

Thurrock

Personal Details:

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Comment text:

Please see attached a letter from my colleagues and I, regarding the Belhus and Ockendon Wards.

Best wishes,
Cllr Polston

Attached Documents:

- lgbce-letter---belhus-submission-(1.pdf



LGBCE
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50 Victoria Street, London
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10th September 2024

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Dear Boundary Commission,

We are writing as the current Labour Party Councillors representing Belhus and Ockendon Ward to express our concerns regarding the proposed boundary changes in our ward

1. Retaining the Belhus Ward Name:

We strongly advocate for retaining the name "Belhus" for the neighbouring ward, as it carries significant historical and cultural importance for the area. The name derives from Belhus Manor House, a historic site once home to the Barrett family (later the Barrett-Lennard family), who played a key role in shaping the region. Belhus Park, a prominent landmark, further emphasizes the area's deep historical roots.

The name "Belhus" is not just a marker of historical significance but a source of local identity for many residents. Generations of families have lived in this area, and they strongly associate with the name, which is tied to their community's heritage. To many, "Belhus" represents a continuity with the past, and changing the name would sever an important connection to the history and culture of the area. Residents feel a strong affiliation to this name, viewing it as an essential part of their shared identity. By preserving the Belhus name, we maintain this historical connection and honour the community's deep-rooted attachment to their local heritage.

Confusion around the proposed name 'Ockendon South': We believe the proposed name "Ockendon South" may lead to significant confusion for residents. Thurrock already has a well-established area known as South Ockendon, while North Ockendon is situated in the neighbouring borough of Havering. Introducing the name "Ockendon South" would duplicate existing names and create unnecessary ambiguity between the two locations.

Residents could easily misinterpret "Ockendon South" as a reference to the existing South Ockendon, potentially leading to confusion with services, postal addresses, and community identity. We recommend retaining the name's Ockendon and Belhus to avoid this duplication and preserve clear distinctions between the areas.

2. Removal of the North Stifford Community from the Ward:

We propose that North Stifford be removed from Belhus Ward, as these two areas have little in common, both geographically and in terms of community identity.

Distinct Historical and Geographical Contexts: North Stifford is a historic village with its own distinct character, separate from the more urban and modern development in Belhus. While Belhus includes much of the post-war housing estate developments, North Stifford retains the feel of a rural village with historical roots, contributing to a strong sense of local identity that differs significantly from Belhus.

Cultural and Community Differences: The community in North Stifford identifies more closely with surrounding rural areas and nearby villages rather than with Belhus. The lifestyle, local events, and even the facilities used by residents (such as schools and leisure areas) are geared more toward smaller, close-knit village life, as opposed to the urban focus of Belhus. Many North Stifford residents feel detached from Belhus and associate more with places like Chafford.

Physical Separation and Transport Links: North Stifford and Belhus are physically separated by significant green spaces and lack strong transport links, which further hinders the cohesion between the two areas. This geographical divide reinforces the need for North Stifford to be included in a more appropriate ward, like Chafford as it has a footpath linking the two wards.

We urge the Boundary Commission to reconsider the proposed changes in light of these concerns. Our suggestions aim to preserve the integrity and history of our communities while ensuring that residents are represented accurately.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Victoria Holloway
Cllr. Mark Hurrell

Labour Councillors for Belhus

Cllr Ryan Polston

Labour Councillor for Ockendon

