east of Giantswood Lane and south of the Congleton Link Road. Removal (transfer) of COWT (the Turnstone Grange estate that transferred from Congleton Town Council to Somerford Parish Council under the CGR). Summary of area covered by proposed ward

All of the area covered by the Congleton Town Council's Central, North and West wards (which includes 4GCT), plus the part of AST4 (Hulme Walfield parish ward) that lies to the east of Giantswood Lane and south of the Congleton Link Road. Details of area covered by proposed ward

Polling districts 4GCT, AST4 (part only), CNW2, CNW3, COC1 (part only), COC2, COC3, COCT, COW1, COW2, COW3, COW4.

The part of AST4 to be included would be the area that lies to the east of Giantswood Lane and south of the Congleton Link Road (namely Local Plan site LPS 28, the part of site LPS 29 that falls within this polling district, and the properties on the east side of Giantswood Lane that lie immediately southwest of the LPS 28 development).

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The part of COC1 to be included would be the part to the north of the line (using the middle of the road in each case) running (from west to east) along Vale Walk, Priestly Fields/ The Vale, Moody Street, Chapel Street, Albert Place, High Street and Lawton Street.

Maps showing a close-up of the proposed divisions of AST4 and COC1 and the resulting boundary lines can be found in Appendix A ('Maps of the proposed wards'), the separate document accompanying this main report. These maps are the ones titled 'Congleton East: close-up of Canal Street/ Kestrel Close area' (which shows the division of COC1) and 'Congleton West:

close-up of Link Road area' (which shows the division of AST4). Rationale for the proposed boundary and for any changes to current warding

As noted in the subsection on Congleton East, the proposed warding for the two Congleton Borough wards:

- ensures both wards have electors per seat ratios close to the Borough average (each of them less than 2% different from the Borough average as of 2030).
- better reflects community identity and promotes effective and convenient local government, by bringing the Kestrel Close estate within a single (East) Borough ward.
- uses the River Dane as a natural boundary (like now) between the parts of the East and Westwards that lie north of town centre.

The housing on 4GCT (parts of Local Plan sites LPS 29 and LPS 30) was developed to meet Congleton's housing needs and residents there are adjacent to other residential areas of Congleton and dependent on the town for key services. (This area was transferred from Eaton Parish Council to Congleton Town Council as part of the CGR changes in 2023.) Therefore it is proposed that 4GCT be included in the Congleton West Borough ward.

The reasons for including the part of AST4 described above (and excluding other new housing development areas outside the Town Council boundary) in the Congleton West Borough ward are as follows (and are also set out in this report's subsection on Gawsworth): Cheshire East Electoral Review 2023-24: Warding Proposal Report (V4, 18 Feb 2024)

- LPS 28 (where construction is now complete) and LPS 29 are adjacent to residential areas that are already part of the Town Council. There are no physical barriers in this area that prevent residents of the LPS 28 and LPS 29 developments from engaging in the same community activities and using the same local services in the adjacent part of the Town Council. Residents on these new housing sites will be relatively dependent on Congleton for key services, as the village of Hulme Walfield to the north has no such provision.
 - The situation is different in some respects for the LPS 27 site (the part of AST4 that is south of the Link Road but west of Giantswood Lane). At the time of writing, construction in this location has not yet started, but the areas of LPS 27 set aside for housing development are separated from the nearest Town Council residential areas because Congleton Business Park and other non-residential development and the River Dane (and Westlow Mere, which will remain as a protected green space) are in between.
 - The number of electors in the LPS 28 and LPS 29 and established (east side) Giantswood Lane properties is forecast to be 790 by 2030, whilst the number on the west (LPS 27) side is forecast to reach 1,113 by then. Including the properties on the west (LPS 27) side in the Gawsworth Borough ward ensures that Gawsworth's electors per seat ratio is high enough to be within the range usually sought by the Commission. However, if the properties on the west side were included in the proposed Congleton West ward, Gawsworth would have to cover a much wider rural area in order for its ratio to be within the required range – but this would mean including parishes in the Gawsworth ward that are relatively distant and have no community links to the rest of that ward. Rationale for the proposed name
The current (and proposed) ward name is well-established and indicates the geographical area of the town that the ward would cover.
- Cheshire East Electoral Review 2023-24: Warding Proposal Report (V4, 18 Feb 2024)