

ESSEX

NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

November 2023

Currently there are:

- 75 councillors
- 65 single-member and 5 two-member divisions

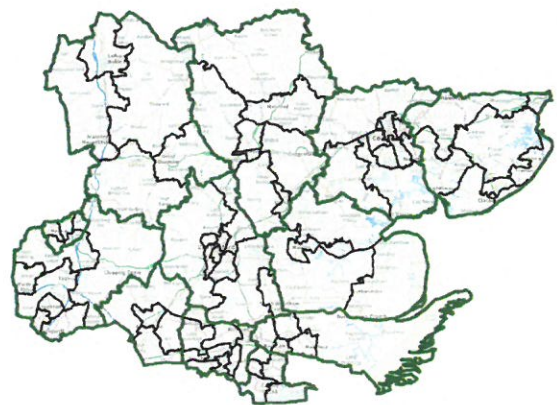
We are proposing:

- 78 councillors
- 78 divisions
- 1 councillor per division

A public consultation is open until
19 February 2024



We aim to make sure Essex
councillors represent a similar
number of electors



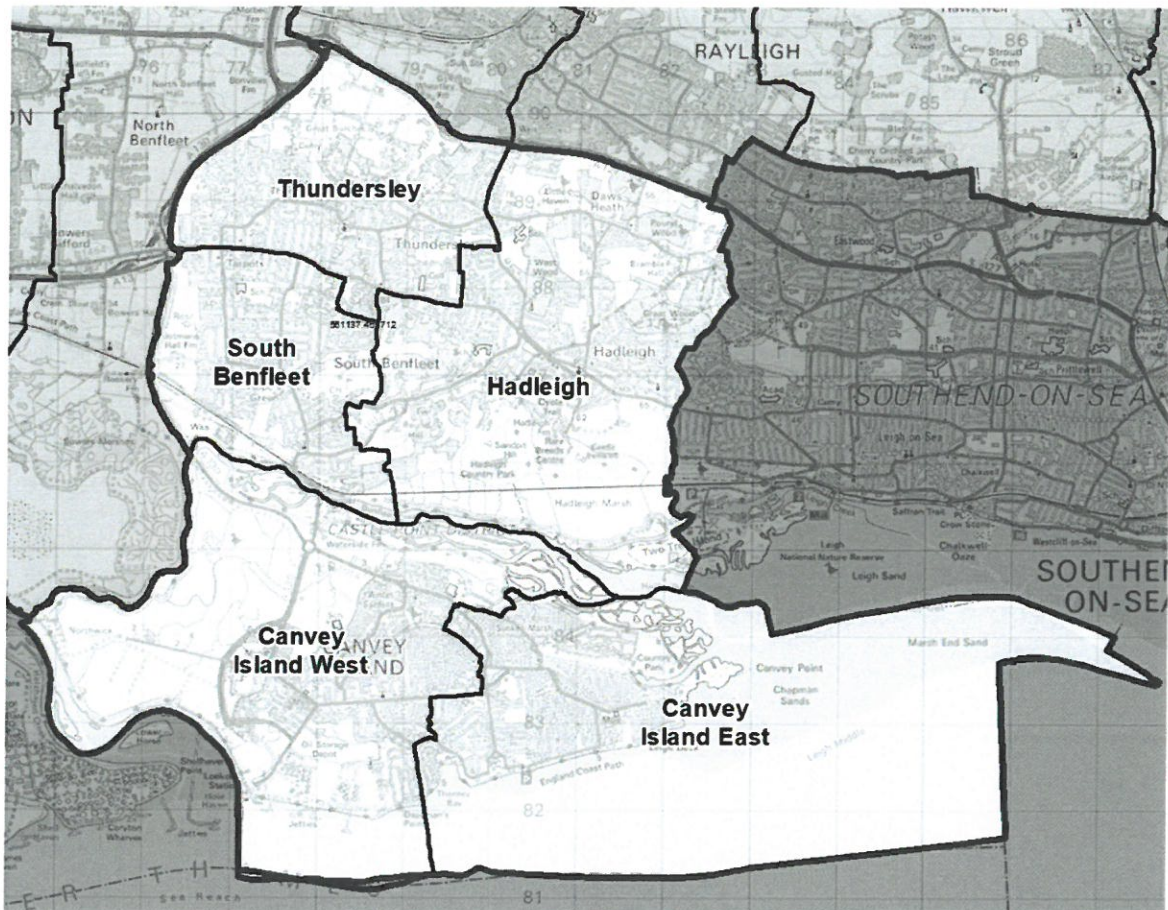
Currently there are:

- 21 divisions that are more than 10% away from the average number of electors per division
- 1 division that is more than 30% away from the average

Our proposals mean that:

- 6 divisions will be more than 10% away from the average number of electors per division
- Each councillor will represent an average of 15,848 electors

CASTLEPOINT.



Division name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Canvey Island East	1	0%
Canvey Island West	1	-7%
Hadleigh	1	-14%
South Benfleet	1	-11%
Thundersley	1	-9%

68 Under a council size of 78, Castle Point is allocated five councillors, with an average variance of -8%. The geography of the borough makes proposing divisions with good electoral equality particularly challenging, with the divide between Canvey Island and the mainland offering a very strong and clear boundary which we would be very reluctant to cross.

69 In addition to the proposal from the Council, we received a proposal from a local resident for five divisions across the borough, two on Canvey Island and three on the mainland. Castle Point Borough Council also provided a submission, arguing for the retention of five councillors, and offering general comments on community identity across the borough, but not submitting specific proposals for division boundaries.

Canvey Island East and Canvey Island West

70 Essex County Council proposed retaining the two existing divisions on Canvey Island. These each have good electoral equality, and offer good levels of coterminosity, with only one of the five borough wards in the area being split between divisions.

71 The local resident provided a very similar proposal, although not enough detail was provided to confirm if the two proposals were identical. Given the broad agreement with the principles of two divisions exclusively on Canvey Island, we have adopted the proposal from the Council as part of our draft recommendations.

Hadleigh, South Benfleet and Thundersley

72 The Council proposed three divisions covering the mainland area of Castle Point. The geography and number of electors means that it is impossible to propose three divisions for this area with good electoral equality. However, we consider that the alternative, which would result in the creation of a division that crosses Benfleet Creek, would not be reflective of either community identity or effective and convenient local government.

73 The resident's scheme proposed a cross-borough division with an area of North Benfleet in Basildon borough being combined with South Benfleet in Castle Point. However, it is not merely a preference, but a statutory requirement, that every division we propose be entirely within a single district or borough. We therefore cannot adopt this proposal.

74 The Council proposed three divisions, based around the settlements of Thundersley, Hadleigh and South Benfleet. This agreed with the information put forward by Castle Point Borough Council that these areas should be the basis of divisions.

75 We have broadly adopted the Council's proposal with one modification. The Council proposed to have the boundary between South Benfleet and Thundersley run along the A13 London Road for its entire length. While this does offer a clear boundary, we prefer to divert south around Glen Road, allowing all of the new Thundersley North borough ward to be within Thundersley division.

76 South Benfleet and Hadleigh divisions are forecast to have relatively high electoral variances (-11% and -14%, respectively, by 2029). However, given the constraints of the geography and the evidence received during consultation, we consider that our recommendations offer the best available balance of our statutory criteria. In particular, we consider them to be reflective of local communities in this part of Castle Point.