



Kettering
TOWN COUNCIL

Community • Environment • Heritage

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TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS FOR WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES, NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE REVIEW

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL WARDS

1. The Town Council is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the LGBCE proposals to change ward boundaries for North Northamptonshire Council, as they affect the town of Kettering. The Town Council is supportive of many of the proposals set out in the LGBCE report of the 30th May 2023 and therefore what follows are comments on matters which the Commission itself has highlighted as warranting discussion or which the Town Council has identified as an opportunity to improve representation yet further. This response is divided into two parts, dealing separately with NNC ward and Town Council wards, but obviously the two sets of proposals are intertwined in terms of the supporting arguments.
2. One issue remains unresolved however, which is that it is far from clear whether the population projections that the Commission have used properly reflect the likely rate of growth of the 5500 house urban extension of Kettering East (Hanwood Park). Whilst 1000 of those houses have been completed, it is likely that steady growth will continue to apply, within the Town Council's boundaries, to the current Ise ward over the next decade, which will impact on the numbers of councillors and the configuration of wards.
3. On the specific ward proposals in the Commission's report, the Town Council has the following observations.

3.1. St Peters and St Michaels ward

The proposal is for a two member ward covering this area. The Town Council considers that better results will flow from creating two single member wards, - one for a St Peters ward and one for a St Michaels' ward, with the proposed ward being split along the line of the railway. The railway forms a natural boundary line separating the two communities, which is already reflected in the current town council ward structure. The residents of St Peters and St Michaels do not share any public or commercial facilities now, have little in common demographically and are connected only by one footpath and a



congested town centre road running under the railway line. They are different communities and are best represented separately.

3.2. Proposed Ise Ward

3.2.1. The proposals for the Ise ward -the area due to experience the most growth because of the urban extension - cause a number of difficulties in our view. These are:-

- The inclusion in the ward of properties along and off Pytchley Rd. These have nothing in common with the rest of the Ise and are clearly only included for numerical reasons to create a ward of the right representational ratio.
- The decision to separate out a part of the current Ise ward and allocate it within the Burton Latimer/Barton Seagrave ward. The northern boundary of the area identified appears to follow an extinct water course or drainage ditch, but otherwise makes no sense at all and will, once the area is developed, run randomly through streets and houses and be nonsense in terms of community representation. The sensible southern boundary for the Ise ward remains the line of the Cranford Rd, which is the Town Council's boundary with Barton Seagrave. This should remain the boundary for the proposed Ise ward. The urban extension was conceived as an integral part of the wider Kettering town and this vision is not served by an artificial boundary which follows no natural boundary and includes part of the area in a ward whose interests are going to be those largely of Burton Latimer than Kettering
- The view that the Ise ward only warrant two members. This cannot be a sound position given the intended growth of population and we believe that it should be a three member ward from the start.

3.2.2. Our solution therefore is to propose

- That the "Wicksteed Ward" part of the proposed ward (the properties along Pytchley Rd) are excluded from the Ise ward, on the basis that this area has nothing in common with the rest of the ward. The Ise ward will have a significant growth of population over time and does not need this area to boost its numbers.

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- That the southern boundary of the Ise ward runs along the Town Council's boundary with Barton Seagrave. This will reduce the population base for Barton Seagrave/Burton Latimer ward as a three member ward. We suggest that that ward is either changed to a two member ward **or** that the "Wicksteed ward" area of Pytchley Rd is included within it, to balance the population lost.
- That the Ise ward is represented by three members as a consequence of these changes and to reflect the real and planned population growth.

3.3. Kettering Central ward and Brambleside ward

The proposed Kettering central ward is very large and – given its demography and physical make up, and the fact it includes the town centre, will generate an enormous workload for its members. Whilst the principle of such a ward is sound, the size of it is a concern. Equally, the proposed Brambleside ward is only just large enough to warrant a single member.

We propose that the boundary of the two wards is shifted so that it runs along or close to Wood St, rather than where it is currently. The northern part of Kettering Central, around Rockingham Rd Park, shares facilities – shops, schools etc – with Brambleside and has more in common with Brambleside demographically than it has with the older, more diverse and more densely populated southern part of Kettering Central.

A new boundary line as suggested would create two 2 – member wards for Brambleside and Kettering Central, and create wards which were more manageable and/or sustainable. The name for the Brambleside ward would have to be changed though.



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4. The Town Council acknowledges the need for the Commission to consider the impact on its wards of the changes to NNC wards, but is also aware that NNC will itself wish to carry out a community governance review before the next elections in 2025 and that – as result – the LGBCE changes may only be a staging post. There are more fundamental issues – such as the number of councillors, the right ratio of voters to councillors, the balance of single and multi-member wards – which only a community governance review can address. However, in the meantime, the Town Council has comments to make on the LGBCE proposals to create and change its wards.
5. Most of the following comments reflect the arguments already made in section 3 above.

5.1. St Peters and St Michaels ward

We propose that this ward is split in two to reflect the proposal in 3.1. above, and that two 2 member wards are created, separated by the railway line.

5.2. Ise ward and Hanwood Park ward

We believe a single three or four member ward for the Ise which covers the area of the urban extension is a better solution. There is little need for a Hanwood Park ward at this stage in its development.

5.3. All Saints and Northfield

- 5.3.1. We are not clear why the Commission has abolished the town council Northfield ward – it was not necessary for any alignment with the new Kettering Central ward and it makes the resulting All Saints parish ward unnecessarily large. Retaining it would still enable All Saints to have three members. We so propose.
- 5.3.2. If the Commission accepts the Town Council's arguments (para 3.3.) about the boundary between the NNC Kettering Central and Brambleside wards, then there would have to be a corresponding change in Town Council wards, probably reducing All Saints to two

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members and increasing Brambleside to three members (assuming Northfield is re-instated).

Ends.
13/7/23