



# Epping Forest District Council

## **ELECTORAL AND COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 19th May, 2011**

**Place:** Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Room:** Council Chamber

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

Members:

Councillors J Philip (Chairman), D Stallan (Vice-Chairman), D Jacobs, C Whitbread,  
D Wixley,

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

**3. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 6)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Electoral & Community Governance Review Committee held on 1 March 2011.

**4. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 7 - 8)**

To note the Work Programme (attached).

**5. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH & THE  
LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (Pages 9 - 24)**

To consider the attached report on the outcome of consultation (2<sup>nd</sup> stage) regarding the Parish boundary in Matching Green.

**6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - MORETON BOBBINGWORTH & THE  
LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL (Pages 25 - 32)**

To consider a report on the next steps required on the review and the consultation result referred to in Item 5.

**7. PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY REVIEW**

To receive an oral update on the current position.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be considered.

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

<b>Committee:</b>	Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee	<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, 1 March 2011
<b>Place:</b>	Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	<b>Time:</b>	7.30 - 8.40 pm
<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors J Philip (Chairman), D Jacobs, Mrs M Sartin, C Whitbread and D Wixley		
<b>Other Councillors:</b>	Councillors A Boyce and R Morgan		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor D Stallan		
<b>Officers Present:</b>	I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive) and P Sewell (Democratic Services Assistant)		

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### 7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor R Morgan declared a personal interest by virtue of being Chairman of Matching Parish Council. The Councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and he would stay for the meeting.

### 8. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 9. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - CURRENT POSITION

At the meeting held on 18 November 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake a second stage of consultation with regards to a boundary change in Matching Green village. A site meeting was held on 9 December 2010 at Matching Green, attended by the Parish Clerks from MBL and Matching, Parish Councillors from each Council, the District Ward Councillors for Moreton & Fyfield and for Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village. The existing boundary was walked and an agreement was reached on how it might be altered to include the whole village in Matching Parish.

As this boundary was a District, County, and Parliamentary demarcation as well as a Parish one, concern was expressed regarding the need for them to be consistent. A letter was sent to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission though no reply had been received to date, probably due to the protracted period of debate in Parliament concerning the national review of constituencies.

Members noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) had also been contacted with regards to the District and County boundaries. A reply had been received outlining that, although the Commission was unlikely to have any difficulty making an order to amend the District and County electoral boundaries to match

changes made to the Parish boundary, an additional election would be required at District level to reinstate the normal electoral cycle. Only one of the Districts involved would be required to hold an out of turn election.

The LGBC had also stated that the Parliamentary Constituency boundary would not change as a result of the Electoral and Community Governance Review. The new Parliamentary Constituencies due to be identified by the current national review are anticipated to be in place for the General Election in 2015. If Parish boundaries were changed and a General Election were to be called before 2015, it would result in Matching Green residents once again voting in different polling stations. It was noted that should this happen, polling arrangements would need careful planning and publicity in order to avoid voter uncertainty.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the new boundary identified be used as a formal proposal;
- (2) That the second stage consultation documents be amended to reflect the Parliamentary position and County and District provisos; and
- (3) That any decisions regarding extra elections be deferred until the completion of this consultation.

**10. STAGE TWO CONSULTATION MATERIAL AND REVISED TIMETABLE**

The Committee were informed that the Council was required to consult all those affected by the proposed boundary change, though no details were specified. Members felt that although the Matching Green Village residents in the MBL ward would be affected most, residents of the wider Matching Parish and those of MBL would also be involved and should therefore be included in the consultation process. It was felt that the forthcoming consultation should be weighted to reflect these varying positions.

Members noted that the legislation stipulated that Community Governance Reviews must be completed over a period of one year from its inception. A revised timetable was presented, which avoided the election period in respect of the second stage of consultation. This would minimise voter uncertainty regarding the May 2011 elections.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the revised timetable be approved;
- (2) That all electors in the Matching Green section currently in MBL be consulted;
- (3) That consultation of residents in MBL and the rest of Matching be undertaken on a household basis;
- (4) That the consultation documents be simplified, with more detailed information provided online; and
- (5) That a public meeting be arranged on Friday 1 April 2011 for Matching and MBL residents to discuss the proposal and ask questions.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

Noted that the next meeting would be held in the week commencing 16 May 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Epping, on a date to be agreed.

**CHAIRMAN**

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# Agenda Item 4

## MBL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Date	Event
1/3/2011	Meeting of the Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- agree consultation material</li><li>- agree revised timetable</li><li>- report Parish Council comments</li></ul>
25/3/2011	Launch consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Matching/MBL residents</li><li>- 2 MPs</li><li>- 2 Parish Councils</li><li>- Essex County Council</li><li>- 3 Local District and Parish Councillors</li><li>- Church</li></ul>
15/4/2011	Close of consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- consolidate information</li><li>- comments of LGBC/BC</li></ul>
19/5/2011	Meeting of the Community Governance Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- review second stage consultation</li><li>- formulate final proposals and recommendations to the Council</li></ul>
16/6/2011	Despatch of Council Agenda
28/6/2011	Council Meeting
30/6/2011	DEADLINE

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## **Report to the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee**

**Date of Meeting:** 19 May 2011 **Item:**

**Subject:** Community Governance Review –  
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers (MBL)  
Parish Council – Stage 2 Consultation

**Officer Contact for Further Information:** I Willett (01992 564243)

**Committee Secretary:** -

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) To consider the consultation responses in respect of the Matching Green boundary;**
- (2) To reach a view on whether there is sufficient public support for the boundary change at Matching Green taking account of:**
  - (a) the overall response rate;**
  - (b) the individual responses to consultation questions by area;**
  - (c) the views of Essex County Council and the 2 Parish Councils.**
- (3) To consider the level of public support for changes in the numbers of Councillors in MBL and Matching Parishes.**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report deals with the second round of consultation with residents of The Lavers Wards in MBL Parish and Matching Parish concerning the Parish boundary at Matching Green Village.
- 1.2 Consultation was conducted by letter with the following:
  - (a) 219 households in the Parish Wards of High, Little and Magdalen Laver (MBL);
  - (b) 273 households in the Parish of Matching; and
  - (c) 180 electors in Matching Green Village (MBL part).
- 1.3 The consultation consisted of an explanatory letter, a summary information sheet and return pro forma with specific questions about:
  - (a) the Matching Green boundary change;
  - (b) the possibility of reducing the number of Councillors in the Lavers by one to reflect the possible inclusion of all of Matching Green in Matching Parish; and

(c) the possibility of increasing by one, the number of Councillors in Matching Parish for the reason set out in (b) above.

- 1.4 The information sheet was supplemented by more detailed information on the Council's Website. In addition, households in The Lavers were advised that the proposal to combine the three Lavers Wards into one, which had been the subject of consultation earlier, was now proceeding as a firm proposal.
- 1.5 Consultation letters were sent to Essex County Council, the two local District Councillors, the two Parish Councils and the County Councillors for North Weald and Nazeing and Ongar and Rural Electoral Divisions.
- 1.6 A public meeting was held on 1 April 2011, to which the public from the area consulted were invited. The consultation period ran from 25 March to 15 April 2011.

## 2. Consultation Results

... 2.1 The responses to the consultation are set out below. Appendix 1 is a note of the discussion which took place at the public meeting on 1 April 2011. Appendix 2 shows the response of Essex County Council to the proposed boundary change at Matching Green (this followed consultation with the two County Councillors concerned). Appendix 3 shows an individual response by County Councillor G McEwen which was received by the District Council directly. Appendices 4 and 5 show the responses from MBL and Matching Parish Councils respectively.

2.2 In framing the second round of consultation, the Committee decided that those residents in the MBL part of Matching Green Village should be given priority in interpreting the results because they would be directly affected. For this reason, all electors (rather than households) were consulted. Matching Parish and the other parts of the Lavers Wards were consulted on a household basis because, although they would be affected, it was felt that this would be to a lesser extent than Matching Green residents.

2.3 The overall responses received from the three areas consulted are as follows:

Matching Green Electors (MBL): 100 electors out of a total of 180 consulted (50.5%).

The Lavers Wards (MBL) (excluding Matching Green): 37 households of 219 consulted (16.4%); and

Matching Parish: 60 households out of 273 consulted (27.4%)

2.4 Turning to replies from Matching Green (MBL part), the responses from electors to the consultation questions were as follows:

	Replies	% Respondents
1. Do you support the principle of changing the Parish Boundary in Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish and rather than part being in Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish?	Yes: 81 No: 19	81% 19%
2. Do you support the new Parish boundary shown on the map in Appendix 2 to the consultation report?	Yes 80 No 19	80% 19%
3. Do you support having one fewer Parish Councillor representing the new Lavers ward if the boundary change takes place?	Yes 75 No 20	75% 20%

2.5 In respect of replies from Matching households, the results were:

Questions	Responses	% of Replies
1. Do you support the boundary change at Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish?	Yes 56 No 4	93.3% 6.6%
2. If the boundary changes, do you think that Matching Parish Council should have more than 7 Councillors to deal with the additional electors in the Parish?	Yes 20 No 40	33.3% 66.6%

2.6 For replies from households in the three Lavers parishes (excluding Matching Green Village) the replies were as follows:

Questions	Responses	% of Replies
1. Do you support the principle of changing the Parish Boundary in Matching Green so that the whole village is within Matching Parish and rather than part being in Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish?	Yes 31 No 6	83.8% 16.2%
2. Do you support the new Parish boundary shown on the map in Appendix 2 to the consultation report?	Yes 31 No 6	83.8% 16.2%
3. Do you support having one fewer Parish Councillors representing the new Lavers ward if the boundary change takes place?	Yes 26 No 11	70.3% 29.7%

### 3. Conclusions

3.1 The recommendations at the commencement of this report invite the Committee to reach conclusions on the results of the consultation. The following points are worth considering:

- (a) the response rates for householders are 16.4% (for MBL excluding Matching Green) and 21.2% (Matching);
- (b) the response rate for Matching Green Village electors (MBL part) is 50.5%;
- (c) the principle of changing the boundary commands a large percentage support among responders in all three areas and is highest in Matching Parish but in all three areas percentages are lower if all consultees are included;
- (d) the new boundary at Matching Green generally commands support within the MBL area including Matching Green Village;
- (e) within Matching Green Village (MB part) the support from those responding stands at 50.5% whilst as a percentage of those consulted, the percentage falls to 45%;
- (f) there is support for reducing the number of Councillors by one in the three Lavers wards of MBL, but most significantly in the areas which would not transfer under the current proposal;
- (g) there is no majority support for an additional Councillor for Matching Parish Council.

**4. Costs**

4.1 The second stage consultation has been costed as follows:

Printing £121  
Postage (including pre-paid reply envelopes) £216  
Accommodation £50

4.2 To these costs should add those for Stage 1 of the consultation as previously reported:

Printing:	£299
Postage:	£107 (including pre-paid return envelopes)
Total	<u>£306</u>

**5. Background Papers**

3 consultation letters  
Consultation returns from local residents.

z/css/bureau/commm/willett/M2011/19 May 11 – Report Electoral and Community

**Electoral & Community Governance Review Committee  
Public Meeting held on 1 April 2011 at Matching Village Hall**

**ECGRC Members Present:** Councillors J Philip (Chairman), D Stallan (Vice-Chairman),  
D Jacobs and D Wixley

**Other Councillors:** Councillor A Boyce

**Apologies:** Councillor C Whitbread  
County Councillors A Jackson and G McEwen

**Representing Matching Parish Council:** Councillor R Morgan (Chairman) and E  
Fenwick (Parish Clerk)

**Representing MBL Parish Council:** Councillor A Busch (Vice Chairman) and C  
Thompson (Parish Clerk)

**Public:** 25 in attendance

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**(1) WELCOME**

Chairman of the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee, Councillor John Philip welcomed those present and introduced the Members present, before outlining the running order for the evening.

**(2) PRESENTATION BY EFDC**

Returning Officer Ian Willett gave a short presentation outlining the current position of the Community Governance Review. He explained the origin for this boundary review, and summarised the complicated nature of this boundary being also a District, County and Parliamentary demarcation.

Referencing the map (distributed separately), Mr Willett confirmed the existing boundary and the proposed change, before detailing the progress made regarding this boundary review so far. Mr Willett then explained the reasons for this public consultation and the options available to the public through the previously dispatched consultation documents.

**(3) COMMENTS BY PARISH COUNCILS**

Councillor R Morgan, on behalf of Matching Parish Council, stated that they were in favour of the proposed change to the boundary, but were not actively encouraging voters either way.

Councillor A Busch, on behalf of Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council, stated that they agreed with the sentiments held by Matching, and that they would support the wishes of the residents of High Laver. They were against any reduction in numbers of Councillors, and added that they felt the timing of the Review was unfortunate with regards to the forthcoming Parliamentary Constituency Review.

**(4) QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

- What is the current precept for Matching Parish Council?
  - £10, 500 (The cost of a contested election would therefore be significant).
- Why are there different letters?
  - There were 3 different forms: One per household for Matching residents, one per household for MBL residents, and one per elector for MBL Matching Green residents.
  - This was to consult with everyone affected, maintaining priority for those directly affected in a transparent and simple manner.
- Why have Matching residents only just become aware of this Review?
  - This Review was initiated in June by MBL in order to combine the 3 Laver wards. As part of the consultation for this, the boundary with Matching was raised and is therefore being investigated. It is quite likely that Matching residents would have been unaware of this as the previous consultation was limited to MBL residents.
- How would a 50/50 split of opinion be resolved?
  - If there is no clear consensus of views with regard to the second stage of consultation, the issue would be decided by the Electoral & Community Governance Review Committee.
- What do I do if I believe I have been sent the wrong letter?
  - Please contact your Parish Council. If a clerical error has occurred they will put you in contact with Ian Willett who can advise you further.
- What is the total cost implication for this Review?
  - To date, the Review has cost £1,100 (from existing District Council money). The biggest foreseeable cost would be the additional election. If this were just a Parish election, it would cost Matching Parish Council £2,000 - £2,500. If a District election ran concurrently this figure would be split between the Parish and the District Councils.
  - The estimated costs were therefore in the region of £4,000.
- Is this anomalous nature of the boundary unique within Epping Forest District?
  - There are many anomalous boundaries at the District Level. These are only reviewed and changed if they cause a problem regarding community governance.
  - The Matching boundary has been the subject of controversy in the past, which adds significance to the reoccurrence of this issue.

- Will the information from this consultation be disseminated to residents?
  - The results of this consultation will be presented to the Electoral & Community Governance Committee for discussion. The agendas and minutes of these meetings will be published online and are open to public access.
- Who decides if there should be extra/fewer Parish Councillors?
  - This is primarily guided by the views of the Parish Councils, and whether they felt able to cope.
  - There is also a question about this in the circulated consultation document to gauge public opinion.
- How many Parish Councillors are there currently?
  - Matching = 7
  - High Laver = 4
  - Little Laver = 2
  - (Magdalen Laver = 2; 'The Lavers' = 8)
- Is there a chance of Matching/MBL becoming part of Harlow District Council?
  - There is currently no chance; Harlow Council is due to sign an agreement undertaking not to initiate a boundary review. The forthcoming Parliamentary Constituency Review, however, might regroup Parishes differently.
- Can you give us more information regarding the Parliamentary Constituency Review?
  - The review will begin in the South-West, reordering constituencies into groups of approximately 76, 641 voters, roughly 10% higher than current sizes. It is understood that the intention is not to split wards, though this can not be guaranteed.
  - Councillor D Jacobs understood that England was to be divided into regions, with Essex in the Eastern region also including Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. He understood that the two latter counties would combine, as would Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Essex and Suffolk would remain as present, though Essex would go down from 18 to 17 constituencies.

### **(5) CLOSE OF MEETING**

It was noted that more detailed consultation documents were available on the District Council's website, and that the outcome of this consultation would be freely available to the public online through the reports and minutes of the Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee meeting scheduled for 19 May 2011.

Councillor Philip closed the meeting, thanking everyone who attended.

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## Philippa Sewell

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**From:** Ian Willett  
**Sent:** 21 April 2011 14:11  
**To:** Philippa Sewell  
**Subject:** FW: Community Governance review - Moreton & Lavers.

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**From:** Gerard McEwen Member CC [mailto:Gerard.McEwen@essex.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 04- Apr- 11 21:53  
**To:** Ian Willett  
**Subject:** RE: Community Governance review - Moreton & Lavers.

Thanks Ian but I don't think I need to attend the meeting.

Gerard

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ian Willett [mailto:IWillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 04 April 2011 10:11  
**To:** Gerard McEwen Member CC  
**Subject:** RE: Community Governance review - Moreton & Lavers.

Hello there,

I will arrange for your views to be reported to the next meeting of our Committee which meets on 19 May 2011 (7.30 pm). Let me know if you would like to speak on your views at that meeting so that I can consult the chairman on this.

Thanks,

IW

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**From:** Gerard McEwen Member CC [mailto:Gerard.McEwen@essex.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 03- Apr- 11 19:58  
**To:** Ian Willett  
**Subject:** FW: Community Governance review - Moreton & Lavers.

Dear Ian,

Can I offer these thoughts in reply to your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> March.

Kind regards,

Gerard

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Gerard McEwen Member CC  
**Sent:** 31 March 2011 20:07  
**To:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS  
**Cc:** Anthony Jackson Member CC  
**Subject:** Community Governance review - Moreton & Lavers.

Dear Colin,

Thank you for your letter of 25<sup>th</sup> March asking for views. I have also had this from EFDC but not replied yet!

I can quite understand the local feeling that it seems nonsense to be split as they are. However it does seem premature to be making a change now, as we are led to believe that a review of all Parliamentary boundaries is imminent. It would be an unnecessary expense if it should involve special elections for District or Parish councillors.

In the case of County it will be simply a transfer of that section from Ongar to North Weald Division. Should the present Parliamentary boundaries continue I doubt whether they will be happy to transfer to Harlow!

In summary, it seems the right thing to do but perhaps not the right time to do it! I wonder what the consultation has cost already?

Mac

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## Philippa Sewell

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**From:** Ian Willett  
**Sent:** 21 April 2011 14:09  
**To:** Philippa Sewell  
**Subject:** FW: Moreton Boundary Review

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**From:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS [mailto:Colin.Ismay@essex.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 14- Apr- 11 12:17  
**To:** Ian Willett  
**Subject:** FW: Moreton Boundary Review

Hi Ian

I have now consulted with the local County Members. The County Council does not have any objection in principle to what is being proposed and it is perfectly understandable that local feeling is concerned about the current split. However it would question whether it is necessary now to go to the expense of putting right what is only an anomaly and whether it could wait until there is a better opportunity to deal with it.

Best wishes

Colin

**Colin Ismay**  
Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer  
Finance

Essex County Council | **telephone:** 01245 430396 | **extension:** 20396 | **email:** [colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk](mailto:colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk)

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ian Willett [mailto:IWillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 30 March 2011 09:30  
**To:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS  
**Subject:** RE: Moreton Boundary Review

Colin,

Both County Councillors have the consultation material.

IW

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**From:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS [mailto:Colin.Ismay@essex.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 29- Mar- 11 18:55  
**To:** Ian Willett  
**Cc:** Philippa Sewell  
**Subject:** RE: Moreton Boundary Review

Many thanks for this Ian.

In principle, if the Parish boundary is to change then it makes perfectly good sense to line up all the other boundaries with it – at the end of the day we are not talking about a massive change. It is not going to make any difference to the provision of any County service. I need however to find out what the two members whose divisions are affected by this think and then take it from there. I will get you a response so that you have something to report back to the Boundary Commission.

I appreciate very much your giving me some leeway but I am the worse person you should relax deadlines for! I will endeavour to meet the original deadline.

Best wishes

Colin

**Colin Ismay**

Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer  
Finance

Essex County Council | **telephone:** 01245 430396 | **extension:** 20396 | **email:** [colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk](mailto:colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk)

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ian Willett [mailto:[IWillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:IWillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)]

**Sent:** 29 March 2011 14:23

**To:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS

**Cc:** Philippa Sewell

**Subject:** RE: Moreton Boundary Review

Hello there,

You will gather that this issue of the Matching Green boundary is a relatively recent matter which has arisen as part of a different review. It started with just review of the parish wards in MBL but that consultation raised a degree of concern from residents about Matching Green being split in two, which we could not ignore.

I have checked all this out with the Local Government Boundary Commission and they were concerned that the County Council should comment on changing the County electoral division boundary, if the Parish boundary changes.

I think that the Commission saw no real objection to District and County wards changing, if they are asked to consider it. Our members are probably of the view that all three should change so as to avoid confusing voters in that area but if the County Council were to have a strong objection, this would obviously give our Committee further food for thought.

I can send you a copy of the Commission's letter if that would help.

Clearly it is important that I can report back on the County Council's views before a final decision is made. By the way, the deadline is for the public to respond so that we can analyze all the data. I think that you can have longer than that if it helps you to reach a reasoned view. We don't propose to consider this again until after the elections so end of April would be OK.

Regards,

IW

**From:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS [mailto:Colin.Ismay@essex.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 29- Mar- 11 11:37  
**To:** Ian Willett  
**Cc:** Philippa Sewell  
**Subject:** RE: Moreton Boundary Review

Many thanks for this Ian it is most helpful.

Our e mails have crossed each other. Your letter arrived this morning. I will get back to you with any comments from the County Council in time for your deadline.

Best wishes

Colin

**Colin Ismay**  
Head of Scrutiny and Lead Governance Officer  
Finance

Essex County Council | **telephone:** 01245 430396 | **extension:** 20396 | **email:**  
[colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk](mailto:colin.ismay@essex.gov.uk)

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ian Willett [mailto:IWillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 29 March 2011 11:30  
**To:** Colin Ismay Governance Manager CS  
**Cc:** Philippa Sewell  
**Subject:** Moreton Boundary Review

Hello there,

Councillor Jackson has been sent the consultation pack and has been invited to comment on the consultation.

I will ensure that I contact him after the public meeting to brief him on what transpired.

A similar letter has been sent to the Chief Executive of the County Council. As there is a possible change to the County Electoral Division Boundary involved, it would be helpful to receive views on that alteration from your authority.

Ian Willett

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# *Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers Parish Council*

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2, Landview Cottages, Moreton, Chipping Ongar, Essex, CM5 OLE 01277 890394

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17 May, 2011

Our Ref. CNT 1383

Mr. Ian Willett  
Returning officer  
Epping Forest District Council  
Civic Offices  
High Street Epping, Essex  
CM16 4BZ

Dear Ian,

## **Community Governance**

The Parish Council debated the results of the last consultation at their meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May. They concluded that the results, particularly from the residents affected, show a desire for the boundary to change but they were not convinced that the level of support for the reduction in councillors representing the new Lavers Ward was adequate to make a change.

We have all found this task to be extremely complex and we know from discussions with residents they have been bemused by it. In trying to ascertain the level of support for a reduction in the number of councillors for the Lavers we have the following concerns.

The question on numbers of councillors required for the revised Lavers Ward is irrelevant to those who are moving out of the Lavers; we have therefore discounted their results.

As the consultation for the remaining affected Lavers group, was at householder not elector level, this leaves the decision, based on a turn out of 37 households only, from a potential of 198 households or possibly 31 electors supporting a reduction, from a total of 448 electors (612-164 moving to Matching) potentially only 5.8% of the electorate in favour of a reduction.

So the Council's conclusion was the statistics are not strongly in favour of change but more importantly, the Parish Council does not believe the residents were properly informed on the value or otherwise of their representation on the Parish Council.

The Parish Council were disappointed that two residents decided to circulate a scurrilous misrepresentation of the Council's performance to local residents, and this will have influenced some responses. Many residents believe Parish Councillors are paid or claim expenses and therefore a reduction will save money. This is far from the truth – the Councillors volunteer their time to serve their communities and none receives any payment or expenses. There is no direct cost to the community per Councillor more importantly no cost saving by losing one.

The other key factor is the physical size of the five parishes and distribution of the population within it. The rural district managed is over 13square miles. Moreton has a reasonably concentrated community but the other four parishes have population spread over a wide area, with few houses grouped together. To maintain the rationale of good local governance at parish level it is important that councillors know their area and are accessible to their electorate.

With more councillors applying their local knowledge and skills, the Parish Council is stronger at no extra cost.

### **Summary of Conclusions**

- 1 The statistical evidence for a reduction of councillors is imperfect.
- 2 The two resident's scurrilous letter had unreasonable influence on the results.
- 3 The residents were not properly apprised of the advantages/disadvantages of the number of councillors representing them.
- 4 Residents believe their Councillors are paid or receive expenses, when in fact they receive no payments at all.
- 5 With no attributable administration cost per Councillor, a reduction does not save money.
- 6 With a remote rural administration area in excess of 13 square miles, local access to representatives is very difficult.
- 7 8 councillor representation is stronger than 7

**The Parish Council resolved to keep the current eight members representing the revised Lavers Ward and seek the support of the Governance Committee accordingly.**

Yours sincerely,

Colin Thompson  
Clerk to the Parish Council.



## Report to the Electoral and Community Governance Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 19 May 2011

**Item:**

**Subject:** Community Governance Review –  
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers (MBL)  
Parish Council – Response by the Council

**Officer Contact for Further Information:** I Willett (01992 564243)

**Committee Secretary:** -

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### Recommendations:

- (1) To consider recommending to the Council that proposals arising from the community governance review for MBL Parish should be adopted, namely:
- (a) the re-warding of the area comprising the existing parish wards of High Laver, Little Laver and Magdalen Laver to form a single ward entitled The Lavers”; and
  - (b) the transfer of those areas of High Laver and Little Laver Wards which are part of Matching Green Village to the Parish of Matching;
  - (c) the re-alignment of the MBL/Matching Boundary in Matching Green Village as a consequence of (b) above; and
  - (d) any proposals arising from (a) – (c) above to change the number of Parish Councillors in Matching and MBL Parishes.

on the basis that these proposals will reflect the identities and interests of the communities in the area and are effective and convenient;

- (2) That, subject to (1) above, recommendations be made to the Council on the following:
- (a) in respect of MBL Parish Council:
    - whether the Parish Council should continue to be known as “Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish” and should continue to have a Parish Council;
    - whether the Council should continue to have electoral arrangements based on wards subject to the change proposed in recommendation (1) taking account the area of the Parish;
    - whether there are alternative arrangements proposed for improving community governance which could be used instead of the proposals arising from the review;

- whether the proposals sever any links within MBL Parish;
- (b) in respect of Matching Parish:
- whether that Parish should continue to be known as “Matching Parish” and should continue to have a Parish Council;
  - whether the Parish Council’s electoral arrangements should continue to be organised on the basis of a single election;
  - whether there are alternative arrangements proposed for improving community governance other than through the proposals arising from the review;
  - whether the proposals to change the parish boundary at Matching Green Village reflects local community interests and does not sever any other local links.
- (3) That, subject to (1) and (2), the Council be recommended to make and publish an order under Section 92 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to give effect to the proposals under the review, subject to any changes made at this meeting;
- (4) That, subject to (1) and (2), a statutory statement under Section 96 of the Act indicating the Committee’s response to the review be prepared for submission to the Council and subsequent publication and notification to all respondents to the public consultation;
- (5) That ,subject to (1) and (2), the Council be recommended to make an application to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) for the following consequential changes arising from the review:
- (a) the re-alignment of the boundary between the North Weald and Nazeing and Ongar and Rural County Electoral Divisions to accord with the proposed change to the Parish boundary at Matching Green Village;
  - (b) the same re-alignment for the District Wards of Moreton and Fyfield and Matching, Hastingwood and Sheering Village;
  - (c) an ‘out of turn’ election in May 2012 for the District Ward of Matching, Hastingwood and Sheering Village.

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**Report:**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to determine its response to the community governance review in the light of the consultation responses dealt with under the previous item. The matters involved are as follows:

- (a) to assess the proposed changes to warding arrangements in MBL Parish and the change in the boundary between MBL and Matching Parishes and to be satisfied that these changes are effective and convenient and reflect community interests;
- (b) to review the proposed route for re-aligning the parish boundary;
- (c) to hear from MBL and Matching Parish Council about their views on the number of Councillors after any boundary change;
- (d) to consider the question of changing the County Electoral Division and District Ward boundaries to accord with the new Parish boundary at Matching Green; and
- (e) to consider recommending an order to be made under the 2007 Act and its contents and a supporting statement.

1.2 The final decision on the review is a matter for the Council. To comply with the statutory requirement for completion of this review within 1 year, the Committee must make recommendations to the Council meeting on 28 June 2011.

## **2. Effective and Convenient Community Governance**

2.1 The Council's duty under the 2007 Act is to ensure that the identities and interests of the community in the area are reflected in its proposals. Those proposals must also be effective and convenient.

2.2 The Council must also take account of the view of local communities and others with an interest in the review.

### **2.3 Relevant Considerations: MBL Parish**

- (a) the review has noted that Matching Green village is divided between two Parishes;
- (b) the review has identified a new boundary which encloses the whole village in Matching Parish;
- (c) the new boundary has been acknowledged by most consultees as more logical;
- (d) electors who have responded from Matching Green Village (MBL part) seem to favour inclusion of the village wholly in Matching Parish;
- (e) reducing the number of parish wards from 5 to 3 has the benefit of achieving a better electoral balance across the whole parish between Councillors and electors;
- (f) the area which would transfer to Matching unifies a village which would be differentiated from the neighbouring rural areas in the new Lavers Ward which will remain in MBL parish; and
- (g) the MBL electors who do not transfer would continue to be directed to the present polling station in Matching Green.

## 2.4 Relevant Considerations: Matching Parish

- (a) the village of Matching Green is currently only partly included in this parish, with which it shares the “Matching” name;
- (b) the present parish boundary with MBL at Matching Green is generally regarded as an anomaly and has been raised in previous electoral reviews;
- (c) voting arrangements for all Matching Green electors will continue as at present and will continue to be convenient to local electors; and
- (d) including all of Matching Green Village in Matching Parish seems to be a clear message from the public consultation.

## 3. Electoral Arrangements

3.1 The Council is required to review the effect of the review on electoral arrangements for the parishes involved below:

**(a) Should both continue to have Parish Councils?**

3.2 No suggestion has come forward stating that the parish pattern should change. The purpose of the one boundary change between the two parishes is to remove an anomaly in defining community links in the area.

**(b) Are there any other arrangements (apart from Parish Councils) which have already been made or could be made for the purposes of community engagement or representation?**

3.3 None have been reported as being in operation and no proposals have come forward. The kind of proposals envisaged by Section 93(5) of the Act would be residents’ associations, community or neighbourhood forums or local committees if these provide better governance arrangements.

**(d) Should the area under Review continue to have Parish Councils? Are the names of the existing Parish Councils still appropriate if the proposals from the review are implemented?**

3.4 The review has been conducted on the basis of clarifying the local pattern of Parish Councils. No proposals to disband, combine or create new parishes have come forward.

3.5 The names of the two parishes continue to reflect the areas for which they are responsible. Although a part of the High Laver and Little Laver Parish Wards in MBL would transfer, the Lavers is still a name associated with MBL parish, through Magdalen Laver and those areas of High Laver and Little Laver which will not transfer.

**(e) As a result of the review are the electoral arrangements appropriate?**

3.6 Section 90(2) requires the Council to consider the electoral arrangements which will apply to the two parishes. These include the ordinary year of elections, Council size and parish warding.

## Election Cycle

- 3.7 Ordinary years for elections are 2011 in Matching and 2012 for MBL and every 4 years thereafter. Within the Epping Forest District, one half of the 24 Parish Councils are contested in each of two years in the 4 year cycle. These are arranged to take place in tandem with District Ward elections. No proposal to change this cycle has been proposed. The changes being proposed could be regarded as not sufficiently large in scale to warrant these more radical options.

## Council Size

- 3.8 The size of the two Councils has been raised by the Committee already. Consultation asked the question whether, with a transfer of electors from MBL to Matching, there should be an adjustment by one in the number of Councillors who serve.
- 3.9 It is recommended that the views of the two Councils should be taken into account but the ratios of Councillors are as follows:

	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Ratio/Cllr/Electors</b>
MBL Current	14	1089	1:77.78
MBL Proposed	14(13)	991*	1:70.78 (76.23)
Matching Current	7	544	1:77.77
Matching Proposed	7(8)	726*	1:103.71 (90.75)

\* includes 5 year electorate growth estimate.

Figures in brackets show the effect of reducing/increasing by one Councillor.

## Parish Wards

- 3.10 The Council is required to look at the effect of boundary changes on Parish Wards. Matching is not currently warded, whereas MBL has five wards and there is a proposal to reduce to 3.
- 3.11 The Committee must consider whether the addition of 159 voters necessitates Matching parish being divided into wards. Defining wards is designed to assist in accessibility to polling stations (i.e. no voter should have to travel excessive distances to vote). The electorate for Matching is smaller than MBL and the polling arrangements are well established. With the boundary change, voters in the MBL part of Matching Green would vote at the same station as the rest of the village.
- 3.12 For MBL Parish, the electorate is larger and the overall area of the Parish greater. Polling arrangements would be unaffected by the transfer of voters for Matching Parish as the existing accessible stations could continue to be used for the new Lavers ward. Although the number of electors is reduced by the boundary change, the Council should consider whether account need be taken of the dispersed population of this rural area. In such a situation, a single unwarded election may not be appropriate.

#### **4. Implementing the Proposals Formulated by the Review**

4.1 Proposals are brought into operation by an order under Section 92 of the 2007 Act. Proposals come into effect on the next day of ordinary elections. The order can specify changes in the boundaries, warding and the number of Councillors. It also authorises the Registration Officer to reflect the changes in the next updated electoral register.

4.2 Such orders may also provide for:

- (a) property transfer;
- (b) transfer of functions, rights or liabilities;
- (c) provisions regarding current legislation;
- (d) transfer of staff and any related staffing matters;
- (e) supplementary agreements (including any affecting any other public body);
- (f) dispute resolution;

No such requirements have been notified.

4.4 If the Council makes an order it must publish a statement to accompany the public deposit copy of the order. This statement must indicate the reasons for approving (or rejecting) any proposals from the review.

#### **5. County Electoral Division Boundaries/District Ward Boundaries**

5.1 Section 92 of the 2007 Act enables the Council to apply to the LGBC for consequential changes to other boundaries, in this case to the District Ward and County Electoral Divisions which share the same boundary as the two parishes.

5.2 In deciding whether to recommend this application, the Committee should take account of:

- (a) potential voter confusion if the 3 boundaries are not the same;
- (b) the requirement of LGBC that there is an additional election in 2012 to ensure that one of the District Wards regains the 4 year cycle;
- (c) the Committee has already noted that the Moreton and Fyfield District Ward has ordinary elections in 2012 and concluded that the additional election should therefore be in the District Ward including Matching Parish which elected in 2011.
- (d) the additional cost which will fall to the District Council as a result of the additional 2012 election (estimated at approximately £2,500).

5.3 LGBC will not be able to amend the Parish Council boundary change if agreed by this Council. The Commission will make its decisions based on the review undertaken and the projections regarding future electorate changes in the 2 County Divisions and the 2 District Wards. LGBC can decline to make such an order but has indicated that in principle, it sees no objection to the changes, subject to review of the details.

## **6. Parliamentary Constituency Boundary**

- 6.1 The common boundary is also followed by the constituency boundary between Harlow and Brentwood and Ongar. The Council or LGBC are unable to take any action to bring that boundary into line with the others. This is a matter for the Parliamentary Boundary Commission which is currently engaged in a national review.
- 6.2 If the latter review does not change the boundary in this area, special arrangements for voters will need to be considered for the General Election due in 2015. In terms of possible voter confusion, this also needs to be taken into account. However, if the Council is consulted by the Commission as part of its forthcoming review, the Council could make representations to align the Parliamentary boundary with the others in this area, assuming that the constituency boundary remains in its present location.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The recommendations at the commencement of this report are designed to clarify the proposals will put to the Council in June 2011.

## **Background Papers**

Letter dated 4 February 2011 from Director of Reviews, LGBC.

Background data/methodology on electoral projections.

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