

With compliments

Ann

This was sent to me by mistake.

Thanks

Susie

Susie Child confirmed that she received this MP at 17/11/06. This copy of knowledge sent today.



The Boundary Committee for England

Part of The Electoral Commission

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**Sleaford and North Hykeham Liberal Democrats
From the Sleaford Councillors Group Secretary
and the District Council Group Leader
25 Leicester Street, Sleaford NG34 7PS 01529 414265**

The Secretary,
The Electoral Commission,
Trevelyan House,
Great Peter Street,
London SW1P 2HW

13th January 2006-01-11

Dear Secretary, -


**North Kesteven District Council Ward Boundaries -
Committee for England**

I enclose the formal response of the local Liberal Democrats (the Constituency Party), the District Council Group Leader and the Sleaford Liberal Democrats Councillors Group which comprises six pages of comments and drafted amendments. It is in response to the invitation of the Boundary Committee to consider and comment on their final recommendations, dated December 2005.

This is a joint and agreed set of opinions and amendments on behalf of the three organisations listed at the head of this letter. Please note that this final correspondence concludes the submissions initially sent under the name of Cllr Bernice Heppell, rather than David Miller (whose draft was withdrawn) at the end of the summer, 2005. Thank you for your assistance in clarifying the responsibility for the drafts.

Yours sincerely,


Cllr Bernice A. Heppell


Cllr Jim Heppell

Sleaford Liberal Democrats Councillors Group Secretary
Group Leader

District Council

North Kesteven District Ward Boundaries

Sleaford & North Hykeham Liberal Democrats Response to the Boundary Committee's Draft Proposals as published in December 2005.

We have addressed particular paragraphs in the Draft Report where we believe some final improvements ought to be submitted. Each paragraph where an amendment is proposed is numbered to match the work of the Boundaries Committee for England and the re-drafts are submitted to logically address the final conclusions in page order (from paragraph 79 to the final revised Conclusions at paragraph 246 and then the addition of Table 5).

Each numbered paragraph in our submitted text of proposals contains words that are our considered Amendments and these *are printed in bold italics* for ease of recognition.

There are a few paragraphs inserted un-numbered where we have summarised the gist of our argument but do not wish to propose a change apart from *the bold italic text* in the adjoining paragraphs.

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79 Therefore, in view of the support received for the proposed council size of 43, we are adopting our draft recommendation for a council size of 43 for North Kesteven District Council as part of our final recommendations.

We are pleased to be able to support this 43-member spread across North Kesteven on both grounds of electoral representation equality and for the workload of members. We ask that this approach be also taken for both the two urban parishes.

137 We proposed to broadly adopt the remainder of the District Council and Labour Party's proposals for North Hykeham, with two amendments to improve electoral equality and the reflection of community identity, as well as providing more easily identifiable boundaries. Our draft proposals for five district wards covering North Hykeham parish would retain the existing ward names. We considered that these wards would ensure good electoral equality, use strong boundaries and provide a

good reflection of community identity. As part of our draft proposals, five new North Hykeham parish wards would be created, based on our proposed new wards, as detailed in the 'Parish and town council electoral arrangements' section (page 65).

We very much favour keeping existing ward names and modest adjustment of Parish ward boundaries (in the interests of both clarity on the ground and electoral equity).

The six wards of Sleaford parish

177 Sleaford is a parish situated in the south of the district and divided into six town council parish wards based on district wards of the same name. The parish comprises the single-member district wards of Sleaford Castle, Sleaford Holdingham, Sleaford Mareham, Sleaford Quarrington, Sleaford Navigation and Sleaford Westholme. Table 4 (page 20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances that they would be forecast to have by 2008 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

177

We are pleased to see that the oversight in Table 4 (the omission of line 26 for Mareham Ward) is corrected.

197 We noted the concerns raised by the Liberal Democrats and Sleaford Town Council regarding the draft three-member Sleaford Quarrington ward and single-member Sleaford Central ward. They submitted alternative warding arrangements based around the existing single-member Sleaford Castle, Sleaford Mareham and Sleaford Quarrington wards. We consider that these proposals provide good alternatives to our draft recommendations for this area, securing improvements to community identities and providing stronger boundaries. We note their argument that the current Sleaford Castle ward provides a good reflection of community identity, and having visited the area, we concur that this ward should be broadly retained. We looked at improving the electoral equality of the ward and as stated in paragraph 194, we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a minor amendment to the ward's northern boundary. We also noted that the current boundary with Sleaford Quarrington ward near St Boltolph's Primary School runs through properties and are

therefore proposing to realign the boundary to tie it to clearer ground features. We propose that the boundary should run along the eastern perimeter of the school, the backs of the houses along Victory Way and the perimeter of 42 Sheldrake Road to the existing boundary. Our proposed Sleaford Castle ward would have an electoral variance of 6% more than the district average by 2008.

197

We are pleased to support these conclusions.

198 We acknowledge that the existing Sleaford Mareham ward endorsed by the Liberal Democrats and Sleaford Town Council would have good electoral equality (1% below the district average by 2008), and would contain a discrete part of the town. However, we noted the Town Council and Liberal Democrats' similar proposals for neighbouring two-member Sleaford wards based on the existing Sleaford Quarrington ward (9% below the district average by 2008) would not provide as good electoral equality compared to the Town Council's alternative three-member Sleaford Quarrington ward. This ward would comprise Sleaford Mareham and Sleaford Quarrington wards and contain 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2008. Subject to the amendment to the boundary with Sleaford Castle ward described above, we consider their proposals secure a better reflection of community identities compared to the draft recommendations. This three-member ward would also secure good electoral equality and strong boundaries and therefore we are adopting it as part of our final recommendations. We also propose naming it Sleaford Quarrington & Mareham ward to reflect the two constituent areas. As part of our proposals, six Sleaford parish wards will be created, as detailed in the 'Parish and town electoral arrangements' section (page 65).

198

There is no need for such a large ward in Sleaford, but whatever the final decision about composition of the ward we urge that the name "Greylees" be included with Quarrington in a two member pattern or with Quarrington and Mareham in a three member arrangement.

228 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies with district councils.² If a district council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or The Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

We wish this arrangement to be implemented so that Quarrington and Greylees can eventually become separate wards for parish/town council purposes.

229 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of North Hykeham and Sleaford to reflect the proposed district wards.

229

We do wish to continue our support for this principle.

231 Under our draft recommendations we adopted the District Council and North Hykeham Town Council's proposals to increase the total of its members by two. We did not adopt North Hykeham Town Council's interim proposals for its electoral arrangements as part of our draft recommendations as this went beyond our remit. Therefore, we recommended an increase in the size of North Hykeham Town Council from 16 to 18. We amended the parish wards in North Hykeham in order to reflect our proposed district ward boundaries. We broadly based the allocation of town councillors to each town ward on electoral equality and welcomed any comments on these recommendations during Stage Three.

231

This recommendation should similarly be applied to Sleaford for parish purposes. A modest increase in the size of both Town Councils allows the workload of parish councillors to be more evenly spread.

235 In view of our final recommendations allocating two members to North Hykeham Mill district ward, we are amending our recommendations for North Hykeham Town Council parish wards and electoral arrangements. We are proposing to allocate six town councillors to North Hykeham Mill parish ward and just three to North Hykeham Memorial parish ward. The remaining three parish wards are also to be coterminous with the proposed district ward boundaries and each would return three town councillors.

235

We note that this solution to the problem of large-scale growth of housing in the Mill Ward is well resolved. We ask that a similar solution be applied in a future Quarrington and Greylees ward of Sleaford. Please see Table 5.

240 The Liberal Democrats argued that the boundaries of Sleaford's district wards should continue to be used for the Town Council's parish wards. They considered a town council comprising 14 members of five two-member wards and one four-member ward. However, they concluded that 14 town councillors would be insufficient to represent a town of more than 13,000 electors. They therefore proposed that the Town Council comprise 20 or 21 councillors. The Liberal Democrats proposed that their proposed Sleaford Quarrington & Greylees ward be represented by five or six town councillors depending on the number of electors in the ward by the time of the 2007 local elections. If this total exceeds 3,600, they argued that the ward should be allocated a sixth town councillor. They argued that the remaining parish wards should be allocated three members each.

240

They, therefore, remain of the view - based on the electoral estimates evidence - that a parish ward based on Quarrington and Greylees requires 5 parish ward members. The electoral statistics for Sleaford displayed in Table 5 demonstrates the alternatives for both the Navigation and Quarrington and Greylees parish representation. On equality of representation grounds they also favour 3 member representation for Navigation parish ward. Table 5 shows how the 20-seat town council membership could be fairly distributed.

245 We note the proposals for differing numbers and allocations of Sleaford town councillors and the lack of consensus. We also note that none of the proposals provide any justification for an increase in the number of town councillors, other than in terms of achieving good electoral equality. 1

In terms of electoral equality by the target date of 2008 it is clear that two of Sleaford's parish wards deserve more than the councillor numbers allocated. In the case of Navigation ward there ought to be 3 councillors, comparable with castle, Holdingham, Westholme and Mareham parish wards - 614 electors per councillor compares quite well with the town-wide average of 663 per member).

245a Forecast electoral numbers in a new Quarrington/Greylees ward clearly call for 5 parish ward members - 699 electors p.m. will be larger than any other ward's allocation (again compared to 663 in a 20 member representation for the town).

246 However, in view of our final recommendations for amended Sleaford district wards, we are accordingly proposing to adjust the majority of the parish ward names and boundaries to match these wards. An exception to this is our proposal to divide Sleaford Quarrington district ward into two parish wards. Under this proposal we are retaining the existing Quarrington and Mareham parish wards in order to provide effective local representation. In addition, we have again sought to achieve equality of representation in each parish ward,

246

Extra allocations of a councillor in Navigation and Quarrington/ Greylees are based on the 2008 forecast electorates.

Final recommendation:

Sleaford Town Council should comprise 20 councillors representing the 6 wards of the Town and constituted as follows:-

Castle Ward 3 councillors
Mareham Ward 3 councillors
Westholme Ward 3 councillors

Holdingham Ward 3 councillors
Navigation Ward 3 councillors

Quarrington and Greylees Ward 5 councillors

The Sleaford Parish ward boundaries should match the proposed District Ward boundaries, as illustrated on Map 3.