

# Cheshire East

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## Comment text:

**Related subject:** Macclesfield and surrounding parishes

Please find attached my views on your proposals

## Attached Documents:

- lgbcelate2024response.docx

Comments and suggestions for improvements on implementing the LGBCE's Draft Recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements for Cheshire East Council (CEC). The comments relate to Macclesfield Parish (the town of Macclesfield) and its relationship with the surrounding parishes.

1. The Draft Recommendations (DR) show two revised Macclesfield borough wards and one revised Bollington borough ward, each incorporating areas belonging both in Macclesfield Parish and in a neighbouring parish. These borough wards are Macclesfield Hurdsfield which now includes Higher Hurdsfield parish; Macclesfield South which includes as before the Gawsworth Moss parish ward but also now includes the development site west of Congleton Road in Gawsworth parish; and Bollington & Rainow which now includes Macclesfield Springwood parish ward, formerly a part of Tytherington.

2. In paragraph 4 of the DR you identify three main considerations to which you have regard when carrying out a review: electoral equality; community identity; and effective and convenient local government. Electoral equality is for most electors an abstract concept and whilst democratically important, it often appears to come at the sacrifice of community identity or effective and convenient local government. It is easy to check that electoral equality is within given limits, whereas good community identity and effective and convenient local government, or the lack of those, will take much more effort to establish.

3. Electoral equality, community identity and convenient local government has been achieved for most of the Macclesfield area, But community identity and convenient local government is lacking for the Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow borough wards and for the Springwood parish ward.

4. How can this review achieve community identity and effective and convenient local government where electors vote for a Macclesfield (or Bollington) councillor at a borough election, but vote for a Gawsworth or Higher Hurdsfield (or a Macclesfield / Tytherington / Springwood) one at a parish or town council election? Only a recommendation by this review for CEC to carry out a Community Governance Review of Macclesfield Parish and surrounding parishes seems to be the way to create solutions to such problems.

5. CEC undertook such a review of its area in 2020/22 but withdrew most of its early progressive proposals. One councillor compared the proposals to a 'Hitler land grab'. The then local MP objected saying that 'the unique identities of local parishes were under threat' from CEC's proposals to move the strategic development sites for Macclesfield's future growth contained in the 2017 Strategic Local Plan from some rural parishes into Macclesfield parish (see newspaper cuttings hopefully attached hereto). In fact, CEC's early proposals would have preserved the unique identities of these parishes by moving areas identified in the local plan for urbanisation into Macclesfield.

6. Paragraph 107 of the DR says that "you propose to include the electors east of Tytherington Lane into the proposed Bollington & Rainow ward, to ensure the entirety of Springwood Estate is contained within one ward". But Springwood Way accessed from Tytherington Lane is incomprehensibly blocked by a mound and a fence which stops both pedestrian and vehicular traffic along it. Behind that mound and fence Springwood Way continues westwards to the A538 Manchester Road. So the result is that the two halves of that estate are placed in separate borough wards, one a Bollington & Rainow ward, the other a Macclesfield one.

7. Paragraph 107 also suggests that a recent community governance review revealed the existence of community ties between residents of Springwood Estate and the area of Bollington north of The Silk Road. However, family and friends in the modern development of the new Macclesfield Springwood parish ward say they definitely feel they belong in Tytherington. They and their neighbours are perhaps not likely to respond to this consultation, but they make up the vast majority of the ward's residents.

8. The DR also manages to move Tytherington Business Park out of Tytherington and into Bollington. The only sensible proposal that will solve these issues is to use The Silk Road in this location as the boundary between Bollington and Tytherington, regardless of the effect this will have on electoral equality in the Bollington and Tytherington borough wards.

9. With regard to the residents of the mature dwellings on Ball Lane / Dumbah Lane / Tytherington Lane (west), they ought to be joined together in one community, not in two or three as at present. This could be either in Bollington or Macclesfield. Any facilities, church, club, pub, school or shops in Prestbury are miles away. The low number of electors here will hardly affect electoral equality. My view is that adding this community to Macclesfield will add to the town's diversity.

10. Polling districts 4BFR and 4GDT Gawsworth Moss are in Macclesfield South borough ward. Community identity places 4BFR squarely in the southern part of Macclesfield West & Ivy borough ward. 4GDT is currently uninhabited and should stay in Macc South.

11. Removing 4BFR from Macclesfield South ward leaves that ward short of electors. To rectify this the Central / South ward boundary that runs east along Park Lane should be extended along Park Lane at least as far as Hobson Street and possibly to James Street, moving South Park into Macc South ward together with sufficient electors south of Park Lane from Macc Central ward (which has a surplus) into Macc South ward (which has a deficit) until a near balance is reached between the two wards. The Ryles Park Road area has pendled between Macc South ward and Macc Central ward in recent decades.

12. Polling district 4HF2 Prestbury – Fallibroome contains two old Macclesfield institutions, 'King's School in Macclesfield', established 1502 and recently moved here from two central Macclesfield sites, and 'Macclesfield Rugby Union Football Club', now celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 4HF2 also shares a boundary with Fallibroome Academy and with Broken Cross & Upton borough ward in Macclesfield, to which it is proposed that 4HF2 should be transferred. Church, school and shops in Prestbury are miles away but nearby in Broken Cross & Upton. 4HF2 protrudes physically into the Macc Broken Cross & Upton ward.

13. In some areas, such as the Beech Farm Drive area, it seems impossible to reconcile communities and ward boundaries without the whole 'house of cards' of the DR collapsing. The southern boundary of Tytherington is the River Bollin. Anything north of that river is Tytherington and should be in Tytherington borough ward. Regretfully, the removal of the Beech Farm Drive area to Central ward seems to be an anomaly we must learn to live with. Another such anomaly is the Sutton parish ward of Lyme Green, which includes the Gaw End Lane housing sites. It lies immediately south of the Macclesfield South borough ward. Between 1998 and 2010/11 it was included in the Macclesfield South borough ward, being moved to Sutton borough ward after the set-up of CEC.

14. The numerical consequences of the proposals made above are:

- Transferring the Springfield parish ward from Bollington & Rainow borough ward, 7964 minus 253 = 7711, -9% to Macclesfield Tytherington borough ward, 4618 plus 253 = 4864, +18%.
- Ball Lane / Dumbah Lane / Tytherington Lane (west) residents to either Bollington & Rainow or Macclesfield Tytherington borough ward – not calculated, negligible.
- 4BFR transferred from Macc South borough ward, 7401 minus 463 = 6938, -21% to Macc West & Ivy ward, 7829 plus 463 = 8292, +1.5%.
- The area south of Park Lane transferred from Macc Central borough ward, 8714 minus say 800 = 7914, -4% to Macc South borough ward, now 6938 plus say 800 = 7738, -6%.
- 4HF2 transferred from Prestbury borough ward, 4239 minus 95 = 4144, +0.6% to Broken Cross & Upton borough ward, 8335 plus 95 = 8430, +2.5%.

15. Paragraph 104 of the DR says “A local resident proposed Macclesfield to consist of 11 single-member wards. We were not persuaded to adopt this proposal as it was unclear how these wards should be configured.” I am the local resident. I intended here to show how the 11 wards could be configured. To obtain the tools to do so I asked CEC for either a set of electoral registers for the town (I could sit supervised in the town hall with a set – but this is too big a project for such an arrangement) or a list of polling districts giving the number of electors in each street. I received a reply that it ‘would provide information on any available options’, but have heard no more. So the 11 single-member wards are for the future.

16. The reason for proposing 11 single-member wards was that the present 12-member town council does not appear to me to be ‘up to scratch’. The council’s response to the 2020/22 Community Governance Review was disappointing, forgetting what we could and could not vote for in 2016 when the council was created. A 12-member council was not on the voting slip as it claimed. Since 2016 there has been no attempt at drafting a neighbourhood plan and 5 of the 12 town councillors also sit on the borough. So here I propose a 22-member town council based on the present 7 11-member borough wards.

17. Macclesfield’s 12-member town council for an electorate of over 43,600 is also way below the size of similar councils anywhere else in CE (see the table below). To create a 22-member town council by doubling the number of parish councillors returned from each present borough ward seems a simple way to obtain a more efficient one. Electoral equality, community identity and convenient local government is achieved for the borough wards. It would be too for 22 single-member parish wards. It should be simple to split the 4 two-member and 3 single-member borough wards into 22 single-member parish wards.

18. The table below shows for each town in CE the number of borough councillors a town will return in accordance with the DR; how many of those who are town councillors; the number of town councillors on the town’s council; the electorate, and finally the average number of electors represented by each councillor. For Macclesfield the table also shows the result of increasing the number of town councillors to 22, 2 for each of the 11 borough councillor proposed. In addition, the table shows the effect which the DR’s proposal for a miniscule Springwood town ward will have on the average number of electors represented by each of the 22 councillors.

Town	No. of CEC councillors	of whom also a town councillor	No. of town councillors	Electorate	Electors per town councillor
Alsager	3	3	15	12,503	834
Congleton	6	5	22	24,525	1,080
Crewe	10	6	20	40,998	2,050
Knutsford	3	2	15	11,639	776
Macclesfield	11	5	12	43,658	3,638
Enlarged town council		-	22	43,658	1,984
Springwood town ward		-	1	253	253
All other town wards		-	21	43,405	2,067
Middlewich	3	1	12	12,626	1,052
Nantwich	4	4	15	13,816	921
Poynton	4	4	14	12,097	864
Sandbach	4	4	21	18,947	902
Wilmslow	5	4	15	20,692	1,379

19. When the setting up a Macclesfield Town Council was being discussed a Bollington councillor wrote to CEC: "1. Wards: There seems to be a wish to keep CE wards. This may be suitable for simplicity but Macclesfield is made up of a number of distinct communities and these communities should at least be considered when wards are created. There has been no detailed discussion to my knowledge. 2. Number of Councillors: There seems to be a wish for 12. This too few in my view based on Bollington's experience. Town Councils really need to get down to street level. We have 12 in Bollington for a town of 8,000 people. Macclesfield has 55,000. I would have said for genuine local representation you will need at least 20 and probably 24." Good advice not heeded.

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