

From: [REDACTED]
To: [reviews](#)
Subject: West Northamptonshire Electoral Review
Date: 07 November 2022 08:27:45

Hi there,

Please accept this email as my submission to the initial consultation on the electoral review of the wards in West Northamptonshire Council.

My submission is guided by two key principles:

I believe that, in order to maintain cohesiveness between levels of government and not create additional work for councillors, the parishes should form the building blocks of wards and, unless unavoidable due to size, should be treated as indivisible. I also believe that dissimilar parishes (eg. a primarily urban parish, and a primarily rural parish) should not be combined for the purpose of making a single ward. Therefore, all mention of place names in my submission will refer to the parishes and their population sizes as given by the local authority.

Due to the diversity of settlements present in the local authority, from large towns like Northampton that alone comprises 30% of the population of the local authority to vast swaths of rural areas containing villages of fewer than a hundred people each, I don't believe the local authority is best served by the existing one-size-fits-all approach of all wards comprising three councillors each.

Instead, I recommend that larger urban settlements be represented by wards comprising two or three councillors, and smaller rural parishes represented by single-councillor wards. This would fix the current problem of rural wards becoming too geographically large and sparse to be effectively represented without also making urban wards unworkably small by holding them to the same standard. I predict this would lead to a council of about 50 wards, which is comparable with other unitary authorities.

Based on these two principles, I recommend that the following ward divisions be given serious consideration:

- The size of Northampton parish necessitates it be allocated 24 seats. The community would be best served if this took the form of eight wards with three seats each.
 - Due to the population size of the parish of Billing, being too big to be represented by one councillor and too small to be represented by two, and its awkward geographic location bordering only the local authority boundary and Northampton parish, serious consideration should be given to treating it as part of Northampton for the purposes of the review. This would give the combined parishes an allocation of 25 seats which could be spread across seven three-seat wards and two two-seat wards.
- Daventry parish is large enough for an allocation of five seats. Therefore, I propose it be divided into two wards, one with three seats and one with two seats.
- Kingsthorpe is large enough to be represented by two wards with two councillors each.
- Towcester, Far Cotton & Delapre, and East Hunsbury are each large enough to be represented by two-councillor wards.
- Wootton, when combined with Hardingstone, would be the perfect size for a single two-councillor ward.
- Upton, Brixworth, Moulton, Long Buckby, and West Hunsbury are all of a size that

would justify a single-councillor ward each.

- All other parishes are too small to form a single-parish ward and would therefore need to be combined with other parishes. However, the above list of recommendations covers over 66% of the population of the entire local authority.

Finally, I would like to make a recommendation pertaining specifically to Hartwell parish. Currently, this is located in the Hackleton & Grange Park ward, which I don't think best serves the parish. The village of Hartwell itself is physically separated from the other population centres of the ward by the M1 motorway and Salcey Forest, and there is no public transport connection to the rest of the ward or really any shared services to speak of. The village and its residents have a stronger connection to the village of Roade, which not only falls along the single bus route serving Hartwell but is also the location of the GP surgery used by the people of Hartwell as well as the closest library and petrol station. I think that combining the parishes of Hartwell, Roade and Ashton (also along the same bus route) would create a ward that is not only the perfect size to be represented by a single councillor but would also form a distinct community-area that would be best served by a shared representative.

Kind regards,

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