

Thurrock

Personal Details:

Name: Miss Dolapo Akinbolagbe

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Organisation Name: Thurrock Labour Group - Grays Councillors (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

The letter attached is from the Labour Grays Councillor's regarding both the "Grays North and South" Wards.

Attached Documents:

- lgbce-letter---grays-submission-(2).pdf



13th September 2024

LGBCE
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

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

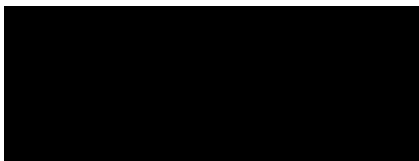
As a group, we largely support the recommendations for Chadwell Heath but strongly believe that Greyhound Lane and Orsett Heath should be moved into the Orsett, Horndon, and Bulphan ward, with Heath Road serving as the northern boundary. This adjustment would create a clearer, more logical boundary that 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.

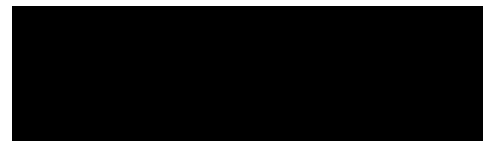
Thank you for your time and consideration.

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



Cllr Valerie Morris-Cook

**Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships,
Arts, Culture and Heritage and Chair of Boundary Review Working Group**

Thurrock

Personal Details:

Name: Miss Dolapo Akinbolagbe

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: (Political groups)

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



9th September 2024

LGBCE
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Dear Boundary Commission,

As the councillors representing Grays Thurrock and Grays Riverside, we are writing to express our significant concerns regarding the proposed boundary changes in Thurrock by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). These changes, as currently outlined, threaten to disrupt well-established communities, and misrepresent the historical and cultural identity of our area. We have outlined our specific concerns and proposals below:

Grays North

1. Disruption of Established Communities: The proposed ward boundaries for Grays North would significantly disrupt long-established communities. Streets like College Avenue, Ward Avenue, Tennyson Avenue, and Bradleigh Avenue, which have historically been integral parts of the Grays community, are now split between different wards. This division not only fragments the social fabric of these neighbourhoods but also creates confusion regarding polling districts and voting locations, further complicating civic participation.

Moreover, the decision to move Richmond Road, Salisbury Road, Kent Road, and Benson Road into Little Thurrock Rectory is unjustified. These streets have always been strongly associated with Grays, with residents enjoying a clear connection to the town. They are within walking distance of Grays Park, a vital community hub, and frequently use its amenities. This park serves as both a physical and social centre for the residents, reinforcing their identity as part of Grays. Moving these areas into Little Thurrock Rectory would sever this natural link and undermine the cohesion of the Grays community.

2. Inappropriate Boundary Demarcation: The use of Bridge Road as a boundary between Grays North and Little Thurrock Rectory is fundamentally flawed. This division detaches Herbert E. Brooks Memorial Gardens from the rest of Grays, severing it from the heart of Thurrock. The Gardens, established in 1933 to honour Herbert E. Brooks—a prominent figure in Thurrock's history and a public servant—should remain connected to Grays, reflecting its historical significance.

3. Inadequate Ward Naming: The proposed name "Grays North" fails to capture the significance of the area it represents. While it is geographically accurate, it does not reflect the central role this area plays in the community. The town centre and surrounding amenities are the beating heart of Thurrock, and the name should convey this importance.

Proposal

1. Revised Ward Boundaries: We propose that all roads west of the A1013 (Whitehall Lane), including the entirety of Tennyson Avenue, Ward Avenue, College Avenue, which is a significant portion of polling district Z, be returned to Grays North. This adjustment will not only create a clear and logical boundary but also maintain the cohesion of established communities within the same ward. We acknowledge that this shift may affect electoral equality. Therefore, we also propose increasing the number of councillors in Grays North to three, while reducing Little Thurrock Rectory to a two-member ward. This approach balances representation while preserving community integrity.

2. Ward Name Change: We strongly recommend changing the ward name from "Grays North" to "Grays Town." This name better reflects the area's identity, as residents and locals commonly refer to it as Grays Town. It is a name that resonates with the community and acknowledges the area's central importance to Thurrock.

Grays South

1. Inadequate Ward Naming: The proposed name "Grays South" fails to capture the deep community ties to the seafront and the rich heritage of Grays Beach, a key element of Grays, the Heart of Thurrock. Grays Beach, acquired by the council in 1903, has been a cherished space for generations of local children, particularly during the summer months. Recognising its significance, the Grays Town Fund has committed £19.9 million to revitalising the beach and opening the Grays waterfront.

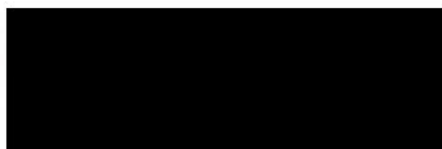
Proposal

Given this legacy and the ongoing investment in the area, we strongly believe that the name "Grays Riverside" should be retained to honour the historical and cultural importance of the waterfront to our community.

These changes are about more than just drawing lines on a map; they are about preserving the integrity of our community and ensuring that our residents are accurately represented. We urge the Boundary Commission to reconsider the proposed changes in light of these concerns and to adopt our proposals, which better reflect the needs and identity of the people of Thurrock.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



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 Labour Councillor for Grays Riverside**

Cllr Martin Kerin

Labour Councillor for Grays Riverside



Cllr Tony Fish

Labour Councillor for Grays Riverside