01/08/2023

**Submission to the Boundary Review – feedback on proposed ward maps**

We have reviewed the proposed ward maps for the Kettering area and would like to feedback to the Commission. Our comments on the Commission’s proposed wards in the order they are presented on the consultation site. We have not commented on all wards where our original proposal differed from the Commission’s proposal, and at this stage have focussed on the most significant points, either to express support or to ask the Commission to reconsider.

**Avondale Grange**

We welcome the proposal for the Avondale Grange area to have representation as a single member ward.

* This is a large area of current and former local authority housing that forms a community intrinsically linked by a pattern of local services, transport and boundaries, as well as characteristics that make it distinct from neighbouring areas.
* Served by Grange Primary and Kettering Buccleuch Academy Primary, both United Learning Trust Schools, education forms a powerful connection and strong social bonds knitting together the young people and families of Avondale Grange.
* The extensive Weekley Glebe recreation grounds are well used by residents across Avondale Grange for informal every day recreation as well as being a hub for local sports teams, along with the astro turf pitch and sports facilities at KBA School.
* The neighbourhood centre on Stamford Road provides shops and amenities for residents all around, as do community facilities at the Crescents.
* Stamford Road rather than being a division between communities, is the central artery of the whole Avondale Grange community
* Identified as a 'Levelling Up' area, with higher levels of socio economic deprivation, a single Councillor for this distinctive area can be a champion for the investment and services that people require

**Brambleside**

We support the Commission’s proposal for this self-contained and distinctive area to be represented by a single member.  The ward would cover the whole area of the Brambleside housing estate, with neighbourhood facilities and services that give a focus to the community. This suburban estate, built in the late 1990s and comprising mainly owner-occupied family homes with off street parking, differs significantly in character, and in terms of the key local issues, from the proposed Central Ward.

**Kettering Central**

We support the Commissions’s proposed Central Ward. The creation of this new ward would bring together the town centre communities across this densely populated area of terraced streets and town avenues, which share the same characteristics. The ward will bring together a community that coheres around the facilities of the centre of town, including shopping, arts, cultural and leisure. Further, these communities in the proposed Kettering Central Ward will have shared interests in:

* town centre planning issues, traffic and highways issues.
* parking, with the need to balance parking for residents, with the many people who travel in and out of the town centre area.
* the future of the town centre shopping area, which is in need of investment and regeneration
* central town area community safety and crime issues, including management and impact of the night time economy
* engagement and representation with diverse communities, including a large community formerly from EU countries, many of whom now have settled status and are making the Kettering Central area their home

As we noted in our submission to the previous round of consultation, a major emerging issue for the central area is net zero infrastructure, and particularly the development of an on-street electric charging network. This is very much a 'Kettering Central' wide issue, and as distinct from the neighbouring suburban estates with off street parking such as Brambleside.

We also welcome the way in which the Kettering Central ward will bring together the heritage areas of Kettering, including religious and cultural buildings of importance, and industrial heritage, particularly the boot and shoe making roots of the ward, with much of the housing in the Town area being built originally for shoemakers.

While the Commission’s ‘Central Ward’ is modified from the Town Ward we originally proposed, we understand that the Commission is looking at how best to achieve electoral equality.

**St Peters and St Michael**

We note that the Commission’s proposed two member ward would achieve greater electoral equality and note the points made around not splitting Thurston Drive.

**Barton, Burton and Ise area**

We maintain that the community links between the Barton Seagrave area and the Ise are at least as strong as those between Barton and Burton. We would encourage the Commission to consider any representations made by Burton Town Council and Barton Seagrave Parish Council on these points.

**Pipers Hill**

We support the Commission’s proposal for a single member Pipers Hill ward, for reasons of the strong community links, clear boundaries, and effective representation.

**Wicksteed**

Rather than the single member ward on the WSE polling district, we would prefer to see this put together with the WSD polling district, as a natural community. We do understand however that there are knock on effects of this on the pattern of other ward arrangements which we support, and in this respect would not oppose the Commission’s proposal.

**Rothwell and Mawsley**

We note the Commission’s main consideration for rejecting our original proposal for a Rothwell, Loddington and Orton Ward, is that this means Harrington would be a ‘detached’ parish. We would suggest that Harrington is included in a new proposed Rothwell and Rural West Ward, comprising Loddington, Orton and Harrington, which would achieve greater electoral equality than our original proposal.

This would allow for Broughton and Mawsley to be combined as a single member ward, which as the Parish Councils have noted in their responses, would be preferable to the current link with Burton.

**Desborough**

We would prefer to see a two member ward for Desborough. This is a distinct community, with clear boundaries to the town, and deserving of dedicated representation as a two member ward. A Desborough ward, co-terminous with the Desborough Town Council, would make for convenient and effective links between representatives at parish and unitary level and the representations that are made for the town. We note the Commissions main consideration in combining Desborough with rural areas is the equality of electors but would ask for the Commission to consider accepting a greater variance in this case.