



Rutland County Council

Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Review Officer (Rutland)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP



Dear Sirs,

Rutland County Council Full Council have considered the Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published on 5th December 2017 and conclude that they are not in support of the proposals for Council Size and Warding Patterns put forward by the LGBCE.

At its meeting on 15 January 2018, members voted in support of this response and agreed that the LGBCE should be asked to consider the following observations in relation to the LGBCE Draft Recommendations:

- Combining the Parishes of Braunston and Martinthorpe has the effect of combining two disparate communities. It results in 2 Ward Councillors being responsible for covering 6 Parish Councils and a geographically sizable ward (around 8 miles across). It does not satisfy the LGBCE requirement to reflect community identity, nor does it provide for effective and convenient local government and does not even result in electoral equality as it results in a Ward with a -12% variance.
- The Council accepts the comments from the LGBCE regarding the RCC proposal to move Hambleton to Martinthorpe, and on this basis suggests that it may be more appropriate to move Egleton to Martinthorpe instead – in order to improve electoral equality.
- There is significant evidence that the Parish of Barleythorpe should be separated from the County Ward of Oakham North West and be a Ward in its own right. A Community Governance Review was undertaken for the Oakham North West and Barleythorpe area during 2016/17. As part of this review a number of options were put forward for consultation, including an option to remove the common boundary between the two parish areas so that the entire parish area of Barleythorpe was brought within the Parish of Oakham (Oakham Town Council's parish area). The overwhelming response 59% (172 out of 293 responses) indicated a preference for Barleythorpe to have its own Parish Council and that it should remain separate from the Parish of Oakham. This was the ultimate outcome of the review. The submissions received from Barleythorpe residents during this consultation clearly evidenced a sense of belonging to the Barleythorpe Community (in spite of its close proximity to Oakham); a strong desire to maintain control over local issues to safeguard the interests of this rapidly growing community; and an aspiration to improve the quality of life for local residents along with community well-being and cohesion through an effective local



governance structure. Based on this evidence and the fact that Oakham North West is a rapidly growing area with a high percentage of electoral inequality, the Council based its original proposal on warding patterns on the premise that Barleythorpe be established as a separate 2 councillor ward. The Council then moved on to each of the other wards in order to ensure that, as far as possible, the relevant criteria were met for each area.

- The Barleythorpe Community see themselves as separate and distinct from the Oakham Town in spite of the geographical closeness. The only way to achieve this without having a significant impact on the other warding arrangements for the County is to increase the Council Size to 28, as Barleythorpe would require 2 ward members in order to achieve electoral equality due to the forecast increase in Council size by 2023.
- A proposal to create a separate ward for Barleythorpe on the basis of a Council size of 27 (as put forward by the LGBCE) could involve reducing the number of Ward Councillors for Oakham by 1 member (i.e. from 8 to 7), but this would result in significant changes to every County Ward of Oakham and such extreme changes are not justified in the light of the negative impact this would have on community cohesion for any effected areas.
- The LGBCE recommendation is that Barleythorpe Parish continue to share Ward Members with Oakham North West (albeit with an increase from 2 to 3 Councillors). The Council do not believe that this represents effective and convenient local governance given that Barleythorpe now have their own Parish Council and their desire to maintain their own unique identity as detailed above.
- The proposals contained in the Draft Recommendations for changes to the Oakham County Wards do not work when considering internal road links, they also depart from the use of the railway as the demarcation between east and west Oakham. The draft recommendations proposed by the LGBCE also propose moving the Oakham South East boundary to the High St, this would split the economic town centre down the middle. The changes also have the result of linking disparate communities and therefore have a negative effect on community cohesion. None of these recommendations were considered to reflect the community identity nor provide convenient and effective local governance.
- The Council notes that the response to the initial consultation on warding patters was relatively low, but many groups, organisations and individuals are now likely to respond to the draft recommendations as part of this next stage of consultation. Early indications are that many of the affected areas feel strongly that the draft recommendations do not achieve an appropriate balance and are predominantly based on electoral equality, to the disadvantage of maintaining community cohesion and providing for effective local governance.

The Council believes, therefore, that its original proposal remains the most effective in providing for electoral equality, resulting in convenient local government in order to protect the interests and identities of local communities and requests that the Boundary Commission re-considers its original proposal.



Mr O Hemsley – Leader of the Council

Encs.

Ward Councillor Supporting Comments
Electorate Pro forma (Egleton in Martinthorpe/Council Size 28)

**RCC Response to Draft Recommendations of the LGBCE –
Supporting Information**

Ward Councillor	Submission
<p>Mr A Walters Oakham North East</p>	<p>Further to Monday evening please find below an extract from my representation: Parkfield Road is part of a former council housing estate and is part of a community of similar builds within ONW. It is associated with the Royce's Recreation Ground and all the former council estates in ONW including Princess Avenue and Westfield Avenue which are less than 50 metres away which are to remain within ONW. This is all one locality and needs to remain as all one locality. It is not acceptable to split this close-knit community for statistical convenience and there is no merit on the ground for making the residents less likely to have consistent fair representation as proposed by the commission. You would be replacing a community linked by 50 metres with an incomprehensible suggestion to link them to estates more than a mile away by way of a long thin line along a commercial estate. There is mention in the proposal that the boundaries proposed are reasonable. It is difficult to imagine a statement being further from the truth. The proposal has completely ignored the rail line that currently divides the town and marks the boundaries in a clear consistent manner simple for residents to understand and replaces it with an improper tortuously elongated path around a commercial estate to ward together disparate communities where there is no real basis for this to take place on the ground and within those communities. It should be noted that in a survey and subsequent issue of grant funding from central government just a few years ago ONW was the only ward in Rutland to be awarded a grant due to social deprivation. Splitting this community and adding part of it to some of the most affluent areas of the town (also being physically separate by a mile) is not acceptable and must be prevented in order to avoid a totally unjustifiable and totally avoidable loss of proper representation as a community.</p>

<p>Mr R Gale Oakham North West</p>	<p>Dear Sirs Born and grew up in Oakham I firstly served as a District Councillor for Oakham West elected in 1995. Rutland became a Unitary Authority in 1997 and I was re-elected and served Oakham North West being re-elected every four years to this day to serve that Ward. The point I am making is that I could not want to have better credentials to speak for the views of an area of Oakham and that of the parish of Barleythorpe. I am in support of the Council's submission to have a council of 28 elected Members and due to a rapidly growing population in Barleythorpe I strongly believe and support there being a new ward of Barleythorpe with two elected councillors. Oakham North West and Barleythorpe are physically separated and do have separate communities with different aspirations. It is important I believe that due to there being separate communities it will be more representative for those two communities to have their different Councillors. There is nowhere that is quite like Rutland with its small and diverse population that will in my opinion be best served by the council's submission for 28 councillors with a new ward of Barleythorpe and the retained ward of Oakham North West, both with two councillors each.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Cllr Richard Gale.</p>
<p>K. Bool, Conservative Councillor, Normanton Ward</p> <p>G.F. Waller, Liberal Democrat Councillor, Normanton Ward</p>	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>We are writing as ward members of, geographically, the largest ward in Rutland. We wholeheartedly support your conclusions that our ward, Normanton, should remain unchanged at this time as we are well aware the ward will undergo considerable change in a few years when the current St George's Barracks is developed. We feel it is too disrupted to change the ward boundaries now when further change is likely to be required in five to ten years' time.</p> <p>Normanton ward, as you are aware, is made up of four villages and one hamlet. Each of these settlements is distinct in character and during our, now seven, years of representing the ward we have worked hard to try and get these parishes to work together on issues of mutual</p>

interest. This has not been easy. It is from this experience, therefore, that we say we can see no advantage to your proposal of combining Martinsthorpe and Braunston to make a two member ward. Your proposal does nothing to improve the equity of electors to councillors but it does create a geographically very large ward whose villages and hamlets are disparate communities with no commonality save they are all in Rutland. We cannot understand the logic of your proposal therefore, but from representing such a ward, can see the difficulties and issues ward members elected to this ward would have in establishing working relationships with each other and with each parish. We urge you, therefore, not to pursue this proposal but to adopt the proposal for Martinsthorpe put forward by Rutland County Council.

We also do not support your proposals for Oakham. We are in favour of the creation of a separate ward of Barleythorpe and the consequent increase in councillors from 26 to 28. We are both members of Rutland Council's Constitutional Review Working Group and in that capacity saw through the community governance review which created Barleythorpe Parish Council. During this process it became apparent to both of us that the people who live in Barleythorpe see themselves as being part of a community separate from Oakham. It is therefore doing these residents an enormous disservice to create a County Council Ward of three councillors where they are lumped together with part of Oakham. Again, we urge you to adopt the proposals put forward by Rutland County Council as these represent the wishes and identity of local residents.

Yours faithfully

K. Bool,
Conservative Councillor, Normanton Ward

G.F. Waller,
Liberal Democrat Councillor, Normanton Ward

