



# Public Document Pack

*James Ellis*  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**MEETING** : COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW WORKING GROUP  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2025  
**TIME** : 6.00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE**

## **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillors D Andrews, M Connolly, A Holt, D Jacobs, J Thomas and G Williams

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## AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Appointment of a Chair

To appoint a Chair for the Community Governance Review Working Group.

3. Consideration of consultation responses and final recommendations  
(Pages 5 - 50)

4. Representations from Aston Parish Council

- Cllr Helena Lovett (vice-chairman)
- Cllr. Alan Cantwell
- Roy Falder (Clerk)

5. Representations from Bishop's Stortford Town Council

- Cllr Stephen Skinner and/or Cllr Miriam Swainston (Lib Dem)
- Cllr John Wyllie (Conservative)
- Cllr Yvonne Estop (Labour)

6. Representations from Thorley Parish Council

- Cllr Robin Lumsden
- Cllr Colin Arnott

7. Representations from Sawbridgeworth Town Council

8. Representations from Buntingford Town Council

- Councillor Duncan Wallace

## **East Herts Council Report**

### **Community Governance Working Group**

**Date of meeting:** Thursday 26 June 2025

**Report by:** Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and Deputy Electoral Services Manager

**Report title:** Consideration of consultation responses and final recommendations

**Summary** – to consider the consultation responses on the draft recommendations and listen to representations from affected town and parish councils with a view to recommending final recommendations on the Community Governance Working Group to Full Council.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR** the Community Governance Working Group:

- a) To consider the responses received via the consultation on the draft recommendations.
- b) To listen to representations from affected Town and Parish Councils.

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

1.1 To consider the responses received via the consultation on the draft recommendations.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 Following Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review (CGR), the Community Governance Working Group (CGWG) met on 6 February 2025 to discuss submissions received from town and parish councils.

- 2.2 After reviewing the submissions, the CGWG submitted recommendations to the Council, which were discussed at the East Hertfordshire Full Council meeting on 26 February 2025.
- 2.3 The Council agreed to accept the CGWG's recommendations, which were subsequently consulted on during Stage 2.
- 2.4 During Stage 2, leaflets were delivered to areas where the draft proposals recommended significant changes.
- 2.5 Representatives from Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford, Thorley, Bishop's Stortford and Aston Parish Council will be attending the meeting to give their representations to the group.

### **Aston Parish Council (Hazel Park Development)**

- 2.6 At Stage 1, Aston and Walkern Parish Councils requested that the new Hazel Park Development comprising 600 new homes located at the northern end of Aston Parish and a small part of the western section of Walkern Parish be granted a separate Community Council.
- 2.7 Both parishes argued that the development represents an urban extension of Stevenage and does not align with the rural nature of the two parishes.
- 2.8 The CGWG's recommendation, which was accepted by the Council, was that the development remains part of Aston Parish.
- 2.9 This recommendation was based on the current population and the stage of development at Hazel Park, which make establishing a separate community council for the current 27 registered electors, impractical. Furthermore, changing district council boundaries between Stevenage and East Hertfordshire is beyond the scope of the CGR.
- 2.10 The Review has received 24 submissions (see Appendix 1) from residents, the parish council, and the Village Society, reiterating the request to establish a separate Community Council for Hazel Park.

### **Bishop's Stortford Town Council and Thorley Parish Council**

- 2.11 At Stage 1, Bishop's Stortford Town Council requested that the Review consider two options:
- a. To move the boundary between Bishop's Stortford and Thorley so that new developments currently straddling the boundary would fall entirely within Bishop's Stortford; and
  - b. To absorb the entirety of Thorley Parish into Bishop's Stortford.
- 2.12 Thorley Parish Council proposed an alternative boundary change, suggesting it run "along the centre lines of Whittington Way, along Obrey Way, and onto Thorley Lane East."
- 2.13 The Council accepted the CGWG's recommendation that only option **a**, proposed by Bishop's Stortford Town Council, be consulted on at Stage 2.
- 2.14 In making this decision, the CGWG and Council considered the [\*Guidance on Community Governance Reviews\*](#) issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Specifically:
- Page 24, Paragraph 84, which states:  
*"In many cases a boundary change between existing parishes, or parishes and unparished areas, rather than the creation of an entirely new parish, will be sufficient to ensure that parish arrangements reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government..."*
  - Page 36, Paragraph 125:  
*"It is desirable that any changes do not upset historic traditions but do reflect changes that have happened over time, such as population shift or additional development, which may have led to a different community identity."*
- 2.15 The Review received six submissions (see Appendix 2) supporting the boundary change to absorb the new development into Bishop's Stortford. All of them also requested that the Review reconsider the full absorption of Thorley.

- 2.16 Four of the submissions came from Town Councillors or Town Council staff, one from a resident, and one from an East Herts District Councillor.
- 2.17 It should be noted that the Town Council expressed concern that the Review did not include the option of absorbing the entire parish of Thorley and that the whole of Bishop's Stortford was not consulted on this issue.
- 2.18 A submission was received from Thorley Parish Council objecting to the draft recommendation, along with two additional objections — one from the Parish Clerk and one from a Parish Councillor (see Appendix 3).

### **Sawbridgeworth Town Council**

- 2.19 In line with the guidance in Paragraphs 158 to 168 (pages 45–47) of the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews, the CGWG recommended that Sawbridgeworth Town Council be divided into four separate wards for consultation.
- 2.20 The Review received 11 submissions (see Appendix 4):
- 1 submission supported the draft recommendation.
  - 10 submissions objected to the proposal, including one from the Town Council. Of the 11 submissions, 9 were from Sawbridgeworth Town Councillors.

### **Buntingford Town Council**

- 2.21 Again referencing Paragraphs 158 to 168 (pages 45–47) of the guidance, the CGWG recommended that Buntingford Town Council be divided into two wards.
- 2.22 The Review received three submissions (see Appendix 5):
- One from the Town Council objecting to the proposal.
  - Two in support — one from a Town Councillor and one from a District Councillor.

### **Hertford Town Council - Rush Green Roundabout**

- 2.23 The Council accepted the CGWG recommendation that the boundaries on the Rush Green Roundabout are changed so that the whole area sits within Hertford Kingsmead East Ward of Hertford Town Council.
- 2.24 This change will require consequential changes to district ward and county division boundaries.
- 2.25 There were no comments or objections regarding this proposal.

### **Ware Town Council and Wareside Parish Council**

- 2.26 At Stage 1, Ware Town Council submitted a proposal to change the boundary with Wareside Parish Council to absorb areas covered by the Ware Two development (as designated in the Local Plan) into Ware Town Council.
- 2.27 Wareside Parish Council objected to this proposal, and the Council accepted the CGWG recommendation to leave the boundary unchanged.
- 2.28 Both councils agreed with the draft proposal and indicated that they will submit a request for a further CGR when appropriate

### **Hertingfordbury Parish Council**

- 2.29 During Stage 1, Hertingfordbury Parish Council requested that the Review consider:
- a. Changing the boundary so that the village of Hertingfordbury is included within the parish and the Birchall Garden Suburb development is excluded.
  - b. Reducing the number of parish members from the current 10 if boundaries remain unchanged
  - c. Reducing the number of members to 9 should the village be included.
  - d. Changing the name of the parish council.

- 2.30 The CGWG recommended that the Council consult at Stage 2 on reducing the number of members and considering a name change.
- 2.31 The Parish Council responded by requesting a reduction to nine members but expressed no preference on a name change and asked that no change be made at this time.

### **Stanstead Abbots Parish Council and Stanstead St Margaret's Parish Council**

- 2.32 At Stage 1, both Parish Councils proposed a merger, which was accepted by the CGWG and Council.
- 2.33 Stanstead Abbots Parish Council has since withdrawn its support for the proposal. (see Appendix 6)

### **Great Amwell Parish Council**

- 2.34 Great Amwell Parish Council submitted a Stage 1 proposal to move the southern boundary to follow the entire length of the B181 to the Amwell Roundabout, then follow the northern part of that roundabout, and proceed along the B1502 to its current intersection with Old Hertford Road.
- 2.35 The CGWG recommended that this proposal be included in the draft proposals.
- 2.36 No comments or submissions were received on this issue

### **Brent Pelham Parish Council**

- 2.37 The CGWG recommended changing the parish name to *Brent Pelham and Meesden Parish Council*.
- 2.38 The Parish Clerk confirmed that the parishes of Brent Pelham and Meesden were grouped in 1976, and therefore there is no need to change the parish name. (see Appendix 7)

### **Buckland Parish Council Parish Council**



2.39 The CGWG recommend to Council that the name of the Parish be changed to Buckland and Chipping Parish Council.

2.40 The Parish Council supported this proposal at stage 1

### **Stapleford Parish Council**

2.41 The CGWG recommend to Council that the name of the Parish be changed to Stapleford and Waterford Parish Council.

2.42 There were no comments on this proposal.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 The council started a Community Governance Review in May 2025. The timetable for the review can be found on the [website](#).

### **4.0 Options**

4.1 The Community Governance Review working group need to come up with final recommendations to present to Council in July to meet the agreed timetable.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Government guidance states that it is good practice to conduct a full review at least every 10 – 15 years and keep the area under review in the interim. Given the Local Government Boundary Associations recommendations during the last district ward review and certain requests received from parish councils, it is now appropriate to formally review the parish governance arrangements throughout the district.
- 5.2 Failure to properly conduct or implement a CGR may result in a Judicial Review. This report sets out how the consultation on the draft proposals will be carried out to ensure an effective consultation period to reduce the risk of this happening.

## **Implications/Consultations**

6.1

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 [Community Governance Review - Terms of Reference and Timetable.pdf](#)

7.2 [Community Governance Review - draft recommendations.pdf](#)

## **Contact Officer and**

### **Report author**

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## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC702529041

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED] (Chair of Parish Council)

**Organisation:** [REDACTED]

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** Aston Parish Council's response to East Herts District Council's Governance Review's draft recommendation that Hazel Park remains within Aston Parish – April 2025: We disagree with the Review's draft recommendation. Leaving the creation of a separate Council for Hazel Park until the development is completed, will have a detrimental impact on the two communities for the following reasons:

1) Community Identity

- Aston - is rural in character and has a strong village community. The seven parish councillors are long term village residents and their regular meetings are held in the cricket and bowls pavilions (both facilities were funded completely by the clubs members). The annual parish meeting is attended by around 70 villagers and is held in the voluntary funded village hall. The village has several clubs and societies that use their own facilities and work closely with the Parish Council to ensure they continue to thrive. The village is accessed by single track lanes and surrounded by open, pasture and arable fields on three sides. There are several wooded areas, the biggest being Astonbury Woods, an ancient woodland of 55 acres. The village centre is where most people live, separated by fields and woodland from the small satellite hamlets of Frogmore, Hooks Cross and Aston End. Residents in these rural hamlets have strong linkages to the main village. There is a primary school, two pubs, two recreation grounds (both funded by village societies and trusts), a church, a village hall, a farm shop, four working farms, several small holdings, five livery stables, with over fifty horses stabled across the parish and two vineyards.

- Hazel Park - will be a densely built urban development, accessed directly from Stevenage and facing onto the main road around the eastern boundary of Stevenage. Planning permission has been granted for a primary school, a community centre, green recreational spaces and five retail outlets. The communal facilities and green spaces will be maintained by the estates

management company. The two communities will have very little in common and the residents will have different outlooks and expectations of identity.

## 2) Size

- Aston - currently has c.365 dwellings and c.700 voters.
- Hazel Park – on completion, will have 618 dwellings, a 66 bed Care Home and a 64 bed Assisted Living Home. All are currently forecast to be completed by summer 2030 and there could be c.1,400 voters. 1 Aston Voters v Hazel Park Voters 1600 1400 1200 1000 800 600 400 200 0 50% more voters 100% more voters 2025 2026 Aston Voters 2027 2028 Hazel Park Voters By Year End 2029 2030 The current build plan shows that by the time of the next Parish Council election in May 2027, there will be 348 dwellings out of the 618 built, which is 56% of the total. This could mean that there are almost as many, if not more Hazel Park voters as Aston voters at this election, especially when the potential voters from the 64 bed assisted living home are included. The assisted living home is due to open next year. If the review is delayed until completion in 2030, there will have been a majority of voters from Hazel Park in Aston Elections for 4 years. With twice as many voters in Hazel Park, managing the priorities of two very different communities will make the day-to-day management of the Parish Council more difficult for the volunteer Councillors than it need be.

## 2) Location

- Aston - the access roads to the village centre pass through the satellite hamlets of Frogmore, Hooks Cross and Aston End, as do many of the public footpaths linking them together. There is a bus service twice a day.
- Hazel Park - the dwellings are orientated around three access roads which join the main road on the eastern boundary of Stevenage. The houses at the front of the development face onto this main road and are opposite the Chells Manor housing estate. The regular Stevenage bus service will be rerouted through the development giving residents access to the railway station, industrial areas and town centre. The only link between the two communities will be via an unlit footpath from the southwestern corner, across a field to the hamlet of Aston End. The two communities are physically separated, making it more difficult for linkages to be created.

## 3) Financial

- Aston - the Parish Council is able to manage its precept effectively, maintaining and enhancing services and supporting the well being of residents. The addition of Hazel Park dwellings to the tax base for Aston will mean that residents will pay less for their share of the precept for Aston in their Council Tax.
- Hazel Park - all roads (bar the spine road), the lighting, the green spaces, recreational equipment and bins are to be managed via a managing agent

and paid 2 for by a service charge levied on each householder. The residents will also pay their share of the precept for Aston in their Council Tax. As the Governance Review is recommending that the communities aren't separated until Hazel Park is completed, this means that until 2031, Hazel Park residents will be unnecessarily paying their service charge (currently £200 per annum) and a precept (currently £63.62 for a Band D). Having their own Council means that Hazel Park can set their own precept and agree how that money is spent within their community. To minimise the impacts of not separating the two communities until Hazel Park is completed, we are asking the Governance Review Working Group to recommend holding a governance review for Aston once Hazel Park has reached an occupancy rate of 50%. This is expected to be by the end of 2027.

## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC713655314

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** I disagree with the Council's recommendation to wait until Hazel Park is complete before creating a council for them. By the time it's complete, sometime in the early 2030s, there will be twice as many voters as in the current Parish. The current parish is a rural farming village with a distinct community, many families going back generations. Hazel Park is physically separate from the parish and is very urban fronting the ring road round Stevenage. They residents will form their own community and there will be little interaction between the two. Hazel Park residents will also be paying a precept for at least six years and get nothing in return. Only the spine road of the development is to be adopted so over 600 properties are paying money for a service charge and to Aston for nothing in return, this is a ridiculous situation. I would like you to create a new parish council for Hazel Park when the occupancy rate reaches 50%. This will mean there will be roughly the same number of voters in each parish.

## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC706184914

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** It is not appropriate for Hazel Park to remain within Aston parish until at least 2030.. The 2 communities have very little in common and the fact that Hazel Park voters will likely exceed the number of Aston voters well before 2030 will have a detrimental effect on Aston. I fully endorse all the comments made to you by Aston Parish council and hope that reason will prevail.

### **Submission Details**

**Case Reference Number |** EHDC706659653

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** Personal

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston Parish within East Herts District Council

**What is your submission:** We very much support the line taken by, and submitted by the Aston Parish Council. That is that the matter of determining the Community Governance Review should be exercised by 2027 at the very latest when over 50% of the homes, the care and assisted living homes will have been completed. That will provide democratic engagement of the two very different communities in their respective futures. As EHDC will be aware from the its EOS Masterplan the design, and the membership of that Committee was heavily informed by its strong membership of Stevenage Borough Council Member and Officer representation. For very good, historical and community cohesion reasons the residents of Aston have been a self-supporting rural community. Its Parish boundary, now denuded by the transfer of land from EHDC to SBC (Poplars and Chells Manor) to support Stevenage expansion by some 20%, It's a small vibrant and strategically social community. Its Parish Meetings per capita are one if not the best attended Parish meetings in the District Council Area. East Herts will no doubt wish to encourage continued community cohesion.hat.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC709999818

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Aston

**What is your submission:** Aston is a small village in East Herts lying on the border with Stevenage. Despite Stevenage having been only “one field away” for 40 years the village has retained its “rural community feel” with a number of clubs, societies and facilities (Village Hall & playing field, Centre Field featuring cricket and wild flower meadow, Tennis Club & Bowls Club) all funded by members and local fund raising activities. However East Herts gave approval for a new 650 house development within the Parish of Aston: Hazel Park. This development is physically separate from the rest of Aston and borders onto one of the Stevenage perimeter roads. The proposal from the Community Governance review is to give consideration to the formation of a separate council when the development is complete. Given the plan is for 650 new houses and the projected completion date is 2030 - we estimate that the current 700 “Aston voters” will be outnumbered by “Hazel Park voters” during 2026. It is likely that the projected completion date will be extended. There currently appear to be 20-30 houses occupied and more new houses completed every week. We are faced with future Parish Council Elections, the next one in 2027, being dominated by non village voters and I urge that the Community Governance Proposal be reviewed in 2026 at the latest.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC710594919

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]



**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** EHDC Governance Review regarding the recommendation that Hazel Park should remain part of Aston Parish Mrs Jennifer Woodget and Mr Brian Woodget wish to wholeheartedly support the comments submitted by Aston Parish Council to EHDC that Hazel Park should cease to be part of Aston Parish. The only link to the Parish, as has been alluded to, is an unlit footpath to Aston End and as far as I am aware there is no intention of adding to this in the foreseeable future. Given the location of Hazel Park, close to Chells and Chells Manor, both of which are suburbs of Stevenage, the sensible solution to this issue, would be to transfer the whole development to Stevenage, which will inevitably be providing many of the facilities required by the residents of Hazel Park. I can see that EHDC do not wish to do this as Hazel Park, when fully completed, will be providing a significant amount of Council Tax to the District Council. Therefore why not set up a Community Council or even a separate Parish, to manage the affairs of this substantial development, a process that will enable EHDC to continue to collect the Council Tax. Residents of Hazel Park will inevitably be using facilities within Stevenage for day to day shopping and leisure, whilst paying Council Tax to EHDC. I am assuming that the SB1 (Stevenage Bus) bus service to Poplars, will be re-routed to include Hazel Park, giving them a service frequency of up to 3 buses an hour as opposed to 2 per day from Aston Village to Stevenage and Hertford. As shown in the graph of year versus voter numbers, by the end of the decade there will be 100% more voters in Hazel Park than in Aston Village (and surrounding hamlets). This will effect the workings of the Parish Council, as we shall have moved from a rural village to an urban village, a situation that current residents of Aston do not want to happen. [REDACTED]

**Aston2.01**

Dear Sir or Madam

I write to support the views put forward by Aston Parish Council concerning Hazel Park.

Hazel Park is a large new development which has more in common with the urban environment of Stevenage than with the village of Aston. Hazel Park should therefore be separated from the Aston Parish Council area as soon as possible and not delayed until the end of the development whenever that will be.

Yours faithfully |  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent via BT Email App

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC710415828

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Aston

**What is your submission:** I urge EHDC and its Governance Review Working Group to take a much more proactive approach towards separating the parish council governance of Hazel Park from that of Aston. Delaying until the development of Hazel Park is completed is entirely inappropriate and would be a dereliction of duty towards the very active community of Aston. The two physically separated communities are very different in character and needs, yet Hazel Park residents would dominate the voting for Parish councillors from 2027, well before Hazel Park is fully developed and occupied in 2030. The situation is already clear, and there is little merit in delaying the split between the governance of two very different communities.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC710835590

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Aston

**What is your submission:** The proposal to include Hazel Park as part of Aston Parish until 2031 is flawed and should be reversed. The two areas are completely different in nature - housing density, location and financial arrangements. This should be recognised now and a separate governance regime set up which can help shape Hazel Park as occupancy grows over the next few years. Waiting for six years to sever the connection with Aston seems pointless and detrimental to both communities.

### Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC711707681

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Aston

**What is your submission:** I propose that Hazel Park should be separated from Aston Parish Council before the next Parish Elections in May 2027. By that time there should be a similar number of voters in Hazel Park as in Aston village and it's rural surrounds and the very different identity and needs of the two communities requires that they be governed separately.

### Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC711855353

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: ASTON

**What is your submission:** I object to EHDC Governance review's draft recommendation that Hazel Park remains within Aston Parish. They are totally different in character ie rural/urban and a Governance review for Aston should happen when Hazel Park has 50% occupancy

### Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC713110011

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:**  
STEVENAGE

**What is your submission:** I'm writing to say I disagree with Hazel Park remains within the parish of Aston. Aston is a small village & its character should be protected from being swamped by a large outside development

**Case Reference Number |** EHDC713483487

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** Aston Village Society

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** Aston Village Society's response to East Herts District Council's Governance Review's draft recommendation not to create a new Community Council for the Hazel Park Development resulting in Hazel Park remaining within Aston Parish. The completion of Hazel Park is scheduled for the summer of 2030 and will consist of 618 dwellings, a Care Home for 66 residents and an Assisted Living Home for a further 64. Thus, it is highly likely that it would have an electorate approaching 1,400. It will be a densely built urban development that is effectively an extension of Stevenage and has planning permission for a primary school, a community centre, green recreational spaces and five retail outlets. The community facilities (including roads, lighting, green spaces, recreational equipment and bins) will be maintained by the estates management company, paid for by the Hazel Park residents – currently £200 per household per annum. Access to Hazel Park is via the main road on the eastern Stevenage boundary and the Stevenage bus service will be rerouted through the development giving access to the town centre, industrial areas and Stevenage Station. There is no public transport link with Aston. Before the development of Hazel Park, Aston Parish constituted Aston and Aston End and the small hamlets, Frogmore and Hooks Cross with approximately 365 dwellings and an electorate of 700. The population benefits from assets, both developed and maintained by the community, including two recreation grounds and a Village Hall as well as clubs and societies that have their own facilities. There is a Primary School, church and three pubs – one of which is community owned. All this

is set within a rural environment supporting agriculture as well as a range of small businesses. Thus, the Parish is not a dormitory – it is a thriving mixed economy with a strong sense of belonging, nurtured by a Parish Council that has a thorough understanding of its needs. This is exemplified by a regular attendance of 70 to 80 at the Annual Parish Meeting and the success of Aston Village Society that has of a membership of over 140 households. The current build plan for Hazel Park predicts that 348 of the 618 dwellings will be built by the time of the next Parish Council election in May 2027. This is likely to equate to an electorate that has a majority of voters based in the new development. Thus, there will be a dichotomy in the Parish with the two sectors having very different needs that would have to be met by the Parish Council – with the likely outcome that neither community will be content with the result. A separate Council for Hazel Park would resolve this difficulty and enable a precept to be set commensurate with the needs of the Hazel Park electorate. Aston Village Society endorses Aston Parish Council’s request: To minimise the impacts of not separating the two communities until Hazel Park is completed, we are asking the Governance Review Working Group to recommend holding a governance review for Aston once Hazel Park has reached an occupancy rate of 50%. This is expected to be by the end of 2027. Peter Stanbury President, Aston Village Society.

## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC713484916

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** [REDACTED]

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** The completion of Hazel Park is scheduled for the summer of 2030 and will consist of 618 dwellings, a Care Home for 66 residents and an Assisted Living Home for a further 64. Thus, it is highly likely that it would have an electorate approaching 1,400. It will be a densely built urban development that is effectively an extension of Stevenage and has planning permission for a primary school, a community centre, green recreational spaces and five retail outlets. The community facilities (including roads, lighting, green spaces, recreational equipment and bins) will be maintained by the estates management company, paid for by the Hazel Park residents – currently £200 per household per annum. Access to Hazel Park is via the main road on the eastern Stevenage boundary and the Stevenage bus service will be rerouted through the development giving access to the town centre, industrial areas and Stevenage Station. There is no public transport link with Aston. Before the development of Hazel Park, Aston Parish constituted Aston and

Aston End and the small hamlets, Frogmore and Hooks Cross with approximately 365 dwellings and an electorate of 700. The population benefits from assets, both developed and maintained by the community, including two recreation grounds and a Village Hall as well as clubs and societies that have their own facilities. There is a Primary School, church and three pubs – one of which is community owned. All this is set within a rural environment supporting agriculture as well as a range of small businesses. Thus, the Parish is not a dormitory – it is a thriving mixed economy with a strong sense of belonging, nurtured by a Parish Council that has a thorough understanding of its needs. This is exemplified by a regular attendance of 70 to 80 at the Annual Parish Meeting and the success of Aston Village Society that has of a membership of over 140 households. The current build plan for Hazel Park predicts that 348 of the 618 dwellings will be built by the time of the next Parish Council election in May 2027. This is likely to equate to an electorate that has a majority of voters based in the new development. Thus, there will be a dichotomy in the Parish with the two sectors having very different needs that would have to be met by the Parish Council – with the likely outcome that neither community will be content with the result. A separate Council for Hazel Park would resolve this difficulty and enable a precept to be set commensurate with the needs of the Hazel Park electorate. We endorse the requests made by both Aston Parish Council and Aston Village Society To minimise the impacts of not separating the two communities until Hazel Park is completed, we are asking the Governance Review Working Group to recommend holding a governance review for Aston once Hazel Park has reached an occupancy rate of 50%. This is expected to be by the end of 2027. Peter and Lesley Stanbury

## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC713853218

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** [REDACTED]

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston Nr Stevenage

**What is your submission:** I support the submissions made by AVH and Aston Parish Council. The completion of Hazel Park is scheduled for the summer of 2030 and will consist of 618 dwellings, a Care Home for 66 residents and an Assisted

Living Home for a further 64. Thus, it is highly likely that it would have an electorate approaching 1,400. It will be a densely built urban development that is effectively an extension of Stevenage and has planning permission for a primary school, a community centre, green recreational spaces and five retail outlets. The community facilities (including roads, lighting, green spaces, recreational equipment and bins) will be maintained by the estates management company, paid for by the Hazel Park residents – currently £200 per household per annum. Access to Hazel Park is via the main road on the eastern Stevenage boundary and the Stevenage bus service will be rerouted through the development giving access to the town centre, industrial areas and Stevenage Station. There is no public transport link with Aston. Before the development of Hazel Park, Aston Parish constituted Aston and Aston End and the small hamlets, Frogmore and Hooks Cross with approximately 365 dwellings and an electorate of 700. The population benefits from assets, both developed and maintained by the community, including two recreation grounds and a Village Hall as well as clubs and societies that have their own facilities. There is a Primary School, church and three pubs – one of which is community owned. All this is set within a rural environment supporting agriculture as well as a range of small businesses. Thus, the Parish is not a dormitory – it is a thriving mixed economy with a strong sense of belonging, nurtured by a Parish Council that has a thorough understanding of its needs. This is exemplified by a regular attendance of 70 to 80 at the Annual Parish Meeting and the success of Aston Village Society that has of a membership of over 140 households. The current build plan for Hazel Park predicts that 348 of the 618 dwellings will be built by the time of the next Parish Council election in May 2027. This is likely to equate to an electorate that has a majority of voters based in the new development. Thus, there will be a dichotomy in the Parish with the two sectors having very different needs that would have to be met by the Parish Council – with the likely outcome that neither community will be content with the result. A separate Council for Hazel Park would resolve this difficulty and enable a precept to be set commensurate with the needs of the Hazel Park electorate.

## Submission Details

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC713901255

**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** Aston is a small ,lively village community. It has a JMI Church school which is fully subscribed. Good amenities and facilities are run by our village organisations and cared for by our 800 residents. It is very disturbing therefore to find that Hazel Park housing development which will comprise 1000

potential voting residents will form a large majority in our Parish. They will have more voters than the village when electing the next Parish council . They may well never have visited or even driven through the village, as there are no direct main link or access roads between Hazel Park and Aston .

**Case Reference Number | EHDC711453283**

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** Self

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** East Herts

**What is your submission:** I wish to express my opposition to the proposal that Hazel Park be amalgamated with Aston and submit that Hazel park should have a separate identity

I wish to comment on this review regarding Aston and the Hazel Park Development.

I believe it will not benefit either community to be combined until the completion of Hazel Park. I agree with all the reasons why, that have been put forward by Aston Parish Council and therefore support their request that a Governance Review for Aston is held once Hazel Park has reached 50% occupancy, which I understand is expected by 2027.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Submission Details**

**Case Reference Number | EHDC711550309**

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston Parish council

**What is your submission:** Hazel Park is a development in Aston Parish. It needs to be separated from Aston before voter numbers in Hazel Park are enough to unbalance the parish council. By 2027 there will be double the number of voters. By 2030 on completion there will be about 600 Aston voters and 1200 in Hazel Park. As Hazel Park is an urban development, looking to Stevenage its residents have very different interests from the rural community of Aston. Hazel Park needs to be removed from Aston Parish before the number of voters there have a significant influence on our Parish Council

### **Submission Details**

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC711614630

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston Parish

**What is your submission:** We agree with Aston Parish Council that Hazel Park is NOT part of Aston and that they have their own Council.

### **Submission Details**

**Case Reference Number** | EHDC711619776

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** [REDACTED]

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** STEVENAGE

**What is your submission:** I disagree with the draft recommendation. Leaving the creation of a separate Council for Hazel Park until the development is completed is likely to be a poor choice for both communities. Aston is a rural community and not suited to represent Hazel Park, effectively, an urban expansion of Stevenage. A more appropriate arrangement would be to plan for Hazel Park to have separate representation at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the end of 2027 when its population is planned to be greater than Aston's.

**Submission Details**

**Case Reference Number |** EHDC711011373

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Aston

**What is your submission:** It is not appropriate for Hazel Park to remain within Aston parish until at least 2030.. The 2 communities have very little in common and the fact that Hazel Park voters will likely exceed the number of Aston voters well before 2030 will have a detrimental effect on Aston. I fully endorse all the comments made to you by Aston Parish council and hope that reason will prevail.

Aston 2.03

Dear Sirs,

I wish to register my objection to the continued association of Aston and Hazel Park. As you can see from the attached document, there is no logic in this and Hazel Park should be considered as part of Stevenage, not Aston.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

**Aston Parish Council's response to East Herts District Council's Governance Review's draft recommendation that Hazel Park remains within Aston Parish – April 2025:**

We disagree with the Review's draft recommendation. Leaving the creation of a separate Council for Hazel Park until the development is completed, will have a detrimental impact on the two communities for the following reasons:

**1) Community Identity**

- **Aston** - is rural in character and has a strong village community. The seven parish councillors are long term village residents and their regular meetings are held in the cricket and bowls pavilions (both facilities were funded completely by the clubs members). The annual parish meeting is attended by around 70 villagers and is held in the voluntary funded village hall. The village has several clubs and societies that use their own facilities and work closely with the Parish Council to ensure they continue to thrive.

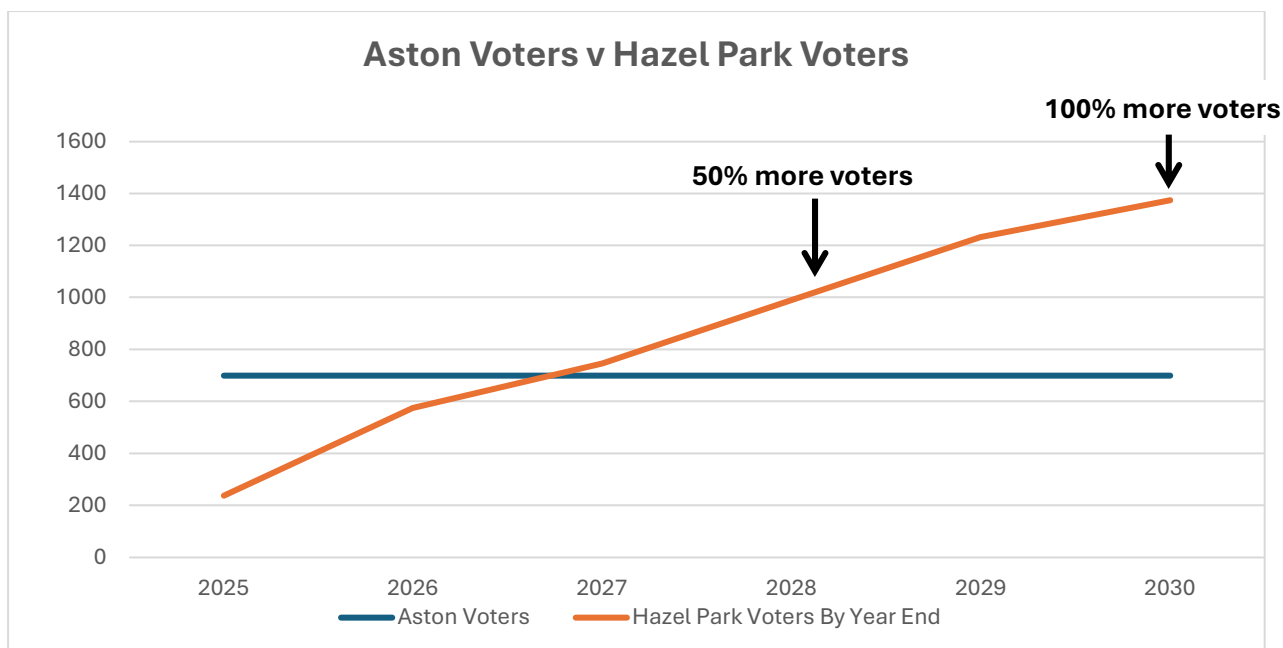
The village is accessed by single track lanes and surrounded by open, pasture and arable fields on three sides. There are several wooded areas, the biggest being Astonbury Woods, an ancient woodland of 55 acres. The village centre is where most people live, separated by fields and woodland from the small satellite hamlets of Frogmore, Hooks Cross and Aston End. Residents in these rural hamlets have strong linkages to the main village. There is a primary school, two pubs, two recreation grounds (both funded by village societies and trusts), a church, a village hall, a farm shop, four working farms, several small holdings, five livery stables, with over fifty horses stabled across the parish and two vineyards.

- **Hazel Park** - will be a densely built urban development, accessed directly from Stevenage and facing onto the main road around the eastern boundary of Stevenage. Planning permission has been granted for a primary school, a community centre, green recreational spaces and five retail outlets. The communal facilities and green spaces will be maintained by the estates management company.

The two communities will have very little in common and the residents will have different outlooks and expectations of identity.

**2) Size**

- **Aston** - currently has c.365 dwellings and c.700 voters.
- **Hazel Park** – on completion, will have 618 dwellings, a 66 bed Care Home and a 64 bed Assisted Living Home. All are currently forecast to be completed by summer 2030 and there could be c.1,400 voters.



The current build plan shows that by the time of the next Parish Council election in May 2027, there will be 348 dwellings out of the 618 built, which is 56% of the total. This could mean that there are almost as many, if not more Hazel Park voters as Aston voters at this election, especially when the potential voters from the 64 bed assisted living home are included. The assisted living home is due to open next year. If the review is delayed until completion in 2030, there will have been a majority of voters from Hazel Park in Aston Elections for 4 years.

With twice as many voters in Hazel Park, managing the priorities of two very different communities will make the day-to-day management of the Parish Council more difficult for the volunteer Councillors than it need be.

### 3) Location

- **Aston** - the access roads to the village centre pass through the satellite hamlets of Frogmore, Hooks Cross and Aston End, as do many of the public footpaths linking them together. There is a bus service twice a day.
- **Hazel Park** - the dwellings are orientated around three access roads which join the main road on the eastern boundary of Stevenage. The houses at the front of the development face onto this main road and are opposite the Chells Manor housing estate. The regular Stevenage bus service will be rerouted through the development giving residents access to the railway station, industrial areas and town centre. The only link between the two communities will be via an unlit footpath from the southwestern corner, across a field to the hamlet of Aston End.

The two communities are physically separated, making it more difficult for linkages to be created.

### 4) Financial

- **Aston** - the Parish Council is able to manage its precept effectively, maintaining and enhancing services and supporting the well being of residents. The addition of Hazel Park dwellings to the tax base for Aston will mean that residents will pay less for their share of the precept for Aston in their Council Tax.
- **Hazel Park** - all roads (bar the spine road), the lighting, the green spaces, recreational equipment and bins are to be managed via a managing agent and paid for by a service charge levied on each householder. The residents will also pay their share of the precept for Aston in their Council Tax.

As the Governance Review is recommending that the communities aren't separated until Hazel Park is completed, this means that until 2031, Hazel Park residents will be unnecessarily paying their service charge (currently £200 per annum) and a precept (currently £63.62 for a Band D). Having their own Council means that Hazel Park can set their own precept and agree how that money is spent within their community.

**To minimise the impacts of not separating the two communities until Hazel Park is completed, we are asking the Governance Review Working Group to recommend holding a governance review for Aston once Hazel Park has reached an occupancy rate of 50%. This is expected to be by the end of 2027.**

Appendix 2 Bishop's Stortford Submission

Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC705205901

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Bishop's Stortford

What is your submission: That Thorley Parish Council be subsumed into Bishop's Stortford Town Council

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Bishop's Stortford Town Councillor

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Bishop's Stortford and Thorley Parish

What is your submission: Move the boundary between Bishop's Stortford and Thorley so the new developments that currently straddle the boundary will be completely in Bishop's Stortford and for EHDC to agree to consider the Town Council absorbing the entirety of Thorley Parish into Bishop's Stortford

Case Reference Number | EHDC705559955

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Bishops Stortford Town Council

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: BISHOP'S STORTFORD

What is your submission: Move the boundary between Bishop's Stortford and Thorley so the new developments that currently straddle the boundary will be completely in Bishop's Stortford and for EHDC to agree to consider the Town Council absorbing the entirety of Thorley Parish into Bishop's Stortford

Case Reference Number | EHDC705160819

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Bishop's Stortford

What is your submission: Move the boundary between Bishop's Stortford and Thorley so the new developments that currently straddle the boundary will be completely in Bishop's Stortford and for EHDC to agree to consider the Town Council absorbing the entirety of Thorley Parish into Bishop's Stortford

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Bishop's Stortford Town Council

Address: Bishop's Stortford Town Council

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Bishop's Stortford

What is your submission: Bishop's Stortford Town Council should wish EHDC to consider: 1. To move the boundary between Bishop's Stortford and Thorley so the new developments that currently straddle the boundary will be completely in Bishop's Stortford; and 2. A possible option of the Town Council absorbing the entirety of Thorley Parish into Bishop's Stortford.

Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC703332018

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: east herts district council.

[REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Thorley Parish Council

What is your submission: Agree that Thorley Parish Council should be incorporated into the Bishop's Stortford Town Council boundaries.. It would also be fully incorporated into the B.S. South Ward boundary. Reason is that the the main roads around this area should become the boundary for the Ward. Thorey Parish Residents all use the facilities within the B.S.T.C. area e.g. shops. schools, community halls etc.



## Appendix 3 Thorley Responses

Case Reference Number | EHDC700533240

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Bishop's Stortford/Thorley

What is your submission: I am opposed to the move of St James' Park from Thorley parish to Bishops Stortford Parish. This would lead to an unnecessary increase in council tax for all residents during a cost of living crisis which is unjustified when the roads are atrocious, the bin collections are moving to 3 weekly, the recycling centre has only just opened after months of being closed. Where exactly would my money be going? This money should go towards Thorley Parish Council.

Case Reference Number | EHDC700768886

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Thorley/ Bishops Stortford

What is your submission: I reject the proposal to move St.James Park to Bishops Stortford. It should stay with Thorley.

THORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Tel: (h) [REDACTED]

COTTAGES,

Email: [REDACTED]

STORTFORD,

HERTFORDSHIRE

4thst April

2025

[REDACTED]  
Legal and Democratic Services

East Herts District Council

Wallfields

Pegs Lane

Hertford

SG13 8EQ

Dear [REDACTED]

THORLEY PARISH COUNCIL - RESPONSE TO THE EAST HERTS COUNCIL  
PROPOSAL OF THE AMENDMENT OF THE THORLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
BOUNDARY WITH BISHOPS STORTFORD

We have seen the draft proposal from Bishops Stortford Town Council which has been adopted by EHDC, but no demonstration from EHDC as to why they have adopted it, and no reference to the proposal put forward by Thorley Parish Council, nor any reasons for rejecting it, despite the mitigation provided by TPC for the proposal. We iterate the great amount of input and direct consultation from TPC in regard to all of the planning issues on the St. James's Park development, and the minimal input from Bishop's Stortford Town Council.

We have read the latest government guidance on possibility of combining already diversified areas of local government, and we do not believe that the guidelines particularly refer to the situation in relation to the boundaries in question, thus we have accordingly submitted a proposal stating boundary changes which we believe will consolidate the Parish of Thorley. Our proposal follows the guidelines which avoids having differing situations in local communities, and forming easily maintained [non- spurious ] permanent boundary lines, all as described in our proposal.

We cannot see anything in the proposal suggested by EHDC which improves any of the suggestions in the government guidelines, nor any demonstration that the said proposal does follow, or augment, the desired outcome of issues in the guidelines. More, we believe that the EHDC proposals diminish community cohesion. In the last boundary governance review Thorley lost the Major part of the St. Michaels Mead development [the only vehicular access into this is via Thorley] and having asked a good number of those residents since the takeover, no advantages to the residents have been noted from the takeover.

As described in our proposal, we iterate that some of the amenities in Thorley are - viz:- Thorley Parish Church and Church Hall, The Emmaus Centre, The Barnabas Centre , all available for hire for functions including weddings and funerals [including burials], the Southern Country Park, The Thorley Scout Group and Old School and Hall [also available for hire], Thorley Parish Allotments, the Bishops Stortford Town Council Allotments, all of the St. James Park 810 house development except for 132 houses on Whittington Way. This includes the Bishop's Stortford High School for Boys and the area where the community centre and associated development will be.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]

## Appendix 4 Sawbridgeworth Responses

[REDACTED]

I understand that some Parish and Town Councils are requesting meetings with the Community Governance Review committee.

As Sawbridgeworth Town Council have repeatedly stated (and voted unanimously) that we do not believe warding to be right for Sawbridgeworth, and yet the draft recommendation is for warding, could we please also ask for a meeting to further explain and set out why warding is not appropriate in this case?

We are happy to host in our Town Council chamber, or to bring a delegation to the next committee meeting.

Our Clerk, Chris, is currently on leave, so we have agreed that I would submit this request, but he is copied in to this email for reference.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]tt

East Herts District Councillor

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC702171800

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** District and town councillor

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:**

Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** I object to Sawbridgeworth being warded. By having the election open to all candidates across the town it is equal and fair. On the Town Council we have a mix of parties and independents because all stand for the whole town, not just small areas. In being warded it can become divisive and acrimonious.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC705197418

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:**

Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** Don't impose a structure where one is not needed and has been rejected several times by our town council.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC696949918

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal of dividing Sawbridgeworth into separate electoral wards. Our current system, where the town elects councillors collectively, ensures that each councillor remains accountable to all residents equally. This holistic approach fosters unity and shared responsibility among elected representatives, promoting decisions that consider the interests of the entire community rather than specific geographical segments. Introducing wards risks fragmenting our community, potentially leading to division and localised politics that prioritise individual ward interests over the broader welfare of Sawbridgeworth. Smaller wards may also discourage collaboration between councillors, creating unnecessary competition and diluting the effectiveness of collective town representation. Moreover, our town is of a size and demographic that does not necessitate ward divisions. The

current system allows voters to choose from a wider pool of candidates, enabling greater democratic choice and encouraging representatives to consider diverse perspectives and needs. Wards would limit voter options, reducing choice and potentially marginalizing certain areas or groups. In short, maintaining our current electoral system ensures accountability, promotes unity, and preserves the democratic strength and collective identity of Sawbridgeworth. For these reasons, I am against these proposals.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC696238105

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: East Herts District Councillor

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** Unlike some other towns of a similar size, it does not make sense to ward Sawbridgeworth. The town lies on a cross-roads, on the main route between Harlow and Bishop's Stortford. This means that in most cases an issue in one part of the town has an impact on the other parts of the town. As such, Sawbridgeworth Town Councillors works collaboratively as a group of 12 people from across the community to address issues across the whole community. This is also reflective of the very strong 'village-style' sense of community found in Sawbridgeworth. The primary motive for bringing in warding would be to improve representation, but given the close-knit nature of the Sawbridgeworth community, residents are already well-represented - as shown by the mix of parties (and independents) on the Town Council. Seeking to shave time off an election count once every four years should not be a legitimate reason to carve up what works well as a cohesive Town Council. The Town Council has consistently, unanimously, and on a cross-party basis voted against warding, and this position remains unchanged. Furthermore, the draft recommendation is to create wards based on the current polling districts - this would not work due to the significant variance in the size of electorate in each polling district: ranging from 179 voters in SAW2 to 3,648 voters in SAW1. Even if you allocated the number of councillors based on the polling district's percentage of the total electorate, you would have a ratio of 608 residents to 1 town councillor in SAW1 and 179:1 in SAW2. Currently - with 7,129 electors and 12 whole-town councillors, the ratio is 594:1; so surely anything which worsens this ratio is not beneficial to representation. We strongly reject the recommendation to ward Sawbridgeworth, and urge the review committee to maintain the status quo in Sawbridgeworth.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC696708638

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** The inclusion of Sawbridgeworth in the review was initiated by officers, not by the town council nor by residents. There has never been any explicit demand for this. The geography of the town is quite tight and cohesive, and there is a strong local identity being situated between two much large towns. Most of the social and cultural facilities are in the town centre. At the time I joined the town council in 2007 it was very often the case that elections were unopposed owing to there not being a fell complement of candidates and co-option was common. Only since 2015 has there a few more candidates than the required 12. When there are issues residents come to the full council meetings to express their views as they tend to relate to the town council as a body rather than to individual councillors. This is often the case for planning and licensing issues. Equally Sawbridgeworth is not warded for District so residents can go to any of the three councillors. For the town council being un warded it provides the most fair mechanism for candidates of any party and especially for independents to be elected since residents can vote for the entire body of candidates with or without political bias and it creates the purest type of proportional representation since the 12 candidates with the highest votes are always elected. This is not always the case in warded areas where turnouts could be different and candidates could be elected with a lower vote than an unsuccessful one in another ward. This was not requested locally and should not be imposed.

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** Our Cllrs have repeatedly voted against having wards. Any imposition of wards by EHDC would be undemocratic and dictatorial. Our Town Council works very well as it is. Consultation is not welcome as our views locally have been signposted. On the basis that EHDC is leaderless at the moment and facing abolition by this Government this is not the right time to be discussing changing our Towns representation which is working well. Of course this could be a political ploy to change the status [quo.No](#) Change

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC696434869

---

Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Sawbridgeworth

**What is your submission:** I strongly disagree with the proposal to ward Sawbridgeworth for several reasons. 1/ The town is like a village in terms of the links between people and areas - we do not see ourselves as a town of separate locations, but rather as a community with common interests and aims. 2/ The vast majority of issues and concerns are town-wide e.g. parking, transport, community events etc. Therefore, warding the town would put artificial barriers in place that prevent the town working cohesively. 3/ Warding would be divisive pitting area against area in terms of projects, finding funding and prioritising issues. 4/ The ward numbering suggested means some areas are woefully underrepresented while others are over represented. 5/ Changing to a warded system simply to reduce time on election night is not a valid reason for making such changes that would have a detrimental impact on Sawbridgeworth.



**Sawbridgeworth Town Council**

**Sayesbury Manor. Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth  
Hertfordshire CM21 9AN  
Tel: 01279 724537  
MAYOR**



██████████  
e-mail: [info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk)

**TOWN CLERK**

web: [www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk](http://www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk) ██████████

**Dip CSMP®**

Subject: Objection to Warding Proposal in the Community Governance Review

Date: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear ██████████

I am writing on behalf of the Sawbridgeworth Town Council to express our strong objection to the proposal of warding our town as part of the ongoing Community Governance Review. This decision has been unanimously agreed upon by all twelve Sawbridgeworth Town Councillors on a cross-party basis.

The Town Council firmly believes that warding is not in the best interest of our community. We have carefully considered the implications and have concluded that such a change would not enhance the governance or representation of our residents. Instead, it would create unnecessary divisions and complexities within our town.

We have made our position clear on two separate occasions via email from me, the Town Clerk, on 19th August 2024 and 4th November 2024. Despite this, the Council's view remains unchanged.

We urge the East Herts District Council to respect the unanimous decision of the Sawbridgeworth Town Council and to exclude our town from any warding proposals. Our community's unity and effective governance are of paramount importance, and we believe that maintaining our current structure best serves these goals.

We trust that you will give due consideration to our position and look forward to your favourable response.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

Case Reference Number | EHDC696395283

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: Councillor [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Sawbridgeworth

What is your submission: I agree with warding Sawbridgeworth I think if you had a pocket of voters voting for a percific candidate they will be represented in that ward

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC696434869

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Sawbridgeworth

What is your submission: I strongly disagree with the proposal to ward Sawbridgeworth for several reasons. 1/ The town is like a village in terms of the links between people and areas - we do not see ourselves as a town of separate locations, but rather as a community with common interests and aims. 2/ The vast majority of issues and concerns are town-wide e.g. parking, transport, community events etc. Therefore, warding the town would put artificial barriers in place that prevent the town working cohesively. 3/ Warding would be divisive pitting area against area in terms of projects, finding funding and prioritising issues. 4/ The ward numbering suggested means some areas are woefully underrepresented while others are over represented. 5/ Changing to a warded system simply to reduce time on election night is not a valid reason for making such changes that would have a detrimental impact on Sawbridgeworth.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC709840847

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:** Buntingford Town Council

**Address:** The Manor House

**Email Address:** [clerk@buntingford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@buntingford-tc.gov.uk)

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Buntingford

**What is your submission:** The Town Council responded to the previous consultation in that it is not felt necessary to ward Buntingford Town. It's felt that the size of the town does not justify warding.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC705239869

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**Full Name:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation:**

**Address:** [REDACTED]

**Email Address:** [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:**  
Buntingford

**What is your submission:** With the town growing fast and with the current Town Council setup consisting of 12 Councillors, I would suggest warding the town into 4 parts

Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC705200561

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: East Herts District Council

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Buntingford

What is your submission: I am in favour of the recommendation to ward Buntingford. I would be in favour of four wards, rather than two suggested in the draft recommendations as the town is growing rapidly and better representation would be achieved with four wards in the town

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC712884953

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [clerk@stansteadabbottsparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stansteadabbottsparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?: Stanstead Abbots

**What is your submission:** In response to the original consultation Stanstead Abbots Parish Council confirmed that they would be interested in exploring the possibility of merging Stanstead Abbots Parish Council with Stanstead St Margarets Parish Council together with the area of Great Amwell Parish Council known as the Folly so that the new Parish area would align with the Neighbourhood Plan area. Our response was as follows. "We would like to investigate merging with Stanstead St Margarets Parish Council and possibly the part of Great Amwell parish that lies within the Neighbourhood Plan area as agreed with East Herts District Council" It was always envisaged that following our response to the consultation there would be discussions around how any new council would be constituted and how any interim arrangements would be finalised including whether the enlarged area would be warded, how many councillors there would be, how the finances would be rearranged etc. No discussions were forthcoming and when the recommendations were published, they included a recommendation that the two parishes should be combined and that both Parish Councils were in favour of the change which is not what was said in the response to the consultation. Following the initial consultation the Government has called for a wide-ranging revision of district and county councils with the introduction of unitary authorities across the county and this change introduces uncertainty over the structure of local government. This reorganisation makes little or no reference to Parish and Town Councils who are currently the most local tier of local government. Against this background the Stanstead Abbots Parish Council believe that any merging of the two parishes is premature as it is unclear what, if any, additional functions the Parish and Town councils will be required/asked to take on and what, if any, resources would be provided to enable them to fulfil any expanded role. Parish Councils are almost entirely run by volunteers and apart from the Clerks tend to have no staff to take on additional roles. Also as has been said above there have been no discussions with the district council about the mechanics of any change which should be a pre-requisite for making a decision as to whether to go ahead with the merger or not. For these reasons Stanstead Abbots Parish

Council are now not in favour of any amalgamation as the council feels that it is premature and that the original expression of interest in merging has been misinterpreted by the working group as being a vote in favour of merging when it was solely an expression of interest in exploring the possibility further.

## Submission Details

Case Reference Number | EHDC712046760

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Full Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation:

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

**Which town/parish council or area does your submission relate to?:** Stanstead Abbots

**What is your submission:** I have a lot of concerns with the proposal to merge Stanstead Abbots Parish council with St Margarets. These two Parishes are very different and have different needs. Already a number of Stanstead Abbots Prish Councillors do not live here and have been pushing their own agenda for a numbe of years. They devised the neighbourhood plan and deliberately fudged some of the facts to push new housing in Netherfield Lane and avoid having building in their own area. If the two Parishes merge it is clear that the decisions made will be to the benefit of St Margarets and the detriment of Stanstead Abbots. With flooding a big issue for residents of Marsh Lane and Roydon Road and Netherfield Lane I feel that combining the Parishes would reult in the needs of St Margarets being prioritised and Stanstead Abbots residents suffer.

## Appendix 7 Brent Pelham Submission

Minutes dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1976 for the **Brent Pelham Parish Council** chaired by Captain Barclay record the formation of a grouped Parish Council with Meesden. Minutes dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 1976 up to and including 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1977 are for "**Brent Pelham and Meesden Grouped Parish Council**". Minutes dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 1977 onwards stop using the word Grouped, but here is no actual mention in the minutes of this.

██████████ cc'd here may be able to add further comments on this.

████████████████████ – Clerk for Brent Pelham & Meesden Parish Council

Minutes of 1976 Parish Annual Meeting held on the 15th April 1976.

There were fifteen residents present.  
Captain Barclay was elected Chairman for the coming year on the nomination of Mr Abbott, seconded by Mr Payne and carried unanimously.  
Mr Spoonman was proposed as Secretary by Captain Barclay, seconded by Mr Abbott and carried unanimously.

Captain Barclay took the Chair and welcomed Mrs Barbara Lyons, one of our East Herts District Councillors, Mr Reynolds, the other Councillor, and his apologies, as did the Rev Roger Jackson, the Chairman expressed the feelings wishes for success in the forthcoming elections to 200 District Councillors.

1. The Minutes of the meeting of 15th October 1975 were read, agreed and signed.
2. Matters arising.

a) Old Paddock Farm. It was reported that the East Herts District Council had now accepted Captain Barclay's offer of land in the Greenway and the prospects for the same were therefore a little brighter. The plea the Chairman proffered was opposite the Council house, consent for other residents to keep an eye on the old people.  
b) Planning applications. The original application (1/220/75) relating to the new bungalow (now Brent Cottage) had not been processed with and the Secretary had now ascertained that it was proposed to refurbish the existing structure. Subsequent applications had been received and dealt with, for access (1/400/76) and for a double garage (1/406/76). It was alleged that the Council was about to send plans to the planning office (1/353/75) although the parish had asked that it should see the plans before they were agreed. (It was subsequently ascertained from East Herts District Council Planning Dept that no plans had as yet been received for the house).

c) Grouping of parishes. Parish Council with Haverhill. The Chairman explained the situation was referred to the county grouping order prepared by the Council. Various points about the order were explained to the meeting and the Secretary gave a statement of the advantages of forming a parish council jointly with Haverhill. Chiefly, perhaps it enables them to select who it wanted to be grouped with. The District Council had power to assign parishes and might suggest a grouping which would not be to the meeting liking. The District Council had tried to get the villages to set up the grouping by the time of the local government elections (May 6th 1976) but this had been impracticable at the parish meetings were to be consulted as they had asked. The Council then said that the meeting he would have to make the next elections in 1979 but the Herts Association of Parish Councils had been consulted and had taken legal advice which was to the effect that there was no reason why the grouped parish council should not be set up at any time.

It was then proposed by Mr Spoonman and seconded by Mrs Councillor that the grouping order be ignored subject to the following amendments to enable a date for the constitution to be arranged later this year.

Article 4 for the collation election of parish councillors in 1978 substitute that an election to be held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1978 and leave out "ordinary" where it appears in the second place.

Article 5 for the Annual substitute "the first" for "the 1978" substitute "1976" and add "within 18 days of the election of the first parish councillors and the said Parish meeting shall be, and shall be treated as, the annual meeting of the parish Parish Council for 1976".

This proposition was carried unanimously.

It was agreed by the meeting (although the democratic process meant that any properly qualified person could stand as a Parish councillor) that Captain Barclay should stand and Nick Harris should be nominated as Brent Cottage councillor.

d) Herts Association of Parish Councils. Brent Herts had been offered membership free of charge during this financial year. The Secretary reported that he had received a lot of help from the Association and had attended one of their courses. He recommended that the offer be accepted and this was agreed.

e) Heavy traffic through the village. The Secretary referred to his correspondence with the County Council during which the responsibility of dealing or restricting heavy traffic from the village had become apparent. There might be an improvement when there was provision for East West movement of heavy traffic within the county. In the meantime both the County and District Councils had been made aware of Brent Paddock's problems and the only other worthwhile way was to note the number and times of the heavy lorries passing through the village and when several cases were noted to refer to the relevant. The Secretary said he would be glad to do it if he was given the information.