



**[North Hertfordshire residents: have your say on new council ward boundaries]**

**HITCHWOOD OFFA AND HOO WARD**

This Ward is the largest area covered in North Hertfordshire - it has three elected Councillors who appear to informally divide the area amongst themselves although at times there is some overlap. Residents cannot clearly decide which Councillor has direct representation for their Area and creates confusion. (This could change if they were from a different political party).

It would be appropriate if this Ward was spit into three separate components as follows. It is however difficult to maintain the 2500 electorate criteria set out in the consultation document.

The historic naming of the Wards could take on the current three titles but separately named  
:: Hitchwood :: Offa :: Hoo

Ward 1  
Cockenhoe  
Breachwood Green  
Total electorate 2660 [+ 160]

The consultation document implies an increase in residents in Cockenhoe but on a phased basis. The draft Local Plan indicates that 2100 dwellings will be built at Cockenhoe (The Local Plan has a programme dateline 2011 - 2031). The number of residents could be well over the 2100 set out in the consultation figures during the timeframe of this consultation

This would have a material impact on the number of residents serviced by Councillors. Hertfordshire County Council have stated in their submission to the Inspectors Hearing that a Secondary, Junior and Pre school will be built at Cockenhoe serviced by the villages west of Hitchin and Stevenage

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**Ward 2**  
Pirton  
Offley  
Lilley  
Preston  
Hexton  
Total electorate 2901 [+401]

....  
**Ward 3**  
Kings Walden  
Langley  
St Paul's Walden  
St Ippolyts  
Total electorate 2439 [-61]

GRAND TOTAL 8100 (Boundary Commission / NHDC)

**Additional Comments REASONS FOR THE ABOVE**

By having three separate Wards with three separate District Councillors (and one County Councillor) democratic control will be better served. The residents will know who their Councillor is and that Councillor will be more accountable providing direct representation for their residents.

In addition the current Hitchwood Offa and Hoo (Area) has one County Councillor although the current incumbent duplicates that representation also as a District Councillor

In my view in order to provide a democratic representation for the residents Councillors should hold down only one councillor position.

The Boundary Commission should have a view on the “twin hatter” approach.

### **Hertfordshire County Council**

Representation on Hertfordshire County Council for this rural is very important and has an impact on all residents. It is therefore essential that the seat is retained  
However with the increase in residents at Cockerhoe potentially amounting to 4500 the number of County Councillors may have to be adjusted

#### The Creation of Unitary Council(s) for Hertfordshire

This strategic policy seems to have been put on the back burner even though it appears that where Unitary Councils have been created there have been interesting budgetary savings, greater efficiency in providing services and a joined up approach to democratic control and accountability by local residents. By having all services under one directly elected Council, residents being actively informed who their councillor is provides a better performance by both Councillors and council officials.

In my view there would a better functioning and democratic accountability if these Unitary Councils were streamlined by having an elected Mayor (with a mayoral team) to ensure greater accountability.

Currently both District and County Councils monitor their own strategic policy and if residents do not agree with a Council policy it is easy for the criticism to be pushed to one side, even ignored. Residents have little democratic control until new elections are convened.

There appears little enthusiasm from local District Councillors to adopt Unitary Councils

### **North Herts District Council**

There could be some argument to have an elected Mayor(and Mayoral Team) based on the arguments mentioned above.

If that came about the number of District Councillors could be drastically cut. This would reduce the budget and demonstrate prudent economies of scale.

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North Hertfordshire District Council  
Boundary Consultation

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