

**CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL  
UNITARY AUTHORITY ELECTORAL REVIEW 2009/2010**

**Submission to the Boundary Committee on Electoral Arrangements**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The Electoral Review of Cheshire East Council commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009, and has previously involved two stages of public consultation on (1) Council size and (2) the warding arrangements for the Authority. Cheshire East Council made detailed submissions at both of these earlier stages, taking into account, wherever possible, the views of Town and Parish Councils and other interested bodies. The Boundary Committee (BC) has indicated that it is minded to adopt a Council size of 82 Members (in line with the Council's proposals), and has now published Draft Recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the Council.

**2. TIMETABLE**

- 2.1. The Draft Recommendations were published by the BC on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009, for a ten weeks period of public consultation. However, due to the need for a number of numerical and mapping errors to be corrected, the deadline for responses was extended to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The Recommendations make provision for six 3 Member Wards, eighteen 2 Member Wards, and twenty-eight single Member Wards (52 Wards in total). Interested parties are now invited to comment on any aspects of these electoral proposals, including the proposed Ward boundaries, the number of Councillors, Ward names, and consequential Parish and Town Council electoral arrangements.
- 2.2. The final stage of the Review will follow the consultation deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> February, when the BC will review these draft Recommendations in the light of representations received, and decide whether or not they should be altered. Final Proposals will be published by the BC in May 2010. They will then be subject to Parliamentary process, and formally brought into force by Statutory Order.

**3. THE COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION**

- 3.1. As at previous stages of the Review, the Council's response has been guided by an all-Party Members Task Group. The Group has given careful consideration to the Draft Recommendations, and has overseen the production of this submission, which sets out the Authority's response for determination by the full Council. The views and responses of other interested parties have been taken into consideration where known, recognising that they may make their own comments directly to the BC as part of the public consultation process.
- 3.2. Whilst the BC's recommendations on the number of Wards and the number of Councillors for each vary to a degree from the Council's earlier submission, the Council is minded broadly to support the BC's proposals. However, there are a

number of areas where the Council does not agree, and wishes to make further representations as set out in this document. The areas and Wards concerned are dealt with in detail in the following sections, but may be summarised as:-

- (a) Wilmslow – Dean Row and Handforth
- (b) Poynton – relating to Adlington, Lyme Handley and Kettleshulme
- (c) Crewe Town
- (d) Willaston, Rope and Wistaston
- (e) Nantwich and Wybunbury Wards
- (f) Haslington and Sandbach
- (g) Macclesfield Town

- 3.3. Reference was made in the Council's last submission to the requirement to conduct a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the unparished area of Crewe Town. The CGR is now nearing completion, following 2 stages of public consultation locally. The Council will make its decision on the CGR at a Special Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January. This means that the outcome of the CGR will be known in time for the BC to take account of any implications for this Electoral Review.

#### **4. WILMSLOW – DEAN ROW AND HANDFORTH**

- 4.1. The Council's original proposal for this area was for a single Wilmslow North Ward, covering the communities of Dean Row and Handforth, represented by 3 Councillors, which achieved good electoral equality of +0.1% from the average.
- 4.2. The difficulty with this area in electoral equality terms is that both communities have similar electorates of 5000 – 5500 which indicates that they should each be represented by 1.5 Councillors. The BC proposal seeks to address this problem by transferring a substantial number of electors from one community to the other (in this case Dean Row to Handforth) in order to create one 2 Member Ward and one single Member ward and thereby achieve electoral equality. The Council believes that this would be at the expense of the community identities in the area.
- 4.3. Whichever way around the transfer of electors is carried out, it will be harmful to one of the communities. The Council's submission is that it is better to reflect the local community identities and avoid artificial boundaries by approving a single 3 Member Ward for the whole area, which would also bring with it good electoral equality. This proposal is made on the following basis:
- (a) The natural boundary between the 2 communities is well recognised locally as the river Dean. To the north of the river lies Handforth, and to the south is Wilmslow, of which Dean Row is part. This is evidenced by the fact that main road names change as they cross the river, ie. Wilmslow Road in Handforth (former A34) becomes Manchester Road in Dean Row; and Dean Road (Handforth) becomes Handforth Road in Dean Row (B5358) at this point.

- (b) The BC proposal places the Colshaw Farm and Finney Green areas of Wilmslow (Dean Row) all of which are located south of the river Dean into Handforth to the north. This means that Wilmslow's cemetery, the Dean Row Community Centre and the local Dean Row Shopping Centre (Summerfields) would be located out of the town and in the Handforth Ward, which is not consistent with local community identities. It would mean that representation of Dean Row residents would lie in the hands of Handforth Councillors.
- (c) To achieve the BC's proposal requires the transfer of the whole of Polling District 8EE1 (1291 electors) and the major part of PD 8EA (595 electors), a total of 1886 electors from Wilmslow (Dean Row) to Handforth in order to arrive at electoral equality within the tolerance. This would continue the decision made in the 2001 Macclesfield Borough Review when PD 8EE1 was moved to Handforth. This outcome generated a good deal of local opposition in the community, many regard it as having been an error and there is now the opportunity to correct the position in line with the community's preferences. In addition, the Council would also wish to see the whole of PD8EA (rather than part) included in the Dean Row and Handforth Ward, in line with our previous submission, as this conforms with previous electoral arrangements and is familiar to local residents.
- (d) There is a large degree of affinity between these distinct but linked communities, evidenced by:-
- The excellent major road and rail links between Wilmslow and Handforth
  - Secondary school transfer by Handforth pupils is normally to Wilmslow High School
  - Both Dean Row (Colshaw Farm) and Handforth (Spath Lane) contain substantial Manchester "overspill" housing from the 1950's
  - The major "out of town" shopping centre serving the area is named "Handforth Dean"
- (e) The Council's proposal for a single 3 Member Ward would render irrelevant and overcome the difficult issue of the transfer of a part of Dean Row to Handforth. It would achieve good electoral equality for the Ward of 3400 electors per Councillor in 2013.
- (f) A Petition has been received requiring a Community Governance Review of Wilmslow and Handforth. Although the outcome cannot be anticipated, should there be a decision to create Parish or Town Councils in the area, the Polling Districts within both Dean Row and Handforth would lend themselves well to forming Parish Wards, without any need for further Ward boundary changes. There could, for example, readily be Parish Wards based on Colshaw Farm and Spath Lane

housing estates, which would further enhance local governance and community identities in the area.

- 4.4. Accordingly, the Council remains strongly of the view that a single 3 Member Ward for the Handforth and Dean Row areas is the solution which best reflects local community wishes, avoids causing damage to any of these community identities, and achieves very good electoral equality. The Council would also now propose that the 3 Member Ward is named “Dean Row and Handforth” rather than “Wilmslow North” as previously suggested.

## **5. POYNTON AREA**

- 5.1. The Council’s proposal for this area was for two 2 Member Wards, namely Poynton West and Poynton East and Adlington. Whilst the BC have accepted the principle of two Poynton Wards each returning 2 Councillors and requiring some linkage with adjoining communities, their preference is for Adlington to be joined with Poynton West, citing better transport links and accessibility as the main reasons. The Council would wish to make further submissions in support of the initial proposal that Adlington should be warded with Poynton East. The Council understands that this is also the strong view of Poynton with Worth Town Council. Cheshire East is also aware that Adlington Parish Council (bearing in mind their express preference to be warded with Prestbury and Mottram St Andrew) would rather be warded with Poynton East should they have to be joined with Poynton at all.
- 5.2. It would appear that the BC have accepted the general evidence of economic, transport, educational and other links between Poynton and Adlington. However, the Council feels that, in particular, local transport links most used by the community are the rural buses linking Adlington more with Poynton East. The bus services connect up the small hamlets within Adlington, and give access to the eastern and more rural part of Poynton, which has more affinity with the rural character of Adlington. The Council also accepts that Pott Shrigley should be included with Poynton East and Adlington, which would reinforce the generally rural character of the whole area. These links are more relevant to the local communities, than the more commuter orientated road and rail connections through Adlington and Poynton West.
- 5.3. Although the Poynton Business Park lies within Adlington (which also has its own Business Park), the workforce and customers found at both of these Parks came from both Poynton and Adlington (and beyond) so any direct link with Poynton West is not critical. Many Poynton residents use Adlington businesses on Wood Lane and Moggie Lane, both of which are nearer to Poynton East.
- 5.4. With regard to the boundary line between Poynton East and West Wards, the Council supports the proposed change advocated by the Town Council, that the centre line of Dickens Lane provides the strongest and most locally identifiable boundary between the 2 Wards, with all of Vernon Road and Spring road being in Poynton West.

- 5.5. Looking a little further afield, the Council is unable to understand the BC's proposed inclusion of Kettleshulme in Poynton East, as it is several miles from the town and the road links are poor. The better road links are with Rainow, which is also well served by the local buses. The Council would therefore want to argue again for its initial submission that Kettleshulme has much greater affinity with Rainow, and that it should therefore be in the Sutton Ward together with Rainow Parish. Should the proposal below concerning Lyme Handley be accepted, there would in fact be no link at all between Kettleshulme and Poynton.
- 5.6. The Council also proposes a minor adjustment to its original submission so that the whole of Rainow Parish is within the Sutton Ward, rather than a very small area (Rainow PD4FE1) being located within Poynton East.
- 5.7. The Council would also wish to press again for its initial proposal for Lyme Handley to be included in the Disley Ward. Lyme Handley has no direct connection by road with Poynton, the only access being by footpath. Previously, Lyme Handley and Disley formed a single ward for Macclesfield Borough Council, and all of the polling places for Lyme Handley are in Disley. Accordingly, the community of Lyme Handley is much more closely identified with Disley than Poynton.
- 5.8. In summary, the Council is making representations on the basis of:-
- A Poynton West Ward.
  - A Poynton East and Adlington Ward (including Pott Shrigley but not including Kettleshulme or Lyme Handley which should be in Sutton or Disley Wards respectively).
  - Adjustment to the boundary between the East and West Wards in the Dickens Lane area, as proposed by the Town Council.

## **6. CREWE TOWN**

- 6.1. The Council recognises the virtue of having clear and distinct boundaries formed by the railway lines in the urban part of Crewe. With regard to the proposed Crewe East Ward, the Council reluctantly accepts the difficulty of splitting the area into individual wards and therefore does not propose any change to the draft recommendations.
- 6.2. The BC Draft Recommendations split the North Western Area of Crewe into four single member wards – Central, North, Leighton and St Barnabas. The Council proposes only one small change to this arrangement. This involves a redrawing of the line between the Leighton and St Barnabas Wards so that James Atkinson Way and a number of small Closes off the way are fully included in the Leighton Ward. This area forms a small estate which is currently split by the Draft Recommendation; a proposal which would involve two separate Councillors being involved in any problems or consultations involving this small community. The revised boundary would run to the rear of Skylark Close and join the BC's recommended boundary adjacent to the top of Wheelman Road.

The change would not split the parish of Leighton nor would it involve splitting the electoral district FJH. There is a strong measure of community support for this proposal, as a petition containing 185 signatures strongly objecting to the proposal of the BC and asking that the whole of the estate remain within the Leighton Ward has been submitted to the Council.

- 6.3. The BC draft recommendations split the South Western Area of Crewe into two two member wards – West and South. The Council proposes several changes to this arrangement.
- 6.4. First the Council believes there is a better line that can be drawn between the two wards. It proposes two changes to the line. At the south end the small polling district BD2 should move into the West Ward, where it has traditionally been, moving the boundary line to Nantwich Road, making it a stronger and much more simple line. This is the current boundary line between the existing Crewe West and South Wards. At the north end of the line, the current proposal cuts diagonally west to east in a series of steps. A better line would be the west extremity of polling district DD1 which would run along Franklin Avenue (to the rear of the houses) and then along Jubilee Avenue and Stewart Street to the railway. DD1 is currently in the existing South Ward and mainly consists of terraced housing very similar to the rest of the ward.
- 6.5. Second the Council believes polling district GM2 (Gresty Brook Parish Ward of Shavington Parish Council) has little in common with the rest of South Ward and should be instead incorporated into Shavington Ward. This would have the added advantage of creating a single ward fully co-terminous with the local Parish of Shavington.

The effect of the changes to the three wards involved would result in an evening up of the variances in the West and South Wards and a similar absolute variance in Shavington, but plus instead of negative:-

Ward	2008 Electors				2013 Electors			
	BC Proposal	Variance	Revised (CE Council) proposal	Variance	BC Proposal	Variance	Revised (CE Council) Proposal	Variance
<b>Crewe West</b>	7536	+8%	7536 Plus BD2 541 Less DD1 -764 Less Part DB3 -150 Less Part DE1 -28 <u>7135</u>	+2%	7698	+8%	7323	+3%
<b>Crewe South</b>	6985	0%	6985 Plus DD1 764 Less BD2 -541 Less GM2 -557 Plus Part BD3 150 Plus Part DE1 28 <u>6829</u>	-3%	7112	0%	6937	-2%
<b>Shavington</b>	3249	-7%	3249	+9%	3250	-8%	3800	+7%

			Plus GM2 <u>551</u> <u>3806</u>					
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- 6.6. Third, dependant on the foregoing changes being made in Crewe West, the Council believes there is a further opportunity to create two single member Wards in the area (rather than the 2 member single Wards as proposed by the BC). One Ward would comprise the area to the north of Queen's Park (Hughes Drive area), the former Hospital site to the north-east, and the housing estate on the south side. This would continue as the West Ward comprising PD's BF1, BB1 and BA1. The remaining PD's (BC1, BD1, BD2 and BB2) covering the area to the north of Gainsborough Infants School would form a new King's Grove Ward. These arrangements would be well understood by the local communities, as they are based on the former Crewe & Nantwich Borough Ward of Ruskin Park. Good electoral equality would be retained in the two single member Wards.

## **7. WILLASTON, ROPE AND WISTASTON**

- 7.1. Currently called Rope Ward, the draft recommendations split the area with three wards, a 2 member Wistaston Ward, a single member Willaston and Rope Ward and a single member Shavington Ward.
- 7.2. Subject to the addition of Gresty Brook Parish Ward (PD GM2) to the Shavington Ward as detailed in the Crewe Area changes, the Council is happy with the Shavington Ward proposal. The Council also accepts the changes proposed which extend the Wistaston Ward into the Wistaston Green area thus enabling a common ward and civil parish boundary. This means the whole of Wistaston Parish is now within the same Council Ward. The Council is however most unhappy about the thoroughly artificial Willaston and Rope Ward. These two parishes have no significant community links (indeed they are completely separate communities) and the only road link (Eastern Road) is an inadequate country lane which is mainly used as a rat-run to access the Shavington Bypass. The Council also notes that Willaston Parish is split into two parts by the proposals with the northern part of the Parish in the Wistaston Ward.
- 7.3. The Council believes a better solution would be to combine the proposed Wistaston and Willaston and Rope Wards into 3 member single ward (retaining the name Rope). This Ward would then neatly and totally encompass the full parishes of Wistaston, Willaston and Rope. It is a good example of how a single three member Ward would be better understood and supported by the communities concerned, and would better reflect convenient local governance with the Ward and Parish arrangements being clearly defined with each other. The new Ward would have a variation of +9% in 2008 and +8% in 2013. This compares favourably with +11% and +10% for Willaston and Rope and +8% and +7% for Wistaston Ward in the draft recommendations.

## **8. NANTWICH AND WYBUNBURY**

- 8.1. With regard to the recommendations on a future Wybunbury Ward, the Council continues to contend that Stapeley Rural (including Batherton) is not part of Nantwich and has much more in common with the conjoining Parishes of Wybunbury and Hatherton & Walgherton (all in the Wybunbury Ward). Whilst this might see the division of Stapeley Parish Council we strongly believe that these areas are rural – the housing is ribbon development on Wybunbury Lane, London Road and Broad Lane and not part of Nantwich. The ribbon housing on these roads is no more part of the Nantwich community than Hatherton & Walgherton, Hough, Shavington or Wybunbury. For example, most young children go to Wybunbury Sir John Delves and Stapeley Broad Lane Primary Schools and not Nantwich Primary Schools. The boundary between the Nantwich South and Wybunbury Wards would run along Peter Destaplegh Way.
- 8.2. If the BC accepts the proposal to include Stapeley Rural and Batherton in Wybunbury, there would be a need to review the boundary line between the Nantwich South and Nantwich North and West Wards, in order to ensure good electoral equality is maintained. The revised boundary should run along Beam Street and Millstone Lane (rather than South Crofts), both of which are main roads, providing a strong boundary line in the Town Centre. This would result in a different balance between electors in Nantwich North and West, and electors in Nantwich South representing good electoral equality.
- 8.3. The Council is pleased that the BC has accepted that the whole of the gated community of Wychwood Park should be in Wybunbury Ward. Over two thirds of the housing has been part of Chorlton (which forms with Hough a first class Parish Council) since it was built and it makes total sense that the remaining two small enclaves should be included in the Ward. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Hotel and the Golf Course gives Hough and Chorlton Parish the basis of some infrastructure which it has been sorely missing to date. Wychwood Park is included in the Nantwich Area Partnership and is policed from Nantwich as is the rest of the Wybunbury Ward.
- 8.4. The Council contends that Wychwood Village, which is normal housing development unlike the very different gated Wychwood Park community, should remain part of Weston Village and hence in the recommended Haslington Ward. Wychwood Village which is still under construction has since its inception had a close affinity with Weston and has been totally within Weston's parish boundaries. It is close to Oakhanger Village (part of Weston's bailiwick) and is most definitely a separate community to the self-contained gated community of Wychwood Park. Wychwood Village has its own amenities which are important to Weston – golf course and a major community centre. The latter is vitally significant to Weston as it has only a very small and dilapidated facility of its own. Wychwood Village is included in the Crewe Local Area Partnership and is policed from Crewe as is the rest of the Haslington Ward. Accordingly, the revised boundary between the Wybunbury and Haslington Wards in this area



would follow the A531 Newcastle Road rather than along Snape Lane and across country.

## **9. HASLINGTON AND SANDBACH**

- 9.1. Both Cheshire East Council and Haslington Parish Council are strongly in favour of the whole of Winterley and Wheelock Heath being included in the Haslington Ward and not in Sandbach. Paragraph 121 of the Draft Recommendations incorrectly attributes the contrary view to the Parish Council. Since the opening of the Haslington/Wheelock Bypasses the natural division of Haslington and the Wheelock area of Sandbach is without doubt the Bypass roundabout at the end of the village. The current arrangement is an unnatural division of the Community which has traditionally looked towards Haslington for its focus and identity as it is isolated from Wheelock/Sandbach. This will then avoid the current situation whereby the Ward Boundaries of certain minor roads go straight down the middle of the road.
- 9.2. The entire area north of the Holly Bush Inn up to the Haslington/Wheelock Bypasses share a common settlement boundary and has strong Community links with the rest of the Haslington Ward. Examples of this include common education provision and the use of local facilities including shops and public houses. Residents in this area also tend to contact Haslington Parish Council should they have any concerns for example on planning matters. Everyone, both residents and visitors alike, regard this area as logically being within the Haslington Ward and there is now the opportunity to correct this anomaly of the Community being unnaturally divided. Accordingly the BC's proposal is endorsed by this Council.
- 9.3. The Council also proposes an adjustment to the boundary line between Sandbach Town Ward and the Sandbach Elworth Ward. The Sandbach Town Ward's boundary line on Middlewich Road needs a slight adjustment to move the line closer to the Elworth village sign ['Elworth'] on Middlewich Road, which is located on the footway in front of house number 206, just past Grange Way, heading towards Middlewich. However, to relocate the boundary line to just beyond Grange Way would probably be difficult to achieve, as it would result in the division of houses on the estates/developments off Grange Way. Consequently, it is proposed that the boundary line is relocated to align with, and to incorporate, Rowan Close, off Middlewich Road. It should be noted that Elworth Village does not have a boundary, it is considered to be a locality and also only about 24 houses would be affected by this proposed adjustment.

## **10. MACCLESFIELD TOWN**

- 10.1. The Council proposes that the Lyme Green area (PD 4CC1) should not be part of the Sutton Ward as recommended by the BC, but that it should be in the proposed Macclesfield Moss Ward. The entry road signs for Macclesfield Town are located in Lyme Green, and the Lyme Green Business Park is adjacent within the Town. The PD has been located in the existing Macclesfield South Ward since 1999, and therefore the ties between Lyme Green and the Urban

approaches to Macclesfield are stronger than to the predominantly rural Sutton area.

- 10.2. The proposal would also improve electoral equality, particularly if Kettleshulme is included in Sutton (as recommended earlier in this submission), given that Sutton is currently +3% without Kettleshulme, and Macclesfield Moss is -6%.
- 10.3. The Council also submits that the proposed Ward name of Macclesfield Moss is not appropriate, as the “Moss” concerns only one part of the area, which also includes “Ryles” and “Ivy” within its boundaries. The Council proposes the Ward name “Macclesfield South” which is more representative of the character of the area, and will be more readily understood by local communities.
- 10.4. The Council recommends that the Broken Cross and Upton Priory Ward should be named simply “Broken Cross and Upton”. Upton is the more historical name for this area, (it may have been an historical parish) which extends well beyond the Upton Priory housing estate.
- 10.5. It is also proposed that Macclesfield Weston and Ivy Ward should be named Macclesfield West and Ivy, as Weston is a housing estate which is only one feature of a much wider area.