

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE – MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL (MBL)

SECOND STAGE CONSULTATION

APPENDIX 2

Background

1. All households in the Parish Wards of High Laver, Magdalen Laver and Little Laver were consulted last year regarding the proposal to combine the three Lavers parish wards into one new parish ward within MBL.
2. Residents were asked to indicate whether they supported this change which would:
 - (a) align the electorate/Councillor ratios in the Lavers wards more closely with the other wards in MBL and thereby achieve better equality of representation; and
 - (b) reduce election costs as the three parish wards elections would be cheaper than the present five.

Results of Consultation

3. **Of 285 Households (166 High Laver, 32 Little Laver 87 Magdalen Laver) 102 residents** responded to the Council's Consultation. Of those responses, 86 supported the reduction in the number of wards and 16 did not.
4. The District Council has reviewed this result and considers that there is substantial support for the change and will now take this forward as a firm proposal. A map showing the new wards is attached as Appendix 1.
5. **Some residents As part of this consultation 20 of the Householders of in the Matching Green part of MBL Parish** raised the boundary between MBL Parish and the neighbouring Parish Council of Matching in their responses. They drew attention to the way in which the boundary divides the village in two and sought a change whereby the whole of the village could be included in Matching Parish Council.
6. Aside from the boundary itself, those residents raised the following issues in support of changing the boundary:
 - (a) there is an obvious community of interest between Matching Green residents on both sides of the boundary;
 - (b) that Matching Green is at the edge of MBL Parish and therefore have limited community of interest with the rest of that Parish.
- ~~7. The Council noted that a minority of residents did not agree with the proposed change in the boundary and that a considerable number of Matching Green residents did not comment at all.~~
7. The District Council has reviewed these responses and has concluded that there is a sufficient body of opinion to warrant a further consultation on the boundary.

How Could the Boundary be Changed?

9. Officials from the District Council have met with representatives of both MBL and Matching Parishes in Matching Green and have walked the boundary together.

The District Council has been much assisted by the local knowledge of the two Parish Councils in identifying the route of a possible new boundary which could be used if the local community supports the change.

- ... 10. Appendix 2 shows the present parish boundary in red whilst a possible revision is shown in green. The District Council is required by the law to take account of the following factors when examining the desirability of altering Parish boundaries:
- (a) whether change would respect community links; and
 - (b) whether the area is such that a boundary change is of a kind which does not compromise other community links.
11. The map shown in Appendix 2 is supported by the District Council and the two Parish Councils as a basis for consultation. Residents who live in the area between the red and green lines will have to tell the District Council whether they wish to transfer to Matching or remain in MBL as now.

(f) How are the Other Boundaries Changed?

20. **The District Council is only able to change Parish Council boundaries. The District Council must ask the Local Government Boundary Commission to make an order to align the District and County boundaries with the new parish boundary. Likewise, another Commission would have to deal with the Parliamentary boundary.**

21. **The District Council would be very concerned about changing the parish boundary without ensuring that the other boundaries will be the same. It would be very confusing to voters if this were to happen. Advice will be sought on the likely attitude of the Commission to changes to other boundaries. The results will be very influential in determining whether the parish change can go ahead. The District Council has sought clarification on this point.**

(g) What is the effect on the District Wards, County Electoral Divisions and Parliamentary Constituencies?

22. **Currently the elector/Councillor ratios are as follows:**

Ward	Current Electorate	New Electorate	No of Councillors	Present Ratio	New Ratio
Moreton and Fyfield District Ward	1,731	1,572	1	1:1731	1:1,572
Matching, Hastingwood and Sheering Village District Ward	1,686	1,845	1	1:1686	1:1,845
North Weald and Nazeing County Division	13,663	14,882	1	1:13,663	1:13,822
Ongar and Rural	11,896	11,737	1	1:11,896	1:11,737

County Division

23. After the boundary change at Matching Green, the figures are as follows:

Constituency	Present Electorate	New Electorate	No of MPs	Present Ratio	New Ratio
Harlow			1		
Ongar and Rural Brentwood & Ongar			1		

Those Residents (detailed at point 11, living in the area between the red & green lines) Would move from the current Brentwood & Ongar constituency to the Harlow constituency

24. It is known that a review of Parliamentary boundaries is due.

(a) Polling Arrangements

12. Currently Matching Green residents who are in MBL vote at Matching School. If the boundary changes, it is likely that those electors will vote at Matching Village Hall along with the other voters from Matching Parish. Those electors who remain in High Laver wards would continue to vote in Matching Green School or Magdalen Laver Village Hall, depending on which parts of the new Lavers ward they live in.

(b) Number of Councillors

13. Currently MBL comprises 14 Councillors and Matching 7. The current elector/Councillor ratios are as follows:

Matching

	Electorate	No of Councillors	Current Ratio (Councillor/Elector)
	544	7	1:77.77

MBL

High Laver	342	4	1:85.50
Little Laver	70	2	1:35.00
Magdalen Laver	183	2	1:91.5
Moreton	276	3	1:92.00
Bobbingworth	218	3	1:72.66

Total:	1089	14	
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14. The boundary change shown in Appendix 2 would transfer 164 electors from High Laver (159) and Little Laver (5) to Matching Parish. The effect of this is shown in the table which follows:

Matching

Existing Electorate	+ Housing Growth	+/- Matching Green Transfer	New Electorate	New Ratio (Cllr/Elector)
544	+18	+164	726	1:103.71

(c) What are the figures for Housing Growth?

15. These are an allowance for the number of additional electors which could be generated by housing development in the area over the next five years. It is a requirement that they are taken into account of in considering boundaries. These figures are derived from planning consents which are pending or which may never have been enacted or other sites which may be considered for residential development.

MBL

Existing Electorate/ Ward	Present Electorate	+Housing Growth	+/- Matching Green Transfer	New Electorate	Ratio (Cllr/Elector)
Bobbingworth	218	+13	N/A	231	1:77
High Laver	342	+14	- 159	197	1:49.25
Little Laver	70	+13	- 5	78	1:36.00
Magdalen Laver	183	+ 13	N/A	196	1:98.00
Moreton	276	+13	N/A	289	1:92.11
TOTAL	1089			991	

(d) **Councillors in the two Parish Councils are not paid or claim expenses. Should the Number of Parish Councillors in MBL Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC or Matching PC, Change as a Result of the Boundary Change?**

16. The lower number of voters in High Laver and Little Laver wards may make a case for reducing the number of Parish Councillors in MBL. By the same token, an increase in the number of electors in Matching could be said to support an increase in the number of Parish Councillors there.
17. The views of local residents on whether, for instance, there should be one or two fewer **Unpaid** Councillors in MBL and one or two more **unpaid Councillors** in Matching is a matter which the District Council would wish to receive views.

(e) What is the effect on District Council and County Electoral Division Boundaries and Parliamentary Constituency Areas?

18. The boundary between Matching and MBL Parish is unusual in that it is also the boundary between:
- (i) the two District wards of Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village with Moreton and Fyfield;
 - (ii) the County electoral divisions of North Weald and Nazeing with Ongar & Rural; and
 - (iii) the Parliamentary Constituencies of Harlow with Brentwood & Ongar.
19. If the boundary change at Matching Green were also made to these other boundaries, those Residents **(detailed at point 11, living in the area between the red & green lines)** would be in a new District Ward (Hastingwood, matching and Sheering Village), a new County Electoral Division **(Ongar and Rural) North Weald & Nazeing** and a new Parliamentary Constituency **(Brentwood and Ongar) Harlow**

(h) What are the Financial Implications of the Boundary Change?

25. All parish and town councils produce a Council Tax precept for each financial year. This precept is a levy on each property in their area sufficient to fund the cost of services they provide. This precept total is then collected on parish councils' behalf by the District Council.
26. For this purpose, each Council has a Council Tax Base reflecting the number of residential properties in the parish. The more such properties are in the parish, the greater is the multiplier which can be used to determine the precept.
27. It follows from this that if 98 properties transfer to Matching, the Council Tax base for MBL will be smaller and that for Matching larger. A comparison of the 2010/11 Council Tax Base figures is as follows:
- Matching
- MBL
28. The changes in the Council Tax base will inevitably affect the decisions of the two parish councils on their budgets in future years. MBL will have a smaller pool of properties from which to precept and may therefore need to review either increasing the precept to maintain services or reduce **the cost of or** services funded from the precept.
29. For Matching Parish Council, the Council Tax base will be larger. That Council could then review whether its current precept is too high or whether more could be spent on services, if this precept is the same. It should be emphasised that these matters will be for the Parish Council concerned to decide, not the District Council. These changes would not come into operation until 2012/13 at the earliest.
30. Any change in warding and the number of Councillors will also affect the cost of elections.

Ecclesiastical Boundaries

31. MBL and Matching are civil parishes. The map in Appendix 3 shows the ecclesiastical parish boundary which has been supplied by the Church Authorities. It is likely that if the civil parishes change, the church parishes would remain the same.

Conclusions

32. The District Council now wishes to hear from residents of the Lavers about the suggested boundary change. The Council must give most weight to the views of the Matching Green community which is currently in High Laver and Little Laver as it is those residents who will be directly affected.
33. A similar consultation is being undertaken with all Matching Parish residents regarding the boundary change but as existing Matching Parish residents will not be directly affected by the boundary change, their views will not influence the Council's decision on the boundary change.

NOTE:

RESIDENTS SHOULD NOTE THAT THE BOUNDARY CHANGE WILL NOT AFFECT THE BOUNDARIES WHICH WILL BE USED FOR THE MATCHING PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN MAY 2011. ANY NEW BOUNDARIES WILL TAKE EFFECT AFTER THAT DATE.