

Committee	FULL COUNCIL
Date	19 July 2021
Agenda Item	12

Response to the initial Boundary Commission proposals 2021

For the second time in recent history, the Boundary commission for England has proposed that Halstead should become part of a different constituency. It was previously part of the Saffron Walden constituency and in the last boundary changes became part of Braintree constituency. The BCE has now proposed that Halstead's identity should be changed again, and for it to become part of an amorphous cross-county constituency sprawling from Halstead northwards almost to Bury St Edmunds, and to include the Suffolk town of Haverhill and numerous small villages many of which are also in Suffolk.

The reasons behind this proposal appear to be based largely on the size of the population in the area (which must for each constituency be between 69,724 and 77,602), which is made up of bits left over from the surrounding constituencies, without any rationale for their being brought together. This proposal has no regard for existing boundaries and local ties.

From a local government point of view, Halstead looks to Braintree District Council for all district matters, and to Essex County Council for all matters at county level. Many local services in Halstead are provided by Braintree District Council. Some land in the town, the public gardens in particular, is owned by Braintree. All planning matters in Halstead are ultimately decided by Braintree, not Haverhill. Halstead has close connections with the surrounding Essex villages, all of which look towards Braintree and Chelmsford for higher authority. Braintree is 7.1 miles from Halstead, whereas Haverhill is 15.3 miles away, by a narrow winding road. In addition to local government links, Halstead is served by Essex police, and has close links with Braintree police through the specials officers who are based there and serve Halstead voluntarily. For medical services, Halstead residents needing hospital treatment are sent either to Chelmsford or to Colchester, and are part of the mid-Essex Health area. Some children go outside Halstead to secondary school, but that would be either to Colchester or to Hedingham, both in the county of Essex. Transport connections are also based on the same community ties and county boundaries; there are good local bus services between Halstead, Colchester and Chelmsford. There are no regular transport links to any towns in Suffolk, and a bus journey to Haverhill would take 4 hours on 4 different buses. In terms of employment, Halstead residents who work outside the town will go to Colchester, Braintree or possibly Sudbury. Shopping is generally done in Colchester or Braintree if not in Halstead itself.

If this is considered from the point of view of a Halstead resident, they would say that they do not see themselves as having any ties whatsoever with Suffolk, and most of them have probably never been to Haverhill. Residents of Halstead have many local organisations to which they belong, and it is a close-knit community. But if they go further afield for entertainment or exercise or to pursue a particular interest, they are almost certain to go south towards Braintree or possibly east to Colchester.

It is noted that the BCE have emphasised that they have tried not to cross county boundaries in their rethinking of the boundaries, but they have done it in a big way in this Haverhill and Halstead constituency. A counter proposal would be to bring Halstead, Gosfield and Greenstead Green, and the Colnes back into the Braintree District where they belong and into the Braintree constituency. In 2018, an application was made by settlements in the Colne Valley including White Colne, Wakes Colne, Chappel, Earls Colne, Colne Engaine, Halstead, Halstead Rural and Great Yeldham to be considered an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Such applications may take 20 years to come to fruition, but the grouping of these towns and villages together emphasises the links between them.

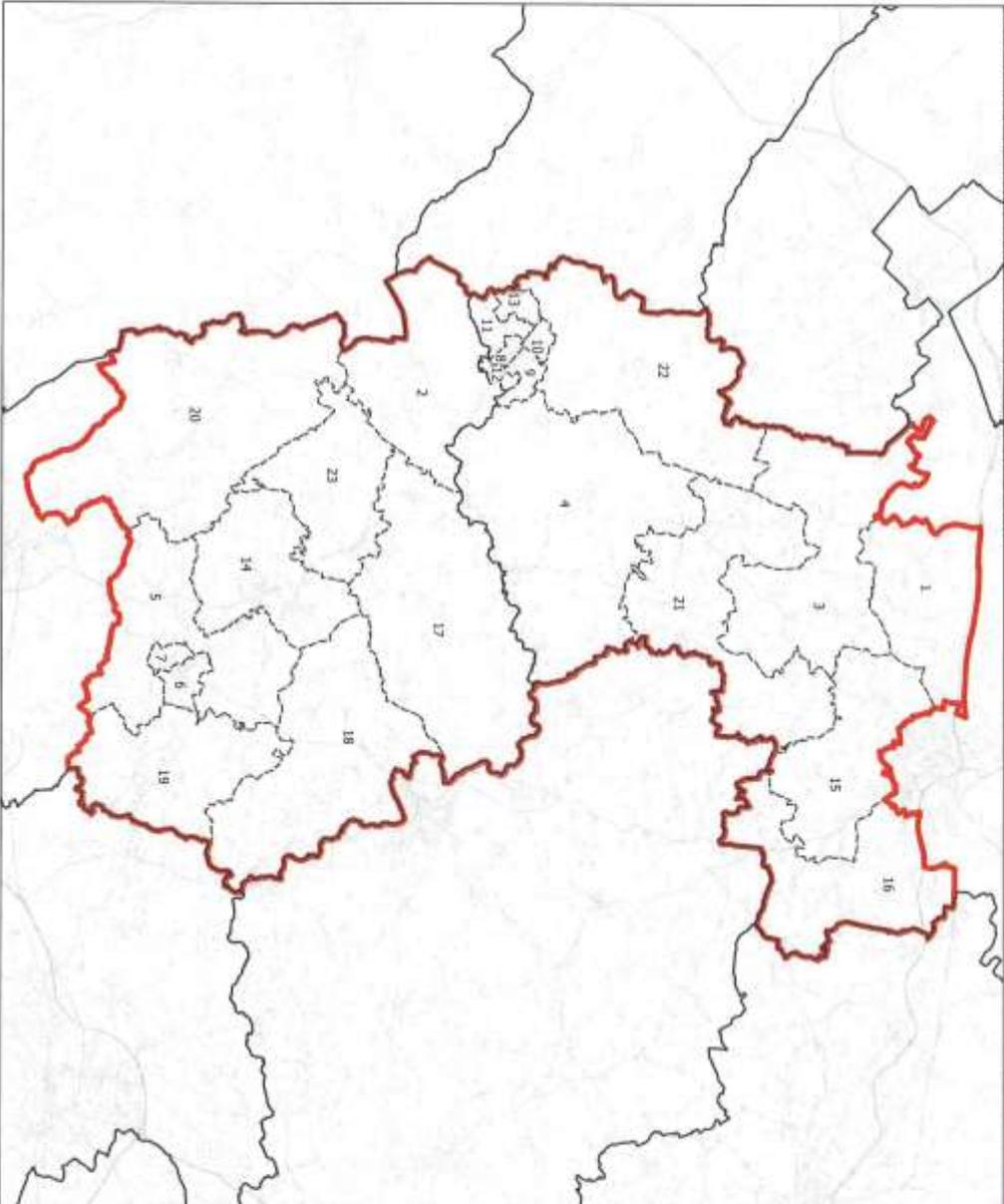
These villages close to Halstead identify with Halstead and rely on the infrastructure provided by the doctors' surgery and the schools and shops. The addition of these villages would add almost 10,000 population to the existing 12,161 of Halstead, making an addition of 22,161 to the Braintree constituency. It should be possible through minor adjustments to the surrounding constituencies in Essex to accommodate this extra number of residents in the Braintree District. This is seen as essential to retaining the identity of Halstead, of which its residents are very proud.

Recommendation : that HTC posts this response or an amended version of this response on the BCE website before 2 August 2021.



Sarah Greatorex Town Clerk

Boundary Commission for England - Initial Proposals for the Eastern Region
 Haverhill and Halstead County Constituency - Electorate 70,787



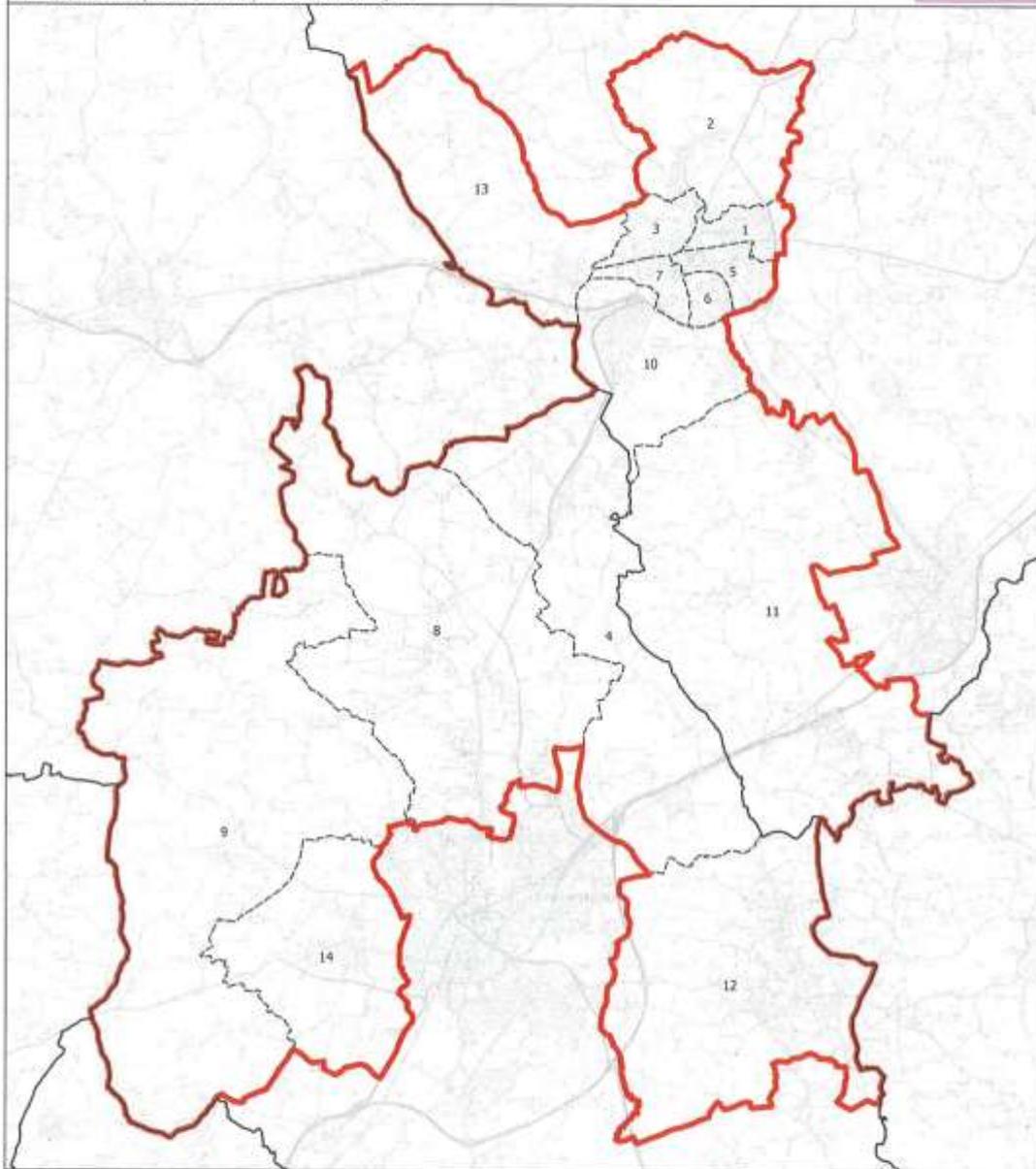
- Wards:
- 1 Barrrow
 - 2 Bumpstead
 - 3 Chesham & Chesham
 - 4 Clew, Haxton & Keddington
 - 5 Gosfield & Gosfield
 - 6 Gosfield
 - 7 Halstead St. Andrew's
 - 8 Halstead Trinity
 - 9 Haverhill Central
 - 10 Haverhill East
 - 11 Haverhill North
 - 12 Haverhill South East
 - 13 Haverhill West
 - 14 Hedingham
 - 15 Hornsea
 - 16 Rougham
 - 17 Spar Valley North
 - 18 Spar Valley South
 - 19 The Colnes
 - 20 Three Fields
 - 21 Wimpstead & Wickhampton
 - 22 Withersfield
 - 23 Yeltham

- Constituency
- Local Authorities
- Wards



1. These proposals for Haverhill and Halstead County Constituency are based on the current boundaries of the local authorities in the area. The boundaries of the local authorities are shown in black. The boundaries of the constituencies are shown in red. The boundaries of the wards are shown in thin black lines. The map is based on the Ordnance Survey map of Great Britain, edition 100000000, copyright Crown Copyright, 2000. The map is reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the permission of the Ordnance Survey. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the permission of the Ordnance Survey.

Haverhill and Halstead County Constituency



- Wards:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Bocking Blackwater | 7 Braintree West | 12 Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon |
| 2 Bocking North | 8 Broomfield and The Walthams | 13 Rayne |
| 3 Bocking South | 9 Chelmsford Rural West | 14 Writtle |
| 4 Boreham and The Leigs | 10 Great Notley & Black Notley | |
| 5 Braintree Central & Beckers Green | 11 Hatfield Peverel & Terling | |
| 6 Braintree South | | |

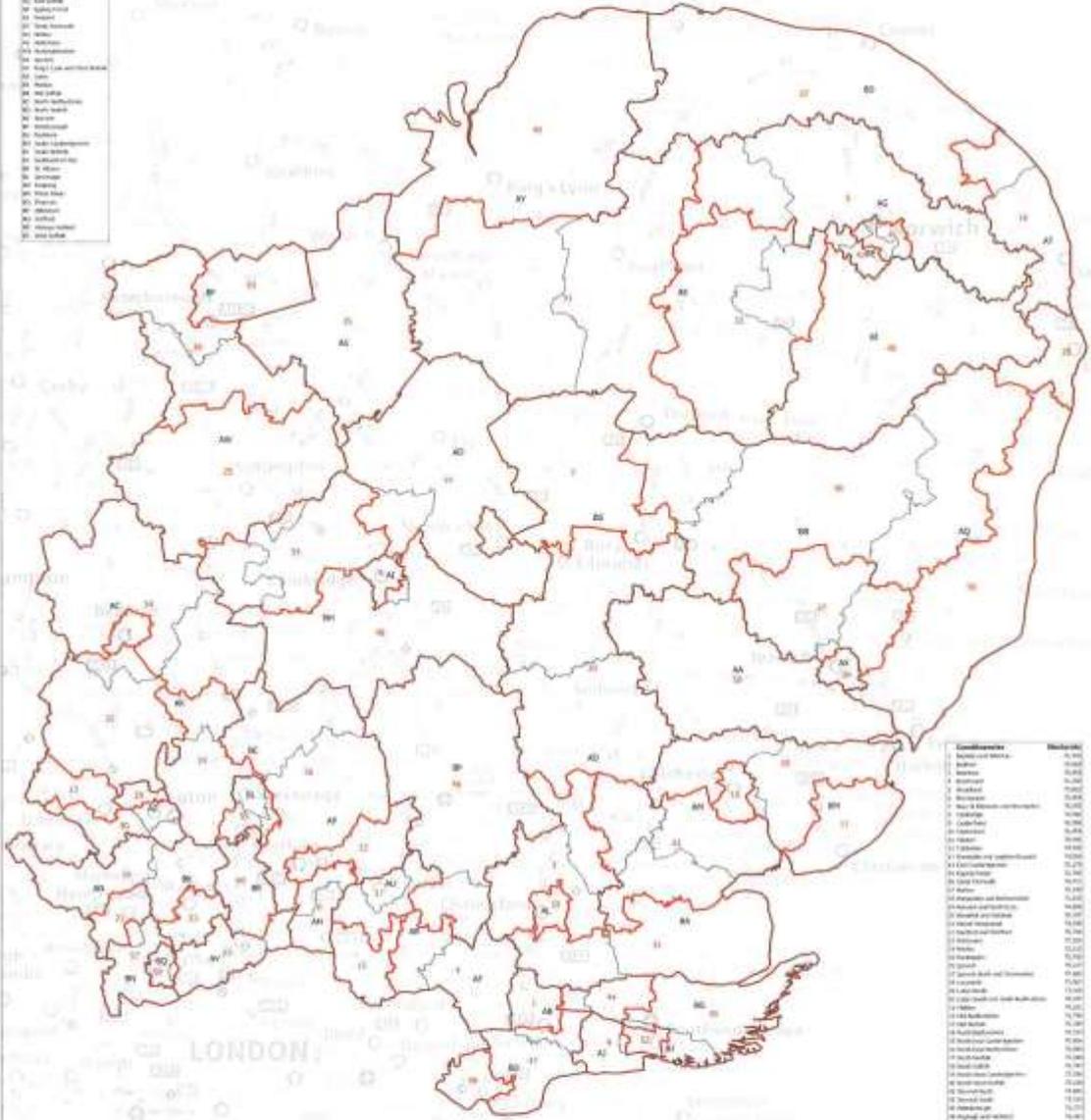
Constituency Local Authorities Wards	
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Braintree County Constituency

Boundary Commission for England Initial Proposals for the Eastern Region



- Local Authorities
- 10 Bedfordshire
- 11 Bedford
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Constituency	Population
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Constituencies Local Authorities