

LANGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Brenda Palmer

Parish Clerk:

Helen Duckering

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30th September 2017

Dear Sirs,

Rutland County Council proposal for changes in ward boundaries

Having reviewed the proposals for changes to ward boundaries, Langham Parish Council has serious concerns. Whilst most of the changes in ward boundaries seem sensible, the fact that those changes are based on an 8% increase in the number of councillors is not acceptable.

We do not agree with the increase in the number of Councillors from 26 to 28. The Government guidelines explicitly directed you to keep the number of councillors at 26. There is so little money available to Rutland County Council that we lack key officers e.g. we have no Conservation Officer. Perhaps the money for two new councillors could better be used in ensuring sufficient skilled staff at Rutland County Council.

You state that the predicted population of Rutland will be 31,604. That is an average of 1215 residents per councillor and, with the recommended variance of 10%, means each of the 26 councillors would represent between 1093 and 1136 residents. This does not appear unrealistic, as in the past some councillors have represented almost that many (Normanton 1202), and we wonder how it was decided that a councillor could only manage to represent 1129 residents. If 1215 is taken as the average number of residents per councillor, this means the variances run overall very low, ranging from -17% for Barleythorpe and Oakham North East, up to +3% for Normanton.

We would also question the number of councillors proposed for Oakham. There were originally 8 councillors, when Barleythorpe was part of Oakham North. Now, for the same area; new Barleythorpe plus Oakham, 10 councillors are suggested. We wonder why so many? In your proposal, Oakham NE and Oakham SW appears to have the lowest ratio of residents to councillor, -8% and -9% respectively. The predicted population of Oakham is 8659. This, divided by the original average of 1215 residents per councillor equates to requiring 7.1 councillors.

In the final paragraph of our response to your consultation we suggested an alternative that would not require an increase in the number of councillors:

'Finally, our calculations, based on your figures, suggest amalgamating Oakham South East and Oakham South West with an allocation of 3 rather than 4 councillors and giving Oakham North West 3 rather than 2 councillors would deliver greater electoral equality across Rutland.'

We would strongly urge you to amend your proposal to accommodate the existing 26 councillors as directed by the Government.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Duckering

Parish Clerk

Langham Parish Council