



**Review Officer (Nottingham)**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
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**Please find a response from the Nottingham City Homes Group to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's request for comments on its draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Nottingham City Council, published in October 2017.**

### **Introduction**

Nottingham City Homes (NCH) Group is made up of an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) managing and maintaining around 25,700 tenant and leasehold properties on behalf of the local authority, as well as on behalf of other landlords. The NCH Group is the largest housing provider in Nottingham, and also manages aspects of the residential estates where these homes are located. The Group also includes a subsidiary company owning dwellings for market rent, and a subsidiary that is a Registered Provider of Social Housing. Residents are actively involved in our decision making structures, from our programme of tenant and leaseholder involvement, through to the NCH Board, which sets the strategic direction of the organisation, and includes tenants and leaseholders amongst the board membership.

### **Background and General Observations**

Historically, many of the neighbourhoods in Nottingham have been created by the construction of the homes that we manage, and their inherent neighbourhood identity and sense of community is bound up with the identity, style, design and layout of the residential estates concerned. This in turn has a relationship to the geography of the electoral wards that make up the city, and the 'natural' boundaries around many of the neighbourhoods that exist in parts of Nottingham. This is often reinforced by strong social networks amongst residents, and a strong sense of community and neighbourhood identity. We believe that giving due regard to this can help the Commission in its work to draw up a scheme of wards in the City that, as the Commission indicates, "reflect community interests and identities" and have clear, identifiable boundaries. We also believe that this does serve to "promote effective and convenient local government" as it helps strengthen the relationship between residents and the elected councillors that represent them.

NCH believes it is important not to see the housing estates we manage divided across wards where this can be avoided, such divisions would have an impact on local residents, their sense of community and neighbourhood identity. In addition, it can have an impact on the services people receive on those estates (from a wide range of public service providers) as it is often the case that

service providers (such as police and community safety teams, health services etc.) organise and manage key services and expenditure planning on a ward basis. Where wards serve to divide estates this can lead to anomalies and inconsistencies in service provision, as things appear to local people. We would strongly advocate this be avoided where possible, when proposals for ward boundaries are drawn up, especially where proposals can still ensure the objective of “good electoral equality”.

As NCH works in partnership with the local authority, some of our neighbourhood improvement budgets are administered by local councillors at a ward level. Therefore divisions that cut through estates create the potential for inconsistent approaches within those estates. We would like to see these divisions avoided where possible.

### **Comments on specific draft ward recommendations**

#### **Clifton Area Proposals**

Where NCH manages housing in Clifton, it is largely divided into two distinct areas that have differing identities stemming predominantly from the different eras in which they were built (as local authority housing) – these are the very large Clifton Estate (predominantly built in the 1950s) and the smaller Nobel Road Estate (built in the 1970s, in a different style). They have their own strong community identity, which to a certain extent allows them to be considered separately for the purposes of neighbourhood identity.

Clearly the sheer volume of housing on these two estates taken together, and thus the number of voters, has always made it hard to include the whole of the two estates in one ward. However, the LGBC recommendation splits the Clifton Estate in a less than ideal way, since it combines part of the Clifton Estate with the Nobel Road Estate. We believe that a more satisfactory outcome would be achieved if all or a greater proportion of Clifton Estate was located within a single ward and would request that the Commission look into that possibility. NCH consider that it would be acceptable, given the point made above, for Nobel Road to be in a different ward to Clifton Estate were that to help the Commission meet its numerical requirements across the area south of the River Trent.

#### **Proposed ‘New Meadows’ and ‘Embankment’ Wards**

We have a significant concern about the Commission’s proposals in this area since they serve to divide one of the communities where we manage homes right through the middle of one of the estates, along a division that people would not recognise as a ‘boundary’. There does not seem to be any strong justification for this division. Residents live in our homes across the wider area and all would refer to it as The Meadows. We would consider that the term ‘The Embankment’ largely refers to the gardens and open recreational space, not the housing, although it could perhaps be observed that some local estate agents have sought to use the term to try to link property values in the area to the more expensive properties south of the River Trent that lie in the Rushcliffe Borough Council area!

The Commission’s proposals create a ward boundary through part of one of our estates that follows an access footpath to houses north of Eugene Gardens, where there is no meaningful neighbourhood distinction north or south of that path. We note that this is a boundary currently used as a Polling District boundary, but that is presumably for the administrative convenience of

voting in elections, rather than a distinction between the areas north and south of this Polling District boundary. Homes both north and south of that path were built as part of the same development, are of similar / the same design, and residents will have a great deal in common with each other, re-enforced by the use of the same local facilities.

The Meadows as a whole has much more distinctive natural boundaries formed by the major roads and the River Trent and it would seem far more logical to use those as a boundary for the whole area, such that all of the residential streets concerned are in the same ward. The Meadows has a strong community identity which is evident across the whole of the area the Commission is suggesting to divide in two. Local shops, community facilities (places of worship, health, community and leisure facilities, library etc) and public transport routes serve to bring the area together in a way that supports such a single ward size and geography rather than the proposed two wards the Commission proposes.

### **Proposed 'Lenton and Wollaton East' Ward**

We note that the proposed ward here is quite a large one, and understand that this is at least in part driven by the reduction in voters that has happened since the introduction of individual voter registration. NCH supports the proposal since we note that the several housing estates we manage are wholly included within the ward. This includes housing at Dunkirk, Old Lenton, Lenton Abbey, Wollaton Park Estate, and our significant new housing regeneration development in New Lenton where we are replacing a site once occupied by five local authority tower blocks with new family housing. The proposal to bring the small Southwold Estate and Kennington Road areas, which we manage, into the proposed ward, makes sense given the 'hard boundary' of the railway line that lies to the north.

The Commission asks for suggestions about the naming of the ward. Given the range of neighbourhoods included in the ward, this is not easy. We would observe that Lenton Abbey estate has a strong sense of identity, and it is shame that this is not reflected in the proposed name. NCH is not convinced by the Commission's point that longer names are a problem. A name that includes the neighbourhoods concerned, especially the more well-known ones, serves to help link residents with their elected representatives.

### **Proposed 'Hyson Green' Ward**

Bringing the area that includes the small group of homes that we manage on Ashwell Gardens into the same ward as the proposed Hyson Green area is something we regard as a helpful change since they are often regarded as part of a similar neighbourhood on the other side of Bobbers Mill Road (the housing around Craven Road). Residents would have a strong community identity across that area, and the two groups of homes that we manage here are very similar in type, with residents using the same local facilities in this part of the neighbourhood, with both sides of Bobbers Mill Road in this area largely looking towards Hyson Green for local services.

### **Other Proposed Wards**

We do not notice plans in other proposed wards that have an impact on the estates or homes that we manage, in terms of altering the ward boundaries that are their basis of representation. As a

result we are not making specific comments about other parts of Nottingham beyond the areas listed above.

NCH hopes that these comments are of help to the Commission.

**This response has been submitted on behalf of Nottingham City Homes by:**

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