



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

MPC(21)104

**TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FINAL PROPOSALS FROM THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND RELATING TO THE
POLITICAL MAP OF SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL WHICH HAVE
IMPLICATIONS FOR MELTON**

The link below gives access to the Boundary Commission's final recommendations on the new Suffolk County Council's electoral divisions to come into being from the next County elections in 2025.

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/18495>

The relevant proposals are contained in paragraphs 86 to 100 of the report. These can be read in the report which also contains maps.

The proposal is to extend the northern boundary of the Woodbridge Division to include the southern part of Melton parish (i.e. the part adjacent to Woodbridge); whilst the northern part of Melton is included in the new Wilford Division.

For ease of reference I append to this report:

- Paragraphs 86 to 100 of the text of the report
- A map showing the new Wilford Division taken from the report
- A map showing the new Woodbridge Division taken from the report
- A sketch map prepared in the office showing in more detail the boundary line between the two Divisions and forming the new Melton North and Melton South Wards.

An implication of splitting the parish of Melton between the two County Divisions is that the parish will need to be split into two Wards – Melton North and Melton South. The Boundary Commission have specified where the boundary line is to be drawn

(see sketch map referred to above) and have allocated numbers of councillors to each Ward:

- North – 8 Councillors
- South - 7 Councillors.

East Suffolk Electoral Services will carry out a polling district review to allocate electors into the new Wards so that the next County elections can be run on that basis. In future candidates will need to stand for one parish ward rather than for Melton as a whole.

It is to be emphasised that these changes only affect County Council elections. The territorial integrity of Melton parish is not affected by these changes.

This report is for noting at this stage as the time for influencing any further changes to the proposals is over.

William Grosvenor

Clerk and Executive Officer to the Council

20 September 2021

should be renamed Wainford as this is an historical name and was used until 2005. The resident also argued the proposal would avoid the name focusing on only one of the constituent parishes.

83 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the support for our draft recommendations for this area. We also considered the proposed division name change, but note that the naming convention of using the name of a single parish is used elsewhere in East Suffolk. In addition, we have received no other submissions suggesting the name is changed. We are therefore not amending the division name as part of our final recommendations and are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Aldeburgh & Leiston and Blyth Estuary

84 In response to the draft recommendations, we received some general support for our proposals for these divisions. Bramfield & Thornington Parish Council argued that Thornington parish should be in the same parish as Bramfield, as reflected by our draft recommendation to include them both in Blyth Estuary division. A local resident argued that Blyth Estuary division should be renamed Heritage Coast, arguing this would reflect the area as a whole as well as its historical and coastal nature.

85 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the support for our draft recommendations. We also note the proposed division name change and while it has some merit, we have received no other submissions suggesting this name change. On balance, we are therefore not amending the division name as part of our final recommendations and are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Carlford, Wilford and Woodbridge

86 As set out in our further draft recommendations, we gave careful consideration to the evidence received during the consultation on the draft recommendations. On the balance of the evidence received, we proposed revised single-councillor Carlford, Wilford and Woodbridge divisions.

87 In response to the further draft recommendations, we receive a mixture of support and objections, with particular concerns expressed over the division of Melton parish between Wilford and Woodbridge divisions.

88 Suffolk County Council Conservative Group, Suffolk Coastal Conservatives, Councillor Hicks, Councillor Porter, Councillor Sanders, Melton Parish Council and a number of residents objected to the further draft recommendations for Wilford and Woodbridge division, expressing support for the initial draft recommendations. They objected to the division of Melton parish between two divisions. Respondents rejected the argument that Woods Lane is a clearer boundary than Pytches Road,

adding that local people were well aware of the division between Melton and Woodbridge parishes. They argued that the proposals divided the Melton community and would require the creation of parish wards for the parish, which is currently unwarded. They also argued that the proposals reduced coterminosity with Melton ward. Some respondents questioned the logic for including Woodbridge Primary School in Woodbridge division while separating Melton Primary School from the rest of Melton. Some argued that Melton Primary School should remain with the rest of the Melton parish in Wilford division. Councillor Sanders added that the further draft proposals also remove Melton's dock and recreational facilities.

89 Respondents also argued that under the initial draft recommendations, Melton parish would act as the core of the Wilford division, being a focus for the parishes between the River Deben and River Butley. Respondents stated that Woods Lane (A1152) is a key transport link that connects the area to the A12 and that there are growing problems around traffic. They argued that using Woods Lane as a boundary would split the road between two councillors, making it harder to address the issues, adding that electors to the south of the road are less affected. Finally, concern was also expressed that the further draft recommendations for Wilford also worsened electoral equality for this division.

90 East Suffolk Liberal Democrats expressed general support for the further draft recommendations for these divisions. Suffolk Coastal Labour Party and Woodbridge Branch Labour Party also expressed support, arguing that the proposals reflected the links between parts of Melton and Woodbridge parishes. Councillor Yule also expressed support for the further draft recommendations.

91 The Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group on East Suffolk Council expressed support for reflecting links between Melton and Woodbridge parishes, but objected to the proposal to split Melton parish between divisions. A number of residents argued the whole of Melton parish should be in Woodbridge division, citing links there, rather than in Wilford division.

92 Councillor Page and Woodbridge Liberal Democrat Action Group expressed general support for the further draft recommendations for Wilford and Woodbridge divisions, particularly as they avoid linking Ufford parish with Woodbridge, while having Melton parish sit between them. They considered it preferable to link parts of Melton to Woodbridge, reiterating links to the area along Pytches Road. However, they did point out that the proposals transferred Melton Primary School to Woodbridge division, along with dividing Woods Lane between councillors. They proposed retaining these areas in Wilford division along with the electors on the north end of Melton Road and those that access Woods Lane. Woodbridge Town Council also expressed support for further draft recommendations, but stated that Melton Primary School should be retained in Wilford division.

93 A number of residents also expressed support for the further draft proposals, including the transfer of part of Melton parish to Woodbridge division. They cited links for services into Woodbridge, arguing that some residents in this area did not realise they lived in Melton parish. Some also supported the further draft recommendations because they avoided the initial draft recommendation proposal that linked Woodbridge to rural parishes.

94 Councillor Hedgley and Great Bealings Parish Council expressed support for Carlford division. A resident suggested that Woodbridge division should be renamed Woodbridge & Melton.

95 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received, noting the support and objections for the further draft recommendations. We note that a number of respondents referred to proposals that kept the grouped parishes of Butley, Capel St Andrew and Wantisden together in the same division. These parishes would remain together under both the draft recommendations and further draft recommendations.

96 We acknowledge that the further draft recommendations for this area result in the creation of parish wards in Melton, a parish that is currently unwarded. The Commission is able to create parish wards where doing so provides for division arrangements that reflect the best balance of our statutory criteria. In this particular circumstance, we must be mindful of ensuring a good balance in our criteria across the wider area of East Suffolk, as well as in Woodbridge and Melton, and consider that dividing Melton parish between divisions would facilitate a better division pattern for East Suffolk. We note that there were significant objections, arguing that the further draft recommendation has divided the Melton community, although this must be offset against the evidence that argued that the area to the north of Pyches Road has good links with Woodbridge. We note the argument that the further draft recommendations reduced coterminosity with Melton ward, but this must be balanced against an improvement in coterminosity in Carlford division with Carlford & Fynn Valley ward.

97 We note that there was some suggestion that whole of Melton parish could be placed in Woodbridge division, acknowledging the links between the areas. However, this would leave Woodbridge division with 22% more electors than the county average by 2026, while Wilford would have 28% fewer. We do not consider there to be the evidence to support such a poor level of electoral equality.

98 In addition to the contradictory evidence about Melton, on balance, we remain of the view that the further draft recommendations, which avoid linking Woodbridge with rural divisions on the other side of the A12 and Ufford parish, provide a stronger division pattern. We are therefore broadly confirming our further draft recommendations for these divisions as final.

99 However, we do note a number of the specific concerns about the boundary between Wilford and Woodbridge divisions and the suggestions for how this could be improved. We acknowledge the concerns about Woods Lane (A1152) and the fact it would be better if this was represented by a single councillor. In addition, we note that our further draft proposals transferred Melton Primary School away from Melton, along with the dock and recreational facilities. We are therefore proposing an amendment to our further draft recommendations. Under our final recommendation, the boundary will run along the south side of Woods Lane, but also take in the north end of Melton Lane, which will include Melton Primary School and the recreation and dock facilities in Wilford division. This will strengthen the boundary, but also improve electoral equality in Wilford division to 6% fewer electors by 2026, while Woodbridge would have 1% fewer.

100 Finally, we note the suggestion from a resident for renaming Woodbridge division, but do not consider there to be sufficient evidence or support from other respondents. Therefore, we are retaining the Woodbridge name as part of our final recommendations.

Framlingham & Wickham Market and Saxmundham & District

101 As set out in our further draft recommendations, we gave careful consideration to the evidence received during the consultation on the draft recommendations. On the balance of the evidence received, we proposed revised single-councillor Framlingham & Wickham Market and Saxmundham & District divisions.

102 In response to the further draft recommendations, we received a mixture of support and objections, as well as some suggested amendments.

103 Suffolk County Council Conservative Group expressed general objections to the proposals for this area, requesting the retention of the draft recommendations. It argued that the Saxmundham & District division name was not clear and it should be renamed Saxmundham division.

104 Suffolk Coastal Labour Party, Woodbridge Branch Labour Party, East Suffolk Liberal Democrats and Ufford Parish Council expressed general support for the further draft recommendations for these divisions. The Green, Independent & Liberal Democrat Group on East Suffolk Council expressed support for Saxmundham & District division.

105 Dan Poulter MP, Councillor Nicoll and Councillor Poulter were broadly supportive of the further draft recommendations, but proposed an amendment to transfer Campsea Ashe, Little Glemham and Marlesford parishes from Saxmundham & District division to Framlingham & Wickham Market division. Respondents cited a range of links between these parishes and Framlingham and Wickham Market, including schools, GP services and social activities. Marlesford Parish Council also





