

<b>Issue No.</b>	<b>12. Vision 2031 Strategic Site "North-West Haverhill"</b>
<b>Area or Properties Under Review</b>	The review will look at whether or not existing parish governance arrangements should be amended in respect of new homes and/or employment land included in the strategic growth site. If amendments are needed, this could be through changes to existing parish boundaries or wards and/or the creation of new parish(es).
<b>Parishes</b>	Haverhill Little Wrating Withersfield
<b>Borough Ward</b>	Haverhill North Withersfield
<b>County Divisions</b>	Clare Haverhill Cangle
<b>Method of Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter to Parish and Town Councils</li> <li>• Emails to elected representatives (Borough, County and MP)</li> <li>• Email to Residents' and Community Associations (if applicable)</li> <li>• Letters/emails to other stakeholders (see Appendix C)</li> <li>• Online questionnaire available for respondents to use</li> </ul>
<b>Projected electorate, warding arrangements and consequential impacts</b>	<p>The Autumn 2015 electorate of Little Wrating Parish was 111. Haverhill Parish's electorate was 18,202. The estimate for <i>additional</i> electorate in relation to the whole of the Vision 2031 site is 1,909 electors i.e. when fully built. A more detailed five year electorate forecast will be prepared during phase 2 of the review relating to any recommendation made.</p> <p>The boundary of Haverhill was moved at the last CGR in 2010 to incorporate the growth site, but is included in this review along with the other growth sites for completeness. No-one has suggested moving the properties out of Haverhill, so the main issue is therefore one of whether to make a further adjustment to the external town boundary.</p> <p>A key point with this issue, however, is that a consequential change was not made to the borough ward and county division boundaries at the time of the last CGR as there were no electors involved (or any other consequential changes required elsewhere in the Borough). So these are not currently coterminous with the parish boundary. It is therefore recommended that this issue is resolved with the LGBCE as a consequential amendment to this review (or as part of the next electoral review) irrespective of whether the parish boundary changes.</p>
<b>Analysis</b>	There is consensus between the Town Council and Little Wrating that the properties from the growth site should remain in Haverhill Parish. Of the small number of local electors and councillors who commented, this is also the preferred course of action for the majority. There is, however, not agreement on whether to leave the boundary as it is, or to make a minor adjustment, and this is a matter the Working Party will need to address at this meeting.

## Summary of comments received during Phase 1

### A. Response of Haverhill Town Council

***Important note: Haverhill Town Council has submitted one response to all of the issues affecting its parish. As it would be hard to separate out the text between all issues, and to avoid repetition it is included in full under this issue only.***

We are proposing that the three identified development sites in the CGR consultation documents for Haverhill area are most appropriately considered as part of Haverhill and therefore the boundary is amended to suit. We believe that the "status quo" would harm village parishes and be unfair to Haverhill. The argument for this boundary change is set out within this document, relative to the criteria described by the Borough in their consultation guidance.

*1 - Impact on interests, identities and community cohesion Community governance arrangements should reflect the identity and interests of local communities.*

Electors should be able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident as this sense of community lends strength and legitimacy to the parish structure.

Hanchett End to Withersfield: There is no break in the Built Up Area Boundary between Hanchett End and the rest of Haverhill. However, to reach the main settlement of Withersfield the electors of Hanchett End clearly leave their settlement and follow a road with a national speed limit, crossing open farmland and only then encounter the [welcome to] Withersfield sign which is set on the outskirts of the village at the beginning of a 30mph zone. The "Welcome to" Haverhill sign is 200m west of the Spirit of Enterprise Roundabout, well inside what is currently Withersfield parish.

The NW Haverhill development is almost entirely within Haverhill – probably only back gardens would be in Little Wratting. We think there can be little argument against the boundary being moved to ensure all of a property lies within a single parish.

NE Haverhill to Little Wratting: The new development would form a continuous built up area with Haverhill and the NW Haverhill development. It would have no spatial relationship to the very small hamlet of Little Wratting and in terms of clearly identifying the parish which electors are resident in, it would be nonsensical to split a new development over two or more parishes.

NE Haverhill to Kedington: There are no direct roads proposed for connecting the Great Wilsey development to Kedington and the only way new residents could reach the village to take part in community activities including voting would be to drive into Haverhill, through it and then through either Little Wratting or Calford Green to arrive in the village centre. By contrast, residents of the Great Wilsey development could walk easily directly to Haverhill town centre, schools and other community facilities.

*2 - In terms of geography, it is also desirable for parish boundaries to be readily identifiable if possible. This can be by reference to physical features on the ground, or may follow adopted electoral ward boundaries in the Borough.*

Hanchett End: The location of the site is clearly within a triangle formed by the old and new A1307, adjacent to the "Spirit of Enterprise" symbol associated with Haverhill. Satellite pictures show a very clear man-made and separate, but just as clear, natural boundary. HTC has proposed a boundary that follows these features. As this would leave a rather impractical 200m wide section of Withersfield parish at the A1307, the proposal is to take the Haverhill boundary to the Cambridge border.

NW Haverhill: This development is almost entirely within the Haverhill parish boundary

already. In the unlikely event that any new homes fall outside the current boundary, it may only be a section of garden. The proposal is that the boundary encompasses the area set aside for the development, including the area north of Hales Barn Road which has a roundabout already constructed to allow the land to be developed in the medium future.

Great Wilsey: NE Haverhill as a development has met with a degree of hostility from some residents of Kedington, whose community has campaigned for the clearest demarcation between it and Kedington. The current proposals link only with Haverhill by means of road connectivity and schools. Therefore a clear geographical boundary is proposed by the developers, putting the development clearly 'in with' Haverhill, which this Council welcomes.

In relation to both NW Haverhill and Great Wilsey, the following is a quote from Great Wrating Parish Council minutes 18/11/10:

*5. NW Haverhill Development Update: GA updated the Council that he has recently met with Rob Maidment from Little Wrating Parish regarding the Masterplan including North West Haverhill. They will next be meeting in December. GA is happy to draft letter objecting to the density and height of the proposed new housing. He will also request that housing is of executive type and there be a good buffer of trees between Haverhill and the Wrattings.*

*6. Boundary Changes to Little Wrating: As above GA has been in talks with Little Wrating Parish and proposed changes to the boundary that would possibly make approx 22 houses from Little Wrating become part of Haverhill. It is being discussed that the remainder of Little Wrating will become part of the Great Wrating and hence the Parish Council. If this goes ahead, there will be a formal consultation.*

Boundary with Essex: The proposal moves the county boundary to enclose Haverhill Golf Course within Haverhill rather than be split across two counties and three parishes. The proposed boundary then follows the ridge line westward, to the south of the bypass before rejoining the existing county boundary. This removes all of the issues caused by the boundary criss-crossing this road.

3 - Community governance should also help with community cohesion i.e. how the different groups that make up communities get on with each other and whether they have a shared sense of what they want for their area.

Haverhill Town Council recognises that although the proposed developments are not going to spring up quickly, it is the case that a large influx of new people does have the potential to change a community. In particular, with no shared sense of history and by sitting outside of the central settlement of the parishes of Withersfield, Little Wrating and Kedington, there will not be a shared sense of what the new community needs and what the existing community have historically planned for themselves.

In relation to Little Wrating, HTC note this small settlement does not have a Parish Council. It should hold a Parish Meeting at least annually but we were unable to find details of when this last happened so do not know the wishes of this community in regard to boundary change, other than what was said at Great Wrating Parish Council in 2010 (above). We assume that this very small hamlet with 111 voters has developed its own identity which the proposed Great Wilsey Development would undoubtedly drown out if allocated into that parish. We assume that the people of Little Wrating do not want this to happen.

4 - A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

The 2031 balance of electors in the small parishes suggests that even with warding, the decision making power would shift to be with the new developments, as the electors in those hugely out-number and can out-vote the existing voters if the existing boundaries were retained.

Furthermore, the existing community facilities may not be sufficient to cope with quadrupling of the population, requiring new community facilities to be built. Naturally, the commitment of developers to provide community space within the new developments, coupled with the weight of population being located there, means new provision will be on those new developments rather than in the current parish centre. Unless the parishes intend to maintain multiple meeting spaces, this could lead to the existing village halls being sold off, to the detriment of the original locals, or if they are kept for their historical social value to the established community, create a social split developing between the established and new population having separate meeting spaces.

5 - In carrying out the CGR the Borough Council should reject any proposals which it has reason to believe will act against the interests of either the local community or surrounding communities, particularly where the effect would be likely to damage community cohesion.

As mentioned above, there is a potential threat to community cohesion of the small parishes if the existing population find they lose power on their parish council and in community-based decision making lose out to the voting power of the new development. Discussions over issues such as traffic-calming would be reversed, as the new majority would not experience or understand traffic issues other than that they want to drive freely through their own village, rather than agree to speed mitigation. There is a real risk that the outcome is resentment or the new community being excluded in order to 'protect' the existing order of things in a village parish.

By moving the boundary, the new developments will be joined 'officially' to Haverhill and to a very well-resourced community which has experience of maintaining cohesion in a large town. The incremental costs of expansion of provision are proportionately much less. It also prevents the scenarios described above, allowing the small surrounding communities to continue with 'business as usual' as clearly defined and identified village parishes.

6 - It is also desirable that any new arrangements 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. Therefore, when sharing your views on this CGR you might like to tell us how your proposal will:

i. Help create distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and a strong 'sense of place';

The developments proposed for Haverhill have been distinctly and exclusively referred to as Haverhill developments. The sense of place, community of interest distinctiveness has been "Haverhill". Haverhill is a large town and has an established parish infrastructure to which these developments are significant but certainly not overwhelming additions. In proposing boundaries, Haverhill Town Council has considered the sense of place 'arriving home' – that sense of arriving back into your home town. From the West, the Spirit of Enterprise is the waymarker for Haverhill. From the East, it is more complicated because of the proximity of Little Wrattling, but certainly the Fox Public House is the beginning of current continuous habitation. Whether the owners of the homes on the A143 opposite the new Great Wilsey development would consent to being in Haverhill is a matter for them, but the proposed roundabout to serve the new development is likely to be a good marker for 'arrival' at Haverhill from Bury St Edmunds.

From the south, the boundary is defined by the county and borough boundary which falls outside this consultation. However, the argument for sense of place very strongly

suggests that the administrative boundaries need to reflect the pattern of everyday life. The roundabout at Sturmer should, along with the A1307 bypass, all clearly be inside Haverhill. For the county boundary to leave isolated stretches of road in a different county to the stretches either side is very unsatisfactory, as is having a county boundary within the built-up area boundary of the town. The southern boundary should follow the ridge line to the south and west of Haverhill. This has been illustrated on enclosed maps, for reference.

ii. Reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the affected area;

The proposed road networks for these developments are facing Haverhill; the developers have been encouraged to do this and discouraged from improving links to the actual parish centres, often by those parishes themselves. If any of the developments are instead to be linked with those smaller parishes after all, it will be a vital necessity to revisit road layouts to create the sense of place linked with the smaller parishes, so everyday life takes families, school journeys and commuters into the heart of those communities. Clearly road widening within those parish centres may also be necessary to accommodate the thousands of new residents.

iii. Build upon what new and existing communities have in common, and serve everyone in those communities;

Haverhill is a community of "incomers", to use a phrase from village life. Everyone has a story about where their family lived before moving to Haverhill. The new communities will therefore have the same life narrative as the existing community. In joining the Haverhill community, it will be easier for new families to fit in. It is more difficult to build relations and feel part of a community when that existing community has been campaigning against your home being built.

iv. Encourage a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride;

Haverhill is a forward looking and positive community which has a history of welcoming change. The town has welcomed proposals for the new developments and recently overwhelmingly supported proposals for the Town Centre Masterplan based on creating a town centre to service the enlarged population. It has an active town council that puts on a large number of events and activities to boost civic pride on a scale that can cope with many hundreds more people turning up to them.

v. Generate a common interest in parish affairs and improve participation in elections; and/or

The capacity of Haverhill Town Council to engage with new communities already exists. It will be necessary to review the Town warding, preferably keeping this coterminous with Borough warding. Given the distance and road conditions, it is a barrier to participation in elections for residents of Hanchett End to walk to Withersfield Polling station in the village hall, along a road with a national speed limit but without a pavement. It is perfectly realistic for those same electors to instead walk to the Haverhill polling station at Sainsbury's in Hanchett End itself. Whilst Hanchett End voters could have a separate polling station at Sainsbury's, it would hardly be in the spirit of generating a common interest in parish affairs for those 'Withersfield' electors to be told they cannot go and vote alongside their fellow parish electors.

Requiring Great Wilsey electors to vote in Kedington itself would be impractical, due to the distance necessary to travel and the number of voters allocated to the Community Centre. Undoubtedly a separate polling station would be required, which would create the same sense of remoteness to village affairs as described for Hanchett End.

Whilst the need for a separate polling station would still be the case with Great Wilsey in Haverhill, that perfectly chimes with the shared identity of living in a town with multiple

polling stations.

vi. Promote strong and inclusive local community organisations and activities.

Haverhill has a range of thriving social and sporting organisations for new people to join. There is something for everyone within the town. The Town Council arranges a good mix of community events around the town which are used to promote the many clubs and organisations in town, plus services offered by other principle councils. There is a large cinema complex, leisure centre and thriving Arts Centre.

7 - Impact on effective and convenient governance

An important aspect to the CGR is ensuring that local people have a say in the way their neighbourhoods are managed, with an effective parish level organisation able to do that on their behalf. The convenience and quality of services provided at parish level is also important. Therefore, when sharing your views on this CGR you might like to tell us how your proposal will:

i. Help a community to be well run, with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership;

The proposed change of boundary will enable a review of the parish warding to provide equitable representation of the existing and new population.

Little Wratting does not have a parish council. If the boundaries were not moved, the approximate 1200 new electors would outnumber the existing electorate 10:1. Little Wratting would be a tiny adjunct to the main population of the parish and be ran from and represented by, people from the new development. If this is an acceptable scenario for the existing population, then Little Wratting as a whole might as well be subsumed in its entirety into Haverhill. Our assumption is that even without a parish council the residents of Little Wratting have a sense of place they want to retain. For that reason alone, it is important to move the boundary. It may be a good opportunity to revisit the 2010 discussions between Great Wratting Parish Council and the residents of Little Wratting to become a single parish.

The residents of properties north of Melbourne Bridge have found Haverhill is now on their doorstep. Future development will wrap around that small community. Whether many of the current residents have known the situation any different to how it is now, we do not know. However, given that it is now physically part of Haverhill and is some distance from the centre of Withersfield suggests they need a voice representing their views about Haverhill more than Withersfield.

ii. Give easy access to good quality local services for new and existing residents;

The proposed road layouts of the new developments link them to Haverhill. Naturally they will find the services and facilities provided for the community through the precept easy to access and relevant, being already designed for a large population.

iii. Improve the capacity of a parish council to deliver better services and to represent the community's interests effectively; and/or

Whatever decision is eventually made, the number of additional new homes will provide a precept income which can be used to deliver better services. The challenge for the village parishes is how to balance the needs of the two populations and represent all the interests equally. The precept cannot just be harvested from the new population to be spent on the existing settlement. Haverhill Town Council believes that the scale of these developments would be destabilising for village parishes and for that reason anticipates that none will want the boundaries to be left unchanged. The developments are designed to be part of Haverhill and the town council offers services that can be extended as necessary to benefit them.

iv. Give users of parish services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them, as well as a fair share of the costs.

The new developments face Haverhill and are marketed on the back of the benefits of being part of Haverhill. Haverhill has a strong Town Council, with no vacancies and all four wards were contested at the last elections. In terms of fair share of costs, the developers have worked hard to 'protect' villages such as Kedington from the impact of new homes. It would be difficult to argue that the new residents would not be accessing Haverhill services. Having created 'separation' between smaller settlements and the new developments, it would be difficult for the new community to be actively involved in decision making in the parishes or access facilities in those village centres to which they would have contributed.

8 - The national guidance is clear that the key issue for the CGR is how best to provide the conditions for effective and convenient local government in the long-term. However, the Borough Council recognises that it is inevitable that parish precepts (the parish council's share of the Council Tax) will influence some consultation responses for the CGR.

- Haverhill £111.75
- Kedington £69.52
- Little Wratting £0.00 (no parish Council)
- Withersfield £28.85

It is noted that the Haverhill precept is the highest of the four parishes and therefore it is quite possible existing residents of parishes who potentially would be brought into Haverhill would resist a boundary change on the basis that they can access Haverhill services without having to pay for them. We are confident that the Borough will recognise that this is an understandable but unfair stance for residents to take, which if anything underlines the importance of change.

9 - Impact on electoral arrangements. The Borough Council will pay particular attention to existing levels of representation, the broad pattern of existing council sizes and the take-up of seats at elections in its consideration of this matter. Parishes wishing to increase numbers of councillors must give strong reasons for doing so. Parishes can also be divided into wards where the number and distribution of local government electors, or other local factors, would make a single election of councillors impractical or inconvenient.

- Haverhill: 16 seats all contested in May 2015, 25 candidates, 16 elected
- Kedington: 9 seats uncontested in May 2015, 9 Councillors elected
- Little Wratting: No Parish Council, no details of election of Chairman of parish meeting.
- Withersfield: 7 seats uncontested, 2 remain vacant at May 2015

From the above, it can be clearly seen that Haverhill Town Council is a democratically elected body which has a vibrant political foundation to it.

10 - The Government's guidance is that the warding of parishes in largely rural areas that are based predominantly on a single centrally-located village may not be justified.

Haverhill agrees that warding existing small parishes would not resolve the issue of balance between the historic centrally located village and housing on the periphery of Haverhill. The balance of electors would still leave the existing residents outnumbered, even if they were guaranteed under warding to have a representative Councillor. It would

potentially be a source of community disharmony that villagers find their representation 'relegated' from all Councillors to perhaps one or two.

11 - When considering parish ward boundaries the Borough Council should consider the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties.

Haverhill's proposals follow easily identifiable boundaries based on the principle of "arriving home" to Haverhill – the point at which most residents, living anywhere in Haverhill, believe they have entered the town. Below are ten images of Haverhill which people will recognise – however none of them are currently within the parish boundary. As Haverhill landmarks, they should be within the town.



Clockwise:

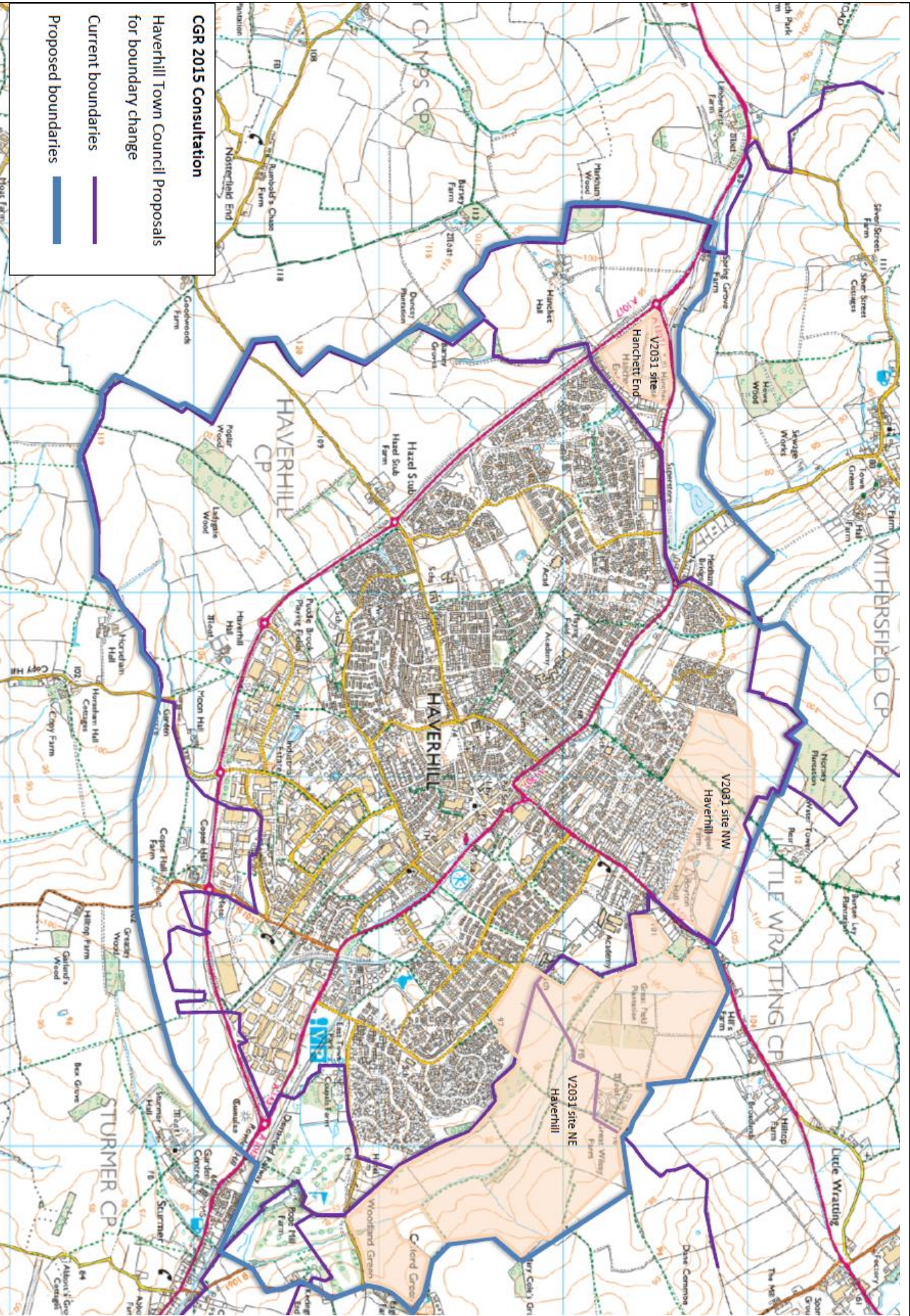
1. Flying Shuttle, Withersfield
2. Haverhill Business Park, Essex
3. Culina Distribution, Essex
4. 'Welcome to Haverhill' sign, Withersfield
5. Haverhill Research Park, Withersfield
6. Haverhill Spirit of Enterprise, Withersfield
7. Sturmer Road Roundabout, Sturmer
8. Days Inn, Essex – including Haverhill Tourist Information
9. 'Essex' sign in middle of the roundabout
10. The Fox Public House, Little Wratting





**CGR 2015 Consultation**  
**Haverhill Town Council Proposals**  
 for boundary change

Current boundaries ————  
 Proposed boundaries ————



## **B. Response of Little Wratting Parish Meeting**

For reasons of practicality and community the boundary should remain "as is" having already been changed in last CGR to take account of pending NW Haverhill development.

## **C. Response of Withersfield Parish Council**

It was agreed that the Parish Council should take no formal view at this particular point in time but should address the full consultation in due course. In the meantime, parishioners are being encouraged to respond individually to the current online survey. This has been done through an insert which was placed in the September edition of Withersfield News; the insert was written by the Chairman immediately following the meeting and the newsletter has now been distributed, with extra copies being delivered to residents of The Arboretum estate. Once firm proposals have been received, the Parish Council will hold an open meeting to which all parishioners will be invited.

## **D. Local Electors**

One local elector emailed the Council to comment:

*"As a resident of Haverhill I believe that to be just and fair the parish Boundary for Haverhill should be expanded to include all areas where new developments are taking place, or about to take place or planned to take place. In fact it would be much fairer on the villages that border Haverhill for them to be brought into an expanded Haverhill as they would then have a say in all things concerning our town."*

14 other local electors responded directly to the Borough Council using the online questionnaire. One respondent identified themselves as a town councillor.

- 10 of the 14 (including the town councillor) supported moving the town council boundary outwards so all of the new properties are in the Haverhill parish (i.e. Haverhill Town Council)
  - 8 felt it would improve the capacity of the town council to deliver better services and to represent the community's interests effectively.
  - 6 felt it would create a strong sense of community identity.
  - 4 felt it would generate interest in town affairs and improve participation in elections, local organisations and community activities.
  - 1 felt it would reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common.
  - 1 felt it would give easy access to good quality local services for new and existing residents.

In support of their preferences, two commented:

- *"There are no 'natural' boundaries for these areas. There is a risk of communities losing their discrete identities as separations between the Town and villages encroach. Residents in the development areas will use shopping and leisure facilities in Haverhill, they ought to have influence in decisions affecting those facilities. Haverhill can absorb the residents whereas the village communities may be overwhelmed by substantial numbers of new residents. The sprawl of residents, beyond traditional village borders, will erode the character and nature of the parish communities."*
- *"The High Street / Queen Street are run down, and full of charity shops, No need to ever go into Haverhill Town centre."*

- The remaining 4 electors all called for no change to the current parish/town council boundaries i.e. the new properties will be in Little Wrattling or Haverhill parishes (as applicable).
  - All 4 felt it would improve the capacity of the parish council/meeting to deliver better services and to represent the community's interests effectively.
  - 2 felt it would create a strong sense of community identity.
  - 1 felt it would generate interest in town affairs and improve participation in elections, local organisations and community activities.

All four commented in support of their preferences, but at least two of the comments related to the impact on Kedington (and were from Kedington residents), so are recorded in issue 13 instead of below. However the sentiment in them was similar to the final of the following two comments:

- *"I have lived at the address for 17 years, and would like my house to stay as Little Wrattling ,also the new houses, being in Little Wrattling means the Little Wrattling community would grow and build a better parish"*
- *"Where are the sustainable jobs that there residents are going to fill? I do not want to be a suburb of Haverhill, I want to live in a village with the benefits that gives my family."*

#### **E. Cllr Mary Evans (Clare Division)**

I support Little Wrattling Parish Meeting and Withersfield Parish Council

#### **F. Cllr Jason Crooks (Haverhill South Ward)**

Councillor Crooks supported moving the town council boundary outwards so all of the new properties are in the Haverhill parish (i.e. Haverhill Town Council) on the basis that this would:

- create a strong sense of community identity.
- generate interest in town affairs and improve participation in elections, local organisations and community activities.
- reflect patterns of everyday life for those living and working in the area, building upon what new and existing communities have in common.

He commented: *"I support moving the parish boundaries so that all new development is within the parish of Haverhill. I would however OBJECT to moving the parish boundary so that Withersfields Approach Cottages and Melbourne Bridge (CB9 7RS) were moved into Haverhill parish. Melbourne bridge and all the houses on Queen Street should remain in Withersfield Parish."*

#### **Map Overleaf**

An alternative proposal was offered by the Town Council (see earlier map). The map below shows the growth site in relation to the current boundaries. The planning team advise that the 2010 boundary (shown on the map) follows the approximate line of the relief road, so there is currently no danger of houses encroaching into Little Wratting (the area north of the boundary is currently allocated as highways land/buffer).

