

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Chris Robins [crobins@foxdown33.freemove.co.uk]
Sent: 01 April 2011 13:13
To: Metherringham-Owlett, Jessica
Cc: John Tanner; Roy Darke; Ivan Coulter
Subject: Oxfordshire County Council Electoral Review
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red
Attachments: Cherwell Submission.docx; Cherwell Divisions.xls; Cherwell map.jpg; Banbury map.jpg; Bicester map.jpg

Dear Jessica

I attach a proposed arrangement of Oxfordshire County Council divisions within Cherwell District. Formally, this is submitted on behalf of Oxfordshire County Labour Party, although my particular interest is in Cherwell District, where I myself live.

These proposals have also been endorsed by the Labour Group of councillors on Oxfordshire County Council, and have been separately submitted by John Tanner on behalf of that Group, together with their own proposals for divisions within Oxford City, which I am happy also to endorse.

One point that I should bring to your attention relates to the proposed boundary between Calthorpe and Bloxham & Easington divisions. I have suggested that Queensway form part of this boundary, as in my view this provides a very clear dividing line between the inner and outer parts of Easington ward. Unfortunately, it does not coincide with an existing polling division boundary, and as electoral data has not been provided below polling district level, I have been forced to estimate the split of electoral data in polling districts AI1 and AJ1. Whilst I hope my estimate is reasonably accurate, you may wish to check the precise figures and adjust the data on the Excel spreadsheet accordingly.

A narrative explanation of the proposals is attached in a Word file, the electoral data is attached in an Excel file, and I have also attached a map of Cherwell District, together with more detailed maps of Banbury and Bicester, on which I have marked the proposed boundaries in red. In the case of the Banbury and Bicester maps, my proposals have been superimposed on copies of the maps submitted by Oxfordshire County Council. I hope this doesn't make them too confusing, although it does also provide an easy comparison between my proposals and those of the Council.

Chris Robins
Kidlington Parish Councillor

Oxfordshire County Labour Party

Electoral Review of Oxfordshire County Council

We are writing in connection with the current electoral review of Oxfordshire County Council. There are a number of shortcomings in the Council's proposals for Cherwell District to which we wish to draw the attention of the Commission. We wish also to propose an alternative pattern of divisions that will address our concerns.

Banbury

The town of Banbury is entitled to 4.4 divisions on its current boundary. Taking into account the stated intention of Cherwell District Council to review the boundary so as to incorporate into the town the whole of the proposed major development at Bankside, that entitlement will increase to 4.5. This is too large for the town to be comprised in its entirety of four divisions, but too small to be able to incorporate five divisions within the town boundary. This is well illustrated by option 1 proposed by the Council, in which five divisions have been incorporated into the town only by reason of the creation of a division (their division 10) with a variance of -21%. The circumstances in which a variance of -21% is acceptable are few and far between; certainly such a variance is unacceptable where a viable alternative exists. We believe that, in order to achieve electoral equality, it is necessary to create a cross-boundary division somewhere in the town.

We agree with the alternative option 2 proposed by the Council in regard to their proposed divisions 7, 8, and 10 (our proposed Grimsbury & Castle, Hardwick and Ruscombe divisions). We are, however concerned by the Council's proposed two-member division 9, which incorporates the parish of Bodicote into a division that is predominantly comprised of the southern part of Banbury town. We are aware that Bodicote parish, strongly supported by the local County Councillor, have raised objections to a link with Banbury town, and we fully understand the local concerns, given that Bodicote has almost coalesced with Banbury, that this could herald the eventual incorporation of the parish into the town. Our proposals therefore incorporate Bodicote into a rural division. Instead, we have linked Calthorpe ward (extended so as to incorporate the Bankside development) with the inner part of Easington ward to create a division wholly contained within the Banbury town boundary. We have created a cross-boundary division by linking the outer part of Easington ward with the parishes of Bloxham and Milcombe. We believe the rural gap separating Bloxham from Banbury is sufficient to alleviate any perception of the town intruding into its rural surroundings; indeed, our hope is that, by linking the leafiest suburb of Banbury to a predominantly rural area, the public perception may be of the countryside encroaching into the town rather than the reverse.

Bicester

We note that division 13 proposed by the Council links Bicester North ward with two polling districts from Bicester Town ward. These two wards meet corner to corner under the bridge at Bicester North railway station. The internal coherence of the proposed division is therefore tenuous at best. In addition, the Council has specifically excluded the eco-town development from Caversfield parish in their proposed adjoining rural division, but has failed to make provision for it in any Bicester division. After taking account of the proposal by Cherwell District Council to

incorporate major developments within Bicester town boundary, the eco-town should be linked with Bicester North ward.

The Council's proposed division 12 is excessively large, with a variance of 14.6%. We propose removing polling district BK1 from that division in order to bring it within the desired range of variance. This division, as amended, constitutes our proposed Bicester West division. We propose combining polling district BK1 with Bicester East ward and polling districts BF1 and BG1 from Bicester Town ward to form our proposed Bicester Town division.

We have combined the eco-town development with Bicester North ward to form the basis of our proposed Bicester North-East division. Ideally we would have liked to contain this division wholly within the Bicester town boundary (as amended to take account of the proposals of Cherwell District Council). Unfortunately however the eco-town is not expected to develop sufficiently by 2016 for this to constitute an appropriately sized division. With regret, we have therefore added Caversfield and Launton parishes in order to bring this division within the desired range of variance.

Bicester South ward is separated from other residential areas of Bicester by railway lines and a large industrial area. The Council's proposed link between Bicester South and Bicester East wards is not a natural one. In our proposals we have maintained the present arrangement by which Bicester South ward is linked to the surrounding rural area in a cross-boundary division. The boundaries for this division will be considered further in our proposals for rural areas.

Kidlington

The County Council have proposed a link between Yarnton, Gosford & Water Eaton ward, Kidlington Orchard parish ward and Otmoor ward. Although Kidlington and Gosford & Water Eaton face Otmoor ward across the River Cherwell, there is no road crossing of the river along this boundary. In order to travel between Kidlington (or Gosford & Water Eaton) and Otmoor, it is necessary to pass through Kirtlington ward en route. The Council's proposed division therefore fails the test of internal cohesion. Kidlington and the surrounding villages form a distinct part of Cherwell District, separated from the remainder of the District by the River Cherwell. Ideally, we would have liked to create two divisions wholly to the west of the river.

We propose an alternative arrangement for Kidlington in which Kidlington South ward is linked with Gosford & Water Eaton parish to form our proposed Kidlington South division. This is slightly outside the preferred range of variances at -11.4%. However, we believe that the strong boundary provided by the River Cherwell justifies this slight divergence from the norm.

We would have liked to link Kidlington North ward with the remaining parishes to the west of the river to create a Kidlington North division. However, the variance of that division would have been -13.4%. We have therefore reluctantly added Bletchington and Hampton Gay & Poyle parishes to bring the division within the desired range of variances. We note however that the village of Hampton Poyle, possibly because of its location, does have significantly closer community links to Kidlington than any other community on the eastern side of the river.

Rural Areas

In the north of the District, we endorse the Council's proposed division 1 (our Wroxtton division).

In the south of the district, the arrangement of divisions is constrained by the absence, already noted, of any direct road link between Otmoor ward and Kidlington. It is further constrained by the fact that the only road link between Ambrosden parish and the remainder of Ambrosden & Chesterton ward (the A41) passes through Bicester South and Bicester Town wards en route, thereby rendering that District ward lacking in internal cohesion. It is not possible to amend the District ward as part of the current review; it is however desirable to avoid replicating that lack of cohesion in the construction of County divisions. We note that the Otmoor villages identify with Bicester as their local market town. This is exemplified in the bus services from Otmoor, which provide a daily service to Oxford (the regional centre), and a market day service to Bicester, but little to any other destination. We have therefore linked Bicester South and Otmoor wards with the parishes of Ambrosden, Arncott, Blackthorn and Piddington to form our proposed Bicester South and Otmoor division.

The needs of electoral equality effectively determine the common boundary between our two remaining proposed rural divisions, Heyfords and Deddington. However, we note that, coincidentally, this boundary is identical to the existing division boundary.

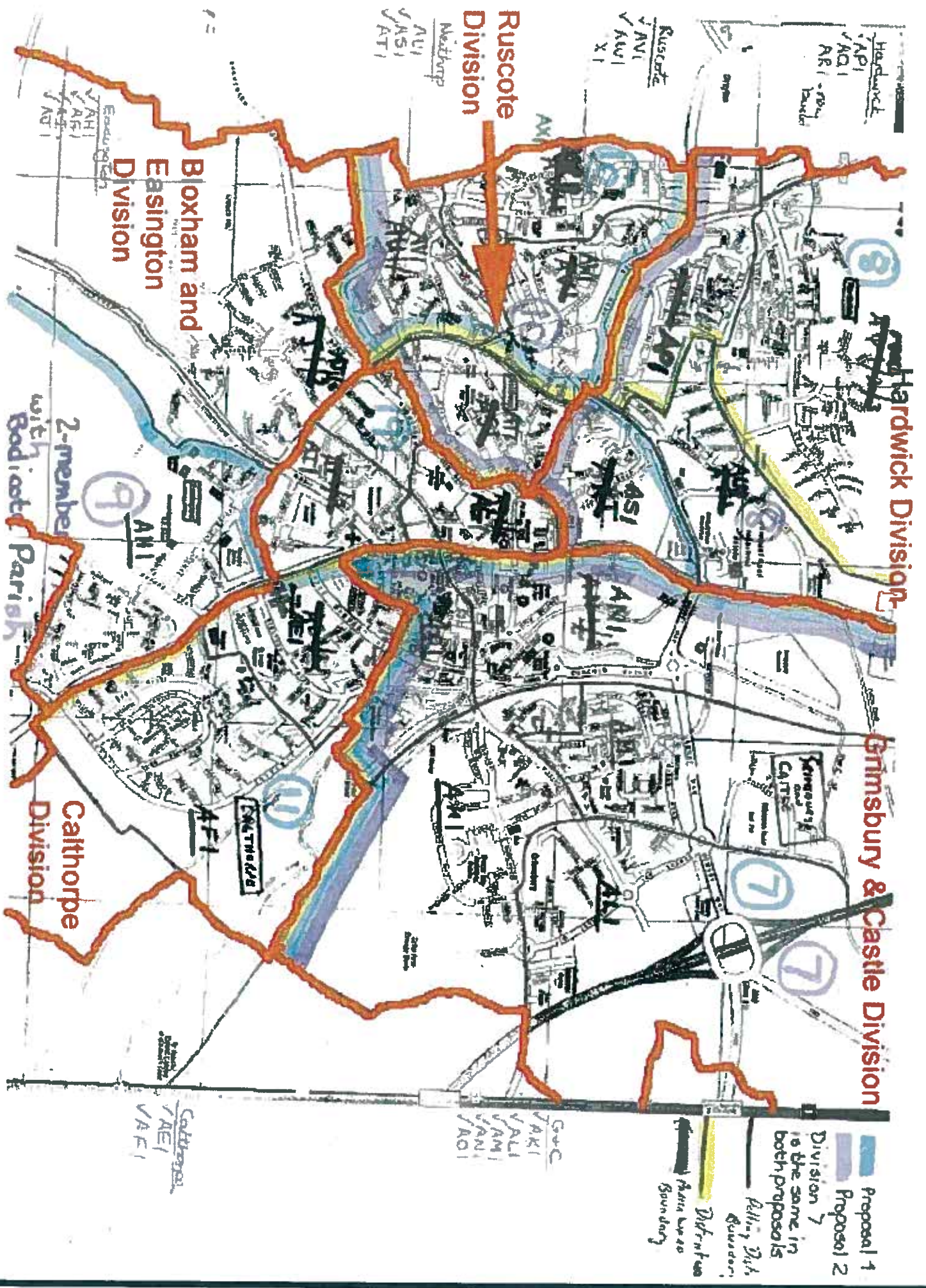
Conclusion

We attach an Excel spreadsheet giving details of our proposed divisions, together with their variances. We also attach a map of Cherwell District, together with more detailed maps of Banbury and Bicester, in which our proposed division boundaries have been marked in red.

We hope that these proposals address a number of anomalies, some of them quite serious, in the proposals of the County Council. We believe also that our proposals provide a general improvement in electoral equality. We therefore urge the Boundary Commission to adopt our proposals as the basis for their own draft proposals for divisions within Cherwell District.

Further Electoral Review of Oxfordshire County Council				
Cherwell Divisions				
District Ward	Polling District	Parish	2010	2016
Banbury Calthorpe Division				
Banbury Calthorpe			4128	6309
Banbury Easington	AG1, AI1 (part), AJ1 (part)		1539	1799
Electorate			5667	8108
Variance			-27.6153	-2.20721
Banbury Grimsbury & Castle Division				
Banbury Grimsbury & Castle			7370	7513
Electorate			7370	7513
Variance			-5.86282	-9.38367
Banbury Hardwick Division				
Banbury Hardwick			6045	6156
Banbury Neithrop	AS1, AU1		2549	2668
Electorate			8594	8824
Variance			9.771363	6.428658
Banbury Ruscote Division				
Banbury Neithrop	AT1		1953	2152
Banbury Ruscote			5826	6564
Electorate			7779	8716
Variance			-0.63865	5.12604
Bicester North-East Division				
Bicester North			4849	5489
Caversfield		Caversfield	979	979
Launton		Launton	965	1118
Electorate			6793	7586
Variance			-13.2329	-8.5032
Bicester South and Otmoor Division				
Ambrosden & Chesterton		Ambrosden	1236	1200
Bicester South			3822	3817
Launton		Arcott, Blackthorn, Piddington	1182	1422
Otmoor			1979	1952
Electorate			8219	8391
Variance			4.981479	1.206127
Bicester Town Division				
Bicester East			4327	4879
Bicester Town	BF1, BG1		2589	2972
Bicester West	BK1		992	992
Electorate			7908	8843
Variance			1.009069	6.657822
Bicester West Division				
Bicester Town	BH1		1266	1366
Bicester West	BI1, BJ1		4443	7144
Electorate			5709	8510
Variance			-27.0788	2.641418
Bloxham and Easington Division				

District Ward	Polling District	Parish	2010	2016	
Banbury Easington	AH1, A11 (part), AJ1 (part)		4413	4672	estimated figures for split of polling districts A11 and AJ1
Bloxham & Bodicote		Bloxham, Milcombe	3031	3133	
Electorate			7444	7805	
Variance			-4.91761	-5.86178	
Deddington Division					
Adderbury			2324	2261	
Bloxham & Bodicote		Bodicote	1694	1702	
Deddington			2132	1857	
The Astons & Heyfords		Duns Tew, Steeple Aston, Middle Aston, North Aston, Somerton, Fritwell, Souldern	2492	2284	
Electorate			8642	8104	
Variance			10.38447	-2.25546	
Heyfords Division					
Ambrosden & Chesterton		Chesterton, Middleton Stoney, Wendlebury	1218	1282	
Caversfield		Ardley, Bucknell, Stoke Lyne	914	903	
Fringford			1876	1702	
Kirtlington		Kirtlington, Weston-on-the-Green	1185	1070	
The Astons & Heyfords		Upper Heyford, Lower Heyford	1290	2633	includes Upper Heyford development
Electorate			6483	7590	
Variance			-17.1925	-8.45495	
Kidlington North Division					
Kidlington North			4164	4090	
Kirtlington		Bletchigdon, Hampton Gay & Poyle, Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp	1093	921	
Yarnton, Gosford & Water Eaton		Begbroke, Yarnton	2774	2847	
Electorate			8031	7858	
Variance			2.580151	-5.22253	
Kidlington South Division					
Kidlington South			6324	6285	
Yarnton, Gosford & Water Eaton		Gosford & Water Eaton	1009	1057	
Electorate			7333	7342	
Variance			-6.33542	-11.4461	
Wroxton Division					
Cropredy			2228	2104	
Hook Norton			2091	1978	
Sibford			2163	2019	
Wroxton			2137	2390	
Electorate			8619	8491	
Variance			10.09069	2.412254	



Handwick
 VAP1
 VAO1
 AR1 - new
 Parish

Ruscombe
 VAV1
 VAV1
 X1

Ruscombe
 Division
 Neighbourp
 VAV1
 VAS1
 VAT1

Bloxham and
 Easington
 Division

Handwick Division

Grimsbury & Castle Division

Calthorpe
 Division

2-member
 with
 Bodicot Parish

Proposal 1
 Proposal 2
 Division 7
 is the same in
 both proposals

Putting Dubs
 Quads
 Division
 Parish
 Boundary

G+C
 VAK1
 VAK1
 VAM1
 VAV1
 VAO1

Calthorpe
 VAE1
 VAE1

9

10

7

7

8

CALTHORPE

Grimsbury
 CASTLE
 Parish

AH1

AS1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

AN1

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