



SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION

Boswell House, 9 Prospect Court, Courteenhall Road,
Blisworth, Northants, NN7 3DG

Tel: 01604 859721. Fax: 01604 859329

Email: agent@wnc.uk.com / abi@wnc.uk.com

Web: www.southnorthantsconservatives.com

**The Review Officer (Northamptonshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG**

1st December 2011

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL SIZE –
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

I am writing on behalf of South Northamptonshire Conservative Association in response to your consultation on the proposed size of Northamptonshire County Council. Your proposal is to reduce the size of the Council from 73 to 57 members.

While South Northamptonshire Conservative Association agrees that a reduction in the size of the Council is appropriate, we believe that the size of the reduction proposed is too great. We would suggest that a Council size of 63 is more appropriate and equitable, on the basis of the following number of Councillors per District / Borough:

Corby Borough - 6
Daventry District - 7
East Northants District - 8
Kettering Borough - 9
Northampton Borough - 18
South Northamptonshire District - 8
Wellingborough Borough - 7

Taking the predicted electoral figures for 2017, with a 57 member Council the average number of electors per Councillor would be 9,621. However under the proposals for the number of County Council seats in each District / Borough the average number of electors per Councillor would vary significantly across District / Borough areas. County Councillors in Daventry District would represent 8,992 electors while those in South Northamptonshire District would represent 10,150 electors. This is a variance of 1,158 electors (12.88%). Daventry Councillors would represent -6.5% of the County

average, while South Northamptonshire Councillors would represent +5.5% of the County average.

A Council of 63 members would generate an average of 8,704 electors per Councillor in 2017. Again there would be a variance in the numbers each County Councillor would represent across the Districts / Boroughs, but this variance would not be less. County Councillors in Wellingborough Borough would represent 8,145 electors and those in Daventry District would represent 8,992 electors. This is a lesser variance - 847 electors (10.4%), and is therefore more equitable and fair. While Wellingborough Councillors would represent -6.4% of the County, Daventry Councillors would only represent +3.3% of the County average.

We would suggest that the variance in the number of electors per County Councillor that would result from a Council of 63 members is far more acceptable than that that would result from a 57 member Council.

A 63 member Council for Northamptonshire will produce an average number of electors of 8,704 per Councillor in 2017. Looking at recent Boundary reviews; Somerset, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, these reviews have resulted in Councils with an average number of electors per Councillor of 8,871 in 2016 /17. (The extremes of Surrey and Northumberland have not been included as these are very different to Northamptonshire and are not really comparable). The size of Council we propose for Northamptonshire would result is an average number of electors per Councillor in 2017 that is close to the average of the other recent reviews, -167. This would provide the electorate of Northamptonshire with a fairer and more equitable representation, comparable with electors in other Counties.

The proposed 57 member Council would result in an average of 9,621 electors per Councillor in 2017. This is above the average of recent reviews meaning that Northamptonshire electors will not be as well or fairly represents as electors in Somerset, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire or Gloucestershire.

The demands on all elected representatives have grown significantly over the past 10 or so years. Councillors are today far more active and engaged in the communities they represent. Constituents are far more likely to seek the assistance and engagement of their elected representatives today than they were 10 years ago. Constituents today have high expectations of their representatives and are often very demanding. This is as it should be.

South Northamptonshire Conservative Association covers a very diverse area. We cover large rural areas, including rural areas of deprivation, as well as inner urban areas of deprivation, i.e. Camp Hill and Upton in Northampton.

Two of our existing County Council Divisions already cover a large number of parished areas. One Division has 17 Parish Councils and another 13. To work effectively within their Divisions, especially in this age of localism, Councillors need to work closely with all the Parish Councils in their Division. The development of Neighbourhood Plans by Parish Councils will be particularly demanding for all local representatives. Parish Councils can also generate a lot of work for elected Members. If these already large rural Divisions are to become significantly larger, containing even more Parish

Councils as they would with a Council of only 57 members it will be extremely difficult, in fact nearly impossible for an individual Councillor to manage to work effectively with them all.

These large rural Divisions are not easy to cover from a geographical perspective as travelling also become very time consuming.

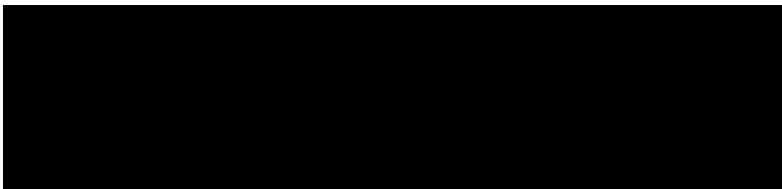
While we accept that a reduction in the total number of Northamptonshire County Councillors is appropriate, we consider that a smaller reduction to 63 Members as opposed to the current proposal of a reduction to 57 Members is more appropriate. A 63 Member Council as we propose will result in Divisions that are more manageable from the geographical perspective. It will also result in Divisions in which Councillors will be more able to work effectively and on a regular basis with their local communities, especially their Parish Councils.

Councillors representing areas of high deprivation are also under great pressure especially with regard to issues surrounding Adult Social Care and Children's Services that are very detailed and involved and consequently very demanding and time consuming. Again, while a reduction in the total number of Councillors is appropriate, to ensure that those electors living in deprived areas can continue to receive a strong level of support from their elected County Councillor; we would again suggest that a smaller reduction in numbers to 63 as opposed to 57 is more appropriate.

We hope that you will positively consider our proposal for reducing the size of Northamptonshire County Council, but only to 63 Councillors.

We look forward to the outcome of your consideration of this consultation.

Yours faithfully



Phil Larratt

Association Management Team Member