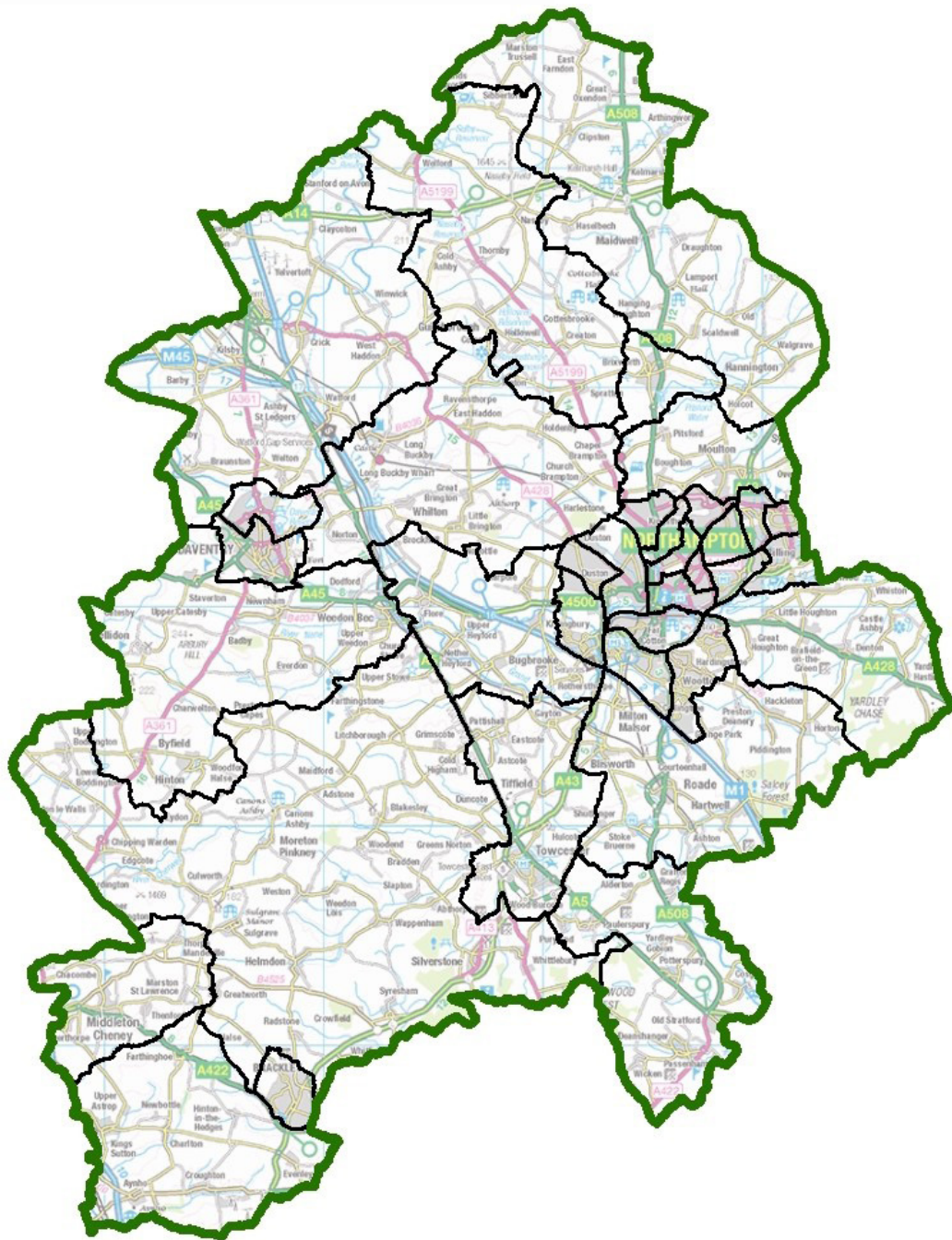


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for West Northamptonshire Council Draft Recommendations

March 2023

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission² are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements include:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many electoral wards there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

² Peter Maddison QPM was present during Board meetings where draft/final recommendations were discussed and agreed. He ceased his role as a Commissioner on 31 December 2022.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why West Northamptonshire?

7 In 2019, the Secretary of State for the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government laid a structural changes order in Parliament which abolished the local government councils in the old Northamptonshire County Council area and established the two new unitary authorities of North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council. The new West Northamptonshire Council ('the Council') would combine Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council and South Northamptonshire District Council into a single unitary authority. The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 provided for a new West Northamptonshire Council that would be created in April 2021. This Order passed Parliamentary scrutiny and was made on 13 February 2020.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in West Northamptonshire are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

Our proposals for West Northamptonshire

9 West Northamptonshire should be represented by 76 councillors, 17 fewer than there are now.

10 West Northamptonshire should have 35 wards, four more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 7 March 2023 to 15 May 2023. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 15 May 2023 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 53 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for West Northamptonshire. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 August 2022	Number of councillors decided
30 August 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
7 November 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
7 March 2023	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
15 May 2023	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
1 August 2023	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2022	2028
Electorate of West Northamptonshire	299,118	325,510
Number of councillors	76	76
Average number of electors per councillor	3,936	4,283

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All but one of our proposed wards for West Northamptonshire are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2028, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2023. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 9% by 2028.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

26 West Northamptonshire Council currently has 93 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council which proposed there should be 77 councillors in the future and another respondent who proposed 85 councillors.

27 The resident who proposed 85 councillors considered the sizes of 10 'comparable' unitary authorities and calculated the mean value of the lowest and highest sizes (76 and 108) to arrive at their proposed optimum council size of 85 for West Northamptonshire. This proposal was not supported by information about how a council would run with 85 members. The Council set out information and evidence in support of its proposed council size.

28 We were satisfied that 77 councillors would allow the Council to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

29 We therefore invited proposals for a new pattern of wards that would be represented by 77 councillors, for example, 77 one-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards. During the first consultation we received three submissions about the number of councillors. Paulerspury Parish Council was concerned that a reduction in the number of district councillors would affect the level of service the councillors provided to residents. It therefore advocated for 93 councillors. A resident proposed a 33% reduction in councillor numbers on cost grounds but did not supply any evidence to show how the Council would carry out its functions with this number of councillors. Another resident also advocated a smaller council size but did not propose a specific number nor did they provide any evidence in support of their proposal.

30 We note that the Council proposed two different district-wide proposals: one based on 77 members and one based on 78 members. The Council suggested that 'having taken account of community identities and natural barriers, a council size of 78 actually results in a better level of representation and is more conducive to efficient local government because it allows for more equal representation between urban and rural areas'.

31 The Commission does allow a change in the total number of councillors, typically by one or two, to facilitate a better pattern of wards. However, we were not persuaded by the Council's proposals throughout the district and have not adopted a pattern of wards that results in a 78-member council.

32 However, when identifying specific wards, we concluded that 76 councillors instead of 77 would best facilitate a warding pattern throughout the district.

33 We considered that in the town of Northampton, the Labour Group's proposals provided good evidence of communities and much stronger boundaries than the other district-wide proposals. Under its proposals, 42 councillors are allocated for Northampton and the surrounding parishes. We adopted Labour's proposals for this area with one modification to reflect representation from the Eastfield area. The impact of this is one fewer councillor across the whole district. Accordingly, we are proposing 76 councillors as part of our draft recommendations. We consider this will allow the Council to undertake its duties effectively and believe this also facilitates a good pattern of wards that reflect the statutory criteria.

Ward boundaries consultation

34 We received 94 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included five district-wide proposals. These were from the Council (who made two proposals within its submission), West Northamptonshire Council Labour Group ('Labour'), West Northamptonshire Liberal Democrats ('Liberal Democrats') and Councillor McCord. These all provided for a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for West Northamptonshire.

35 We also received proposals from Crick Parish Council, Daventry Constituency Conservative Association ('Daventry Conservatives'), Daventry Town Council, Hackleton Parish Council, King's Sutton Parish Council, Northampton North Constituency Labour Party ('Northampton North CLP'), Roade Parish Council and Tiffield Parish Council. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for particular wards and parishes throughout the district.

36 The Council submitted two proposals: one based on 77 and one based on 78 councillors. It expressed a preference for the 78-councillor scheme. The schemes were identical in all but four wards in the south of the district. Under the 78-councillor scheme, the Council's proposed Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire had one more councillor than under the 77-councillor scheme.

37 Labour and Councillor McCord also proposed schemes based on a council size of 77, while the Liberal Democrats submitted a 76-councillor scheme.

38 Daventry Conservatives proposed nine wards across an area north of Northampton town, Tiffield and Woodford cum Membris and west of Duston and Upton.

39 We carefully considered the proposals received and noted that generally the district-wide proposals that we received would result in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. We are grateful for the views that we have received.

40 We conducted a detailed virtual tour of West Northamptonshire. We also visited the area in order to look at the some of the different proposals on the ground. This helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

41 When considering what ward boundaries to recommend there were a few areas that were particularly challenging, and which would potentially have quite a significant knock-on impact on surrounding areas. Firstly, we recognised that the decision on whether to include rural parishes in a ward comprising the north of the town of Daventry would have a knock-on impact on neighbouring wards throughout the north of the district. Secondly, we noted the persuasive representations we received regarding the community of Boughton and whether or not to include the southern part of the parish into a Kingsthorpe ward and also where to place Moulton Leys north of Northampton town.

42 Identifying a pattern of wards for and around Towcester was challenging – all the district-wide proposals that we received were different and the number of electors forecast to be in Towcester has meant that we consider we should include a number of surrounding parishes in a ward with the town.

43 Having taken decisions in relation to these areas, this impacted the shape of the warding pattern throughout the district.

44 We consider that we have reflected the evidence that we received in these areas and are satisfied that we have reflected the statutory criteria. In doing so we have noted that a council size of 76 (one fewer than our original decision) allows us to create wards that divide fewer parishes between wards and which we are satisfied reflects the statutory criteria.

45 Our draft recommendations are based on a mix of the district-wide proposals that we received. In some places it was not possible to adopt wards proposed by one respondent in one area and the wards proposed by another in the neighbouring area given the significant difference in their respective proposed boundaries. In parishes where we have created a different warding pattern, we have created new parish wards. We welcome comments on these parish ward names as well.

46 As well as generally being based on the district-wide proposals our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

Draft recommendations

47 Our draft recommendations are for 13 three-councillor wards, 15 two-councillor wards and seven one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for a generally good level of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

48 The tables and maps on pages 10–48 detail our draft recommendations for each area of West Northamptonshire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

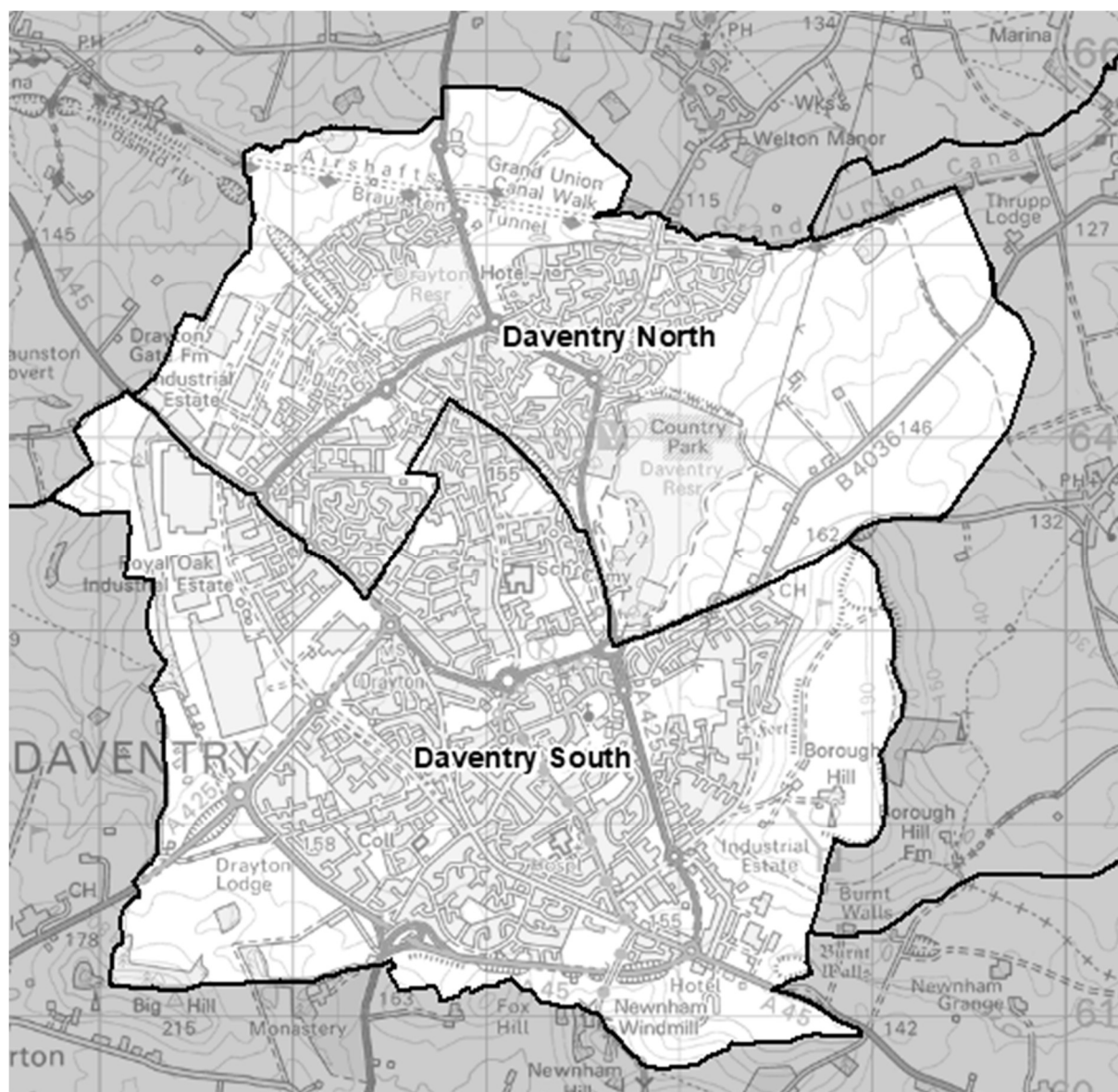
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

49 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 59 and on the large map accompanying this report.

50 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Daventry Town



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Daventry North	2	8%
Daventry South	3	6%

51 We received different proposals for Daventry. The Council, Labour and Daventry Conservatives put forward proposals that included the north of Daventry in a ward with three smaller rural parishes to the north of the town. However, Daventry Town Council, Welton Parish Council, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor McCord and a resident considered that there should be two Daventry wards that do not include any other parishes. We have been persuaded that the residents of Daventry town and these parishes would be best served by having different councillors who are able to focus on the differing needs of these communities. In particular, we were

persuaded by the views of Daventry Town Council and Welton Parish Council who stated that Daventry's urban identity and interests are distinct from those of the surrounding villages. Welton Parish Council was of the view that including Welton parish in a ward to the south with Daventry would lead to possible conflicts of interest between the urban Daventry and its rural neighbours. We agree that two Daventry-based wards will best facilitate effective and convenient local government and reflect community identities while allowing a good level of electoral equality for both the town and the surrounding wards.

Daventry North and Daventry South

52 The Liberal Democrats and the resident proposed five single-councillor wards for Daventry town. Three of the wards were broadly the same as each other, the differences not affecting any electors. The difference between the other two wards was around the High Street and Warwick Street. Both submissions described the proposed wards and shared facilities. However, we considered that we had not received enough evidence to reassure us that, in creating five wards, we would not be splitting communities within the town. Furthermore, the Liberal Democrats' proposed Headland & Timken ward was forecast to have 13% more electors than the district average. The resident's proposed Hill ward was also forecast to have 12% more electors than the average for West Northamptonshire. Accordingly, we did not adopt either of these proposals as part of our draft recommendations. We welcome comments and further evidence.

53 Councillor McCord and Daventry Town Council both proposed a two-councillor ward and a three-councillor ward. Councillor McCord used the southern half of Ashby Road as the boundary and included an area between Drayton Way (A361) and northwest of Betjeman Close in his proposed Daventry South ward. Daventry Town Council on the other hand included this area in a ward to the north and united both sides of Ashby Road in a single ward.

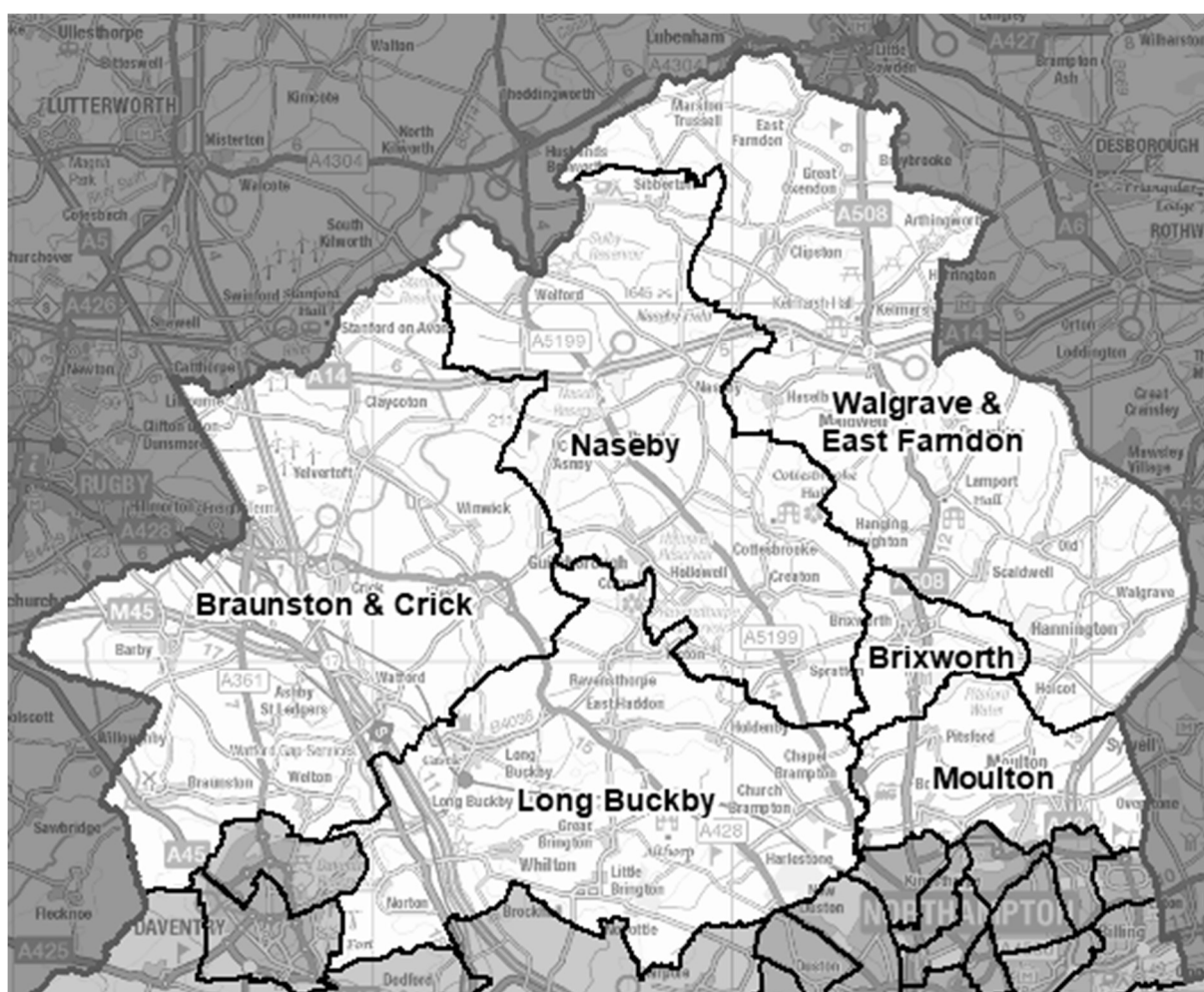
54 On our tour, we noted that Morning Star Road could only be accessed via Braunston Road. While there is some access to Dewar Drive and Timken Way via Taper Way, most of the area will be accessed through Braunston Road. We also noted the schools on the eastern side of Ashby Road and the desirability of including the residents across the road in the same ward. We note that the Council, Labour and Daventry Conservatives all proposed including residents northwest of Betjeman Close in a ward to the north.

55 After careful consideration, we have adopted the boundaries proposed by Daventry Town Council with a slight modification so as not to split the allotment gardens across wards. Its proposed boundaries east of Baird Close and along the footpath between the areas around Livingstone Road and Magnolia Drive are strong and identifiable.

56 However, we also note that there is an industrial estate between these residents north of Morning Star Road and the rest of Daventry North. Therefore, we welcome evidence and comments on whether Councillor McCord's proposal, which uses the southern half of Ashby Road as a boundary and places residents around Timken Way in a ward to the south, better reflects the community in this area.

57 Daventry North and Daventry South are two- and three-councillor wards forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

North and North-central parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Braunston & Crick	2	6%
Brixworth	1	2%
Long Buckby	2	-6%
Moulton	3	0%
Naseby	1	10%
Walgrave & East Farndon	1	-4%

Braunston & Crick

58 In addition to the district-wide schemes, we received submissions from Crick Parish Council and Welton Parish Council. We were persuaded not to include the parishes of Ashby St Ledgers, Braunston and Welton in a ward with Daventry town, as detailed above. Accordingly, we have not adopted the proposals from the Council, Labour or Daventry Conservatives in this area as they all included these parishes with Daventry.

59 The Liberal Democrats' and Councillor McCord's proposals differed in how far east and north their respective wards extended. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Braunston & Crick ward did not include Clay Coton, Cold Ashby, Elkington, Stanford and Welford parishes. It did, however, include Watford and West Haddon parishes. Councillor McCord included the five northern parishes but excluded Watford and West Haddon from his proposed ward.

60 The Liberal Democrats expressed the view that their proposal creates a collection of villages with common interests and issues. They stated that West Haddon faces similar issues and challenges as Crick, such as the expansion of DIRFT (Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal) and traffic issues. They also cite West Haddon, Crick, Barby, Welton, Braunston, Watford and Kilsby as sharing GP services through Crick Medical Practice, which also has a surgery located in West Haddon.

61 Crick Parish Council proposed a single-councillor Crick ward that was similar to the Liberal Democrats' proposal but did not include Ashby St Ledgers, Braunston and Welton parishes. Instead, it included Clay Coton, Cold Ashby, Elkington and Stanford parishes to the north. It stated that there were common interests around DIRFT, road networks, solar farms, wind turbines and warehousing etc with Barby & Kilsby, West Haddon & Winwick, Crick & Yelvertoft but less so with Ashby St Ledgers, Braunston and Welton to the south of its parish, and immediately neighbouring Daventry.

62 On careful consideration of the representations we received, we have noted the evidence of community interests among the parishes identified by the Liberal Democrats and Crick Parish Council in their Braunston & Crick and Crick wards. We are persuaded that these wards, which are similar but with different northern and southern boundaries, should be the basis of our proposals. We are recommending a Braunston & Crick ward that comprises Ashby St Ledgers, Braunston and Welton parishes, which we have decided should not be included in a ward with part of Daventry town. It also includes Clay Coton, Elkington and Stanford parishes in line with Crick Parish Council's proposed northern boundary. However, we are not including Cold Ashby parish because we believe the inclusion of this parish in a Naseby ward creates a more coherent ward with good road links. Our Braunston & Crick ward is a combination of two locally generated proposals which will have good electoral equality and which we consider is likely to reflect communities in the area though we welcome further views on it.

63 While we noted Councillor McCord's proposal and consider it would provide a reasonable ward with good electoral equality, it did not include community evidence to support extending this ward any further to the northeast. Our Braunston & Crick ward facilitates a good pattern of wards to the east considering other evidence received for that area. However, we invite community evidence and views on

whether to move Clay Coton, Elkington and Stanford parishes from this ward into a ward to the east and simultaneously move Naseby and Sibbertoft parishes to a ward to the east of where we currently place them.

64 Our Braunston & Crick ward has two councillors and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Brixworth

65 Most of the submissions we received (the Council, Labour, Councillor McCord and the Daventry Conservatives) proposed a Brixworth ward coterminous with Brixworth parish. The Council was of the view that a single councillor would be able to represent the needs of this large village without having to balance the needs of much more sparsely populated areas in the surrounding parishes. Labour's comments were similar and, in their opinion, because of its much greater size in relation to the villages to its north, east and west, Brixworth's interests are different. Daventry Conservatives also felt that a single-councillor ward would enable the elected member to focus on the needs of the village and build strong relationships with the single parish council rather than a number of villages whose needs may be somewhat different.

66 The Liberal Democrats, however, warded it with several rural parishes, including Stanford and Sulby in the north of the district, and with Guilsborough, citing 'the importance of linking the remote villages with the services and amenities in Brixworth' as a reason for this.

67 East Farndon Parish Council felt that the existing Brixworth ward should not be expanded without an increase in the number of councillors representing it due to the geographical spread of villages in this part of the district. Naseby Parish Council wanted to remain in Brixworth ward. It did not give any community identity reasons for this. Old Parish Council stated that it would be more fairly represented in 'Brixworth ward' than in the Moulton ward that it is currently a part of although did not explain this view further.

68 We have carefully considered these representations. We acknowledge that there is merit in the Liberal Democrats' view and those who proposed smaller parishes being included in a ward with Brixworth. However, we have been persuaded that a single-councillor ward focusing on the needs of the larger Brixworth parish both facilitates effective and convenient local government and reflects the community identity of the parish. Our draft recommendations for Brixworth are a single-councillor ward containing Brixworth parish only, as proposed by the Council, Labour, Councillor McCord and the Daventry Conservatives.

69 Brixworth ward has one councillor and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Long Buckby and Naseby

70 The district-wide proposals we received for this area were very different from each other. The Council's proposals included a two-councillor Long Buckby ward and a single-councillor Welford & Naseby ward. Labour proposed two single-councillor wards while the Liberal Democrats created three wards in the area. Councillor McCord proposed a Harlestone & Long Buckby ward and a Naseby ward.

71 In addition to the area-wide submissions, we received submissions from several parish councils about this area of the district.

72 Having received such different proposals, we have identified a Naseby ward which uses the A5199 as a spine running north to south and which reflects individual parish council views. Our Long Buckby ward also reflects evidence received from parish councils and uses some boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

73 Daventry Conservatives proposed a two-councillor Naseby ward. This included a large area in the north of the district, 25 parishes in total, which in light of smaller alternative wards we were not persuaded to adopt.

74 Brington Parish Council wanted to remain in a ward with other rural parishes. East Haddon Parish Council explained that its residents accessed services from several parishes in the area. Its closest shops were in Great Brington and Ravensthorpe parish but other services (e.g., schools and post office) were in Guilsborough and Long Buckby. It also stated that 'East Haddon is part of the Spencer Benefice with Church (with Chapel) Brampton, Harlestone, Wilton, Norton and Great Brington'.

75 Flore Parish Council stated that it was closer to Weedon Bec and Bugbrooke parishes than Long Buckby. Guilsborough Parish Council and Naseby Parish Council wanted the boundaries of their respective existing wards to remain the same.

76 Spratton Parish Council stated that its residents accessed shops in Brixworth and Creaton parishes, went to schools in Guilsborough, and used doctors' surgeries in both Brixworth and Guilsborough.

77 In drawing up wards for this area we sought to reflect the community evidence we received from the four parish councils that provided us with details of where they access services. We were persuaded to include Spratton parish in a ward with Creaton and Guilsborough parishes, to reflect where they access their services. We were also persuaded to include East Haddon parish with Great Brington Village and many of the other parishes that it had community links with.

78 We note that some of the area-wide proposals place Creaton and Spratton in a ward with parishes to their northeast. The evidence from Spratton Parish Council suggests that aside from Brixworth and Creaton parishes to its immediate east and north, it looks to the west and south for its community ties and services and not further north and northeast. We also noted that the district-wide proposals for this area did not entirely reflect the views that the parish councils provided and separated parishes with shared community interests between different wards.

79 As part of our draft recommendations, we have created a two-councillor Long Buckby ward and a single-councillor Naseby ward. Naseby ward's eastern boundary is identical to the one proposed by Councillor McCord in all but one area. It also includes Spratton in a ward with Creaton and Guilsborough as proposed by the Liberal Democrats (and the councillor). We have excluded Flore parish from our draft recommendations for this area in line with the parish council's comments.

80 We have placed East Haddon parish in Long Buckby ward with Brington, Long Buckby and other parishes with which it shares interests.

81 Long Buckby and Naseby wards are both forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Moulton

82 We received submissions from Councillor King, Councillor Shephard, Boughton Parish Council, Holcot Parish Council, Moulton Parish Council and residents in addition to the district-wide and Daventry Conservatives' proposals.

83 The Council included Hannington, Holcot, Moulton, Overstone and Pitsford parishes in its proposed Moulton ward. It also included Boughton Village in this ward but excluded the Buckton Fields Estate and the Dixon Road areas of Boughton parish. It was of the view that because of Buckton Fields Estate's proximity to Kingsthorpe it could be included in a Kingsthorpe ward and that this would improve electoral equality in the area.

84 The Council also included the Moulton Leys area of Northampton in its proposed Moulton ward on community identity grounds. This was in line with comments from Councillor Hallam and Moulton Parish Council. Councillor Hallam stated that residents of Moulton Leys contacted councillors about issues relating to the main Moulton Village (e.g., burials, allotments). Moulton Parish Council pointed out that Moulton Leys residents used community facilities in Moulton and received copies of the Moulton Scene newsletter.

85 Labour, in common with the other district-wide proposals (other than the Council) and those from Daventry Conservatives, includes Buckton Fields Estate in a ward with Boughton Village. It was of the view that the estate does not form part of

the community of Kingsthorpe. It points out that the road network for Buckton Fields does not connect to neighbouring areas of Whitehills or Spring Park and it is not covered by the Whitehills & Spring Park Residents' Association.

86 Like the Council it excludes the Dixon Road area from Moulton ward. It believes that this area is functionally an extension of Kingsthorpe and is separated from Boughton Village by open countryside. It also points out that children here attend All Saints CEVA Primary School just across Boughton Green Road. Unlike the Council, Labour does not include Moulton Leys in Moulton ward.

87 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Moulton & Overstone ward which did not include Pitsford parish or Moulton Leys but included Hannington and Holcot parishes on the grounds that they would benefit from the support of larger neighbouring communities. Holcot Parish Council and a resident put forward a different view, stating that they wanted Holcot parish to be included in a ward with similar small parishes because its residents considered that with the developments going on in the larger villages, their needs and interests would be ignored.

88 Boughton Parish Council expressed its opposition to the Council's proposal which would split its parish across wards. It detailed work that the parish council had done to build a shared community between Buckton Fields residents and those of Boughton Village. It cited last year's Jubilee celebrations, which were organised and hosted at the village and at Buckton Fields Estate. It supported a proposal that creates a Moulton ward comprising Moulton, Pitsford, Boughton and Overstone parishes.

89 This view was shared by Councillor King and Councillor Shephard. Councillor Shephard pointed out that three residents of the Buckton Fields Estate are parish councillors, that a farm shop operates on the estate and acts as a community centre for all parish residents, and that the property developers marketed the estate as being part of Boughton. The latter point was also made by several residents.

90 Although some residents appeared to think that the Council's proposal would result in a change to the parish boundary as part of this review (which it would not), it was clear that they identified as being part of the Boughton community and wanted to be in the same ward as the rest of their community.

91 On our tour of this area, we noted that Buckton Fields Estate is geographically close to Kingsthorpe. The boundary between Boughton and Kingsthorpe parishes runs to the south of the estate but with no vehicular route across it. On the west side, the only way out is via Home Farm Drive which leads to Brampton Lane from where it is as easy to get to Boughton Village by going straight across the roundabout as it is to go to Kingsthorpe by taking the first exit.

92 While one could assume based on the location of the estate that it could be placed either with Kingsthorpe or with the rest of Boughton parish, it is clear from the representations we received that residents share community interests and ties with those in Boughton Village. We also note that one of the Council's stated reason for including it in Kingsthorpe under its proposals was to improve the electoral equality of its Kingsthorpe wards.

93 After considering the submissions we received and after visiting the area, we have been persuaded on community identity grounds to include Buckton Fields Estate in a ward with Boughton Village and not split up the community that is being fostered here.

94 We have also been persuaded that Moulton Leys residents share a community with Moulton parish residents and are persuaded to include them in a Moulton ward with Moulton parish. On a virtual tour of this area, we noted that there did not appear to be a distinction between where one area ended and the other began. We also noted that Boughton Lane forms a strong and identifiable boundary with the industrial estate to the south.

95 We exclude Dixon Road from this ward having been persuaded by the rationale put forward by Labour. This is also in line with the Council's boundary for this area.

96 Our draft recommendations also reflect Holcot Parish Council's views: it wanted to be included in a ward with similar rural parishes on community interest grounds.

97 Our Moulton ward is a three-councillor ward forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Walgrave & East Farndon

98 We received submissions from Holcot Parish Council and a resident in addition to the district-wide proposals.

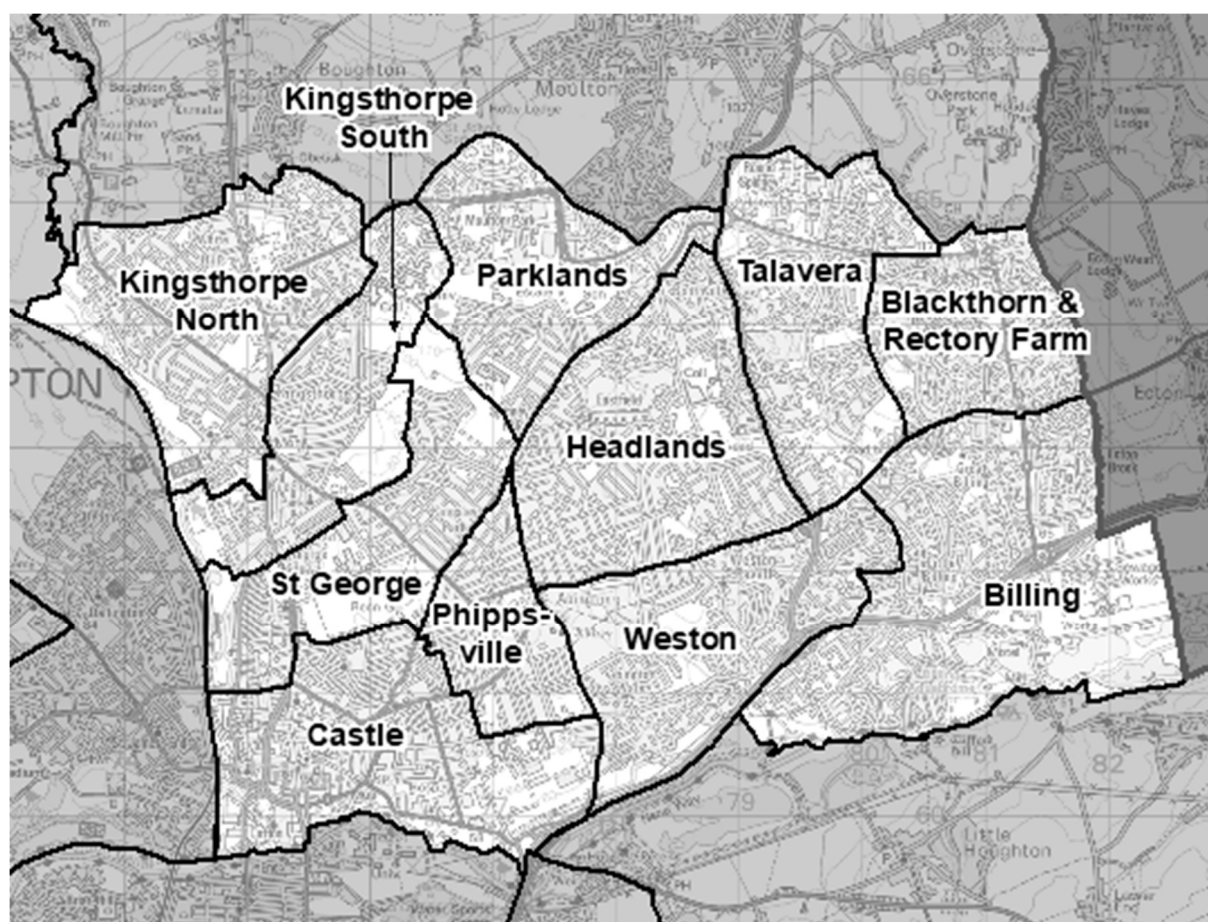
99 As mentioned above, Holcot Parish Council expressed the view that its needs would be ignored in a ward with larger communities and developments. A resident also felt the same way and suggested a ward made up of rural parishes including Hannington, Holcot, Walgrave and others as far north as Marston Trussell. They were of the view that these smaller parishes tended to have similar issues, required more 'prima facie' community engagement and would be well represented by a single councillor.

100 We are proposing a Walgrave & East Farndon ward based on Councillor McCord's proposal, which is in line with the resident's proposal. We believe that this ward, made up mostly of small parishes to the north-eastern edge of the district, will

have common interests. It does not include the bigger parishes from the area and includes Walgrave as proposed by Holcot Parish Council. We have made one modification and included Haselbech parish here because it facilitates a good warding pattern to the west. We note that all these parishes were included in the same ward by the Daventry Conservatives and a significant number of them were placed together under the other district-wide proposals.

101 Walgrave & East Farndon is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Billing, Central and East Northampton, and Kingsthorpe



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Billing	2	-7%
Blackthorn & Rectory Farm	2	-11%
Castle	3	0%
Headlands	3	8%
Kingsthorpe North	3	-5%
Kingsthorpe South	2	0%
Parklands	1	-10%
Phippsville	2	6%
St George	2	3%
Talavera	2	-3%
Weston	2	-4%

102 In considering wards for this built-up area of the district, we sought to use identifiable boundaries to facilitate effective and convenient local government. All the proposals generally had good electoral equality for most of Northampton and broadly reflected community identities. However, we considered that Labour's proposal

generally utilised stronger boundaries and we have used their proposals as the basis of our wards across Northampton.

Blackthorn & Rectory Farm and Talavera

103 In addition to the district-wide proposals, we received comments from the Northampton North CLP.

104 The Council and Labour proposed similar boundaries for the Rectory Farm area and Talavera ward. They used the A43 as the western boundary for Talavera. To the north, they used the boundary between Northampton parish and Moulton parish. Lings Way was proposed as the boundary between Talavera and Rectory Farm although the Council included part of East Priors Court to the west of Lings Way in its proposed Rectory Farm ward to the east. It also included a small area south of Wellingborough Road (A4500) in this ward. The Council says that this ward is centred on communities that are traditionally grouped together for local government purposes in Northampton.

105 Labour states that its proposed Talavera ward is coherent with boundaries that are easily recognisable on the ground. It would comprise four estates, two of which are covered by the same 'residents' council'. It also states that its proposed Blackthorn & Rectory Farm ward includes communities that have been linked through neighbourhood organisations and that 'Blackthorn Academy' and Rectory Farm Primary School are closely linked and currently share the same headteacher. Its ward seeks to unite the Overstone Lodge community.

106 Councillor McCord's proposals for Talavera were also similar to the Council's and Labour's. However, his proposed Billing & Rectory Farm ward to the east crosses Wellingborough Road and includes most of Billing parish in a ward with Rectory Farm.

107 The Liberal Democrats' proposed Talavera ward extends east to the district boundary but not as far south as Wellingborough Road. They retain the existing boundary along a section of Blackthorn Road. Their proposed Ecton Brook ward also crosses Wellingborough Road to include a significant part of Billing parish. They expressed the view that this ward was in four quarters with each area having its own community centres and other facilities. They are of the view that these estates and developments are similar in nature, with shared interests.

108 The Northampton North CLP considered that Wellingborough Road (A4500) is a major road which forms a natural boundary and that wards should not cross it like they do at present. It also felt that some existing boundaries separate estates which had previously worked together.

109 After carefully considering the very different representations that we received for this area, we were persuaded to adopt the Blackthorn & Rectory Farm and Talavera wards as proposed by Labour.

110 We note that this unites the Overstone Lodge community and creates easily identifiable boundaries for these wards instead of retaining the existing boundary on Blackthorn Road which the Liberal Democrats use. Also, on our virtual tour of Wellingborough Road, we noted that it was a major road which forms an identifiable boundary and therefore we are not including any residents south of that road in a ward to the north. We were also not persuaded to separate some residents of East Priors Court from their neighbours and community as the Council proposed.

111 These boundaries proposed by Labour share a lot of similarities with those proposed by the Council. We have not included any part of Billing parish in these wards.

112 Our Blackthorn & Rectory Farm and Talavera wards are both two-councillor wards. We note that Blackthorn & Rectory Farm is forecast to have 11% fewer electors than the average for West Northamptonshire by 2028 but we consider this the best balance of our statutory criteria, given the strong boundaries and communities with shared interests within it. Talavera is forecast to have 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2028.

Billing and Weston

113 In addition to the district-wide ones, we received submissions from Billing Parish Council and residents.

114 Both the Council and Labour proposed two wards covering broadly the same area. The Council excludes a few roads south of Wellingborough Road which it includes in its Rectory ward. It includes the Billing Aquadrome Holiday Park in Riverside Park ward. The Council was of the view that its proposed Billing ward is centred on communities that are enclosed by the A45 Nene Valley Way to the south, the border with North Northamptonshire to the east and the A5076 to the north. It also included some roads from Standens Barn in its proposed Billing ward.

115 Labour, on the other hand, uses Wellingborough Road as a boundary and includes the holiday park in a ward with Billing parish. It stated that it has also included 'two neighbouring areas with road access only on to Little Billing Way (namely Longford Avenue and the streets off it and Stockmead Road and the streets off it) which hence look to Billing as much as they do to nearby areas of Standens Barn'.

116 Billing Parish Council advocated for its entire parish to be united in a single district ward and not split across different ones as it is currently.

117 A resident suggested treating Billing parish as part of Northampton town for the purposes of the review because it was too small to be represented by two councillors and too big to be a single-councillor ward.

118 As discussed in paragraph 110, we were not persuaded to adopt the proposals put forward for this area by the Liberal Democrats and the Council as they both create wards that cross Wellingborough Road, which we consider is a strong and identifiable boundary.

119 We are adopting a Billing ward based on Labour's proposals. We note that this ward uses Wellingborough Road as a boundary, which we consider is clear and identifiable. We also note that it unites Billing parish in a single ward, as proposed by the parish council. We note that both the Council and Labour include a part of Standens Barn in Billing for electoral equality reasons.

120 We also note that this places the residents of Lower Ecton Lane in Billing with their closest neighbours instead of in a ward further west. We welcome comments on this and on the inclusion of the holiday park in Billing ward.

121 Having included Lower Ecton Lane, Billing Brook and the area south of Nene Valley Way in Billing ward, we are adopting Labour's proposals for a Weston ward. It has strong boundaries and does not extend as far east in the way that the Council's proposals do linking separate areas.

122 Billing and Weston wards are two-councillor wards forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Headlands and Parklands

123 In addition to the district-wide schemes, we received submissions from Councillor Hallam, Eastfield Residents' Association and the Friends of Eastfield Park.

124 The Council proposed retaining most of the boundaries of the existing wards. However, it moved roads to the north of Chestnut Road into Boothville & Parklands ward and excluded Moulton Leys from that ward. Councillor Hallam was of the view that Mayfield and Pinewood roads ought to be in Parklands ward with Hillcrest Avenue as they were part of Spinney Hill. This was in line with the Council's proposal.

125 Labour proposals included one change to the current boundaries. That was to include Churchill Avenue and the roads coming off it in Headlands ward thereby uniting residents north and south of Eastfield Park in a single ward.

126 The Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area placed an area at the west end of Birchfield Road East in a ward to the south, crossing Wellingborough Road. Their proposal for Parklands retained the boundary on Greenfield Avenue and included the roads to its north up to Mandeville Close in this ward.

127 Eastfield Residents' Association was of the view that Eastfield Park was important to the Eastfield, Headlands and Lakeview communities. It proposed a ward bounded by Wellingborough Road, Park Avenue North, Kettering Road and Booth Lane (North and South). The Friends of Eastfield Park explained that its membership came from both sides of the park and that councillors for Eastfield Estate should have a say in the management of the park. It suggested a ward with Kettering Road, Lumbertubs Way, Wellingborough Road and Park Avenue North as its boundaries.

128 On our tour we observed users of the park coming from the Eastfield side to the south. We noted that shops to the west of Broadmead Avenue would be used by all the residents (east and west) of that road and the surrounding area. We also noted that Kettering Road would make an identifiable boundary and facilitate effective and convenient local government. Finally, we concluded that the dual-carriage A43 (Lumbertubs Way) is a very strong boundary. We considered it a much stronger boundary than Booth Lane North and Booth Lane South, and that the existing boundary between The Arbours Primary Academy and Weston Favell School (retained by some proposals) was not a strong one.

129 After careful consideration we are proposing a Headlands ward based on the boundaries suggested by the Friends of Eastfield Park. We have concluded that residents around the park all share an interest in the park and this is persuasive evidence of community identity for the area. We also note that this ward will provide for good electoral equality and strong boundaries.

130 We were not persuaded by the Council's proposals because it did not include both sides of Eastfield Park in a single ward. We did not adopt Labour's proposed wards because its Boothville & Parklands ward includes Moulton Leys, an area we have been persuaded to include elsewhere. Neither did we adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposal which crossed Wellingborough Road south of Birchfield Road East. They too included Moulton Leys in a ward in this area.

131 Adopting Eastfield Residents' Association's proposed boundaries would leave the area between Lumbertubs Way and Booth Lane (North and South) and south of Booth Rise on its own as it extends too far south to be included in Parklands to the north. Therefore, we did not adopt this either.

132 Our Parklands ward shares some boundaries with the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We considered including both sides of Booth Rise in Headlands ward, but this produced a single-councillor Parklands ward with 21% fewer electors than the

district average. We also considered continuing the boundary from Kettering Road along Booth Rise but decided to unite both sides of Booth Rise in a single ward (i.e., Parklands to the north). We welcome comments on this.

133 We note that an alternative ward uniting Booth Rise in Headlands ward and at the same time using the Liberal Democrats' and Labour's boundary, which crosses Kettering Road between Greenfield Avenue and Mandeville Close, would produce wards with good electoral equality. We have not done this as part of our draft recommendations because we consider Kettering Road a clear and identifiable boundary. However, we welcome comments with evidence as to whether doing this is a better reflection of the communities in the area.

134 Our draft recommendations are for a three-councillor Headlands ward and a single-councillor Parklands ward. Both are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

135 We also welcome comments on the names of these wards, in particular Headlands ward which has been expanded and contains a number of other communities including part of Boothville.

Kingsthorpe North and Kingsthorpe South

136 We received comments from Kingsthorpe Parish Council and a resident in addition to the district-wide proposals for this area. The district-wide proposals for Kingsthorpe were all different. However, except for the Council, none of them proposed including Buckton Fields Estate with any part of Kingsthorpe.

137 We did not adopt the Council's proposals because of our decision not to include Buckton Fields Estate in a ward with Kingsthorpe (paragraph 93). Councillor McCord put Buckton Fields in Moulton ward and his Kingsthorpe North ward had poor electoral equality.

138 Labour and the Liberal Democrats both proposed Kingsthorpe wards covering a similar area (i.e., Kingsthorpe parish and the Queens Park area of Northampton). This is the same area covered by the current Kingsthorpe wards. Labour also included the Dixon Road area of Boughton parish (paragraph 95) in its warding arrangements for the area. Labour proposed two wards while the Liberal Democrats proposed three wards with mainly strong boundaries.

139 Labour was of the view that its wards would have strong boundaries and unite the new community being created by developments around the former Park Campus of the University of Northampton.

140 The Liberal Democrats stated that their Kingsthorpe St David's ward reflects the former arrangements in place prior to 2010 and that the proposed Kingsthorpe Village ward reflects the local community in that area.

141 Kingsthorpe Parish Council advocated wards that were coterminous with existing parish wards. A resident also proposed the same thing. However, neither provided community evidence to support these parish wards being reflective of communities as they exist today. Furthermore, when we create district wards within a parish, we will create new parish wards to reflect the revised district warding pattern.

142 The resident was of the view that including part of Northampton town in a district ward with Kingsthorpe would be confusing.

143 We note that an area of Northampton town, south of Kingsthorpe parish, is split across two wards under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. While they use Kingsthorpe Road as a boundary, they deviate from it to the south of their proposed Kingsthorpe St David's and Kingsthorpe Village wards and include Kingsthorpe Hollow in a ward to the west of Kingsthorpe Road. The Labour proposals include the entire area in Kingsthorpe South ward.

144 We considered excluding this area from our warding pattern for Kingsthorpe and including it in St George ward. However, this produced a St George ward forecast to have 31% more electors than the district average. Even with three ward councillors and a council size of 77, this ward would be forecast to have 12% fewer electors than the district average. Under a council size of 76, it would have a variance of 13% fewer electors than the district average. Both scenarios also produced poor variances in Kingsthorpe. Therefore, we did not do this.

145 While we accept that part of Northampton may have to be included in district wards with neighbouring semi-urban parishes in order to reflect the way communities have developed or to create wards with good electoral equality, we consider that keeping this area of Northampton town in a single ward is preferable to splitting it across two Kingsthorpe wards. Accordingly, we did not adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals as part of our draft recommendations for Kingsthorpe. Instead, we have adopted the boundaries proposed by Labour with slight modifications on Burleigh Road and Sutton Close to reflect the access of those residents. We believe that these wards are a good balance of our statutory criteria.

146 Kingsthorpe North and Kingsthorpe South have three and two councillors, respectively, and are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Castle, Phippsville and St George

147 In addition to the district-wide proposals, we received submissions from two residents. The Liberal Democrats' proposal for an Abington ward included an area

north of Wellingborough Road which we were not persuaded to cross. Having included this area in a different ward, the remainder of their proposed Abington ward was forecast to have 21% fewer electors than the district average by 2028 and we did not adopt their proposed boundaries for this ward. This has also had a knock-on effect and we were unable to adopt their other proposals in this area.

148 The Council's proposed Phippsville ward extended south to the River Nene. It was the only one of the district-wide schemes to do this. Its eastern boundary ran along Park Avenue South and Rushmere Road. Its Castle ward was based on the existing ward but excluded roads west of Bailiff Street and united Derby Road, Perry Street and Turner Roads in this ward. It also proposed a Kingsley & Semilong ward comprising the existing St George ward and the Queens Park area.

149 Labour proposed an Abington & Phippsville ward based on the existing ward with modifications to its southeastern boundary, which runs to the west of the cemetery and along East Street. Its southern boundary is Billing Road. Labour expressed the view that this ward has strong boundaries. It proposed a St George ward which in its view includes communities near the town centre and who use Malcolm Arnold Academy.

150 Councillor McCord proposed an Abington ward with similar boundaries to Labour's. He stated that this ward is made up of a community as identified by the town council.

151 Both Labour and the Council use the railway line as a strong western boundary for their proposed Castle ward. Councillor McCord utilises St James' and St James' Mill roads as boundaries.

152 The North Northampton CLP was of the view that the existing St George ward was made up of very different estates which are deprived and could benefit from some focus. However, it did not propose any specific boundaries.

153 A resident advocated for Perry Street to be united in the existing Abington & Phippsville ward. They were of the view that as a short street with similar issues facing residents, it ought to be in the same ward, specifically with St Michael and All Angels with St Edmund Church. We note that Derby Road and Turner Street are also split across district wards.

154 Another resident expressed the view that certain roads south of Billing Road East and east of Rushmere Road, including Rushmere Crescent, Rushmere Road (eastside), Tanfield Lane and Watersmeet, were better placed in the existing Abington & Phippsville. They also wanted Abington Park included in this ward. This would produce an Abington & Phippsville ward with 15% more electors than the

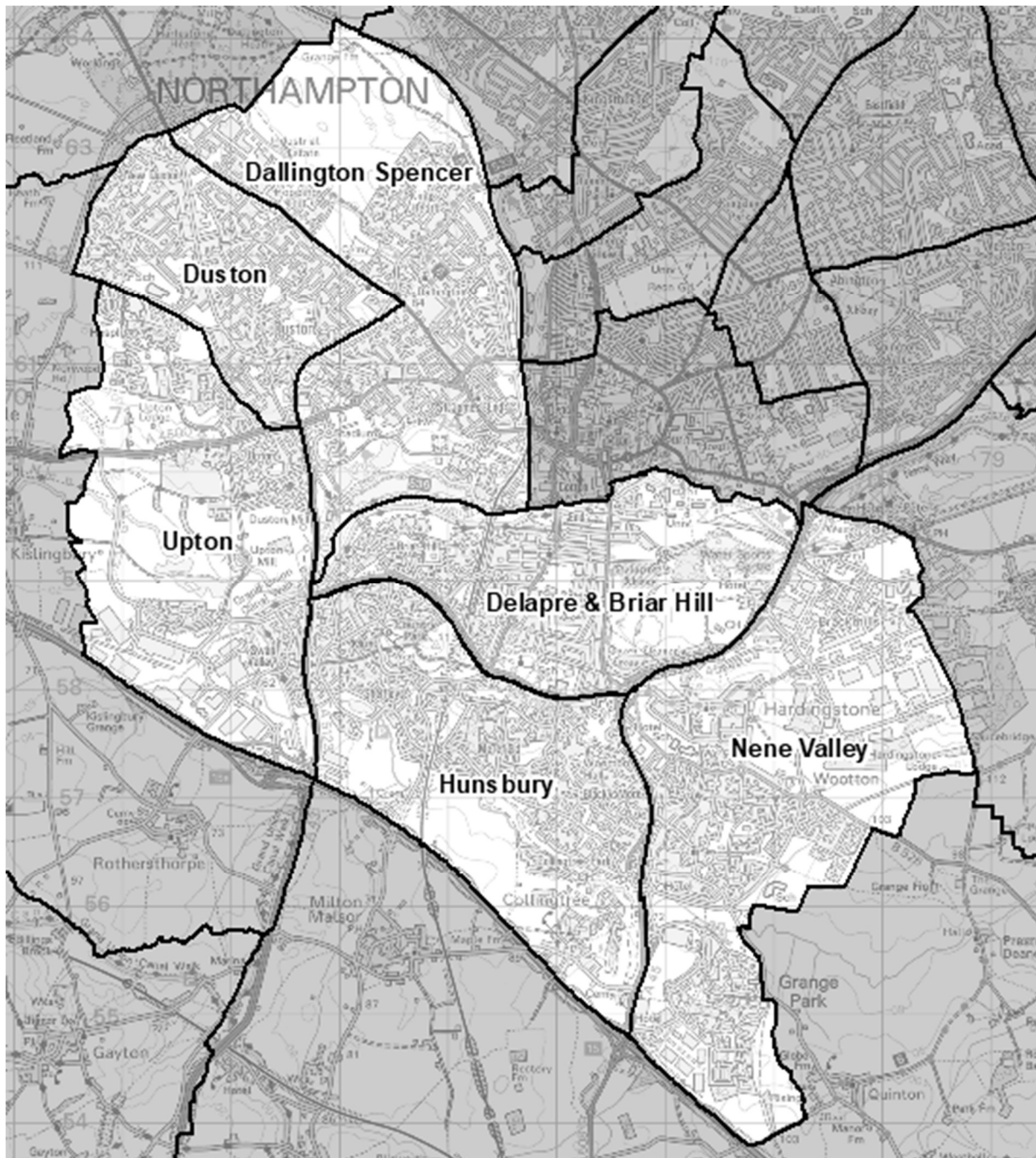
district average. We did not adopt this proposal as we did not want to create wards with such electoral inequality.

155 After careful consideration we have not been persuaded to extend Abington & Phippsville ward as far south as Bedford Road and River Nene. The evidence we received has not shown that the area between Billing Road and River Nene is part of Abington or Phippsville community. Instead, we have included it in a ward to the west (Castle ward). We considered including the area between Chipsey Avenue and Rushmere Road in a ward to the east as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. We did not do so because of the strength of Rushmere Road as a boundary. We have based our draft recommendations on Labour and Councillor McCord's boundaries for an Abington/Abington & Phippsville ward. We unite all of Derby Road, Perry Street and Turner Street in this ward. However, we note that neither Abington Vale nor Abington Park are included in proposals for this ward. We have therefore not used Abington in the ward name. We also note that the Council's proposed ward, which included this area, was named Phippsville and have adopted it for this ward. We welcome comments on this.

156 We have also adopted the railway line as proposed by the Council, Labour and the Liberal Democrats as the western boundary of Castle ward. The Council includes the Queens Park area in its Kingsley & Semilong ward. This is an area we have included in Kingsthorpe South ward. Its proposals for Castle ward also cut off residents of Baronson Gardens and Westleigh Close from its ward. Furthermore, we considered that Labour's proposed boundaries along Barrack Road to be stronger than the Council's one along Bailiff Street. We therefore adopted Labour's boundaries for Castle and St George wards.

157 Castle is a three-councillor ward. Phippsville and St George each have two councillors. All are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

West Northampton and parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Dallington Spencer	3	7%
Delapre & Briar Hill	3	-10%
Duston	3	0%
Hunsbury	3	8%
Nene Valley	3	1%
Upton	2	7%

Dallington Spencer, Duston and Upton

158 We received submissions from a councillor and a resident in addition to the district-wide proposals.

159 The Council proposed two Duston wards, based on the existing wards, which included part of Upton parish. It also included some of the developments to the north of Duston parish in these wards. The Council included the rest of Upton parish with Hunsbury Meadows parish and the Camp Hill area of West Hunsbury parish, east of the A5123, into its West Hunsbury & Upton ward. This is similar to the Liberal Democrats' West Hunsbury & Upton ward, although the latter include all West Hunsbury parish (i.e., Camp Hill and Shelfleys areas) in this ward. Both respondents express the view that this area is made up of several communities each with its own shopping area. The Liberal Democrats also state that it incorporates residential areas with common characteristics including Hunsbury Meadows and Pineham Barns, as well as Upton and Camp Hill. Like the Council's, the Liberal Democrats' proposed Duston and Duston East wards were similar to the existing wards but theirs did not include any of the new developments.

160 The Council explains that its proposed St James & Briar Hill ward includes residential and industrial areas on either side of the River Nene and Grand Union Canal. This is identical to the Liberal Democrats' proposed Tower ward. Councillor McCord's Briar Hill ward shared many of the boundaries of this ward.

161 The Liberal Democrats state that their Tower ward includes the 'northern community of St James and the southern community of Briar Hill' and has shared leisure facilities and country park around the Sixfields Reservoir linking them together.

162 The Council also proposed a Dallington Spencer ward to the immediate north which it says comprises communities that share similarities in demographic makeup and interests and that 'it is consistent with the area covered by' the town council.

163 The Liberal Democrats proposed two wards (Kings Heath and Spencer) covering the same area as the Council's Dallington Spencer ward. They state that their Spencer ward includes the 'Spencer Estate' and Dallington Village while Kings Heath represents Kings Heath Estate. Councillor McCord also proposed an identical Kings Heath ward. However, his Dallington Spencer ward differed in that it extended east across the railway line.

164 Labour and Councillor McCord both proposed a Duston ward which was coterminous with Duston parish. Labour was of the view that, although Duston Village has been subsumed by the expansion of Northampton town, it has maintained its separate identity, which is why it proposed this ward.

165 Labour's Upton ward included Hunsbury Meadows and Upton parishes. In support of its Upton ward, it explained that children in one of the three Upton parish communities and Hunsbury Meadows parish attend the same primary school and that these two parishes were included in the same ward until the recent abolishing of Northampton Borough Council. It points to the dual carriageway roads to the south and east of this ward as strong boundaries. Councillor McCord's Upton ward excluded Hunsbury Meadows parish. Otherwise, it was similar to that proposed by Labour.

166 Councillor Stonehouse's view was that the existing 'Duston East and Duston West & St Crispins [district wards] should be within Duston parish and Sixfields [district ward] should be within the Upton parish'.

167 The resident was of the view that the existing Dallington Spencer ward extends too far to the south but did not give any reasons why they felt this way, where the boundary should be, or which residents should move to which ward. We note, however, that the Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals for that area do not extend as far south as Labour's.

168 We considered these submissions and concluded that all the proposals had merit. We note that they provide good levels of electoral equality and are supported by some evidence of communities in the area. We consider that the Berrywood Road boundary between Duston and Upton parishes does not necessarily constitute a major barrier between communities. However, we have not been persuaded to create the St James & Briar Hill/Tower and West Hunsbury & Upton wards proposed by the Council and Liberal Democrats. With regards to St James & Briar Hill/Tower ward, we note that while the railway line cutting to the east is a good boundary, we would have to create a parish ward, which we consider unviable in Braunston Close. This is because there would be just a handful of electors for a parish ward. While we do not disagree that the communities on either side of the reservoir may share some interests, like the Council we are of the view that they are separate communities, and we consider that a significant number of Briar Hill residents will look east towards Far Cotton & Delapre via Rothersthorpe Road at least as much as they do to the north across the reservoir and along the major dual carriageway.

169 With regards to West Hunsbury & Upton, we consider that the A5123 dual carriageway, notwithstanding the cycle/footpath under it, is a significant and strong boundary. Furthermore, we have not been persuaded to place Camp Hill and Shelfleys in different wards – for community identity reasons. For instance, we consider that Hunsbury Close residents are geographically close to and most likely share a community with those in Southcrest.

170 Therefore, we did not adopt the Council's or Liberal Democrats' proposals for Duston or Dallington Spencer and have instead adopted Labour's (and Councillor

McCord's for Duston only) proposals as part of our draft recommendations. These wards all have strong and identifiable boundaries using the railway lines, motorways, parish boundaries and the River Nene. We believe that they reflect the best balance of our statutory criteria.

171 Dallington Spencer and Duston are three-councillor wards and Upton is a two-councillor ward. They are all forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Delapre & Briar Hill

172 We received submissions from Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council and Northampton North CLP in addition to the district-wide ones for this area.

173 Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council did not want any changes that would affect its parish boundaries because it 'has a distinct community identity'. We cannot change parish boundaries. Only the Council can do that as part of a Community Governance Review.

174 North Northampton CLP was of the view that Far Cotton & Delapre parish was big enough to for a ward on its own. This was in line with the proposed wards from the Council. However, due to decisions made to the west of this area, we did not adopt this proposal as it would have created a Briar Hill ward with too few electors. We also did not adopt the other district-wide proposals from the Liberal Democrats and Councillor McCord for the same reason.

175 Instead as part of our draft recommendations, we have included Briar Hill in a ward with Far Cotton & Delapre parish in line with Labour's proposal. This ward was forecast to have 12% fewer electors than the district average. Therefore, we have made one modification to include the residents of the roads off Auctioneers Way and Northampton Marina in this ward. This improves the variance. Delapre & Briar Hill is a three-councillor ward forecast to have 10% fewer electors by 2028. We welcome comments on this.

Hunsbury

176 We received a submission from a resident in addition to the district-wide submissions. The resident was of the view that West Hunsbury was big enough to form a single-councillor ward on its own.

177 The Council, Labour and Liberal Democrats proposed a ward in this area that included East Hunsbury and Collingtree parishes and differed only with regards to West Hunsbury. The Council included the Shelfleys area of the parish in its East Hunsbury & Collingtree ward, the Liberal Democrats did not include any part of West Hunsbury parish in their East Hunsbury ward while Labour included it in its Hunsbury ward.

178 The Council point to the 'Friends of Hunsbury Country Parks' Group within Shelfleys that supports Hunsbury Hill County Park and Shelfleys Park as evidence of shared interests between East Hunsbury and Shelfleys. The Council states that including Collingtree parish in this ward corrects an existing anomaly that includes this parish in the existing Nene Valley ward across a major road and motorway junction.

179 Labour states that East and West Hunsbury parishes are suburban extensions to Northampton and that while Collingtree used to be a separate village, it has been cut off from other rural parishes by the M1 motorway and has also seen 'suburban' development.

180 Councillor McCord excluded Collingtree parish from his proposed The Hunsburys ward and included it in a ward east of the A45. In his view, East Hunsbury and West Hunsbury are established and identifiable communities.

181 After due consideration, we have been persuaded to include Collingtree in our Hunsbury ward, rather than across a major road which is a strong and identifiable boundary. It also reflects the level of imminent development in the area. We note that the Liberal Democrats' ward comprising only East Hunsbury and Collingtree parishes is forecast to have at least 15% more electors than the district average by 2028. We are not minded to create a ward with such a poor variance so did not adopt this proposal.

182 While we note that a ward coterminous with West Hunsbury parish as proposed by the resident will produce a ward forecast to have good electoral equality, the remaining area (East Hunsbury and Collingtree parishes) is forecast to have poor electoral equality, as mentioned above.

183 In light of our decision for Delapre & Briar Hill, we have adopted Labour's proposal which is similar to the Council's but includes Camp Hill in this ward. It also includes East and West Hunsbury parishes in a single ward in line with Councillor McCord's proposals.

184 Our draft recommendations are for a three-councillor Hunsbury ward forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Nene Valley

185 We received comments from Hackleton Parish Council, Wootton Parish Council, Councillor Clarke and a resident in addition to the district-wide submissions.

186 The Council and Labour proposed identical boundaries for a Wootton ward. It comprises Grange Park, Hardingstone and Wootton parishes as well as a residential area and new development immediately east of Wootton parish boundary in

Hackleton parish. Comments from Councillor Clarke and a resident were in support of this on community identity and interest grounds.

187 It was also in line with Wootton Parish Council's comments which supported the Council's intention to move the parish boundary to include the new developments in Wootton parish. Aside from this the parish council advocated for the retention of the existing Nene Valley ward on community interest grounds. A resident of the area east of Lady Hollows Drive in Hackleton parish explained that they looked to Wootton for all their services and community and not to Hackleton.

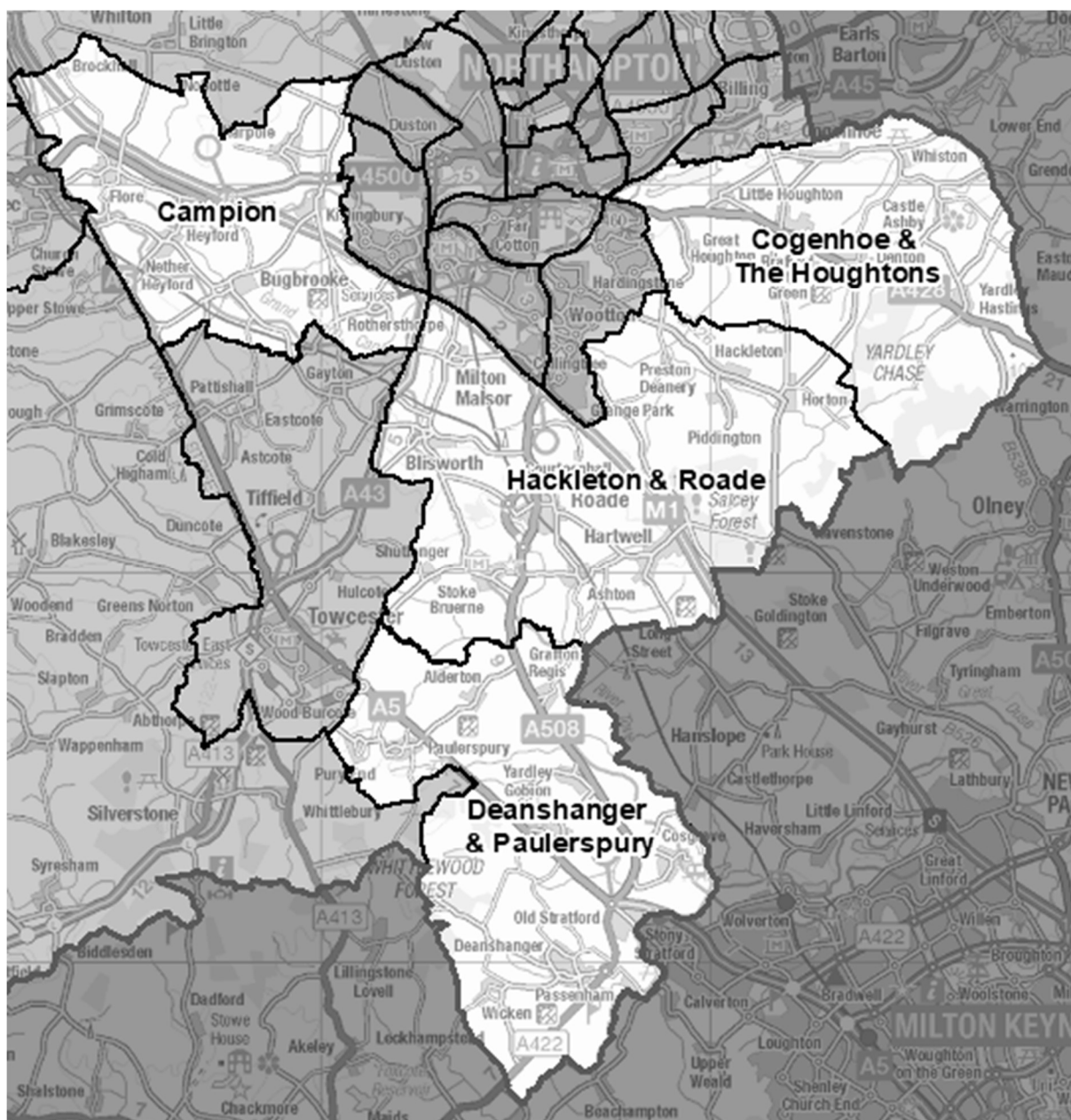
188 The Liberal Democrats excluded Grange Park parish and the new development from their proposals for this area.

189 Hackleton Parish Council was of the view that Grange Park parish, which was in the same existing (rural) ward with it, had very different issues, including urban issues, to deal with. We note that the Council's proposals exclude Grange Park parish from its proposed ward.

190 We note that the boundary between Hackleton and Wootton parishes is defaced, and the Council's and Labour's proposals reflect the community that exists now and will continue to develop in that area. They also reflect comments we received from Hackleton Parish Council about Grange Park parish.

191 We have therefore adopted the Council's and Labour's proposals as part of our draft recommendations. Nene Valley ward has three councillors and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028. We note that Labour named its proposed ward Wootton, and we welcome comments on which name better reflects the communities within the ward.

Southeast and Central



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Campion	2	-4%
Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	1	-5%
Deanshanger & Paulerspury	2	3%
Hackleton & Roade	2	4%

Campion

192 In addition to the district-wide submission, we received comments from Blisworth, Bugbrooke and Flore parish councils.

193 Having been persuaded to include Whilton and Brington parishes in our Long Buckby ward, we have not adopted Labour's proposals in this area which were very different.

194 The Council's proposal placed the parishes of Bugbrooke, Harpole, Nether Heyford, Upper Heyford, Kislingbury, Brockhall, Rothersthorpe and Flore in a single ward. In its submission, the Council states that most children in these villages will attend the Champion School in Bugbrooke. It also states that there is a bus service connecting most of these villages.

195 The Liberal Democrats' proposed Bugbrooke ward did not extend as far north as Brockhall, Flore, Nether Heyford or Upper Heyford but extended further south to include Blisworth, Gayton and Pattishall parishes. They state that the villages surrounding Bugbrooke have schools that 'feed into Champion School' and that they share medical facilities in Blisworth.

196 Councillor McCord was of the view that Bugbrooke has a close association with the Heyford villages and he proposed a Bugbrooke & The Heyfords ward.

197 Blisworth Parish Council advocated to be included in a ward with at least one of Shutlanger, Stoke Bruerne or Tiffield parishes, on shared interest grounds. Flore Parish Council told us that they used amenities in Weedon, which was the largest village in the area and close by. Its first choice was to be in a ward with Weedon and second choice was with Bugbrooke.

198 Bugbrooke Parish Council informed us that it had links with Nether Heyford parish due to its shared sponsored PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) and that it looked to maintain and grow that partnership by continuing to be in a ward together. It also stated that 'there was merit' in being in a ward with Flore as they were both part of the Nene Valley and shared a bus route.

199 We considered the submissions we received very carefully, including the comments and interests of the parishes. We note that while the Liberal Democrats' proposed ward included Flore in a ward with Weedon, it also included Blisworth parish, meaning it was not with any of the parishes with which it said it had shared interests. It also excluded Bugbrooke from a ward with Nether Heyford, which Bugbrooke has shared interests with. Councillor McCord's proposal includes Flore in a ward with Weedon and not Bugbrooke. The Council's proposal does not include Flore in a ward with Weedon, but it includes it in a ward with another parish it shares interests with (i.e., Bugbrooke).

200 We received a lot of different proposals and conflicting information about this area. On balance, we have been persuaded to adopt the Council's proposed Champion ward as part of our draft recommendations. This is also in line with

comments from the parish councils. It includes Bugbrooke in a ward with Nether Heyford and with Flore in line with Bugbrooke Parish Council's stated shared interests. This partially reflects Flore Parish Council's views, which indicated that if it could not be in a ward with Weedon, Bugbrooke was its second choice. We exclude Blisworth from this ward and place it in a ward with those its parish council states that it has shared interests with.

201 Champion ward has two councillors and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Cogenhoe & The Houghtons and Hackleton & Roade

202 We received submissions from Councillor Clarke, Blisworth, Bugbrooke and Flore parish councils and a resident in addition to the district-wide proposals.

203 The Council and Councillor McCord proposed a three-councillor (Roade & Hackleton/Houghton & Roade) ward with similar boundaries. The only difference pertained to a new development east of the border of Hackleton parish with Wootton which Councillor McCord included here. Labour proposed two wards covering a similar area as the Council's with the only difference being the exclusion of Milton Malsor parish. The Liberal Democrats also proposed two wards for this area, but they excluded Ashton, Grange Park and Great Houghton parishes.

204 The Council was of the view that many of the parishes included in this ward have several common interests, including the traffic issues caused by the A508 and proximity of the busy motorway junction, but particularly the development of the nationally significant rail freight interchange adjacent to the motorway junction. To the north, the parishes are predominantly rural bordered by the River Nene and the district boundaries. Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council expressed support for the Council's proposed ward.

205 Labour noted that its single-councillor ward comprised small villages on or near the A428 road and that most of them are served by Bus 41. It noted its two-councillor ward to the south of the area comprised communities around the M1 with shared interests around access to Salcey Forest.

206 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Grange Park & Roade ward citing the fact that Roade has a secondary school with Grange Park in its catchment area in support of this. They stated that their Cogenhoe & Hackleton ward comprised 'an area of rural villages with geography being the main linking factor'.

207 Councillor Clarke provided detailed community evidence to support the creation of a ward comprising the parishes in the Council's proposal. This included joint church benefices, bus services, GP surgeries, community groups and schools between different groups of parishes in the ward. He advocated for the inclusion of

Ashton and Great Houghton and the exclusion of Grange Park parish on the grounds that Grange Park, unlike the others, was a 'mixed-use urban area with a greater affinity with Wootton'.

208 Hackleton Parish Council expressed a similar view with regards to Grange Park parish with which it is currently in the same ward. It proposed that several rural parishes with similar issues and interests form a new two-councillor Salcey ward. This would produce a ward with 16% fewer electors than the average for West Northamptonshire and 35% for the residual single-councillor ward to the south in a 76-councillor council. Under a council size of 77, Salcey ward would have 15% fewer electors and the single-councillor ward would have 36% more electors than the average for the district. Roade Parish Council advocated for a single-councillor ward and proposed a ward comprising Roade parish and three neighbouring parishes.

209 Blisworth Parish Council advocated to be included in a ward with other local parishes which had shared or similar issues. It proposed any one of Shutlanger, Stoke Bruerne or Tiffield parishes as they have shared towpaths, footpaths and road systems and they were close by.

210 A resident of Ashton in the existing Deanshanger ward stated that they looked to Roade for their shopping, GP surgery and library use. In their view their interests were more aligned with Roade and Stoke Bruerne than Deanshanger.

211 After consideration of the submissions we received, we have been persuaded to include Ashton parish in the warding arrangement for this area, on community identity grounds. For the same reason we are including Great Houghton here. We therefore did not adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

212 The evidence provided by the Council, Labour and Councillor Clarke appeared to suggest that, broadly speaking, there are a variety of community connections in the area. We understand there is a community (without defined boundaries) comprising the smaller villages north of Hackleton parish which have shared interests and that parishes to the south form another separate community (though also with undefined boundaries). In light of this, and the Council's view of the challenges faced by councillors in large rural wards to attend meetings in many parishes, we have created two wards in the area proposed by the Council and Councillor McCord as part of our draft recommendations. In doing so, we have used the boundary proposed by Labour, which runs north of Hackleton parish. We welcome comments on this and whether a three-councillor ward would better reflect community ties in the area. We considered whether to adopt a Roade ward as proposed by Roade Parish Council. However, we note that while such a ward is forecast to have good electoral equality, it would not allow us to adopt a pattern for the rest of the area including with regards to the parishes of Blisworth, Milton Malsor, Shutlanger and Stoke Bruerne to the east. However, in view of Roade Parish

Council's comments, we welcome community evidence with regards to whether and how to split our two-councillor Hackleton & Roade ward.

213 Our draft recommendations are for a single-councillor Cogenhoe & The Houghtons ward and a two-councillor Hackleton & Roade ward. Both are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

214 We note Councillor Packer's comments about part of Cogenhoe Mill Caravan Park being outside of Cogenhoe & Whiston parish boundary and therefore in North Northamptonshire district. However, we cannot amend districts' external boundaries as part of this electoral review.

Deanshanger & Paulerspury

215 The only comment we received about this area in addition to the district-wide ones was from a resident who provided evidence to support the exclusion of Ashton parish from a ward with Deanshanger.

216 The Council, Labour and Councillor McCord proposed similar boundaries for a ward in this area. The Council and Councillor McCord note that the Elizabeth Woodville School in Deanshanger is attended by students in this area. The Council is also of the view that these parishes share similar issues with busy and congested roads. Labour and Councillor McCord note that this ward is made up of Northamptonshire villages who look to Milton Keynes in some ways (e.g., commute to London or work). The Council, Labour and the Liberal Democrats all refer to strong links between Deanshanger and Old Stratford parishes.

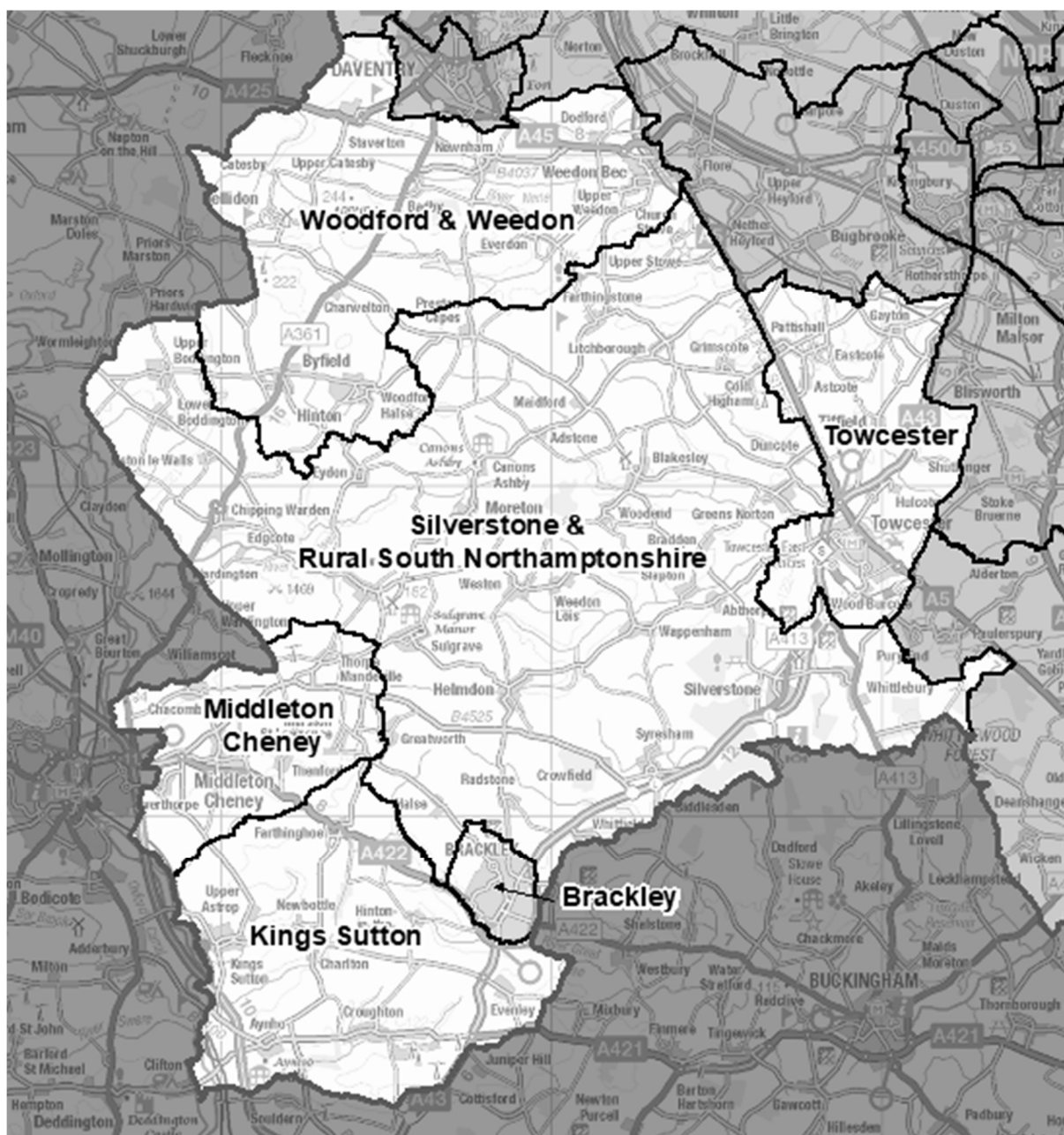
217 The Liberal Democrats' proposed Deanshanger ward differed with respect to two parishes: Ashton, which it included, and Paulerspury, which it excluded. However, we note that the Council pointed to similar issues around the A5 that links Potterspury and Paulerspury parishes and included them in a single ward

218 We have been persuaded that Ashton is better placed in a ward with Roade and not Deanshanger to the south. We were also persuaded by the Council that there is merit in including Paulerspury and Potterspury in the same ward. Accordingly, we have based our draft recommendations on the proposals put forward by the Council, Labour and Councillor McCord. However, we welcome comments on whether including Paulerspury in a ward with Towcester to the west would better reflect community identities.

219 Deanshanger & Paulerspury is a two-councillor ward and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

220 We note Paulerspury Parish Council's comments about the number of parish councillors it has. We can confirm that we will not change these numbers as part of our view.

Southwest



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Brackley	3	-3%
Kings Sutton	1	1%
Middleton Cheney	1	0%
Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire	3	-6%
Towcester	3	-8%
Woodford & Weedon	2	4%

221 As mentioned in paragraph 36, the Council submitted two proposals which were identical in all but this area in the south and southwest of the district.

222 All the district-wide proposals for a significant part of this area were very different and it was not possible to adopt wards proposed by one respondent in one area and the wards proposed by another in the neighbouring area given the significant difference in their respective boundaries. In particular, identifying a pattern of wards around Towcester was challenging. A two-member Towcester ward based solely on the parish would have 16% more electors than the district average. A three-councillor Towcester ward would have at least 20% fewer electors than the district average. We were not persuaded to adopt a ward with such poor variances. Respondents also recognised this challenge. All the district-wide schemes proposed different parishes to be included in a Towcester ward. As discussed below, we have included four rural parishes from the north of Towcester in a Towcester ward. This facilitates a warding pattern across this area that we believe balances the statutory criteria. We welcome further comments on our decisions.

Brackley

223 All the district-wide submissions proposed a three-councillor Brackley ward coterminous with the Brackley parish boundaries. We did not receive any other proposals for this area.

224 Respondents were of the view that Brackley was a town with a sense of community distinct from its rural neighbours. The Council feels that this will facilitate effective and convenient local government.

225 We are satisfied that this ward is a good balance of our criteria and have adopted this as part of our draft recommendations.

226 Brackley has three councillors and is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Kings Sutton and Middleton Cheney

227 We received additional submissions from Evenly Parish Council, King's Sutton Parish Council and Middleton Cheney Parish Council about this area.

228 The Council's preferred proposal (78-councillor scheme) was for a two-councillor Middleton Cheney ward comprising several parishes south and west of this parish, including Greatworth & Halse but excluding Marston St Lawrence. Its alternative 77-councillor proposal placed Marston St Lawrence, Radstone and Thorpe Mandeville parishes in this ward, in addition to those in its preferred option. Councillor Manners wrote on behalf of the existing Silverstone ward councillors, in support of the Council's preferred option.

229 Councillor McCord's two-councillor Middleton Cheney & Croughton ward included Thorpe Mandeville and the southern half of Greatworth & Halse parish.

230 Labour proposed two single-councillor wards – Kings Sutton and Middleton Cheney covering a similar area to the Council's preferred proposal. However, Labour excluded Greatworth & Halse but included Marston St Lawrence parish in its warding pattern for the area. It was of the view that many residents in its proposed Kings Sutton ward look to Oxford and Banbury for services because of the proximity of the M40 and A43.

231 Similarly, the Liberal Democrats also proposed two wards. Their proposed Middleton Cheney ward included Thorpe Mandeville parish. They state that this ward follows the geography of the road network. They split Greatworth & Halse parish across this ward and their proposed Middleton Cheney ward.

232 King's Sutton Parish Council proposed two single-councillor wards and expressed the view that having a single person with responsibility for the parishes to whom they could turn to for help with issues was advantageous and was in line with the Council's objective 'for local ward councillors to reclaim their leadership role as the accepted and mandated voice of citizens'. It proposed that Middleton Cheney, Chacombe, Greatworth, Farthinghoe and Marston St Lawrence parishes form a ward. Kings Sutton, Aynho, Croughton, Newbottle, Charlton, Evenley, Thenford and Overthorpe parishes would make up the second ward. We note that it would be almost impossible to include Kings Sutton in a ward with Overthorpe and Thenford parishes without including Middleton Cheney and Warkworth parishes due to geography.

233 Middleton Cheney Parish Council advocated for the retention of the existing boundaries. It was of the view that many of the surrounding villages looked to Middleton for amenities and that issues affecting it had an impact on the surrounding parishes. It acknowledged that parishes at the southern edge of the district may have more connections with Brackley but that those to the north shared more connection with Middleton Cheney than Silverstone.

234 We note that the area covered by the different proposals is similar and they differ in the inclusion and exclusion of only three parishes. We have carefully considered them and have been persuaded by King's Sutton Parish Council's rationale for suggesting the creation of single-councillor wards in this rural area. We note Middleton Cheney Parish Council's comments about some parishes to the south looking elsewhere for their services. However, none of the district-wide proposals included them in a ward with Brackley.

235 Our draft recommendations for this area are, therefore, for two single-councillor wards: Kings Sutton and Middleton Cheney. They are broadly based on the wards

proposed by Labour, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor McCord and King's Sutton Parish Council but with some modifications. We have included Thorpe Mandeville parish in Middleton Cheney ward in line with proposals from the Council's 77-councillor scheme, the Liberal Democrats and Councillor McCord. We welcome comments and evidence on whether this parish should be included in a ward to the north.

236 To facilitate a better warding pattern (good electoral equality) to the immediate east, we have not included any part of Greatworth & Halse parish in either ward. We have included this parish in Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire ward.

237 We note that these wards can be combined to form a two-councillor ward and we welcome comments with community interest evidence on whether this would be a better option.

238 Kings Sutton and Middleton Cheney are single-councillors wards forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Woodford & Weedon

239 In addition to the district-wide proposals, we received submissions from Weedon Bec and Woodford cum Membris parish councils.

240 The Council proposed a Woodford & Weedon ward which it states groups together the larger villages of Weedon Bec and Woodford Halse with neighbouring villages that share good transport links and common characteristics.

241 Labour proposed a single-councillor Weedon ward with parishes to the north and east and a two-councillor Woodford & Byfield ward to the west. The Liberal Democrats also created two wards in this area: a single-councillor Woodford ward and a two-councillor Weedon ward.

242 Councillor McCord's Woodford & Byfield ward extended south to include several parishes between Woodford and Middleton Cheney being of the view that it made geographical sense. He also proposed a Weedon & Flore ward.

243 Weedon Bec Parish Council advocated being included in a ward with villages to the east as it was of the view that it would be more beneficial to them. Woodford cum Membris Parish Council stressed the importance of retaining its links with Byfield parish.

244 We note that, although different, the proposals all included Woodford and Byfield in a single ward. However, those from Labour, the Liberal Democrats and Councillor McCord include parishes we had placed elsewhere based on the balance of evidence we received. Therefore, we did not adopt them.

245 We have instead based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposal and created a two-councillor Woodford & Weedon ward. In view of the comments from Weedon Bec parish, we welcome comments on whether creating two single-councillor wards, one looking to Woodford and the other looking to Weedon Bec, would better serve the communities in this area.

246 Woodford & Weedon ward is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Silverstone & Rural Northamptonshire and Towcester

247 We received comments from the councillors representing the existing Silverstone ward, Tiffield Parish Council and a resident in addition to the district-wide proposals here.

248 The Council submitted two proposals: one with Greens Norton, Blakesley and four other parishes in Towcester ward and a preferred proposal which placed them in its proposed three-councillor Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire ward to the west.

249 The Council was of the view that Towcester should not be split across different wards and neither of its proposals divide it between wards. In its preferred proposal it included parishes connected via the A43 road to the north of the town in its Towcester ward. In its other (not preferred) proposal it included two additional parishes.

250 In both of its proposals the Council's Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire ward included parishes to the south which it noted share traffic issues. It considers under both proposals this ward would be composed mainly of interlinked rural areas which share common characteristics and features.

251 Labour proposed a Towcester & Silverstone ward. It was of the view that Silverstone was 'the best candidate' to be included in a ward with Towcester. It pointed to the medical centre in Towcester having links to the GP surgery in Silverstone. It also stated that the influence of the Silverstone motor racing circuit can be seen in Towcester, where most of the streets on The Shires Estate are named after individuals known for their involvement in Formula 1. They also proposed two other wards in this area: Green Norton and Helmdon. We note that we received an alternative view from a resident of the existing Silverstone ward who advocated that the ward should remain rural in nature and not include Towcester.

252 The Liberal Democrats' proposed Towcester ward included parishes which in their view had easy access to Towcester town and those which in their view look to Towcester for its facilities. Their Silverstone ward was a single-councillor ward comprising Silverstone and its surrounding rural area which is said would reflect the interests of the area.

253 Tiffield Parish Council stated it did not want to be 'subsumed' in a ward with Towcester and proposed a ward comprising similar rural parishes.

254 Towcester Parish Council proposed a ward coterminous with the parish boundaries. Some residents also advocated for this. However, such a ward is forecast to have 16% more electors than the average for the district with 76 councillors. With 77 councillors, it is forecast to have 18% more electors than the average for West Northamptonshire by 2028.

255 After careful consideration of the proposals, and in light of decisions made elsewhere, we are adopting the boundaries of the Council's preferred option as part of our draft recommendations. This includes the parishes of Easton Neston, Gayton, Pattishall and Tiffield in a three-member Towcester ward. As described previously, we consider that it is necessary to include a number of smaller parishes in a ward with Towcester to provide for an acceptable level of electoral equality. Having considered all of the views, and in light of the need to identify a warding pattern that works across the whole area, we consider that these parishes should be included in a Towcester ward. We note the comments from Tiffield Parish Council and recognise that it would be desirable for it not to be included in a Towcester ward. However, as mentioned above, a Towcester ward which did not include any other more rural parishes would have a variance of 16%. Furthermore, removing the four rural parishes that the Council included in its Towcester ward would leave those parishes in a ward which would have at least 50% fewer electors than the district average.

256 We did consider splitting Towcester and including the area around Surtees Way in a ward with Tiffield and the other smaller parishes to its north to address Tiffield Parish Council's concerns. However, this still resulted in a single-councillor ward with 28% fewer electors than the district average. We note that most of the other district-wide proposals included Tiffield in a ward with Towcester. We have not been able to identify a ward that would better reflect both Tiffield Parish Council's concerns and the statutory criteria across the whole area. We welcome views on whether there is another permutation of parishes that would provide a good reflection of the statutory criteria.

257 We note that our three-member Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire ward is a geographically large area and may not facilitate effective and convenient local government. Therefore, we considered how we could split it into smaller wards.

258 We considered creating a two-councillor ward comprising Abthorpe, Blakesley, Bradden, Greatworth & Halse, Greens Norton, Helmdon, Radstone, Silverstone, Slapton, Syresham, Wappenham, Weston & Weedon, Whitfield, Whittlebury and Woodend parishes. A single-councillor ward would be formed by Adstone, Aston Le Walls, Boddington, Canons Ashby, Chipping Warden & Edgcote, Cold Higham,

Culworth, Eydon, Farthingstone, Litchborough, Maidford, Moreton Pinkney, Preston Capes, Stowe IX Churches and Sulgrave parishes.

259 Although we have not been persuaded to do this as part of our draft recommendations, we invite comments on whether such a split will reflect communities here. We also welcome alternative proposals.

260 Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire and Towcester wards both have three councillors and are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Conclusions

261 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in West Northamptonshire, referencing the 2022 and 2028 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2022	2028
Number of councillors	76	76
Number of electoral wards	35	35
Average number of electors per councillor	3,936	4,283
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	9	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendations

West Northamptonshire Council should be made up of 76 councillors serving 35 wards representing seven single-councillor wards, 15 two-councillor wards and 13 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for West Northamptonshire Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for West Northamptonshire Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

262 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.

263 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, West Northamptonshire 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.

264 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Boughton, Daventry, Hackleton, Kingsthorpe and Northampton.

265 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Boughton parish.

Draft recommendations

Boughton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Boughton Village & Buckton Fields	10
Dixon Road	1

266 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Daventry parish.

Draft recommendations

Daventry Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Daventry North	6
Daventry South	10

267 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Hackleton parish.

Draft recommendations

Hackleton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Hackleton & Piddington	6
Hackleton Urban	5

268 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kingsthorpe parish.

Draft recommendations

Kingsthorpe Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Kingsthorpe North	10
Kingsthorpe South	5

269 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Northampton parish.

Draft recommendations

Northampton Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing 14 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Billing Aquadrome	1
Blackthorn & Rectory Farm	2
Briar Hill	1
Castle	3
Dallington Spencer	3
Headlands	3
Marina	1
Moulton Leys	1
Parklands	1
Phippsville	2
Queens Park	1
St George	2
Talavera	2
Weston	2

Have your say

270 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole district or just a part of it.

271 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for West Northamptonshire, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

272 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

273 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

**Review Officer (West Northamptonshire)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth NE24 9FE**

274 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for West Northamptonshire Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

275 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

276 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in West Northamptonshire?

277 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

278 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

279 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 representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lqbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

280 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, 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.

281 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.

282 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. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for West Northamptonshire Council in 2025.

Equalities

283 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for West Northamptonshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Billing	2	7,686	3,843	-2%	7,952	3,976	-7%
2	Blackthorn & Rectory Farm	2	7,332	3,634	-7%	7,654	3,827	-11%
3	Brackley	3	11,717	3,906	-1%	12,445	4,148	-3%
4	Braunston & Crick	2	8,868	4,434	13%	9,122	4,561	6%
5	Brixworth	1	4,291	4,291	9%	4,362	4,362	2%
6	Campion	2	7,320	3,660	-7%	8,217	4,109	-4%
7	Castle	3	11,886	3,962	1%	12,872	4,291	0%
8	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	1	3,856	3,56	-2%	4,052	4,052	-5%
9	Dallington Spencer	3	12,527	4,176	6%	13,769	4,590	7%
10	Daventry North	2	7,140	3,570	-9%	9,282	4,641	8%
11	Daventry South	3	12,768	4,256	8%	13,574	4,525	6%
12	Deanshanger & Paulerspury	2	8,740	4,370	11%	8,836	4,418	3%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13	Delapre & Briar Hill	3	10,985	3,662	-7%	11,502	3,834	-10%
14	Duston	3	12,631	4,210	7%	12,894	4,298	0%
15	Hackleton & Roade	2	8,704	4,352	11%	8,944	4,472	4%
16	Headlands	3	13,428	4,476	14%	13,852	4,617	8%
17	Hunsbury	3	11,513	3,838	-2%	13,871	4,624	8%
18	Kings Sutton	1	4,210	4,210	7%	4,311	4,311	1%
19	Kingsthorpe North	3	11,935	3,978	1%	12,179	4,060	-5%
20	Kingsthorpe South	2	7,485	3,743	-5%	8,506	4,253	-1%
21	Long Buckby	2	6,970	3,485	-11%	8,048	4,024	-6%
22	Middleton Cheney	1	4,144	4,144	5%	4,288	4,288	0%
23	Moulton	3	8,690	2,897	-26%	12,883	4,294	0%
24	Naseby	1	4,655	4,655	18%	4,699	4,699	10%
25	Nene Valley	3	11,298	3,766	-4%	13,030	4,343	1%
26	Parklands	1	3,675	3,675	-7%	3,848	3,848	-10%

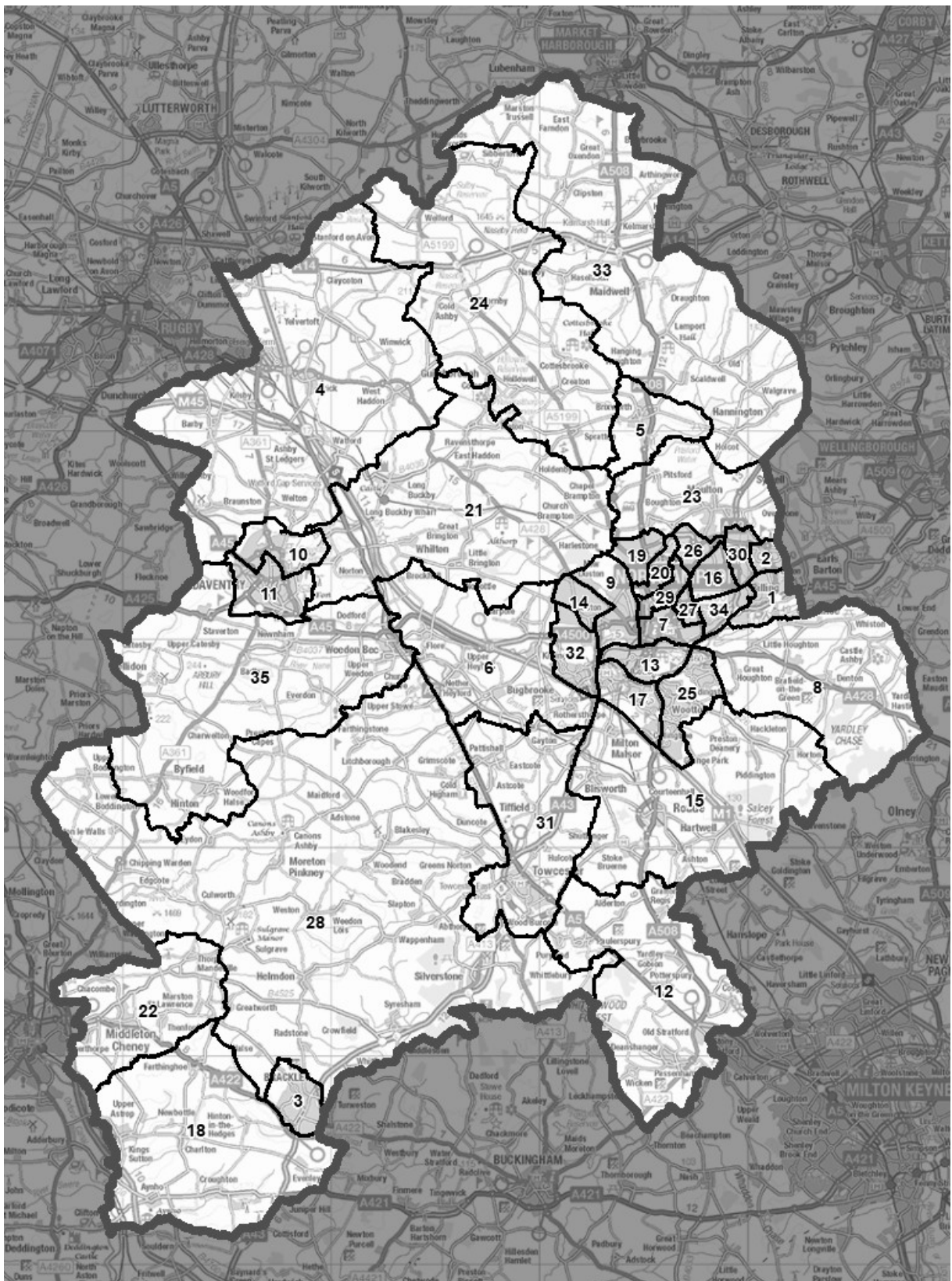
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Phippsville	2	8,668	4,334	10%	9,089	4,545	6%
28 Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire	3	11,640	3,880	-1%	12,112	4,037	-6%
29 St George	2	8,524	4,262	8%	8,845	4,423	3%
30 Talavera	2	7,982	3,991	1%	8,207	4,137	-4%
31 Towcester	3	10,375	3,458	-12%	11,873	3,958	-8%
32 Upton	2	6,998	3,499	-11%	9,142	4,571	7%
33 Walgrave & East Farndon	1	3,986	3,986	1%	4,121	4,121	-4%
34 Weston	2	7,980	3,990	1%	8,246	4,123	-4%
35 Woodford & Weedon	2	8,535	4,268	8%	8,882	4,441	4%
Totals	76	299,118	-	-	325,510	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,936	-	-	4,283	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by West Northamptonshire Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral 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 B

Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Billing
2	Blackthorn & Rectory Farm
3	Brackley
4	Braunston & Crick
5	Brixworth
6	Campion
7	Castle
8	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons
9	Dallington Spencer
10	Daventry North
11	Daventry South
12	Deanshanger & Paulerspury
13	Delapre & Briar Hill
14	Duston
15	Hackleton & Roade
16	Headlands
17	Hunsbury
18	Kings Sutton
19	Kingsthorpe North
20	Kingsthorpe South
21	Long Buckby
22	Middleton Cheney
23	Moulton
24	Naseby
25	Nene Valley
26	Parklands
27	Phippsville
28	Silverstone & Rural South Northamptonshire
29	St George
30	Talavera
31	Towcester
32	Upton
33	Walgrave & East Farndon
34	Weston
35	Woodford & Weedon

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/east-midlands/northamptonshire/west-northamptonshire

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/east-midlands/northamptonshire/west-northamptonshire

Local Authority

- West Northamptonshire Council

Political Groups

- Daventry Constituency Conservative Association
- Northampton North CLP
- West Northamptonshire Council Labour Group
- West Northamptonshire Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor S. Clarke (West Northamptonshire Council)
- Councillor M. Hallam (West Northamptonshire Council and Northampton Town Council)
- Councillor F. King (Boughton Parish Council)
- Councillor C. Manners, Councillor D. Bambridge and Councillor A. Eastwood (West Northamptonshire Council)
- Councillor I. McCord (West Northamptonshire Council)
- Councillor E. Packer (Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Shephard (West Northamptonshire Council)
- Councillor E. Stonehouse (Dunston Parish Council)

Local Organisations

- Eastfield Residents' Association
- Friends of Eastfield Park

Parish and Town Councils

- Billing Parish Council
- Blisworth Parish Council
- Boughton Parish Council
- Brington Parish Council

- Bugbrooke Parish Council
- Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council
- Crick Parish Council
- Daventry Town Council
- East Farndon Parish Council
- East Haddon Parish Council
- Evenley Parish Council
- Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council
- Flore Parish Council
- Guilsborough Parish Council
- Hackleton Parish Council
- Holcot Parish Council
- King's Sutton Parish Council
- Kingsthorpe Parish Council
- Middleton Cheney Parish Council
- Moulton Parish Council
- Naseby Parish Council
- Old Parish Council
- Paulerspury Parish Council
- Roade Parish Council
- Spratton Parish Council
- Tiffield Parish Council
- Towcester Parish Council
- Weedon Bec Parish Council
- Welton Parish Council
- Woodford cum Membris Parish Council
- Wootton Parish Council

Local Residents

- 48 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

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 inequality	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. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
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 can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
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

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It 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.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
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www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Twitter: @LGBCE