

Response to proposals and alternative submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by Peterborough City Council on warding arrangements

1. Introduction and background

This document sets out Peterborough City Council's (PCC) response to the Boundary Commission proposals of July 2014 and its submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for alternative warding arrangements.

Peterborough City Council submitted its original proposals for new ward boundaries in April 2014. This proposal followed the earlier LGBCE decision that the council would increase its membership from the current 57 councillors to 60. The council formed a cross-party Electoral Review Group (ERG) whose members considered the LGBCE's guidelines for three-member wards for councils that elect its councillors three years out of every four, where a third of councillors are elected at each election, and the need for equity in the existing elector to councillor ratios across the proposed wards in the city. Of paramount consideration to the ERG has also been the natural boundaries that cross the council's area, as identified in the last review of the electoral arrangements for the PCC area in July 2002.

Peterborough can be divided into four distinct urban areas. These are the southern area (the area south of the River Nene, the western area (the area north of the River Nene and west of the railway line), the eastern area (the area north of the River Nene, east of the railway line and south of Soke parkway) and the northern area (the area east of the railway line and north of Soke parkway). The council's view is that communities have developed within the parameters of these boundaries and the ERG has weighed up the statutory rules and guidelines against its knowledge and understanding of the communities that exist within Peterborough

The ERG concluded in April that to best maintain these natural boundaries, preserve community identity and provide equality of representation, it would propose an additional single member ward at Barnack.

In its response to those proposals the LGBCE did not support this single member ward, which adds a further additional member to the number of councillors. The LGBCE therefore offered an alternative set of proposals, which are the subject of the current consultation.

The ERG has carefully reviewed the LGBCE proposals and has decided that it cannot support them. The council proposes, therefore, that the LGBCE reconsiders its proposals and reviews the council's earlier proposals as set out in this submission.

This proposal largely reflects the earlier submission made by the council to the LGBCE. It has, however, been modified to address those issues which it considers led to the LGBCE departing so markedly from the council's proposals. It will also deal, within each section, with its reasons for rejecting the LGBCE proposals and offer further evidence in support of the earlier proposals. The council accepts that its earlier proposal perhaps did not go far enough in explaining the community ties that exist within its well-defined boundaries. Therefore the LGBCE was asked to consider its earlier proposals in the absence of important evidential information.

2. The existing electorate

The table below shows the current wards with the projected 2019 electorate.

Western rural wards

Barnack	2,570
Glington & Wittering	5,260
Northborough	2,360
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	10,190

Eastern rural wards

Eye & Thorney	5,350
Newborough	2,330
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	7,680

Northern urban wards

Paston	8,010
Walton	4,490
Werrington North	5,930
Werrington South	5,560
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	23,990

Eastern urban wards

Central	8,110
Dogsthorpe	7,180
East	8,590
North	4,110
Park	7,370
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	35,360

Western urban wards

Bretton North	7,280
Bretton South	2,380
Ravensthorpe	5,430
West	7,160
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	22,250

Southern urban wards

Fletton & Woodston	8,700
Orton Longueville	7,300
Orton Waterville	7,620
Orton with Hampton	15,630
Stanground Central	9,140
Stanground East	2,180
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	50,570

Total electorate	<hr/> <hr/>
	150,040

3. The proposed electorate by new ward

If the decision is made to base these proposals on a membership of 61 councillors, the average councillor to elector ratio will be 1:2460 with 21 wards.

The new patterns of wards, with the proposed electoral variance, is shown in the table below. Electoral variance demonstrates the numbers below or above average representation for that ward.

Western rural wards

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Barnack	2,570	4.5%
Glington, Northborough & Wittering	7,620	3.3%

Eastern rural wards

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Eye, Newborough & Thorney	7,680	4.1%

Northern urban wards

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Gunthorpe	8,000	8.4%
Paston & Walton	7,810	5.8%
Werrington	8,086	9.5%

Eastern urban wards

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Central North	6,749	-8.5%
Dogsthorpe	7,180	-2.7%
East	6,590	-10.7%
North	7,471	1.2%
Park	7,370	0%

Western urban areas

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Bretton	7,280	-1.4%
Ravensthorpe	7,782	5.4%
West	7,188	-2.6%

Southern urban wards

Ward name	Electorate 2019	Variance
Fletton & Stanground	7,030	-4.7%
Fletton & Woodston	7,866	6.6%
Hampton Vale	6,670	-9.9%
Hampton and Hempstead	7,035	-4.7%
Orton Longueville	8,083	9.5%
Orton Waterville	7,856	6.4%
Stanground South	6,030	-18.3%

It should be noted that this has resulted in some variances in electorate size that are close to the tolerance normally accepted by the LGBCE. The Stanground South ward is significantly below the tolerance permitted, however, there have been further developments in proposed electorate which will be dealt with in the next section.

The council has also altered the description of one ward from its earlier submission. Please note that Central ward is now renamed Central North ward.

4. Response to the LGBCE proposals

It is important at the outset to note that the council considers there to be three overriding issues as to why it cannot accept the LGBCE proposals. Firstly, it sought to add an additional councillor, the LGBCE having already agreed to increase the existing number of councillors from 57 to 60. Secondly, it creates a single member Barnack ward against the general pattern of three member wards, and finally the electoral variance in Stanground South ward is significant.

It is important to address these issues at the outset.

Stanground South

The electoral variance in elector numbers for Stanground South is significant. However, the council will evidence in this submission (see page 15) that this variance will be considerably reduced within the next five years. Peterborough is the fastest growing city in the country by population (Source: Centre Outlook for 2014 published by Centre for Cities).

In particular, Stanground South is an area of significant new development and is home to the fastest selling housing development in the UK. At the time of the earlier submission, figures for the electorate were based upon anticipated residential planning development for that area. Development has since come forward at rates in excess of the planned numbers. The increasing density of development is therefore reflected in the increased number of electors within that ward.

Barnack ward

With regards to Barnack, if the council believed there was a viable alternative to increasing the number of councillors from 60 to 61, it would have supported that proposal. However, it has concluded that there is no successful proposal that both reflects community interests, provides for effective local government, and meets the requirement for 20 wards.

The best demonstration of this is the LGBCE proposal itself. In trying to deliver 20 three-member wards, the council believes that the LGBCE proposals have favoured electoral equality above the other criteria and created anomalous patterns of warding which ignore community identity and in many cases long-established strong connections between communities.

The proposal for the western rural area in particular results in a mix of urban and rural areas with no demonstrable community ties. The LGBCE states that "in order to provide for a uniform pattern of three member wards which have good electoral equality, it is necessary to have this mixture of urban and rural communities". The statement shows that this proposal does not even-handedly reflect all the statutory criteria. In fact, the community impact of this arrangement is not addressed. The council believes that other than achieving 20 three-member wards, there is no other supporting criteria in favour of this ward.

This proposed arrangement does not only impact upon the Barnack ward. A domino effect results, with several communities across the wider city being dissected as a result of having

to bring Barnack into a three member ward. Community interests are thought to play little or no importance in the overall proposals, which is a view widely held by council and Parish council members. Dissatisfaction with the LGBCE proposals is the one factor that has united all the members of the ERG and many of the local parishes. This dissatisfaction arises largely from the view that the proposals break local ties and do not make for effective local government in the rural areas.

Following receipt of the LGBCE proposals the ERG looked at several alternative proposals but eventually came back to its earlier submission that by creating a single member ward for Barnack, the council maintains good community identity across its whole area. Although this increases the number of councillors it is notable that Councillor Charles Swift (a member of the ERG) supports this proposal even though he made an initial representation to the LGBCE to reduce the overall number of councillors for Peterborough.

The council meets regularly with its parish councils and the view has been expressed at those meetings that parishes would prefer a single member ward pattern across the rural area. The council, whilst it would like to support the parishes, accepts that such a proposal is not in accordance with the statutory criteria. The council has therefore considered how each of its parish communities might be placed in a new warding arrangement to achieve three member wards wherever possible. As a result of those deliberations it still maintains that by placing Barnack into a single member ward, good electoral equality can be achieved, community interests can be served and effective and convenient local government is the result. This is the best possible outcome for Peterborough residents.

5. Proposals by ward

This section is divided into descriptions of each ward, how the new ward secures electoral equality, how it reflects the identities and interests of the local community and why it meets the need for effective and convenient local government.

It will also address how it believes the LGBCE proposals do not best serve the community.

Western rural wards

Barnack ward:

The proposal is for a single-member ward on the same boundaries as the existing ward. The ward has a higher than average ratio of councillor to electorate but the council considers this to be an acceptable variance.

The community identity of the Barnack ward is reflected in the earlier submission as comprising six villages and a number of smaller settlements together with isolated farms. There is no likelihood of any further growth in housing in this area in the foreseeable future and it is entirely a rural ward with specific interests and traditions that differ from other wards.

The ward has a long history, formerly as Barnack Rural District Council between 1894 and 1972 and subsequently as a single-member ward within Peterborough District Council and more recently, Peterborough City Council. In its day, Barnack Rural District Council sat in Stamford Town Hall. Village children go to one of the two local primary schools, although some students attend the secondary school in Glinton. However, a number go to The King's School, Peterborough, Stamford Endowed Schools and Oundle. Also, there are plans for a new Free School in Stamford that aims to recruit from the ward's villages.

Stamford is seen by many of villagers as their main shopping area.

The ward is geographically well defined with physical boundaries created by the railway in the east and north, the river Welland to the north, the A1 in the west, and the A47, an area of woods, agricultural land and part of another ward to the south. The B1443 runs across the middle of the ward. There is an hourly bus service to Stamford and Peterborough along this road and it is very well used. The ward's settlements are mostly small, in contrast to larger ones to the east in the A15 corridor, which have recently grown more rapidly.

The present Barnack ward has a strong community identity with two primary schools serving the children of the ward, local groups such as Helpston Tennis Club, play groups, Ufford Cricket Club and Barnack Bowls Club all providing a focus for the local community and are in part financially supported by the parish councils that form the Barnack ward group.

The council cannot support the LGBCE proposal as it believes that creating a ward stretching from Wittering in the west to Deeping Gate and Northborough in the east is based on no clear boundaries.

Currently the Barnack ward is bound by distinct physical boundaries including main roads, rivers and railway lines. The logic of these boundaries has been echoed by the Peterborough Diocese which has redrawn the Barnack Benefice to be largely co-terminus with Barnack ward.

In addition, the ward has a long-established history which has given it a strong community identity. The council believes this could be jeopardised by the proposed new warding arrangements.

An example of the community's strength is the Barnack Ward Group established in 2006 which has achieved a number of successes because of the commitment of its members. Successes have included a lorry ban on the B1443, planting of hundreds of trees and miles of reinstated hedges and the installation of historical information boards in each of the villages. In addition, a ward neighbourhood plan is currently being drafted.

Members of Barnack Ward Group fear that the proposed larger ward would undermine the community focus and spirit that has driven all of these successes. This is because the existing ward has no strong social interaction with homes east of the East Coast Main Line, which acts as a physical barrier. Residents fear that their rural voice will be lost if the ward boundaries are expanded, along with the detailed understanding of their ward by their current ward councillor.

Glinton, Northborough & Wittering ward:

The proposal is to merge the two existing wards of Glinton & Wittering (currently a two-member ward) and the single-member ward of Northborough. Glinton and Wittering are already situated in separate geographical locations but have worked well as a ward unit for many years. The addition of Northborough making up a three-member ward is considered to be the best solution.

Having recognised that a single three-member ward for the western rural area was not sustainable, given the location of Barnack to the west with its own strong community ties, it is logical that the existing ward of Glinton & Wittering be merged with Northborough, which adjoins it to the north to give good electoral equality across the proposed western rural wards.

This would also retain the same number of councillors for the ward as already exists.

Our proposal includes the villages of Thornhaugh, Wansford, Sutton, Upton, Castor and Ailsworth which currently sit in the Glinton and Wittering ward. We cannot support the

LGBCE proposal which places these villages into the new West ward together with parts of South Bretton and Longthorpe.

The council considers this to be an inappropriate mix of communities with South Bretton and Longthorpe having a diverse and distinctly separate community identity to the villages.

In addition, there is concern from the parishes that their views and interests could not be properly represented when the urban areas of Longthorpe and South Bretton account for 75% of the electorate and the villages just 25%.

The present Glington and Wittering ward is wholly rural with many local communities with strong connections. The villages share local clubs and groups with residents from each of the parishes attending each one. These facilities are not shared by residents of Longthorpe and South Bretton.

Children from the villages attend schools in the villages and in Glington – they do not use the schools in the urban areas like the children of Longthorpe and South Bretton.

The differences in issues affecting residents of rural communities are, in the main, quite different from those in more built up areas, such as public transport, farming and protecting village amenities such as the post office and local shop. These issues are different from those faced in urban areas. There is concern from the parishes that their ward members would not have the time to dedicate to the rural areas when the large majority of the ward is urban. In particular they are concerned that their ward councillors would not have the specialist knowledge of the rural areas that their current councillors have developed over a number of years.

A councillor representing a mixed urban/rural ward could have difficulty finding the time to become fully conversant with the minutiae of the issues in a rural environment, quite understandably. Rural communities fear that the focus would not be on matters arising in the rural areas, but in the more urban areas with the higher housing density where the majority of voters live. As a result there is a fear from the rural areas that their rural voice will be lost as a result.

Eastern rural wards

The proposal is to merge the two existing wards of Eye & Thorney with the ward of Newborough. This will create a single three-member ward covering a large rural area and whilst this covers a large geographical area, the same number of councillors would represent that electorate as at present.

There are no alternative proposals that would meet the commission's criteria of electoral equality and the council and the LGBCE are in agreement that this arrangement would support a presumption for three member wards.

Northern urban wards

The council and the LGBCE are largely in agreement regarding the northern urban wards. The proposals reduce the number of wards to three as opposed to the existing four wards of Paston, Walton, Werrington North and Werrington South. To retain four wards in this area would not meet the LGBCE's guidance and these proposals will reduce the existing number of councillors from 11 to 9 to make 3 new three-member wards.

With the projected development on what is known as Paston Reserve, which lies to the east of Paston parkway, there needs to be a re-adjustment of the neighbouring wards to reflect the above issues.

Gunthorpe ward:

The proposals for Gunthorpe ward are agreed. This creates a new ward from the existing Paston ward (polling districts PAS1, PAS2 and PAS4 (part lying to the east of Paston parkway) and polling districts SWE2 and SWE3 from the existing Werrington South ward. There are strong links between these areas in relation to the schools that serve both existing wards. The proposed name of the ward is merely to reflect the central area of Gunthorpe.

Paston & Walton ward:

The council and the LGBCE are largely in agreement regarding the Paston and Walton ward. The council's proposal is to create a new ward to include the polling districts PAS3 and PAS4 (part lying to the west of Paston parkway) from the existing Paston ward, and merge them with the existing Walton ward (polling districts WAL1 and WAL2). It additionally wanted to include that area of land including the mobile home park from polling district SWE1 (South Werrington), however the Brookfield and Dukesmead Residents' Association preferred the mobile home park to remain in the Werrington ward. The council makes no specific comment in relation to this other than it considered that the stream represented a better ward boundary. The electoral variance has to be adjusted accordingly.

Werrington ward:

The council and the LGBCE are again largely in agreement other than the adjustment made for the mobile home park which increases the voter to councillor ratio.

Eastern urban wards

The existing wards of Central, Dogsthorpe, East, North and Park currently have variances of 14%, 5%, 8%, 11% and 2.5%. As this is made up of four three-member wards and one two-member ward, it is proposed to adjust the electoral boundaries to facilitate five three-member wards. In order to increase the electorate for the new North ward, there has been a need to adjust both the Central and East ward boundaries to effect this change. The difficulty in finding an electoral balance in this block of wards is that the wards proposed to be changed all have variances below the electoral average. Alternatively, if it had been proposed to reduce the number of wards from five to four, the opposite would have happened, resulting in a far higher than acceptable elector to councillor ratio.

The council and the LGBCE are largely in agreement regarding these wards other than for Central ward. This is where the impact of the newly created West ward begins to become apparent within the wider city. The council considers that the changes necessary to the Central ward to facilitate the West ward are in direct contravention of the statutory criteria. The community identities and interests criterion refers to the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable and which will not break local ties.

The LGBCE proposals break away from the easily identifiable and long held natural boundaries existing in this part of the city to create new boundaries, which do not follow such logical patterns. In addition there is significant impact upon community interests.

Central North Ward:

The council proposes a revised ward from the existing polling districts of CEN3 and CEN4 and encompassing Silverwood Road, Summerfield Road and Lincoln Road (west side) up to the junction of Cambridge Avenue, plus part of polling district EAS2 of the existing East ward (west of the Frank Perkins parkway). This area lies naturally within the centre of Peterborough ward.

This proposed warding arrangement reflects the long recognised natural boundaries of the railway to the west, the River Nene to the south and the A1130 to the east.

Given the LGBCE's proposed move of parts of Central ward into West ward, these natural boundaries are disturbed. The natural boundary of the railway line now cuts through the Central ward which makes it a difficult ward to serve.

In order to service this ward a councillor has to cross the railway line from Taverners Road and over Spital Bridge/Mayor's Walk. This is not a natural link between parts of the city and it does not make for effective and convenient local government.

The council not only fails to see how community identity is supported in a ward that merges some of the densest residential areas in the city with parts of the rural West ward, but also cannot justify the resulting impact on Central ward.

This ward, as its name suggests, has a natural affinity to the centralised urban development of the city centre. In joining parts of this area to the west, the east side of the city becomes dissected. Natural community ties with community centres and churches within the Central ward are disrupted. Currently Central ward sits within the parish of St Mark's and St Paul's and there is also a community centre at St John's Church hall which is used by the community. The churches and community centre are not used by residents living in the area to the south of the railway line, which the LGBCE proposes will become part of Central ward.

There are several initiatives in Central ward such as Gladstone Connect, the regeneration of the area from Bright Street to Occupation Road and the North Westgate regeneration site, many of which are supported by community projects which have no affinity with West ward. By splitting the ward into two areas to the east and west it divides the support for the projects across two wards which will cause difficulties.

In addition, there are community facilities which will be affected by the Central ward proposals. For example, Westwood Bowls Club which meets at Finchley Green off Alderman's Drive would transfer into the new Central ward from Ravensthorpe. This club has no affinity with Central ward as it is mostly used by residents of West Town which currently sits within Ravensthorpe ward.

There are also vast differences between the demographics of Central ward and West ward and the two areas have little affinity. Central ward comprises predominantly terraced Victorian houses, densely populated close to the urban centre. West ward, by contrast, is largely suburban with detached and semi-detached late 1960's housing.

Dogsthorpe ward:

The council and the LGBCE are in agreement regarding the proposed warding, which contains polling districts DOG1, DOG2, DOG3, DOG4 and DOG5.

East ward:

The council's proposal is to use the existing East ward polling districts of EAS1, EAS3, EAS4 and EAS5, but to only retain a small part of EAS2 (east of the Frank Perkins parkway). Whilst this will result in a variance of 10% below the average, a potential for further development exists in this area.

The council cannot support the LGBCE proposal as it believes it will result in large scale disruption for the East ward, caused by the changing of the Central and West ward boundaries.

Community interests are thought to play little or no importance in the overall proposals.

Our proposals will generate limited disruption to East ward.

North ward:

The council and the LGBCE are largely in agreement regarding this ward. The council's proposal is to create a new ward from the existing North ward polling districts of NTH1 and NTH2, plus polling districts CEN1 and CEN2 (excluding Lincoln Road, part of Silverwood Road and Summerfield Road) from the existing Central ward.

The LGBCE proposes to adopt a minor amendment to this ward to place the boundary along Lincoln Road and St Paul's Road. The council does not support this proposal. These roads have never been part of Park ward and it does not add anything to the electoral equality to move them from North ward.

Park ward:

The LGBCE's proposal mentioned above to adopt a minor amendment to North ward to place the boundary along Lincoln Road and St Paul's Road impacts on Park ward.

The council does not support this proposal. These roads have never been part of Park ward and it does not add anything to the electoral equality to move them from North ward.

Western urban wards

The existing wards of Bretton North, Bretton South, Ravensthorpe and West are all within a range of less than 10% variance but are currently served by two three-member wards, one two-member ward and one single-member ward. It is therefore, proposed to create three three-member wards. However, this cannot be achieved by a simple merger of the two wards that have a single member and the other two-member ward as their respective boundaries do not adjoin each other.

The council and the LGBCE fundamentally disagree on the warding arrangements within this area. The LGBCE proposes that an area of properties off Bretton Way are moved into West ward, again to improve electoral equality of that new ward without any regard to the settled community ties within the current Bretton area.

To compensate for the electoral inequality remaining in this ward, the LGBCE proposes that the village of Marholm is transferred into the new Bretton ward from the existing Glington and Wittering ward. The council disagrees with this decision as Marholm has no recognised affinity with the larger urban township of Bretton, whereas it does with the village of Castor and Milton Estates, which currently sit within the Glington and Wittering ward. However, we appreciate that to fully understand the detrimental impact this would have on residents of Marholm and the ability of the ward councillor to serve both the rural area of Marholm and the urban area of Bretton, further detailed evidence is needed, and is therefore provided in this submission.

Fundamentally, many of the services and facilities used by the residents of Marholm are either in the village itself or in nearby Castor. Residents do not use services in Bretton, other than the shops at the centre which are used by residents across the wider city.

Children of Marholm go to school in Castor and Glington and not Bretton. Therefore this proposal means that the schools used by the village would sit outside the remit of the ward councillor.

In addition, residents use community facilities such as the village hall and green space in Marholm and Castor and not Bretton, which in turn has developed well established and close social links between the two villages. The residents of the two villages attend each other's social events, for example dance nights and quizzes.

Marholm, Castor and the villages of Ailsworth, Sutton and Upton form one church benefice sharing the same priest. A number of years ago Marholm was transferred into the Bretton parish, however this decision was reneged upon five years later and Marholm returned to its former parish because of difficulties catering for the differing needs of residents in rural and urban areas.

In addition, many residents of Marholm farm land or work on the Fitzwilliam Estate. It would be difficult for different ward councillors to represent the estate and the Marholm village.

There is also concern as to whether a councillor representing 7,000 Bretton residents would have the necessary time to dedicate to the small number of Marholm residents. This would make it a difficult ward to serve and therefore fails to meet the criteria for effective and convenient local government.

Similar to comments made by other rural communities, residents fear that their rural voice will be lost, along with their current ward councillors' detailed understanding of their village.

The proposals also affect the Bretton community, which means the council cannot support the proposals. The Bretton wards are a stable, well-established area of the city and there is little justification for the changes proposed by the LGBCE. The Bretton township was designed and purpose built so that residents living there could access their needs within the township. The homes are all of similar design and layout and the township includes leisure facilities including a theatre and green open space in the form of Bretton Park. There is also the main shopping area at the centre of the township and smaller shopping areas throughout the township.

The LGBCE proposals would split some of these community facilities, such as the Court Snooker Club on Mallard Road, into a separate ward when the majority of its custom comes from Bretton.

Therefore the council believes that the ward is being split simply to achieve electoral equality with little regard for existing community ties. This is a well-established community that was designed and purpose built to be exactly that.

Bretton ward:

The council's proposal remains to retain the existing Bretton North, which contains polling districts BRN1, BRN2, BRN3 and BRN4, but to rename it Bretton ward.

Ravensthorpe ward:

The council's proposal is to retain the existing Ravensthorpe ward, which contains polling districts RAV1, RAV2 and RAV3, plus polling district WES1 from the existing West ward and Charlotte Way from polling district WES3.

West Ward:

The council's proposal is to create a new ward from polling districts WES2, WES3 (less Charlotte Way) and WES4 from the existing West ward, plus the current Bretton South ward

(polling district BRS). Bretton South was historically part of the West ward and is the only ward that currently goes over the parkway.

The council wants to create a West ward merged with part of Bretton South ward. This is a practical solution because there are good links across this part of the parkway between the two areas and there are good walking and cycleway links.

The council believes that the LGBCE proposals for West ward disregard the lack of public transport links within their new ward. This would make it difficult, if not impossible, for a councillor with no access to a car to effectively serve this ward. This fails to meet the criteria for effective and convenient local government.

In addition, the LGBCE proposed West ward would be traversed by the main arterial A47 road. The council disagrees that the A47 provides a good transport link, seeing it rather as a natural boundary between the parishes and the more urban areas of Bretton and Longthorpe.

The council does not consider that voter turnout will be encouraged where a councillor has to represent such diverse interests in the proposed West ward.

Southern urban wards

By 2019, 30% of the PCC electorate will be within the southern urban area. The current six wards of Fletton & Woodston, Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville, and Orton with Hampton, Stanground Central and Stanground East have variances in electorate sizes of 15.8%, 4.6%, 5%, 33.3%, 0.6% and 3.7%. The proposal is to increase the number of wards in this area from six to seven. Notwithstanding the current high imbalance, this area is subject to extensive growth, not only over the next five years, but beyond. Ideally, it would have been preferable to simply create new wards with the specific development areas to accommodate both the current and future growth. However, this would potential create 'ghost' wards in the short term and it would be difficult to elect councillors where very few electors would exist. Therefore, this has led to a proposal to adjust the boundaries of all the wards within this urban grouping.

The fundamental difference between the council and the LGBCE in this part of the city relates to the LGBCE proposal to put parts of the Fletton ward over the river. This traverses a natural, long established boundary within the city. Again, this impacts the established existing community which has traditionally fallen behind the river boundary, but in this regard the ERG also believes that the greatest impact is upon the ability to deliver effective and convenient local government. This is because voters will simply not turn out to vote where they have to cross the river in order to do so. This also impacts upon a councillor's ability to move easily around the ward.

Fletton & Stanground ward:

The council's proposal is to create a new ward from polling districts FLE1 (which lies to the east of the railway line from the existing Fletton & Woodston ward), plus polling districts STC1, STC2 and STC4 of the existing Stanground Central ward. This would create a more appropriate geographical ward, whereby the existing Fletton & Woodston ward is divided by the railway line and will also absorb the new development within Stanground.

The LGBCE proposed boundary between Fletton & Stanground and Stanground South does not make for a logical boundary. It cuts across a river and through the back of houses which is contrary to all LGBCE guidance which states that a ward should never cross a natural boundary, like a river.

This boundary would make it a difficult ward to serve as the road dissecting the two areas is a 70mph parkway with no crossing points and there is just one bridge across the river which is closed.

The council fully accepts that the electoral variance in the Stanground South area is too wide to support the statutory criteria. However, the council considers that the LGBCE proposals do not offer an acceptable solution, and asks the LGBCE to reconsider in light of the additional growth coming forward in the Stanground South area.

Fletton & Woodston ward:

The council's proposal is to retain the existing ward polling districts FLE2, FLE3 and FLE4, but to include part of ORH1 (north of Oundle Road) from the existing Orton with Hampton ward. This area sits adjacent to the existing Fletton & Woodston ward.

The LGBCE proposals do not meet the statutory criteria in the council's opinion. In order to effectively serve the ward the councillor would have to do a circuitous route. To get to the Drove, the councillor would have to cross the railway bridge, travel a short route along Thorpe Road and then over the parkway. This does not appear to be a logical boundary and makes the ward difficult to serve. In other parts of the LGBCE submission the railway is accepted to be a strong natural boundary but that is not applied consistently in this ward.

Hampton Vale ward:

The proposal is to create a new ward from polling districts ORH3 (part of, including Bank Avenue; Braymere Road; Delves Way; Harn Road; Osier Avenue and Torold Drive), ORH4 and ORH5 (part from the existing Orton with Hampton ward).

Hampton and Hempstead ward:

The proposal is to create a new ward from polling districts ORH1 (part of, including Landsdowne Walk and Shrewsbury Avenue), ORH2, ORH3 (part of, excluding Bank Avenue; Braymere Road; Delves Way; Harn Road; Osier Avenue; Torold Drive).

Orton Longueville ward:

The councils' proposal is agreed by the LGBCE subject to a minor amendment to improve electoral equality in Hargate & Hempstead ward.

Orton Waterville ward:

The council's proposal is agreed by the LGBCE.

Stanground South ward:

The proposal is to create a new ward from polling districts STC3 from the existing Stanground Central ward (including the Cardea development) and the existing ward of Stanground East (polling district STE), which naturally links to two areas together.

The electoral variance for Stanground South is significant in the council's earlier submission. However, the council can evidence that this variance will be considerably reduced within the next five years due to the fact Stanground South is an area of significant new development.

At the time of the earlier submission, figures for the electorate were based upon anticipated residential planning development for that area. Development has since come forward at

rates in excess of the planned numbers. The new Cardea housing development is the fastest selling housing development in the UK. The population is growing fast. In total 667 homes had been occupied by August 2014. Outline planning permission was granted in 2007 for 1,525 dwellings on this site. Planning permission was subsequently granted in June 2013 for an additional 138 dwellings on land that was formerly allocated for employment use. We are currently in receipt of a planning application for an additional 33 dwellings towards the top north west of the Cardea development area which has been accepted in principle.

In addition, the council is in negotiation with a developer to increase the density of the eastern side of Cardea and add a further 250 units. Although the council hasn't received a planning application for this as yet, there are good grounds to plan for future increased development on this site. We appreciate that this scheme is yet to reach a detailed stage, however we have used this to illustrate the capacity and desire of this area of the city to grow considerably in years to come.

Therefore, this area could have up to an additional 421 houses on top of the 1,525 originally approved in 2007, so based on 2.46 persons per household an extra 1,036 people could be living in that development area alone.

The increasing density of development is therefore reflected in the increased number of electors within that ward.

6. Conclusion

This submission is based upon consideration of the LGBCE's guidance for warding arrangements. Peterborough City Council elects its councillors three years out of every four where a third of councillors are placed into office at each election. This submission sets out proposals that seek, where possible, to deliver three member wards to best fit that election cycle. The council is requesting that the LGBCE considers the Barnack ward as a specific exception to this principle as it is justified on grounds of community interests and identities, and that the LGBCE consider community ties not only for this ward but to support community identity and interests across the entire Peterborough area. All wards have an electorate within the proposed acceptable ratio of member to electorate, other than Stanground South where the variance in the number of electors is justified on predicted growth of the city.

The council submits that these proposals will achieve effective and convenient local government with a ward pattern that reflects its electoral cycle.