



# New electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council

May 2010

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## Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Northampton Borough Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the borough.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Boundary Committee for England commenced the review in 2009. However, on 1 April 2010, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee and is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

This review is being conducted as follows:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	27 October 2009	Submission of proposals to the Boundary Committee
Two	19 January 2010	Boundary Committee's analysis and deliberation
Three	25 May 2010	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	20 July 2010	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Submissions received

The Boundary Committee received seven representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from Northampton Borough Council and the Northampton Borough Council Independent Group. All submissions can be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Analysis and draft recommendations

### Electorate figures

Northampton Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral roll which is the basis for this review. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 7% over this period. Although we had some concern that this level of growth appeared somewhat high, the Council provided a robust methodology to support this increase. We are therefore content to accept the Council's electorate forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

### Council size

Northampton currently has 47 councillors. During Stage One the Boundary Committee received proposals for a council size of 45 from Northampton Borough

Council. This was supported 'in principle' by the Independent Group. The Council took an evidenced-based approach in its consideration and detailed its governance structure in addition to providing information on the roles, responsibilities and workload of its members. Given the evidence provided, we have decided to adopt a council size of 45 members as part of our draft recommendations.

## General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage One, we have developed proposals which are based broadly on those of the Council. The Council's proposals would provide good electoral equality and a clear warding pattern using man-made and natural boundaries. The Council's proposals were also supported by evidence of community identity. Where we have moved away from the Council's proposals, we have sought to use clearer ward boundaries that will result in good communication links across each ward.

## What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by **19 July 2010**. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Review Officer**  
**Northampton Review**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**Layden House**  
**76–86 Turnmill Street**  
**London EC1M 5LG**  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

# 1 Introduction

1 The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee for England to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council on 11 March 2009. The review commenced on 27 October 2009. The Boundary Committee wrote to Northampton Borough Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on the council size and warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

2 On 1 April 2010, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee. We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council in autumn 2010.

## What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure ‘electoral equality’, which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations.

5 Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Why are we conducting a review in Northampton?

6 In March 2009, the Electoral Commission directed the review because, based on the December 2008 electorate figures, 35% of wards had variances of over 10% from the average. Most notably, the existing Nene Valley ward had 38% more electors per councillors than the borough average.

7 As discussed in paragraphs 1–2, following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) assuming the functions of the Boundary Committee, the LGBCE is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

8 Our recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also determine which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

9 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 19 July 2010. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in autumn 2010. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 15 and more information can be found on our website, [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

10 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL (Deputy Chair)  
Jane Earl  
Joan Jones CBE  
Professor Colin Mellors

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill  
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

## 2 Analysis and draft recommendations

11 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries, ward names, and parish or town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

12 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Northampton is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,<sup>2</sup> with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

13 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

14 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that, in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

15 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Northampton Borough Council or the external boundaries or names of parish councils, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Submissions received

16 Prior to the initial stage of the review, members and officers of the Boundary Committee visited Northampton Borough Council and met with members, officers and parish councils. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

assistance. The Committee received seven submissions during Stage One, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Electorate figures

17 As part of this review, Northampton Borough Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2013, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 7% over the five-year period from 2008–2013.

18 During Stage One, the Northampton Borough Council Independent Group ('the Independent Group') expressed concern that these figures may have underestimated the likely growth for the borough and asserted that a larger increase may have resulted had the projections been 'in line with regional growth plans rather than the Council's own estimate'. However, the Independent Group did not provide further evidence to support their views.

19 We had some concerns about whether a rate of 7% growth would be realised. However, the Council provided a robust methodology to support this increase, citing planning forecasts, factoring in the expected level of void properties and having regard to inward and outward migration levels for the borough.

20 Noting the Council's supporting methodology, and the lack of evidence to contradict the electorate forecasts, we were content to accept the Council's forecasts as the basis of our draft recommendations.

## Council size

21 Northampton Borough Council currently has 47 councillors. During Stage One, the Boundary Committee received three comments in relation to council size. However, of these respondents, only the Council submitted a specific proposal.

22 The Council took an evidence-based approach in its consideration of council size and proposed a council size of 45, a reduction of two from the current number.

23 The Council's proposal outlined a Leader and Cabinet political management structure with a cabinet of seven members which meets every three weeks. In supporting its proposal for a council size of 45 members, the Council set out an allocation of members to committees under its political management structure and set out the frequency of meetings. In addition, the Council considered member commitments to outside bodies, as nominated by the Council.

24 The Independent Group accepted 'in principle' the Council's proposal for a council size of 45. However, it expressed some concern over the increased workload for councillors resulting from the Council's proposed neighbourhood working arrangements. The Independent Group also said that the nominations to outside bodies was less than suggested by the Council, commenting that, to date, its members had 'not been involved in the nomination of members to any outside bodies'.

25 A local resident made non-specific comments in relation to council size. He favoured a higher councillor:elector ratio which would result in a reduction in council size. He also said that the allocation of members per ward should 'reflect the index of deprivation' to accurately reflect member workload. However, it should be noted that we do not consider socio-economic factors in developing our proposals for electoral arrangements. Furthermore, we do not take into account the councillor:elector ratio in isolation as a principle in deciding the appropriate council size for an authority.

26 We noted from the responses to the Council's own local consultation on its proposals to us that a local resident had proposed fewer councillors. However, he did not make a specific proposal.

27 We considered the Council's proposals provided a comprehensive rationale for a council size of 45. The Council detailed its governance structure in addition to providing commentary on the roles, responsibilities and workload of members within the context of its committee structure.

28 We noted the Independent Group's comments regarding increased workload as a result of the Council's proposed neighbourhood working arrangements. However, we are satisfied that the Council has taken a holistic approach to member workload in developing its proposal for a council size of 45 members. We also note that the Independent Group give qualified support to this figure.

29 Based on the evidence received, we have decided to adopt the proposed council size of 45 members as the basis of our draft recommendations.

## Electoral fairness

30 As discussed in the introduction to this report, the prime aim of an electoral review is to achieve electoral fairness within a local authority.

31 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations should provide for electoral fairness whilst ensuring that we reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

32 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (151,504 in December 2008 and 162,061 by December 2013) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 45 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 3,367 in 2008 and 3,601 by 2013.

33 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in one of the 34 wards will vary by more than 10% from the average across the borough by 2013. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved reasonably good levels of electoral fairness under our draft recommendations for Northampton Borough Council.

## General analysis

34 During Stage One, two borough-wide schemes were received. These were from the Council and the Independent Group. Northamptonshire County Councillor Winston Strachan (St Crispin) and a local resident endorsed the Independent Group's proposals. Both borough-wide schemes were based on a council size of 45.

35 The Council proposed a pattern of single- and multi-member wards and provided evidence of community identity. Its scheme was consulted on locally prior to being submitted to the Boundary Committee. The Council's proposals would provide good electoral equality with only one ward having an electoral variance of more than 10% from the borough average by 2013.

36 The Independent Group proposed a uniform pattern of single-member wards. The Independent Group asserted its proposals reflected 'identifiable communities'. However, it did not provide evidence of community identity to support this view. While the Independent Group did not indicate that its proposals had been consulted on locally before being submitted to the Boundary Committee, we note from other submissions received during Stage One that some respondents had sight of the proposals.

37 Broadly speaking, the Independent Group's proposals would provide reasonable electoral equality. However, a notable exception to this was its proposed Nene Valley ward. This ward, based on the information provided in the submission, would have a variance of 36% by 2013.

38 The Independent Group opposed the Council's use of multi-member wards. However, it stated that where 'sensible' single-member wards, based on 'identifiable communities', were proposed by the Council, it would endorse them.

39 We consider that the Council's scheme provides clear ward boundaries using main roads, railways and waterways, and that its proposed wards provide a good reflection of communities in the borough. We have therefore based our proposals on the Council's scheme, subject to a number of modifications which are outlined in this report.

40 The remainder of the submissions received during Stage One were localised or non-specific comments. Northamptonshire County Council requested that the electoral review consider the impact on county divisions. However, it did not make specific comments in relation to the warding pattern in Northampton borough. In practice, while we are required to have regard to district ward patterns in undertaking reviews of county council electoral arrangements there is no similar requirement in district council electoral reviews. A local resident made non-specific comments relating to the Grange Park Estate, which lies to the south-east of Northampton borough itself.

41 We have also noted the responses to the consultation on the Council's proposals.

42 Our proposals are for a pattern of 24 single-member wards, nine two-member wards and one three-member ward. We consider our proposals provide for reasonable electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

43 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table C1 (on pages 24–26) and Map 1.

44 During Stage Three we welcome comments on these draft recommendations.

## Electoral arrangements

45 This section of the report details the submissions received by the Boundary Committee, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Northampton. The following areas are considered in turn:

- North west Northampton (pages 9–11)
- North east Northampton (pages 11–12)
- South Northampton (pages 12–13)

46 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 24–26, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

### North west Northampton

47 North west Northampton broadly comprises the area of the borough to the north west of the River Nene. The area is largely urban with Dunston parish being the only parish in the area.

48 During Stage One, in addition to the borough-wide proposals discussed in paragraph 34, the Boundary Committee received one submission in relation to this area from a local resident. As discussed in paragraph 39, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on the borough-wide scheme of the Council.

49 The Council's proposed wards in this area would provide good electoral equality. However, we have proposed minor modifications to provide clearer ward boundaries that will result in good communication links across each ward.

### **Duston area**

50 A local resident proposed a warding pattern of four single-member wards in the Duston area, broadly covering Duston parish. In support of this warding pattern, the resident cited amenities and facilities as evidence of a distinct community identity in each of the proposed wards.

51 While we acknowledge the communities of interest that exist in the proposed four single-member wards, this proposal would have a consequential effect on the adjacent wards of Kings Heath and St James and therefore cannot be accommodated as part of our draft recommendations.

52 The local resident also proposed an alternative warding pattern for four-member wards in the Kingsthorpe and St James areas. As an alternative to his initial proposal of four-single member wards in Duston, he also proposed a four-member ward in this area. However, our policy is not to normally recommend wards with more than three members as we consider that to do so could dilute to an unacceptable degree the accountability of councillors to the electorate.

53 We have decided to adopt as part of our draft recommendations the Council's proposed two-member Old Duston and single-member St James wards, subject to a minor modification. Where the boundary between these wards follows the centre of Malcolm Drive, we propose that it instead follow the rear of properties on the eastern side of Malcolm Drive. This modification would ensure the properties in this section of Malcolm Drive are wholly located within the proposed Old Duston ward. We consider this modification will result in good communication links across each ward and provide a clearer warding pattern for the residents in this area.

### **Kingsthorpe area**

54 We have decided to adopt in their entirety as part of our draft recommendations the Council's proposed wards for this area of the borough subject, in a number of instances, to the minor modifications set out below.

55 Single-member Sunnyside and St David's wards. Where the boundary between these wards follows the centre of Eastern Avenue North, we propose it instead follows the rear of properties on the western side of Eastern Avenue North. This modification would ensure the properties in this area are wholly located within the proposed St David's ward. We consider this modification will provide a clearer and more easily identifiable ward boundary for the residents in this area.

56 Single-member St David's and Kingsley wards. We propose the boundary between these two wards partially follow the allotment gardens and the rear of properties on Holdenby Road and Brockhall Close. This modification does not affect any electors but ties the boundary to clear ground detail.

57 Single-member Kings Heath and Kingsthorpe wards. Where the boundary between Kings Heath and Kingsthorpe wards follows the canal, we propose it instead follow the railway. We note that the railway is used as a constant boundary from the centre of the borough and would therefore add clarity to the warding pattern in this area. This modification would not affect any electors.

58 Single-member Kingsthorpe and Semilong wards. We propose that the boundary between these two wards should follow Mill Lane and the perimeter of buildings on Studland Road, the allotment gardens and Northgate School. Consequently, the two properties to the east of Northgate School, which are accessed via the path to the north, will be located in our proposed Kingsthorpe ward.

59 Single-member Semilong and Trinity wards. We propose the boundary between these wards follow Cranbrooke Road and the rear of properties on Bunting Road to provide a clearer warding pattern in this area. The modification would also ensure the properties in the adjacent section of Balfour Road are wholly located within the proposed Semilong ward.

60 Table C1 (on pages 24–26) provides details of the electoral variances of the draft recommendations for wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

## North east Northampton

61 North east Northampton broadly comprises the area of the borough north east of the River Nene. The area is largely urban with Billing as the sole parish in the area.

62 During Stage One, we did not receive any specific submissions in relation to this area other than the borough-wide schemes discussed in paragraph 34. As discussed in paragraph 39, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on the borough-wide scheme from the Council.

63 The Council's proposed wards in this area would provide good electoral equality. However, we have proposed minor modifications to provide clearer ward boundaries that reflect access and communication routes.

### **Rectory Farm area**

64 The Council proposed a single-member Rectory Farm ward and a two-member Talavera ward. However, we had some concerns about this warding pattern. While these wards would have good electoral equality, we did not consider the proposals in this area reflected transport links and result in good communication links across each ward. In particular, we considered the proposed ward boundary in the Maidencastle area to be particularly unclear. We therefore sought to modify the boundary in this area.

65 We initially considered a three-member ward comprising the Council's proposed Rectory Farm and Talavera wards. However, we noted the local preference for single-member wards where possible. This was echoed by local residents in the Council's consultation. We therefore sought an alternative warding pattern to achieve this.

66 We considered that under the Council's proposal, the Maidencastle area would have no direct communication link with the majority of Talavera ward and would be separated from it by a park. We considered it would be more appropriate for the Maidencastle area to be located in a ward with areas to its east. We considered the properties on Maidencastle, within the Council's proposed Talavera ward, to look more towards the proposed Rectory Farm ward. Indeed, these areas have clear transport and access links with each other via a subway and residential streets. We have therefore decided to transfer these properties to the proposed Rectory Farm ward, with the boundary following Blackthorn Road and Blackthorn Walk in the south-east of the area. However, the transfer of these properties would result in a significant electoral variance. We therefore examined a further modification to achieve good electoral equality in this area.

67 We propose that properties in the north of Greatmeadow, within the Council's proposed Rectory Farm ward, be transferred into the proposed Talavera ward. We note that these properties have clear transport and communication links via Greatmeadow Road to residential streets to the west. Furthermore, we consider the overall modification in this area to provide a clearer warding pattern.

## **Cottarville area**

68 In the Cottarville area of the borough, we considered the Council's proposals to provide good electoral equality. However, in two areas of Cottarville, we propose modifications to the Council's proposed wards to provide more easily identifiable ward boundaries.

69 We do not consider the Council's proposed single-member Boothville and Westone wards reflect the main access and communication links for the properties on Kendal Close, within the Council's proposed Boothville ward. Furthermore, we noted the communication links for the properties on Kendal Close are orientated to the south, in the proposed Westone ward, via Kendal Close and Booth Lane North. We therefore propose a modification to transfer the properties on Kendal Close from Boothville ward to Westone ward. Consequently, the boundary between these wards would follow the rear of properties on Woodside Avenue, providing clearer access for the properties on Kendal Close and a more logical boundary between the two wards.

70 We also propose a further modification to the west of this area between the Council's proposed single-member Westone ward and Headlands ward. Where the boundary between these wards follows the centre of Bush Hill, we propose it instead follow the rear of properties on the eastern side of Bush Hill. This modification would ensure the properties on Bush Hill were wholly located within the proposed Headlands ward. In addition, we propose the properties to the immediate south of Bush Hill on Wellingborough Road be transferred to Headlands ward.

71 Elsewhere in the north east of the borough, we propose a minor modification to the northern boundary of the Council's proposed two-member Billing ward. Where the boundary slightly departs from the boundary of Billing parish at the roundabout, we propose it instead follow the parish boundary in its entirety. Consequently, Billing ward would be fully coterminous with Billing parish.

72 We also propose a minor modification to the Council's proposed single-member Phippsville and Eastfield wards. We propose the two properties to the north of Beech Avenue be located in Phippsville ward with the remainder of properties on this side of Beech Avenue.

73 In the remainder of the north east of the borough, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposals without modification. Table C1 (on pages 24–26) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

## **South Northampton**

74 South Northampton broadly comprises the area south of the River Nene. The area has a rural/urban mix in contrast to the north of the borough and contains the parishes of Collingtree, Great Houghton, Hardingstone, Upton and Wooton.

75 During Stage One, we did not receive any specific submissions in relation to this area other than the borough-wide schemes discussed in paragraph 34. As discussed in paragraph 39, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on the borough-wide scheme from the Council.

76 The Council’s proposed two-member Nene Valley ward would have 11% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2013. This variance is slightly higher than we would seek to recommend.

77 The area comprising the proposed Nene Valley ward is a rural/urban mix. It comprises the urban parish of Wooton which is bounded to the east and west by the semi-rural parishes of Collingtree and Hardington. Hardington parish also contains the Brackmills Industrial Estate and the entire ward is adjacent to the borough boundary. However, the overall geography presents a number of constraints in developing an alternative warding pattern. Therefore we have decided to adopt the Council’s proposals without modification.

78 We propose a minor modification to the Council’s proposed single-member Rushmills and Weston Vale wards. Where the boundary between these wards follows Billing Road East, we propose a modification to include the property north of the point at which it deviates to join Nene Valley Way. This modification would ensure the properties in this section of Billing Road East are wholly located within the proposed Rushmills ward. In the remainder of the south of the borough, we have decided to adopt the Council’s proposals without modification.

79 Table C1 (on pages 24–26) provides details of the electoral variances of the draft recommendations for wards in this area of the borough. The draft recommendations are shown on Map 1, Map 3 and Map 4 accompanying this report.

**Conclusions**

80 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2008 and 2013 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Draft recommendations	
	2008	2013
Number of councillors	45	45
Number of electoral wards	34	34
Average number of electors per councillor	3,367	3,601
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

**Draft recommendation**  
 Northampton Borough Council should comprise 45 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

81 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

82 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Northampton Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

83 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Collingtree and Duston.

84 We would particularly welcome comments on these proposals from the parish councils concerned and local residents during this consultation stage.

85 The parish of Collingtree is currently unwarded, returning seven members.

86 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Collingtree parish.

### **Draft recommendations**

Collingtree Council should return seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Collingtree North (returning three members) and Collingtree South (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 4.

87 The parish of Duston is currently divided into two parish wards: Old Duston (returning six members) and New Duston (returning six members).

88 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Duston parish.

### **Draft recommendations**

Duston Parish Council should return 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Old Duston (returning six members) and New Duston (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2.

### 3 What happens next?

89 There will now be a consultation period of eight weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Northampton Borough Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 19 July 2010. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

90 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Northampton and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

91 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Officer**  
**Northampton Review**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**Layden House**  
**76–86 Turnmill Street**  
**London EC1M 5LG**

[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) or by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk).

92 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Northampton Borough Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

93 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

94 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

95 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Northampton Borough Council in 2011.

## 4 Mapping

### Draft recommendations for Northampton

96 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Northampton Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Northampton Borough Council.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed wards in north west Northampton.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed wards in north east Northampton.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed wards in south Northampton.

# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England was a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Boundary Committee's functions were assumed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections

Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town Council'
Parish (or Town) Council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town Council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

## Appendix B

### Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (November 2000) ([http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/\\_consultation.pdf](http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/_consultation.pdf)) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

**Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.

We comply with this requirement.

Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

We comply with this requirement.

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## Appendix C

**Table C1: Draft recommendations for Northampton Borough Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2008)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2013)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Abington	2	6,534	3,267	-3%	6,570	3,285	-9%
2	Billing	2	6,309	3,155	-6%	6,802	3,401	-6%
3	Boothville	1	3,325	3,325	-1%	3,383	3,383	-6%
4	Briar Hill	1	3,248	3,248	-4%	3,248	3,248	-10%
5	Brookside	1	3,630	3,630	8%	3,925	3,925	9%
6	Central	3	8,289	2,763	-18%	9,793	3,264	-9%
7	Delapre	2	6,673	3,337	-1%	7,456	3,728	4%
8	East Hunsbury	2	7,793	3,897	16%	7,802	3,901	8%
9	Eastfield	1	3,719	3,719	10%	3,719	3,719	3%
10	Headlands	1	3,752	3,752	11%	3,752	3,752	4%
11	Kings Heath	1	3,277	3,277	-3%	3,658	3,658	2%
12	Kingsley	1	3,958	3,958	18%	3,972	3,972	10%
13	Kingsthorpe	1	3,623	3,623	8%	3,629	3,629	1%

**Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Northampton Borough Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2008)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2013)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
14	Nene Valley	2	7,722	3,861	15%	7,964	3,982	11%
15	New Duston	2	7,888	3,944	17%	7,928	3,964	10%
16	Obelisk	1	3,519	3,519	5%	3,519	3,519	-2%
17	Old Duston	2	6,134	3,067	-9%	6,969	3,485	-3%
18	Parklands	1	3,489	3,489	4%	3,700	3,700	3%
19	Phippsville	1	3,568	3,568	6%	3,568	3,568	-1%
20	Rectory Farm	1	3,679	3,679	9%	3,968	3,968	10%
21	Rushmills	1	3,317	3,317	-1%	3,353	3,353	-7%
22	Semilong	1	3,506	3,506	4%	3,574	3,574	-1%
23	Spencer	1	3,627	3,627	8%	3,681	3,681	2%
24	Spring Park	1	3,699	3,699	10%	3,730	3,730	4%
25	Standens Barn	1	3,318	3,318	-1%	3,339	3,339	-7%
26	St David's	1	3,157	3,157	-6%	3,386	3,386	-6%
27	St James	1	3,273	3,273	-3%	3,401	3,401	-6%

**Table C1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Northampton Borough Council**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
28 Sunnyside	1	3,453	3,453	3%	3,549	3,549	-1%
29 Talavera	2	7,291	3,646	8%	7,386	3,693	3%
30 Trinity	1	3,295	3,295	-2%	3,364	3,364	-7%
31 Upton	2	3,273	1,637	-51%	7,386	3,693	3%
32 West Hunsbury	1	3,445	3,445	2%	3,464	3,464	-4%
33 Westone	1	3,322	3,322	-1%	3,644	3,644	1%
34 Weston Vale	1	3,399	3,399	1%	3,479	3,479	-3%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>151,504</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>162,061</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,367</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,601</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Northampton Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Appendix D

## Additional legislation we have considered

### Equal opportunities

In preparing this report we have had regard to the general duty set out in Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

### National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

We have also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by Section 97, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.



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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010. It is independent of Government and political parties, and is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas.