

New electoral arrangements for Thurrock Council Draft Recommendations

July 2024

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many electoral wards there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Why Thurrock?

7 We are conducting a review of Thurrock Borough Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2000 and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² Additionally some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Thurrock are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Thurrock

9 Thurrock should be represented by 49 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Thurrock should have 20 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of all but one ward should change.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 9 July 2024 to 16 September 2024. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new ward to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 16 September 2024 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 27 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Thurrock. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
16 January 2024	Number of councillors decided
23 January 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
1 April 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
9 July 2024	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
16 September 2024	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
3 December 2024	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2023	2029
Electorate of Thurrock	122,803	132,604
Number of councillors	49	49
Average number of electors per councillor	2,506	2,706

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All but two of our proposed wards for Thurrock are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2024.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2029, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2024. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7.6% by 2029.

25 The Conservative Group challenged the Council forecast in the early stages of the review, arguing that certain housing developments have been left out, estimating an overall increase in electorate of around 13% by 2029. We discussed the

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Conservative Group's concerns with officers at the Council and agreed upon minor revisions to the forecast with a predicted increase in the electorate of about 8% by 2029.

26 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 Thurrock Borough Council currently has 49 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 Although the Council presently elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years), it is scheduled to begin electing by whole council elections, once every four years from 2025. In order to achieve this, under Section 86 of the Local Government Act (2000), the Secretary of State made the Borough of Thurrock (Scheme of Elections) Order 2024⁵ which has legally changed the cycle. We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 49 councillors: for example, 49 one-councillor wards or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

29 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. These argued for reducing the number of councillors but were not supported by evidence relating to the Council's governance and decision-making responsibilities, or the representational role of members. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 49-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 54 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included three borough-wide proposals from Thurrock Labour Group and Thurrock Labour Local Campaign Forum ('Labour'), Thurrock Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') and a resident. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough.

31 The three borough-wide schemes provided mixed patterns of two- and three-councillor wards for Thurrock. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of

⁵ [The Borough of Thurrock \(Scheme of Elections\) Order 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk).

electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

32 Our draft recommendations are based on the Conservatives' scheme, amended to accommodate some elements of the Labour and resident schemes. Having carefully considered all three schemes we considered that the Conservatives' provided more comprehensive community evidence and a better overall reflection of our three statutory criteria than the other two. For example, while the Labour scheme made relatively minor changes to the existing wards, we were not persuaded that the scheme was supported by sufficient evidence to support this approach.

33 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

34 We visited Thurrock in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Thurrock helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

35 Our draft recommendations are for nine three-councillor wards and 11 two-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 The tables and maps on pages 8–23 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Thurrock. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

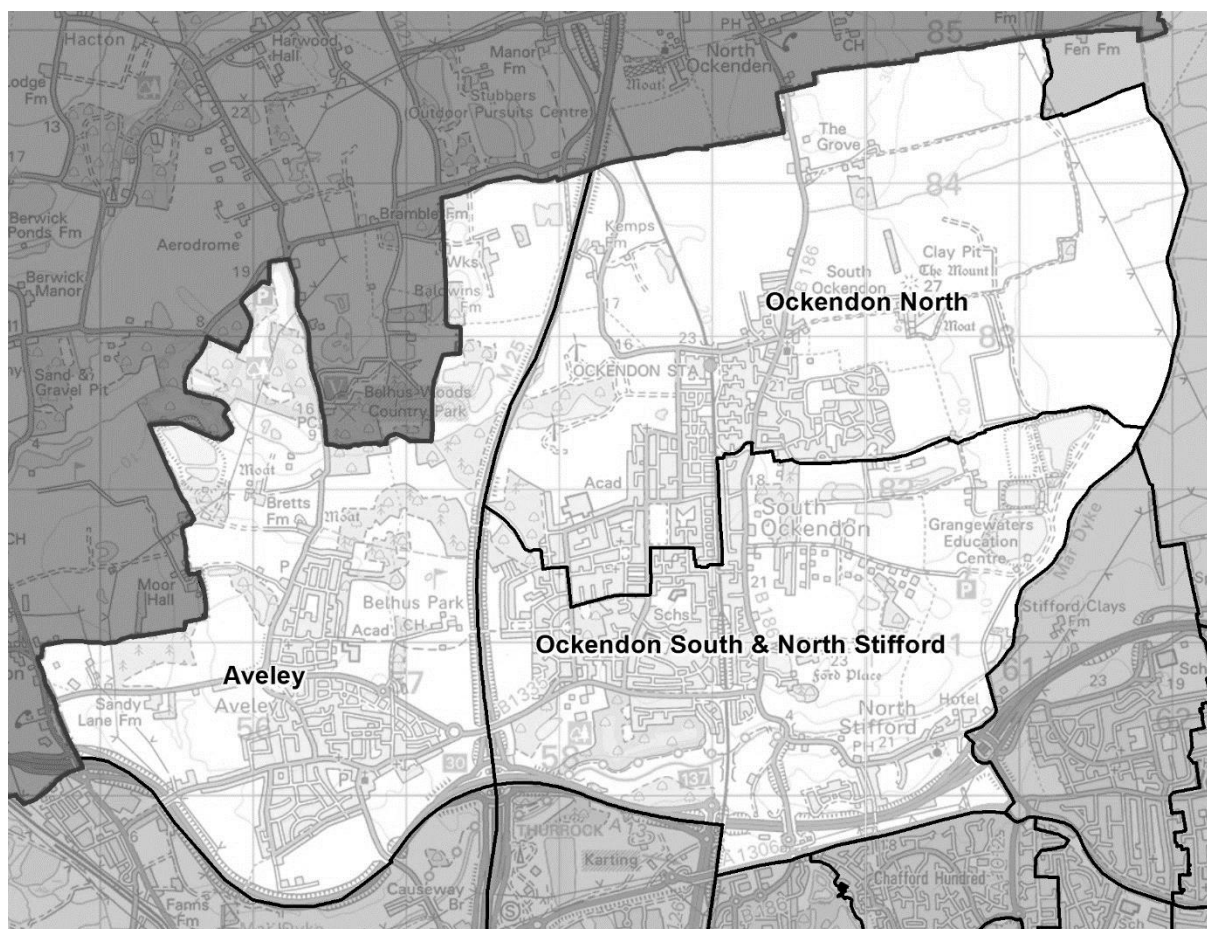
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 33 and on the large map accompanying this report.

38 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Aveley and Ockendon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Aveley	3	-10%
Ockendon North	3	9%
Ockendon South & North Stifford	3	10%

Aveley

39 The Conservative, Labour and resident schemes for Aveley all closely followed the existing boundaries of Aveley & Uplands ward. However, all made changes to the southern boundary of the ward, while the Conservative and resident schemes also amended the eastern boundary by following the M25 to the borough boundary. The Conservatives and resident supported this proposal by describing the M25 as a strong and a clear boundary separating Aveley from South Ockendon – an observation with which we are inclined to agree.

40 We noted that the one settlement in the area to be transferred – Baldwins Farm – does not appear to be accessible from the rest of Aveley ward by road, though there do appear to be a network of footpaths and dirt tracks. However, we also noted that residents only have access to Ockendon ward by leaving the borough altogether

via Baldwins Farm Lane to Dennises Lane and re-entering via Dennis Road. As this is similar to how residents would enter Aveley ward by road – along Dennises Lane and Bramble Lane to Romford Road – we believe the Conservative and resident schemes offer the best balance of our statutory criteria by providing a clearer boundary.

41 All three schemes proposed moving the southern boundary from North Road – an anomaly which placed residents on the north side of the road in Aveley & Uplands ward and the south side in West Thurrock & South Stifford – though their choice of boundary differed. The Labour scheme placed this on the A1306 Arterial Road Purfleet while the Conservative and resident schemes placed this on the A13. We consider the dual carriageway of the A13 to be a much stronger and clearer boundary so have adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

42 While the Labour scheme has retained the existing ward name of Aveley & Uplands, the Conservatives and resident shortened this to 'Aveley'. The Conservative submission noted that the name 'Aveley & Kenningtons' was considered, in order to represent the two communities residing in the ward, but concluded that 'Aveley' was sufficient. We are content to adopt this proposal in our draft recommendations but would be interested to hear from residents of Kenningtons to about whether they feel represented by the name 'Aveley'.

Ockendon North and Ockendon South & North Stifford

43 The Conservative, Labour and resident schemes all made minor changes to the existing Ockendon and Belhus wards to correct the forecast variance of 14% in Ockendon ward. The Labour proposals moved the boundary slightly north from Darenth Lane to Easington Way. This arrangement produces good electoral equality, with the proposed Ockendon and Belhus wards having forecast variances of 6% and 5%, respectively. However, we noted that Easington Way is a narrow road, and suspect that drawing a boundary here would arbitrarily divide a community. Furthermore, we consider Dilkes Park/Little Dilkes Wood on Darenth Lane to be a good boundary. We have therefore not adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

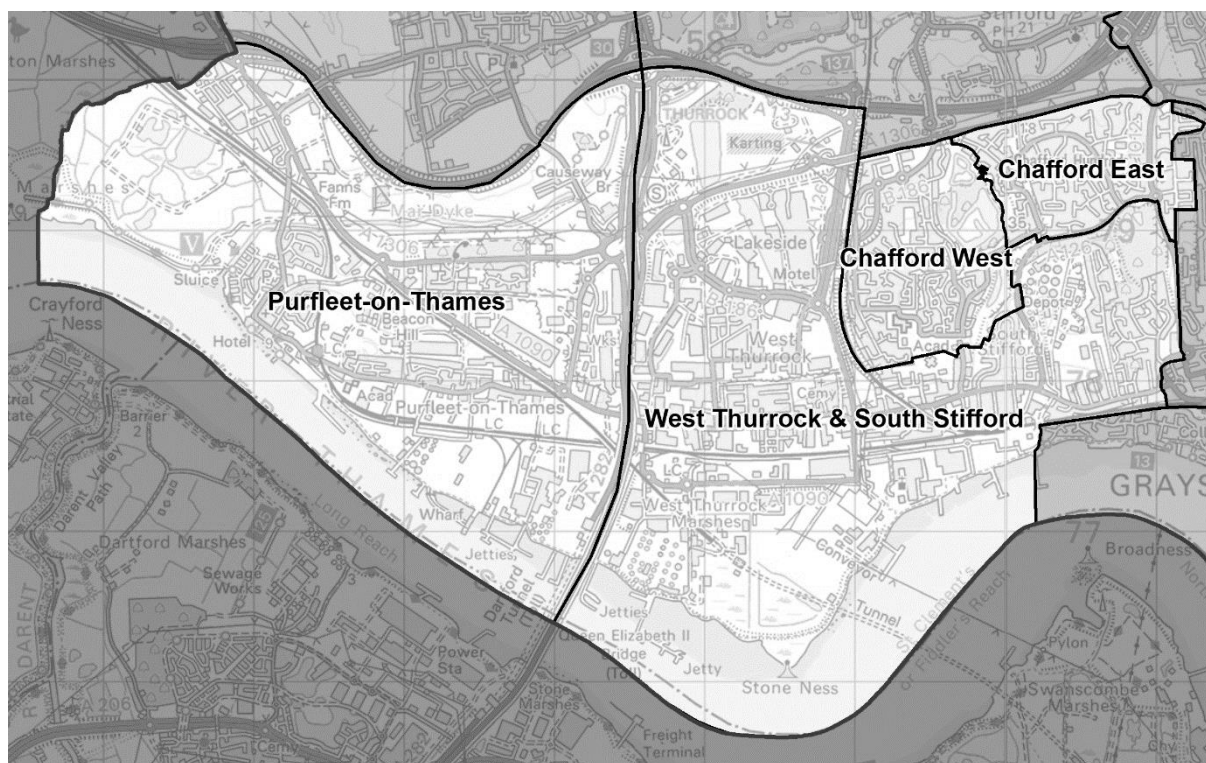
44 The Conservative and resident schemes instead proposed moving the Afton Drive boundary slightly north to follow Annalee Road and the rear of houses on Alwen Grove. Both support this proposal by pointing out that the existing boundary divides the estate built on either side of Afton Drive. Although this results in poorer electoral equality in Ockendon relative to the Labour proposals – 9% and 2% for Belhus – we believe this will better reflect community identities in the ward so have broadly based our draft recommendations on this proposal.

45 On our tour of the area, we noted that North Stifford appeared to be better connected by road to Belhus than either Chafford, as in the Labour scheme, Stifford

Clays, as in the Conservative scheme, or Orsett, as in the resident's scheme. In the case of the Conservative and Labour schemes, this is because North Stifford is separated from said areas by the A13, and in the resident's case because of the distance between North Stifford and Orsett. Stifford Hill, however, flows easily from Belhus into High Road in North Stifford. For this reason, we have extended the boundary of Belhus ward south to the A13, to include North Stifford. This increases the forecast variance for the ward to 10%.

46 All three schemes chose to maintain the existing ward names of Ockendon and Belhus. The Conservatives noted that both wards represent South Ockendon, with the village of North Ockendon lying outside the borough boundaries, and suggested that naming Belhus 'Ockendon South' may prove confusing. However, we received submissions from two residents who argued 'Belhus' was not a place, and therefore did not represent the South Ockendon residents who live there. We have therefore chosen to name Ockendon and Belhus wards 'Ockendon North' and 'Ockendon South & North Stifford', respectively, and would be particularly interested to receive responses from residents on this proposal.

Chafford Hundred and Purfleet-on-Thames



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Chafford East	2	3%
Chafford West	2	1%
Purfleet-on-Thames	2	-4%
West Thurrock & South Stifford	3	5%

Purfleet-on-Thames

47 A feature common to all three schemes was the creation of a two-councillor Purfleet-on-Thames ward out of the existing West Thurrock & South Stifford. The Council, in its sole proposal for the borough, agreed the boundaries of the ward should be the A282 to the east, the borough boundary to the south and west and the Mardyke river to the north.

48 As discussed in paragraph 41, despite this initial consensus by councillors, none of the schemes we received used the Mardyke as the northern boundary of the ward and we adopted the Conservatives' and resident's suggestion of following the A13. The Labour proposals also deviated from the Council's in the east in maintaining the existing Ship Lane boundary before joining the A282. However, we agree with the Council, the Conservatives and the resident that the full length of the A282 to the A13 provides a clear eastern boundary for the ward, and have adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

West Thurrock & South Stifford and Chafford East

49 The Labour and Conservative schemes left the remainder of West Thurrock & South Stifford ward untouched, relative to their boundaries with Purfleet-on-Thames, only reducing the number of councillors from three to two. This results in variances of 5% in the Conservatives' scheme and 6% in Labour's.

50 The resident's scheme maintained three councillors for the ward, adding Badgers Dene and using Hogg Lane as the eastern boundary of the ward. On our tour of the area we noted that we moved very easily from South Stifford to Badger's Dene along London Road, and the resident's submission noted that West Thurrock, South Stifford and Badger's Dene are all based around London Road. The submission further notes that Belmont Castle Academy in Badger's Dene was formerly named South Stifford Primary School.

51 The Conservatives included Badger's Dene in a three-councillor Chafford East ward which would also include that part of the existing Chafford & North Stifford ward south of Arterial Road North Stifford plus Orchard Drive, Grays End Close and Rushdon Close. These wards would have variances of 5% and 4%, respectively. On our tour of the area we noted the significant distance between Badger's Dene and Chafford Hundred, which are connected only by Devonshire Road. We have decided not to adopt this specific proposal in our draft recommendations but would welcome submissions from residents of Badger's Dene about whether they feel connected to Chafford Hundred via the gorges, as suggested by the Conservatives.

52 The Labour scheme included Badger's Dene in a three-councillor Grays Riverside ward very similar to the existing ward. Although London Road is also well connected to Grays via Crown Road, we were not persuaded by Labour's overall scheme in the Grays area, as discussed in paragraphs 56–59. We have therefore not adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

53 The resident's scheme proposed a Chafford Hundred East ward which was made up of the existing Chafford & North Stifford ward south of the A13. However, we did not adopt this proposal in our draft recommendations, as we considered that Arterial Road North Stifford to be a clearer boundary between Chafford Hundred and North Stifford. Furthermore, we also considered that the Conservatives' inclusion of Orchard Drive, Grays End Close and Rushdon Close in the ward made for more effective and convenient local government. We have therefore chosen to adopt the Conservatives' Chafford East ward, subject to including Badger's Dene in our proposed three-member West Thurrock & South Stifford ward.

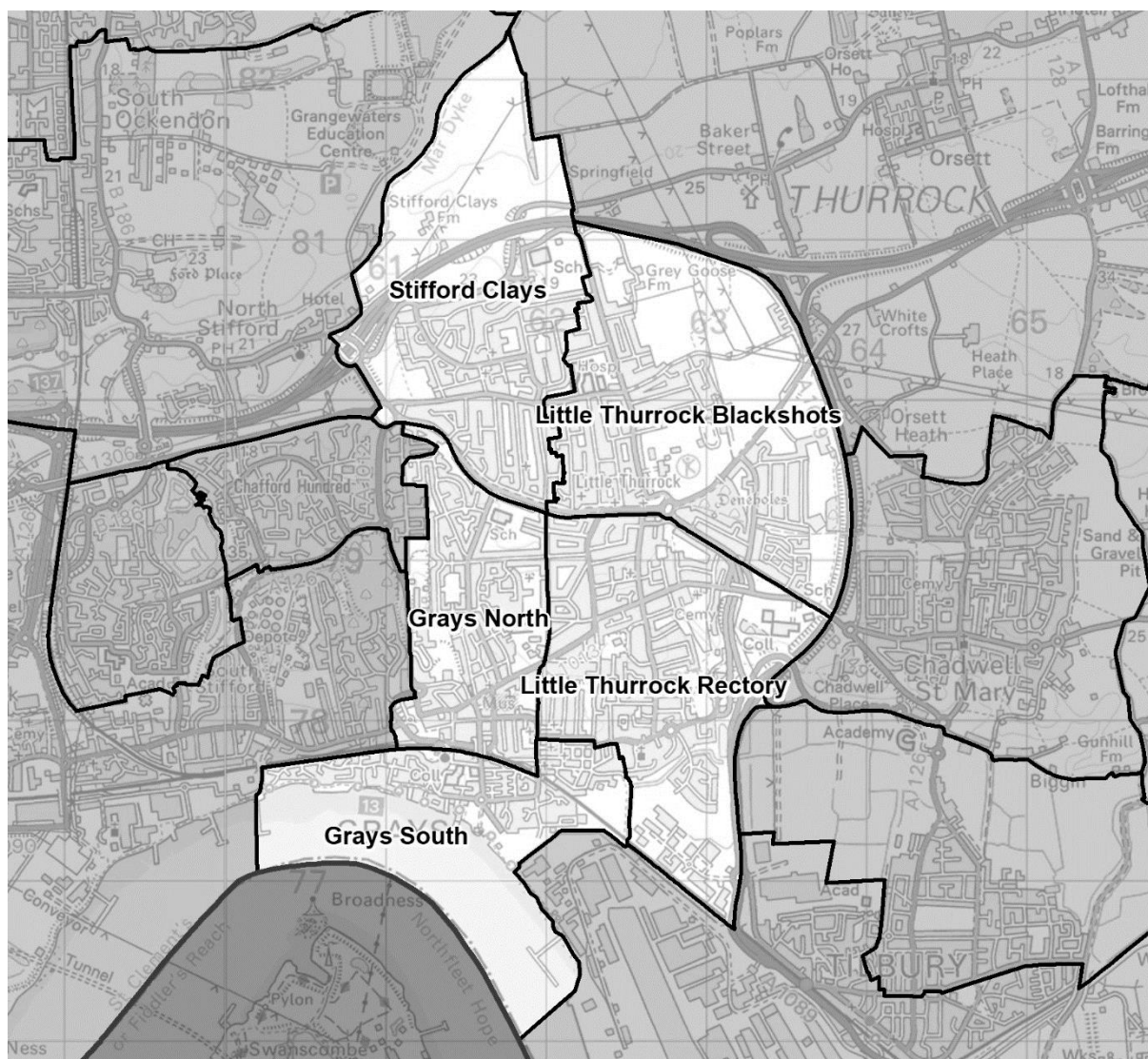
Chafford West

54 All three schemes proposed maintaining the existing boundaries of South Chafford ward and we have done so in our draft recommendations. The Labour scheme maintained the existing name, while the Conservatives proposed 'Chafford

West' and the resident proposed 'Chafford Hundred West'. The latter two proposals also adopting the names 'Chafford East' and 'Chafford Hundred East', respectively, for the adjacent ward. We believe that, under our draft warding pattern, the compass points of east and west make most sense for the two wards but have adopted the Conservatives' proposal of 'Chafford', rather than 'Chafford Hundred' for the sake of continuity. However, we would welcome responses from residents of Chafford Hundred about whether they feel better represented by the ward names of 'Chafford East' and 'Chafford West' or 'Chafford Hundred East' and 'Chafford Hundred West'.

55 One resident argued that Chafford Hundred should no longer be split between two wards and the Conservatives' submission mentioned this as a popular feeling in the area. However, such a ward would have very poor electoral equality with three councillors, having 36% more electors per councillor than the borough average and would therefore require four councillors. While there is no upper limit in legislation regarding the number of councillors that may be returned from each ward, we take the view that wards returning more than three councillors result in a dilution of accountability to the electorate. There are currently no principal authority wards or divisions in England returning more than three councillors.

Grays and Little Thurrock



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Grays North	2	-3%
Grays South	2	3%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	2	7%
Little Thurrock Rectory	3	-7%
Stifford Clays	2	-5%

Grays North and Grays South

56 The Labour scheme made only minor amendments to the existing wards of Grays Thurrock and Grays Riverside in order to improve electoral equality. Accordingly, the scheme moves Argyll Road, Brooke Road and Quarry Hill from Grays Riverside to Grays Thurrock, resulting in a 5% forecast variance in Grays Riverside. Labour also proposed moving the streets off Hogg Lane from Chafford &

North Stifford to Grays Thurrock. This results in a -1% variance for Grays Thurrock.

57 The Conservative scheme proposed a two-councillor Grays North ward with a variance of -3%. This ward would be bounded by Bradleigh Avenue, the railway line, Eastern Way/Maidstone Road, Hogg Lane (minus Rushdon Close, Grays End Close and Orchard Drive) and Lodge Lane. The resident's proposal was similar, excluding Eastern Way/Maidstone Road and including Rushdon Close, Grays End Close and Orchard Drive. This results in a variance of 5%. We have adopted the Conservatives' proposals in our draft recommendations as we consider they provide the clearest boundaries and, particularly in respect of the streets off Hogg Lane, better reflect local community identity.

58 The Conservatives proposed a two-councillor Grays South ward, while the local resident proposed a two-councillor Grays Thameside ward. The boundaries of these wards were identical and would result in a forecast electoral variance of -2%. The proposed wards include the existing Grays Riverside ward south of the railway line, as well as Alfred Street, Arthur Street, Charles Street, Doug Siddons Court, Elm Road, Grove Road, John Street, Oak Road, Percy Street and William Street. All of these roads are connected over the railway line by Bridge Road, with the western boundary running through Gipsy Lane/Maple Road.

59 As discussed above, we considered the Conservatives' scheme in this area to provide the clearest boundaries, particularly as the existing boundaries would result in an unusual 'dog leg' in Grays Thurrock ward south of Palmers Avenue. We have therefore adopted the Conservatives' proposals for Grays South ward, subject to also including Church Street, Manor Road, Wood Street and Thameside Primary School in the ward. This was because we considered Gipsy Lane/Maple Road inappropriate for use as a ward boundary, owing to it being a narrow residential street and therefore likely to split a cohesive community. This changes the variance for Grays South to 3%.

Little Thurrock Rectory

60 The Labour proposal for Little Thurrock Rectory expands the existing ward southwards into Thurrock Park in order to better reflect community identity. This also has the effect of improving its forecast variance of -11% for the existing two-councillor ward to 1% in the proposed three-councillor ward. This addition, which was also included in the Conservatives' and resident's proposals to create a three-councillor ward, was supported by three local residents who argued that Thurrock Park had no affinity with Tilbury and had very different concerns. One also pointed out that residents did not even have direct access to the rest of Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park ward.

61 In line with the rest of our draft recommendations for this area, we have adopted the Conservative/resident proposals for Little Thurrock Rectory ward, with

the exclusion of Church Street, Manor Road and Wood Street, resulting in a forecast electoral variance of -7%.

Little Thurrock Blackshots and Stifford Clays

62 The Labour scheme made no changes to the existing two-councillor Little Thurrock Blackshots and Stifford Clays wards, which both have electoral variances of 2%. While the existing wards have good electoral equality we considered that insufficient supporting evidence had been provided as to why the current boundaries ought to be maintained.

63 The Conservatives explained that the existing pairing of the Wood Side community of Little Thurrock with Blackshots was advantageous because residents of Wood Side use many of the same facilities as those in Blackshots, such as King George's Field, Blackshots Leisure Centre and Blackshots Library. The Conservative proposals also add Elmway, The Firs, Leasway and Thurrock Community Hospital, as well as 94–102 Lodge Lane to the existing Little Thurrock Blackshots ward. The Conservatives explained this modification as being better for community identity as, at present, a number of neighbours on Lodge Lane and Long Lane are in separate wards from one another. The northern border is also extended to the A13. This ward would have a variance of 7% by 2029.

64 The Conservatives' proposed two-councillor Stifford ward is similar to the existing Stifford Clays ward, minus those areas added to Little Thurrock Blackshots, and with the addition of North Stifford. The ward would have a variance of 6% by 2029. The Conservatives' submission states that residents of both communities share the same schools (Stifford Clays Primary and William Edwards secondary), as well as a doctor's surgery (Stifford Clays Health Centre).

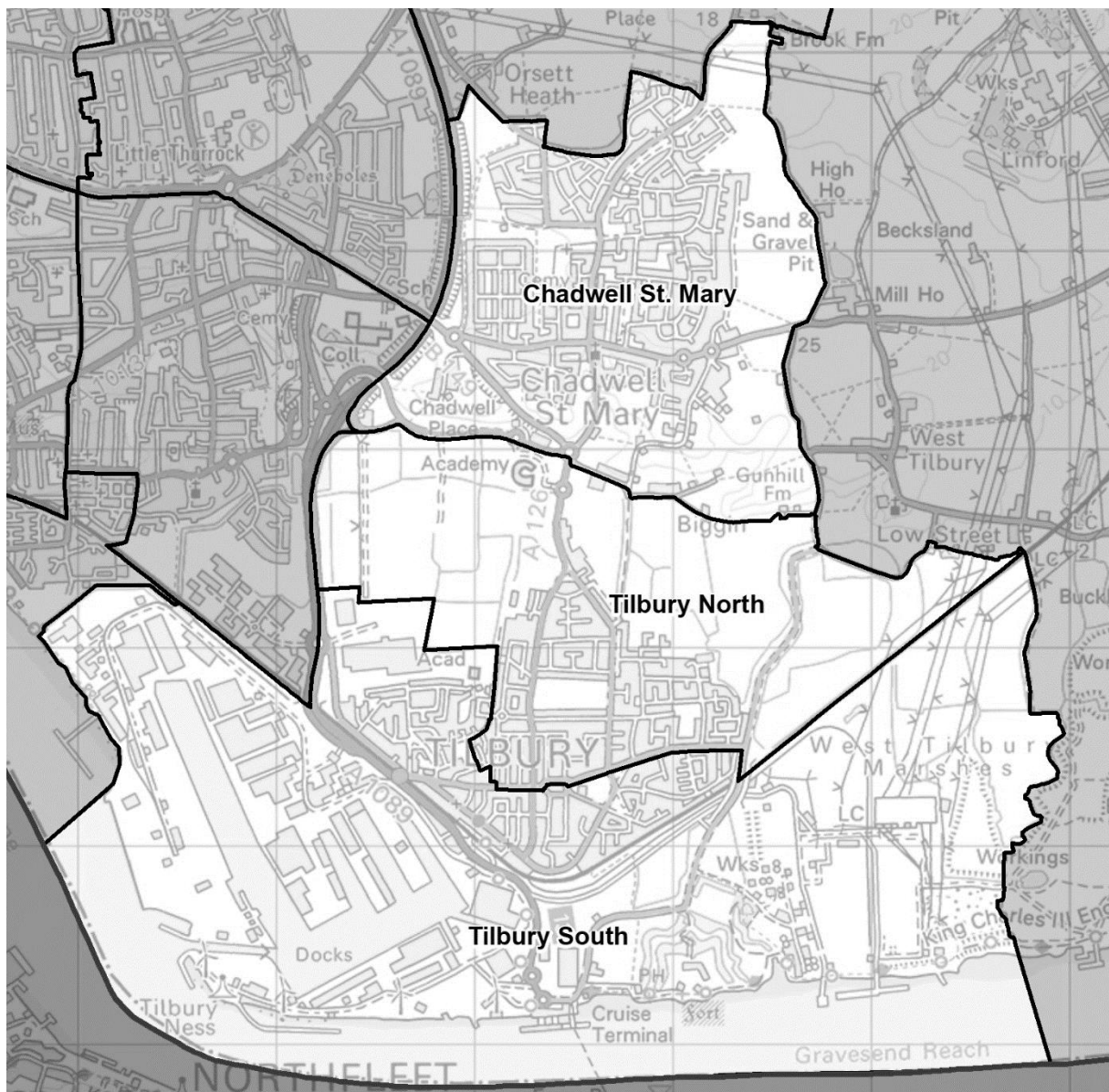
65 The resident's scheme proposed a three-councillor Stifford Clays & Blackshots ward, which is forecast to have an electoral variance of 10% by 2029, encompassing the Stifford Clays and Blackshots communities within the A13 and A1013/Lodge Lane ('old A13') ring road. While we found this an attractive proposal, not least because our tour of the area did not reveal any obvious natural divide between the existing or proposed Stifford Clays and Little Thurrock Blackshots wards, we ultimately concluded that it would not fit into our overall draft recommendations for the wider area where we have received good evidence for alternative warding patterns.

66 We came to this conclusion because the ward excludes the Wood Side area of Little Thurrock and instead places it in a two-councillor Orsett Heath ward. On our tour of the area we noted that Wood Side was only indirectly linked to the rest of the ward, as the A1089 Dock Approach Road dual carriageway separates it from Orsett Heath. We concluded that this made the two areas a poor pairing with regards to community identity and effective and convenient local government. Adding Wood

Side to the resident's proposed Little Thurrock ward, however, would increase its forecast variance from -7% to 17% and Orsett Heath's from -4% to -42%.

67 Having considered the evidence, we consider that the Conservative proposals offer the best balance of our three statutory criteria, though we have amended these slightly by placing North Stifford in our Ockendon South & North Stifford ward instead. As discussed in paragraph 45, our tour of the area suggested to us that North Stifford was better connected to the existing Belhus ward, but we would particularly welcome submissions from North Stifford residents as to which community they feel they most belong and whether this is an appropriate pairing. As we are not including North Stifford in the proposed ward, we have reverted to the existing name of 'Stifford Clays', the community which this ward represents.

Chadwell St. Mary and Tilbury



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Chadwell St. Mary	3	-1%
Tilbury North	2	-12%
Tilbury South	2	-12%

Chadwell St. Mary, Tilbury North and Tilbury South

68 The Labour and Conservative schemes reached a measure of consensus in the Chadwell St. Mary and Tilbury area of the borough, differing only slightly in their respective boundaries. In Chadwell St. Mary, both schemes add the Hill House Drive area from the existing East Tilbury ward, using Turnpike Lane/Gun Hill and Biggin Lane/Gunhill Farm as the new boundary.

69 Both submissions stated that the Hill House Drive area identifies as Chadwell St. Mary and, indeed, there is no obvious separation from the rest of the Chadwell St. Mary ward. However the area is a considerable distance from the next-nearest settlement in East Tilbury ward (West Tilbury), which the Labour submission states creates issues with electors being unable to walk easily to their nearest polling station. The Labour proposals make no further changes to Chadwell St. Mary ward, though the Conservatives' scheme also excludes the Orsett Heath area, which is instead added to their proposed Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan ward. This results in a ward with a -1% variance, while Labour's proposal results in a variance of -2%.

70 The Labour and Conservative schemes both moved Thurrock Park from the existing Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park ward to Little Thurrock Rectory which, as discussed in paragraph 60, is supported by residents there as better reflecting community identity in Little Thurrock. The Labour submission also stated that such a move would improve effective and convenient local government in Tilbury, as the high levels of social and economic deprivation in the town means it accounts for an estimated 29% of all councillor casework across the authority. This position was also supported by local councillors Steve Liddiard, Cici Manwa and Kairen Raper.

71 This, however, leaves the ward with an electoral variance of -13%. Furthermore, the electoral variance in Tilbury St. Chad's ward, which neither Labour nor the Conservatives proposed to change, would be -12%. The Conservatives' proposals differed only slightly in that the mapping they provided included London Distribution Park and Olive AP Academy in Tilbury Riverside, which they renamed Tilbury South. Owing to the five electors registered at Three Acres, this improves the variance of the ward to -12%. The Conservatives also proposed that Tilbury St. Chad's ward be renamed Tilbury North.

72 The Conservatives stated that the geography of the two wards – a settlement concentrated in the centre of the combined ward area surrounded by docklands and agricultural land – made it difficult to improve the variances without adding areas geographically and culturally far removed from Tilbury. The Labour submission and the local councillor submission mentioned above both made reasonably strong cases for accepting their proposals for Tilbury, noting the isolation of the town from adjoining areas as well as its specific socio economic and community composition, which impacts on member workload.

73 In formulating our draft recommendations, we accepted some of the above observations. While we were able to improve the variances of both wards to 10%, this was only possible by adding West Tilbury and Low Street to Tilbury Riverside and the 'triangle' of new housing between Chadwell Bypass and Marshfoot Road to Tilbury St. Chad's. We declined to adopt this option in our draft recommendations because it would require the addition of areas which appear to have little or no connection to Tilbury.

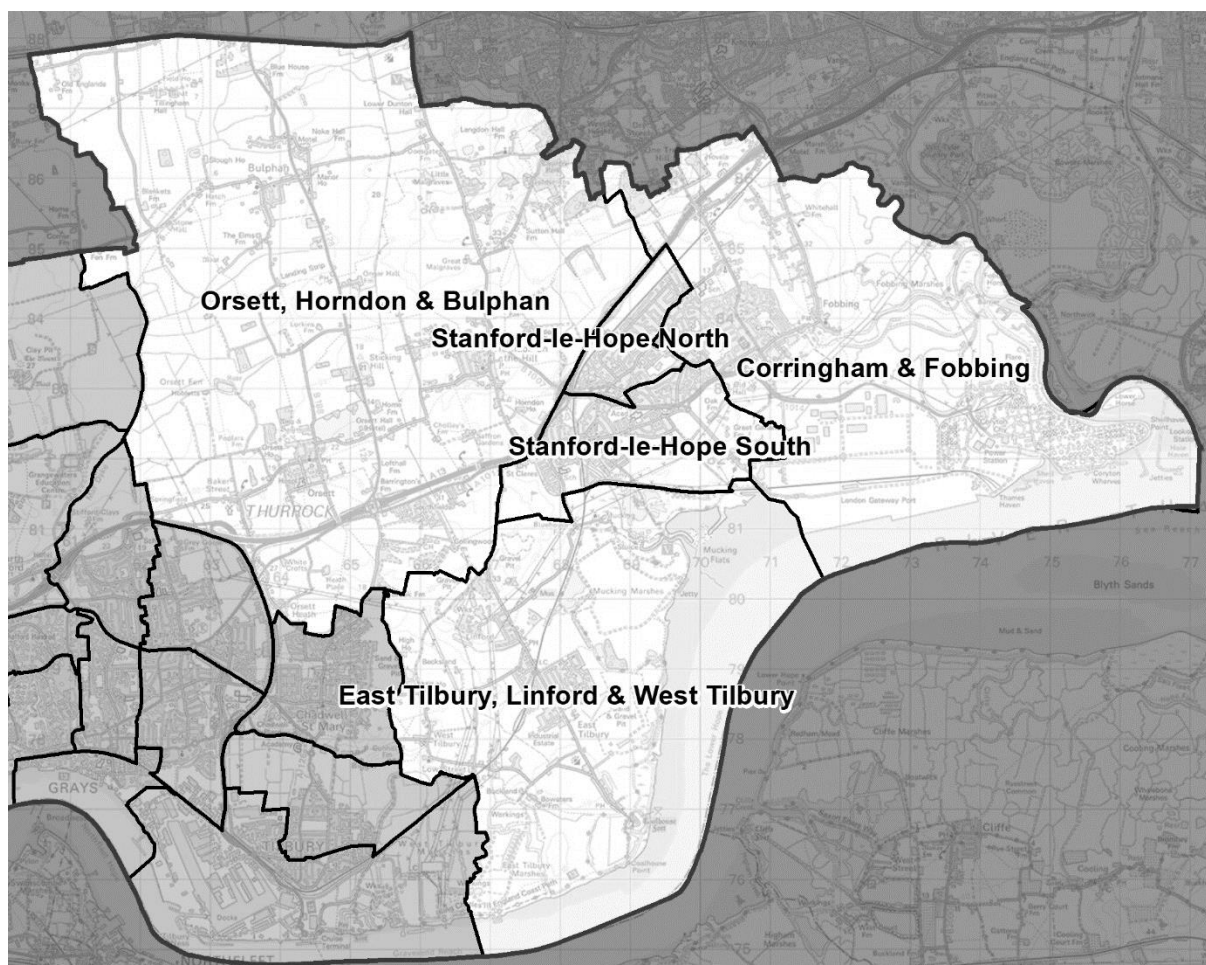
74 We also explored the feasibility of a single three-councillor ward for Tilbury. However, we ultimately rejected this option, as simply combining the proposed Tilbury Riverside/Tilbury South and Tilbury St. Chad's/Tilbury North wards resulted in a variance of 18% – but neither did we consider it appropriate to divide areas of Tilbury and combine them with surrounding wards to reduce this electoral inequality.

75 The resident's scheme achieves good electoral equality in the area by dividing it between a three-councillor Tilbury Town ward and a three-councillor Chadwell & Tilbury North ward. These wards would have variances of 3% and -9%, respectively.

76 The resident's submission states that the northern part of Tilbury has 'always had a closer affinity to Chadwell' and that children from both communities attend Gateway Academy. However, we do not believe this accords with the other community evidence we have received regarding the identities of Tilbury and Chadwell St. Mary. We have therefore not adopted this proposal in our draft recommendations.

77 Having carefully considered the various proposals received, we believe there is a strong case for allowing slightly poorer electoral equality in the two Tilbury wards owing to the unique geographical and community characteristics the town. We consider that this approach will provide for the best balance of our three statutory criteria. Owing to the slightly better electoral equality in the Conservatives' Tilbury South ward, we have adopted their proposals in our draft recommendations, including the names – though we would particularly welcome submissions from residents about appropriate ward names for this area.

Thurrock East



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Corringham & Fobbing	3	4%
East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury	2	-2%
Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan	2	7%
Stanford-le-Hope North	3	-4%
Stanford-le-Hope South	3	6%

East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury

78 The Labour scheme made no changes to the existing East Tilbury ward, other than to transfer the Hill House Drive area to Chadwell St. Mary ward, which would not change the existing ward's forecast variance of 3%. The Conservatives' and resident's proposals were similar; however, they also excluded Orsett Golf Course from their proposed wards and included the Mucking area. As Orsett Golf Course is not accessible from within the existing East Tilbury ward, we agree with its exclusion from the ward. We were also satisfied, following our tour of the area, that Mucking would be better represented in a rural ward like East Tilbury rather than Stanford-le-Hope West, as under the existing arrangements. We have therefore adopted the

Conservative proposal in our draft recommendations. While not entirely discounting the existing ward name of 'East Tilbury', the Conservatives have proposed the ward be named 'East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury' instead. We would particularly welcome submissions from residents as to which name they feel best represents the ward.

Corringham & Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope North and Stanford-le-Hope South

79 The Labour scheme made minor changes to the existing Stanford East & Corringham Town, Stanford-le-Hope West and The Homesteads wards, which are forecast to have electoral variances of 14%, -16% and -14%, respectively, by 2029. Labour proposed to move the area between Corringham Road, High Street and The Manorway from Stanford-le-Hope West ward to Stanford East & Corringham Town. It was also proposed that Ashdown Close, Burton Close, Colville Close, Edinburgh Avenue, Williamsons Way and Woodmanhurst Road be transferred to Stanford East & Corringham Town ward from The Homesteads, which would also become a two-councillor ward. This results in electoral variances of -6%, 8% and 12% for Stanford East & Corringham Town, Stanford-le-Hope West and The Homesteads, respectively. The existing boundaries of Corringham & Fobbing remained unchanged.

80 The Conservatives and resident proposed the three-councillor wards of Stanford-le-Hope North and Stanford-le-Hope South, and a three-councillor Corringham & Fobbing ward. There are, however, minor differences between the two schemes in the Stanford-le-Hope area.

81 The Conservative proposal for Stanford-le-Hope North includes the existing The Homesteads ward north of Southend Road and minus Cawder Hall Farm. It also includes the area of Stanford East & Corringham Town ward between Abbots Drive, Gordon Road, The Manorway, Silvertown Avenue and Southend Road. This results in an electoral variance of -4% by 2029. The resident's scheme differs only slightly in that it also includes Aldrin Close, Armstrong Close, Collins Close and Thors Oak, resulting in a variance of 1%.

82 The two proposed Stanford-le-Hope South wards are made of the remainders of the existing Stanford East & Corringham Town ward and Stanford-le-Hope West wards with the exclusion of Mucking. This produces variances of 6% in the Conservative scheme and 1% in the resident's. The Corringham & Fobbing ward proposed by the Conservatives and resident includes the existing ward plus an area east of Gordon Road/Springhouse Road and an area south of Southend Road. The only difference between the two proposals is that the Conservatives include Cawder Hall Farm. The forecast electoral variance for both these three-councillor wards is 4%.

83 We considered that the Conservative scheme offered the best balance of our statutory criteria, with good electoral equality, clear boundaries and good community identity. The simpler structure of two Stanford-le-Hope wards and the inclusion of all of Corringham in a single ward led us to favour the Conservatives' and resident's schemes over Labour's, which also included one ward with poor electoral equality. However, on balance, we consider the evidence favours the Conservative proposals, both with the inclusion of Cawder Hall Farm in the more rural Corringham & Fobbing ward and the inclusion of Aldrin Close, etc., in Stanford-le-Hope South ward, to which we think they are better connected.

Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan

84 Labour's proposed Orsett ward is almost identical to the existing ward, save for the inclusion of Orsett Golf Course, which does not change the forecast electoral variance of 4%. The Conservatives' proposed Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan ward is similar except that it includes Orsett Heath and excludes the area west of the A13, which is moved into Little Thurrock Blackshots ward (see paragraph 63). This produces a ward with a variance of 7%.

85 The resident proposed the two-councillor wards of Orsett Heath with a variance of -4% and Orsett & North Stifford with a variance of -6%. As discussed in paragraph 45, we consider North Stifford to be an inappropriate pairing with Orsett owing to the distance between the two, but removing it results in a variance of -17%. Similarly, as discussed in paragraphs 64–66, we did not consider Wood Side to be an appropriate pairing with Orsett Heath, owing to it being separated from the rest of the ward by the A13. While the resident claims this is not insurmountable owing to road and footpath links, and that residents cross this divide for schools and shops, this does not accord with other evidence received or our observations when we visited the area.

86 Furthermore, the ward includes the area of Chadwell St. Mary north of Brentwood Road, which we consider may produce an arbitrary ward boundary. On our tour of the area we found the Conservatives' proposed boundary of Farm Road and Heath Road, to be clear and easily understandable on the ground. We have therefore adopted the Conservative proposals for Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan as part of our draft recommendations as we consider they provide the best balance of our three statutory criteria.

Conclusions

87 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Thurrock , referencing the 2023 and 2029 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the ward is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2023	2029
Number of councillors	49	49
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,506	2,706
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Thurrock Borough Council should be made up of 49 councillors serving 20 wards representing 11 two-councillor wards and nine three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Thurrock Borough Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Thurrock Borough Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Have your say

88 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

89 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Thurrock, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

90 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say www.lgbce.org.uk

91 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

92 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Thurrock)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth NE24 9FE

93 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Thurrock Borough Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

94 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

95 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Thurrock?

96 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents your area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

97 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

98 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

99 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

100 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

101 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Thurrock Borough Council in 2025.

Equalities

102 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Thurrock Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Aveley	3	6,820	2,273	-9%	7,319	2,440	-10%
2	Chadwell St. Mary	3	7,517	2,506	0%	8,063	2,688	-1%
3	Chafford East	2	5,273	2,637	5%	5,575	2,788	3%
4	Chafford West	2	5,182	2,591	3%	5,448	2,724	1%
5	Corringham & Fobbing	3	7,596	2,532	1%	8,431	2,810	4%
6	East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury	2	4,968	2,484	-1%	5,288	2,644	-2%
7	Grays North	2	4,918	2,459	-2%	5,264	2,632	-3%
8	Grays South	2	5,196	2,598	4%	5,548	2,774	3%
9	Little Thurrock Blackshots	2	5,467	2,734	9%	5,778	2,889	7%
10	Little Thurrock Rectory	3	6,982	2,327	-7%	7,586	2,529	-7%

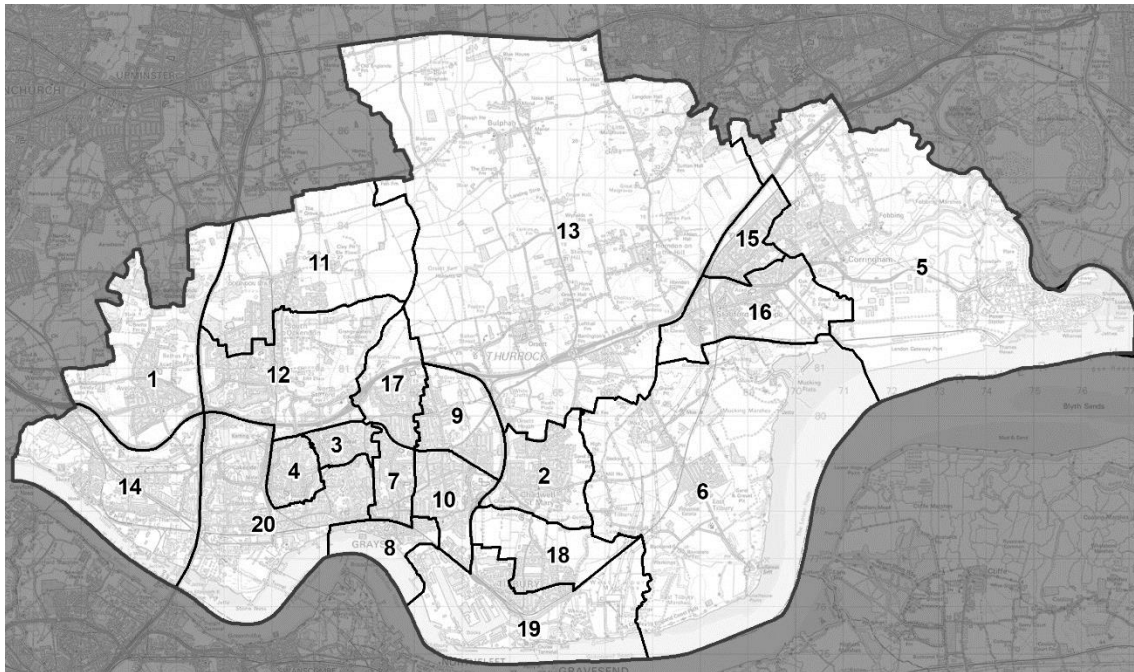
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Ockendon North	3	8,004	2,668	6%	8,824	2,941	9%
12	Ockendon South & North Stifford	3	8,263	2,754	10%	8,905	2,968	10%
13	Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan	2	5,213	2,607	4%	5,817	2,909	7%
14	Purfleet-on-Thames	2	4,778	2,389	-5%	5,177	2,589	-4%
15	Stanford-le-Hope North	3	7,177	2,392	-5%	7,763	2,588	-4%
16	Stanford-le-Hope South	3	8,003	2,668	6%	8,645	2,882	6%
17	Stifford Clays	2	4,769	2,385	-5%	5,132	2,566	-5%
18	Tilbury North	2	4,403	2,202	-12%	4,746	2,373	-12%
19	Tilbury South	2	4,481	2,241	-11%	4,738	2,369	-12%
20	West Thurrock & South Stifford	3	7,793	2,598	4%	8,557	2,852	5%
Totals		49	122,803	–	–	132,604	–	–
Averages		–	–	2,506	–	–	2,706	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Thurrock Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Aveley
2	Chadwell St. Mary
3	Chafford East
4	Chafford West
5	Corringham & Fobbing
6	East Tilbury, Linford & West Tilbury
7	Grays North
8	Grays South
9	Little Thurrock Blackshots
10	Little Thurrock Rectory
11	Ockendon North
12	Ockendon South & North Stifford
13	Orsett, Horndon & Bulphan
14	Purfleet-on-Thames
15	Stanford-le-Hope North
16	Stanford-le-Hope South
17	Stifford Clays
18	Tilbury North
19	Tilbury South
20	West Thurrock & South Stifford

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thurrock

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thurrock

Local Authority

- Thurrock Borough Council

Political Groups

- Thurrock Labour Group
- Thurrock Labour Local Campaign Forum
- Thurrock Conservative Group

Councillors

- Councillor S. Liddiard (Thurrock Borough Council)*
- Councillor C. Manwa (Thurrock Borough Council)*
- Councillor K. Raper (Thurrock Borough Council)*
- Councillor L. Worrall (Thurrock Borough Council)

*represented in a single submission

Local Organisations

- Bulphan Village Community Forum

Local Residents

- 47 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Ward	A specific Thurrock of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or ward than the average
Parish	A specific and defined Thurrock of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the Thurrock defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish ward; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular Thurrock of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or ward than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or ward varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific Thurrock of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

Telephone: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Online: www.lgbce.org.uk

www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Twitter/X: @LGBCE