



Boundary Commission for England

Initial proposals - Eastern region

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2023 Review

Electoral Quota = 73,393

Electorate range = 69,724 - 77,062

Allocation of constituencies

Table 1: Allocation of constituencies by ceremonial county

County	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement
Norfolk	675,778	9.21
Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough)	591,247	8.06
Suffolk	557,535	7.60
Essex (including Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea)	1,348,788	18.38
Bedfordshire (comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton)	467,322	6.37
Hertfordshire	841,457	11.47
Totals	4,482,127	61.07

Sub-regions

Table 2: Headline numbers by sub-region

Sub-region	Electorate	Mathematical constituency entitlement	Existing constituencies	Proposed constituencies	Average constituency size of proposed sub-region
Preferred sub-regions					
Norfolk	675,778	9.21	9	9	75,086
Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough)	591,247	8.06	7	8	73,906
Suffolk and Essex (including Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea)	1,906,323	25.97	25	26	73,320
Bedfordshire (comprising Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton) and Hertfordshire	1,308,779	17.83	17	18	72,710
Region Totals	4,482,127	61.07	58	61	73,478

The sub-regions are the same in each of the schemes presented. There are no existing cross-county boundary constituencies in the Eastern region. However, it is mathematically impossible for both Bedfordshire and Suffolk to be considered as sub-regions in their own right for the 2023 Review. As these two counties do not share a common boundary, a minimum of two constituencies crossing county boundaries is therefore required.

The Secretariat has resolved as a general rule to prioritise schemes which cross as few county boundaries as possible. Bedfordshire being considered with Hertfordshire as a sub-region allows us to minimise the crossing of county boundaries, as it allows Cambridgeshire to be considered on its own. Similarly, Suffolk forming a sub-region with Essex allows Norfolk to be considered on its own. It is mathematically possible for Norfolk to form a sub-region with Suffolk and for Essex to be considered on its own. However, a Suffolk and Essex sub-region has been agreed to be preferable, as the combined mathematical entitlement allows for more flexibility within the sub-region.

Headline numbers and summary of schemes

Table 3: Headline numbers for schemes

Schemes	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies incl. Unitary Authorities			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial county	Split wards	Orphan wards*	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two counties			
Preferred Scheme	4	5	25	24	27	30	4	2	0	5	47
Alternative Scheme 1	3	4	28	23	26	33	2	2	2	5	46
Alternative Scheme 2	4	5	24	25	27	31	3	2	0	5	47

*'Orphan wards' refer to a ward from one local authority, in a constituency where the rest of the wards are from at least one other local authority.

Names of wards to be split:

- **Preferred Scheme:** n/a
- **Alternative Scheme 1:** West Leigh (Southend-on-Sea), Dallow or Biscot (both Luton)
- **Alternative Scheme 2:** n/a

The number of options for schemes in Norfolk is more limited than some of the other counties in the region, due to the average constituency size being at the upper end of the electorate range. Any alternative configurations we explored for the Great Yarmouth

constituency and the two Norwich constituencies had major, negative knock-on effects that our preferred configurations minimised. Therefore there are no alternative schemes suggested for Norfolk.

Despite being considered on its own, there is unavoidably fairly substantial change in Cambridgeshire. This is because an additional constituency is allocated, with six of the existing seven constituencies outside of the electorate range. In all three schemes, a reconfiguration sees a constituency comprising the town of St Neots and a number of wards from the South Cambridgeshire local authority. The only changes in the alternative schemes are a more compact Peterborough constituency around the city centre, and minor changes in the Cambridge constituency.

There is fairly substantial change in Suffolk as a cross-county boundary constituency is required, which has unavoidable knock-on effects. There are alternative schemes for eastern Suffolk, which serve to highlight the difficulties with minimising change while adhering to the other statutory factors.

Although none of the constituencies in Essex remain wholly unchanged, most of the change is relatively minor. The most significant changes are in the Braintree constituency, and in the two Southend-on-Sea constituencies. The two Southend-on-Sea constituencies are the only part of Essex that changes in the alternative schemes, where a ward split to minimise change is considered.

Bedfordshire is similar to Essex, in that although none of the constituencies remain wholly unchanged, most of the change is fairly minor. The most significant areas of change are around the towns of Stotfold and Arlesey. The only change in the alternative scheme is a ward split in Luton, which improves internal road links within the Luton North constituency.

There is significant change to a small number of constituencies in Hertfordshire, in order to minimise disruption throughout the rest of the county. The two main areas of change are the cross-county boundary constituency with Bedfordshire, and the South West Hertfordshire constituency. Any alternative configurations we considered for these areas of the county had major, negative knock-on effects that were deemed unsatisfactory. Therefore there are no alternative schemes suggested for Hertfordshire.

Breakdown of schemes by county

Preferred Scheme

Table 4A: Preferred Scheme - county breakdown

County*	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies incl. Unitary Authorities			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county	Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more	Two counties			
Norfolk	0	0	5	4	3	6	0	0	0	0	9
Cambridgeshire	0	1	1	5	5	3	0	0	0	0	6
Suffolk**	1	1	1	4	5	1	2	1	0	0	3
Essex	0	1	12	5	7	10	1	0	0	1	17
Bedfordshire	0	1	5	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
Hertfordshire***	3	1	1	6	4	7	1	1	0	4	9
Totals	4	5	25	24	27	30	4	2	0	5	47

*All counties include their respective unitary authorities for the above table

**The proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency is regarded as being in Suffolk for the above table

***The proposed Hitchin constituency is regarded as being in Hertfordshire for the above table

Norfolk

Despite none of the existing constituencies remaining unchanged, there is relatively minor change across much of the county, highlighted by all nine of the constituency names being retained. While it is possible to retain Great Yarmouth as being coterminous with the local authority and wholly unchanged, this would have many negative knock-on effects. The existing Norwich North constituency is outside the electorate range and therefore change is required. The preferred configuration allows us to create two compact, largely urban Norwich constituencies that also unite the Old Costessey and New Costessey wards in the same constituency, while also minimising issues in the Mid Norfolk and South Norfolk constituencies.

Cambridgeshire

In Cambridgeshire, the Peterborough constituency is changed by rewarding only, and there is minimal change to the Cambridge and North East Cambridgeshire constituencies. The most significant changes in Cambridgeshire are in the remaining four constituencies, due to the knock-on effects of the reconfiguration around the town of St Neots. Despite the relatively high number of ward changes in this area, there is no substantial change to any of the individual constituencies, with all names being retained other than South East Cambridgeshire being renamed East Cambridgeshire.

Suffolk

In Suffolk, the Ipswich and South Suffolk constituencies are unchanged, and there are minor changes to the Lowestoft and Suffolk Coastal constituencies. The remaining four constituencies see relatively substantial change. The cross-county boundary constituency with Essex requires a reconfiguration that sees the towns of Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket included in the same constituency. The location of the cross-county boundary constituency has been proposed as it allows the South Suffolk constituency to remain unchanged, and avoids the historically important Suffolk towns of Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds being contained in a cross-county boundary constituency. Necessary changes to the Suffolk Coastal constituency and the knock-on impacts of the cross-county boundary constituency force a substantial reconfiguration of the two constituencies in central Suffolk. This sees the town of Stowmarket included in a constituency with the three north western Ipswich wards currently not in the Ipswich constituency. This also allows a North Suffolk constituency comprising a number of rural wards in the north of the county.

Essex

The majority of Essex sees relatively little change, with 13 of the constituencies seeing two wards or fewer moved. There is significant change to the Braintree constituency, which is largely an unavoidable knock-on effect of the cross-county boundary constituency with Suffolk. An area of possible contention is around the town of Southend-on-Sea, where both the Castle Point and Southend West constituencies require change due to having low electorates outside the electorate range, which has further implications to the Rochford and Southend East constituency.

Bedfordshire

There is minimal change in Bedfordshire, with the only notable change being the inclusion of three Central Bedfordshire wards in the cross-county boundary constituency with Hertfordshire. There is minimal change in the area around the town of Luton, with only two wards changing between the three constituencies. Despite this limited change, the inclusion of the two large, rural wards of Caddington and Eaton Bray in the Luton South and South Bedfordshire constituency was unavoidable.

Hertfordshire

There are three constituencies in Hertfordshire that are wholly unchanged, and one changed by rewarding only. However, a radical reconfiguration of the existing South West Hertfordshire constituency is considered necessary to limit further change elsewhere. Rather than the existing north-south configuration from Tring to Rickmansworth, the new arrangement sees an east-west configuration from Tring to Harpenden. This has two benefits: allowing the town of Hitchin and the three Central Bedfordshire wards mentioned previously to form the necessary cross-county boundary constituency, and also allowing us to respect the local authority boundaries and local ties around the town of Watford.

Alternative Scheme 1

Table 4B: Alternative Scheme 1 - county breakdown

County*	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies incl. Unitary Authorities			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county	Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewording only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more				
Norfolk	0	0	5	4	3	6	0	0	0	0	9
Cambridgeshire	0	0	2	5	5	3	0	0	0	0	6
Suffolk**	0	1	1	5	4	4	0	1	0	0	2
Essex	0	1	14	3	7	10	1	0	1	1	17
Bedfordshire	0	1	5	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	3
Hertfordshire***	3	1	1	6	4	7	1	1	0	4	9
Totals	3	4	28	23	26	33	2	2	2	5	46

*All counties include their respective unitary authorities for the above table

**The proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency is regarded as being in Suffolk for the above table

***The proposed Hitchin constituency is regarded as being in Hertfordshire for the above table

Norfolk, Hertfordshire

There are no changes from the preferred scheme in these counties.

Cambridgeshire

In the city of Cambridge, the only change is that the Cherry Hinton ward is included in the Cambridge constituency, with the Trumpington ward now included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency. There are further changes in this scheme in the city of Peterborough and subsequently around the town of Huntingdon. Rather than leaving the Peterborough constituency unchanged, this scheme sees one rural and one urban ward included in the North West Cambridgeshire constituency, and three urban wards south of the River Nene included in the Peterborough constituency. While this creates a more compact Peterborough constituency, it is considered that the benefits of an unchanged constituency are stronger, avoiding an unnecessary transfer of approximately 34,000 electors between the Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire constituencies.

Suffolk

The only differences from the preferred scheme are in the constituencies around the town of Ipswich. In this scheme, the River Deben provides a natural boundary between two constituencies on the Suffolk coast. The three north western Ipswich wards currently not in the existing Ipswich constituency are now included in the Ipswich constituency, and three south eastern Ipswich wards currently in the Ipswich constituency are now included in a South East Ipswich and Felixstowe constituency. It is considered that this proposal is inferior to the preferred scheme as both the Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal constituencies are significantly changed. In the Ipswich constituency in particular this change is unnecessary, as approximately 35,000 electors are moved when it is possible to leave the constituency wholly unchanged.

Essex

The only changes from the preferred scheme are in the Castle Point and the two Southend-on-Sea constituencies. A ward split in the West Leigh ward means that rather than five wards moving between the Southend West and Rochford, and Southend East constituencies, only one ward is required to move. This also has the added benefit of minimising the division of the town of Leigh-on-Sea. However, the West Leigh ward is an orphan ward, and to split it as proposed would mean that only two polling districts from the Southend-on-Sea unitary authority are included in a constituency that is otherwise wholly coterminous with the Castle Point local authority. The inconveniences that are likely to be attendant from this were initially considered to be stronger than the benefits of moving fewer electors. The Secretariat considers, however, that this is a finely balanced argument, and the Commission are asked to reconsider whether the splitting of the West Leigh ward is the more preferable solution.

Bedfordshire

The only changes from the preferred scheme are in the two Luton constituencies. Rather than the inclusion of the Stopsley ward in the Luton North constituency, a ward split in either the Dallow or Biscot wards is possible. The benefits of this configuration are that it removes a potential issue in the Stopsley ward, regarding the apparent lack of direct road access to the rest of the Luton North constituency. However, it is considered that the inconveniences attendant on a ward split out-weigh this benefit.

Alternative Scheme 2

Table 4C: Alternative Scheme 2 - sub-region/county breakdown

County*	Constituencies - ward changes				Districts in constituencies incl. Unitary Authorities			Constituencies crossing more than one ceremonial/metropolitan county	Split wards	Orphan wards	Const. names retained
	Number wholly unchanged	Number changed by rewarding only	Minor substantive changes (1-2 wards)	Major substantive changes (3+ wards)	One	Two	Three or more				
Norfolk	0	0	5	4	3	6	0	0	0	0	9
Cambridgeshire	0	1	0	6	5	3	0	0	0	0	6
Suffolk**	1	1	1	4	5	2	1	1	0	0	3
Essex	0	1	12	5	7	10	1	0	0	1	17
Bedfordshire	0	1	5	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3
Hertfordshire***	3	1	1	6	4	7	1	1	0	4	9
Totals	4	5	24	25	27	31	3	2	0	5	47

***All counties include their respective unitary authorities for the above table**

****The proposed Haverhill and Halstead constituency is regarded as being in Suffolk for the above table**

*****The proposed Hitchin constituency is regarded as being in Hertfordshire for the above table**

Norfolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire

There are no changes from the preferred scheme in these counties.

Cambridgeshire

The only difference from the preferred scheme is in the city of Cambridge. In this scheme, both the Trumpington and Cherry Hinton wards are included in the South Cambridgeshire constituency, with the Queen Edith's ward instead being included in the Cambridge constituency. While Queen Edith's arguably has closer ties to Cambridge than the other two wards, it is considered that moving three wards (approximately 19,000 electors) rather than only one ward (approximately 6,500 electors) is an unnecessarily large change in this case.

Suffolk

The only differences from the preferred scheme are in the constituencies around the town of Ipswich. Rather than the three north western Ipswich wards being included in a constituency with the town of Stowmarket as in the preferred scheme, they are included in a narrow, largely rural constituency that stretches north to Halesworth and Bungay. While this could be considered to be more reflective of the existing constituencies, there is a relative lack of local ties and poor internal connections caused by the peculiar narrow shape, highlighted by the difficulty in naming the constituency. It is therefore considered that the preferred scheme better adheres to the statutory factors as a whole.

Names of constituencies (preferred scheme)

Table 5: Constituency names and designations

Constituency name and designation	Name unchanged?	Designation unchanged?
Basildon and Billericay BC	✓	✓
Bedford BC	✓	✓
Braintree CC	✓	✓
Brentwood CC		✓
Broadland CC	✓	✓
Broxbourne BC	✓	✓
Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket CC		✓
Cambridge BC	✓	✓
Castle Point BC	✓	✓
Chelmsford BC	✓	✓
Clacton CC	✓	✓
Colchester BC	✓	✓
Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard CC		✓

East Cambridgeshire CC		✓
Epping Forest CC	✓	✓
Great Yarmouth CC	✓	✓
Harlow CC	✓	✓
Harpenden and Berkhamsted CC		✓
Harwich and North Essex CC	✓	✓
Haverhill and Halstead CC		
Hemel Hempstead CC	✓	✓
Hertford and Stortford CC	✓	✓
Hertsmere CC	✓	✓
Hitchin CC		
Huntingdon CC	✓	✓
Ipswich BC	✓	✓
Lowestoft CC		✓
Luton North BC	✓	✓
Luton South and South Bedfordshire CC		
Maldon CC	✓	✓

Mid Bedfordshire CC	✓	✓
Mid Norfolk CC	✓	✓
North Bedfordshire CC		✓
North East Cambridgeshire CC	✓	✓
North East Hertfordshire CC	✓	✓
North Ipswich and Stowmarket CC		✓
North Norfolk CC	✓	✓
North Suffolk CC		✓
North West Cambridgeshire CC	✓	✓
North West Norfolk CC	✓	✓
Norwich North BC	✓	✓
Norwich South BC	✓	✓
Peterborough BC	✓	✓
Rayleigh and Wickford CC	✓	✓
Rochford and Southend East CC	✓	✓
Saffron Walden CC	✓	✓
South Basildon and East Thurrock CC	✓	✓

South Cambridgeshire CC	✓	✓
South Norfolk CC	✓	✓
South Suffolk CC	✓	✓
South West Norfolk CC	✓	✓
Southend West BC	✓	✓
St Albans CC	✓	✓
St Neots CC		
Stevenage CC	✓	✓
Suffolk Coastal CC	✓	✓
Three Rivers CC		✓
Thurrock BC	✓	✓
Watford BC	✓	✓
Welwyn Hatfield CC	✓	✓
Witham CC	✓	✓