



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

15th January 2025

Interim Polling District Review

Report by:

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Purpose

To outline and recommend where changes to the current polling arrangements will be required further to the recent review of the Essex County Council electoral divisions by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

Recommendations

1. The committee approve the amendment of the Polling District arrangements as outlined in the report, to match the Essex County Council boundaries due to come into effect for 1st May 2025. If arrangements are made for these elections to be postponed, the implementation of these boundaries will be postponed accordingly. If no postponement is to be undertaken, these changes will take effect on the republication of the electoral register on 1st February 2025.
2. The committee approve future amendments required to ensure that the polling district arrangements match the relevant Essex County Council boundaries at the time. Any amendments must relate only to ensuring that the polling district boundaries are coterminous with the Essex County Council boundaries, not any other boundary changes. For example, if the new boundaries are put in place

and an Essex County Council by-election is called before the Essex County Council boundary review order takes effect.

1. Background

- 1.1. A polling district and polling place review seeks to establish the best voting arrangements for electors within the local authority area. The statutory requirements of polling districts are set out as follows:

Each parish must be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply, and each polling district must have its own polling place. However, this does not apply if the size (or other circumstances) of a polling district means that the location of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors.

- 1.2. A full review of the suitability of polling places and polling districts was completed in 2024, in which, various polling district and polling place changes were implemented. The arrangements agreed in this review remain appropriate in most circumstances, other than where the recent LGBCE review has redrawn some Essex County Council division boundaries and created one parish ward. This review seeks only to rectify these discrepancies to ensure that future elections can be administered effectively.
- 1.3. The proposal to amend these boundaries to ensure that they are conterminous was published on Chelmsford City Council's website on 5th December 2024 and a consultation period commenced, with a closing date of 6th January 2025. No responses were received during this consultation.
- 1.4. The new boundaries agreed by the LGBCE have been made by way of a legal order, due to come into effect for the next scheduled Essex County Council elections, 1st May 2025. However, it should be noted that there are ongoing discussions regarding devolution and local government reorganisation across Essex. We understand that if government wish to proceed with this, the scheduled elections and subsequently boundary order may be postponed. Without further clarification on this matter, we must ensure that we maintain the flexibility to put into effect the relevant polling district boundaries to align with the appropriate Essex County Council boundaries.

2. The proposed changes

2.1. Proposal A

This proposal relates to realigning the boundary between The Avenues polling district (Patching Hall ward) and Rectory Lane polling district (Marconi ward) so that the boundary does not divide Rivermead Industrial Estate and the entirety of the area is included within the Rectory Lane polling district, as already agreed in the LGBCE review.

This amendment is required following the LGBCE review reconfiguration of the boundary of the Chelmsford West county division to include the whole of Rivermead Industrial Estate.

2.2. Proposal B

This proposal also relates to Rivermead Industrial Estate, the area of the estate that currently falls within Springfield Chelmer (The Lawns ward) also needs to move to the Rectory Lane polling district (Marconi ward).

This is also because the LGBCE review has adjusted the boundaries of the Chelmsford West county division to include the whole of Rivermead Industrial Estate.

2.3. Proposal C

The LBGCE review was required to create a new parish ward for the Chelmsford Garden Community Council area, as the new boundary between the Chelmer and Broomfield and Writtle county divisions divided the North ward of the parish area.

The new parish ward boundary now follows Channels Drive to create a North ward and a Central ward. Therefore, we must divide the Belsteads polling district (Broomfield and the Walthams ward) to follow this.

The northern part of the polling district will be renamed North Belsteads (reference SBF) and the southern section will create the new polling district, with the proposed name South Belsteads (reference SBG). The polling place for both polling districts will remain Essex Barn, Channels Estate.

No changes for any other polling districts or places were identified for amendment in this review.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Further to the recent LGBCE Essex County Council boundary review, an interim polling district review was required to ensure that all of the polling arrangements are compliant and effective. This interim review has sought to resolve this.

3.2. Due to the ongoing uncertainty regarding the potential postponement of the upcoming elections and the implementation of the boundary changes order, flexibility in the implementation of the outcome of this review is required. It is requested that the committee considers the proposals outlined above and makes a decision on the recommendations independently.

List of appendices:

Appendix A – Acting Returning Officers final recommendations

Background papers:

[The Electoral Commission guidance on polling place and polling district reviews](#)

[Local Government Boundary Commission for England Essex County Council boundary review](#)

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

Compliance with s18A Representation of the People Act

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity:

Relevant age, disability and accessibility requirements have been considered in undertaking this review. No changes proposed or existing arrangements will adversely or disproportionately impact on any protected groups.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

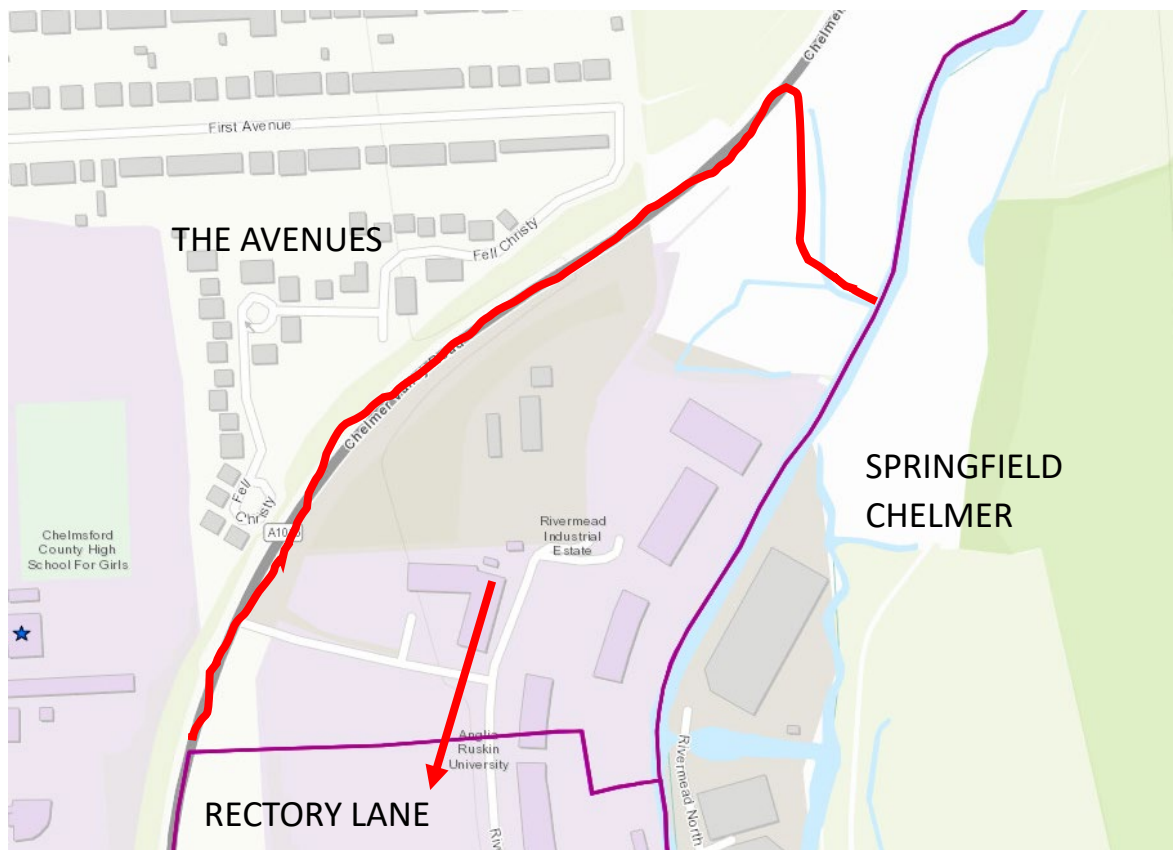
None

Acting Returning Officers Final Recommendations

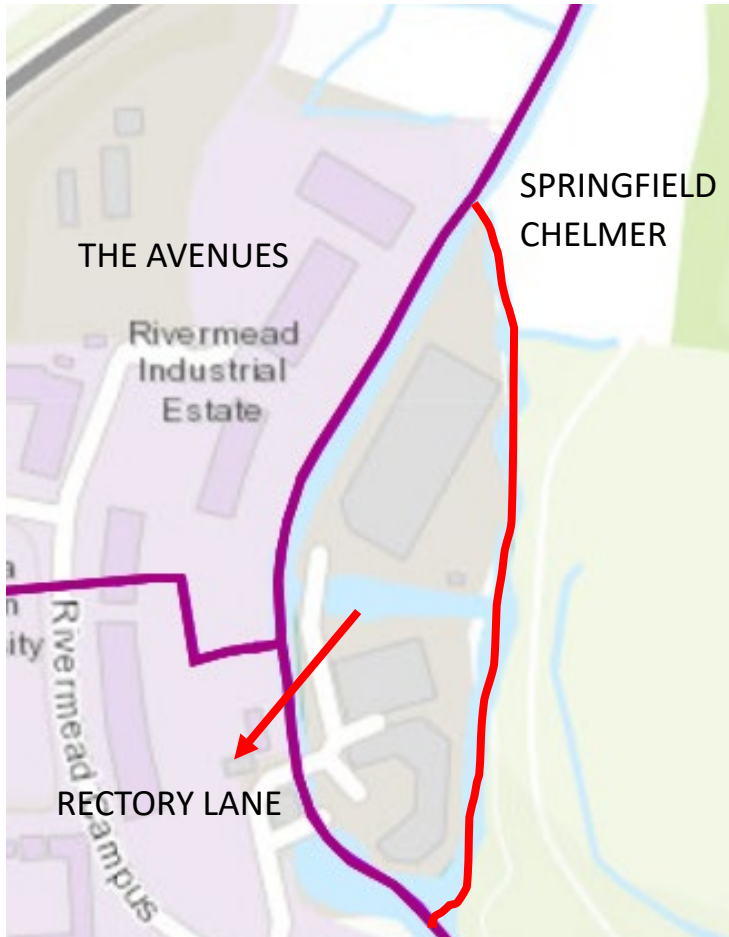
As a thorough review was conducted in 2023-24, the Acting Returning Officers recommended changes only relate to the boundary changes introduced by the Essex County Council boundary review. You can [view a map of the new boundaries](#).

Rivermead Industrial Estate

- Proposal A: realign the boundary of The Avenue so that the area of Rivermead Estate that currently falls within The Avenues also moves to Rectory Lane

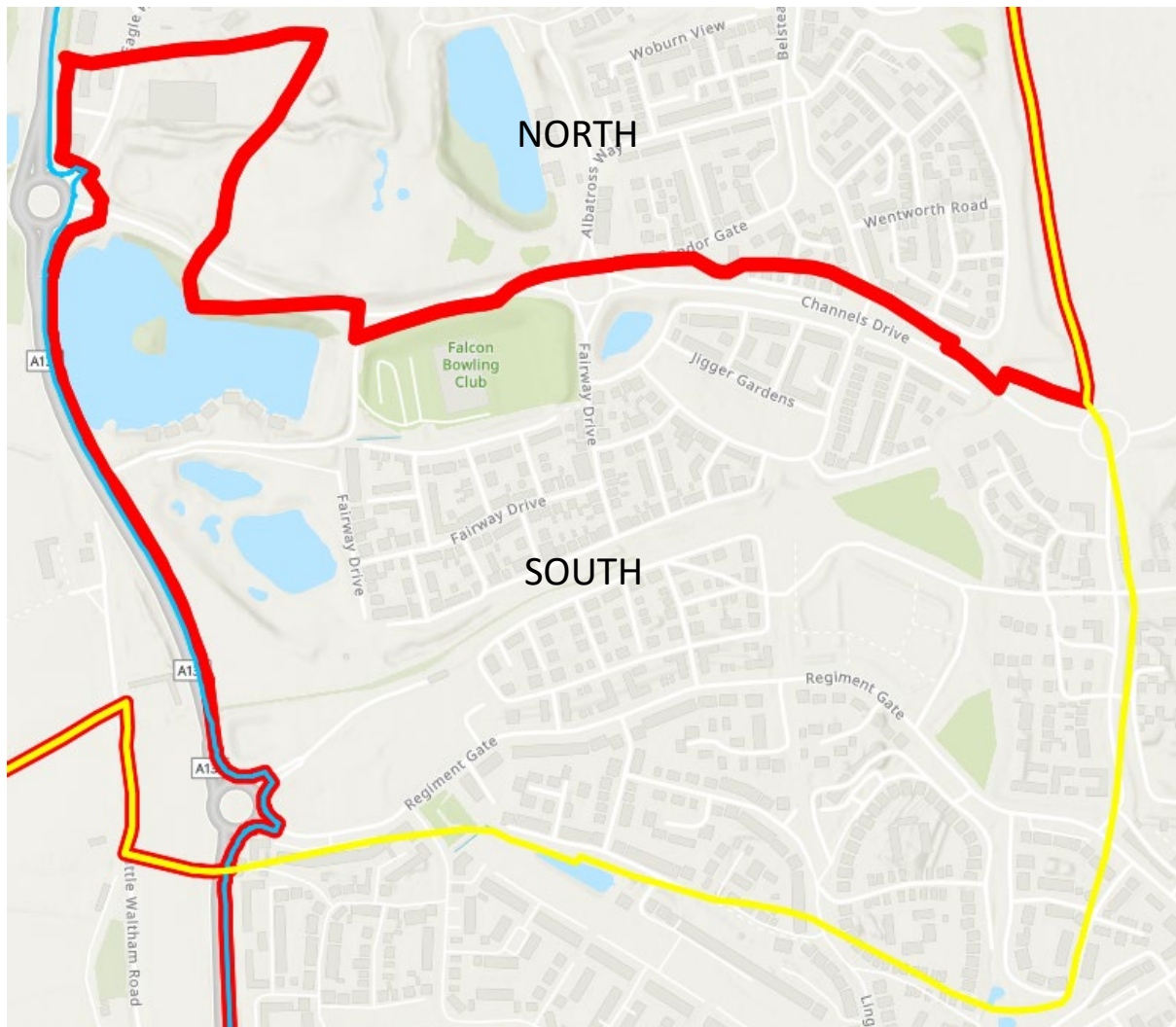


- Proposal B: realign the boundary of Springfield Chelmer Polling District, so that the area of Rivermead Estate that currently falls within Springfield Chelmer moves to Rectory Lane polling district



Belsteads polling district

- Proposal C: divide the Belsteads polling district along the new county division line (following Channels Drive) to create a North Belsteads and a South Belsteads polling district



All of the changes are needed to ensure that the polling district boundaries align with the new County Council boundaries, due to come into effect at the next scheduled County Council elections on 1 May 2025.