

New electoral arrangements for North Northamptonshire Draft Recommendations

May 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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Who we are and what we do	1
What is an electoral review?	1
Why North Northamptonshire?	2
Our proposals for North Northamptonshire	2
How will the recommendations affect you?	2
Have your say	3
Review timetable	3
Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	6
Draft recommendations	7
Corby and Desborough	9
Rural Eastern North Northamptonshire	12
Kettering	15
South Eastern North Northamptonshire	19
Wellingborough	22
Rural Western North Northamptonshire	25
Conclusions	29
Summary of electoral arrangements	29
Parish electoral arrangements	30
Have your say	33
Equalities	37
Appendices	39
Appendix A	39
Draft recommendations for North Northamptonshire	39
Appendix B	42
Outline map	42
Appendix C	44
Submissions received	44
Appendix D	46

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 Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Liz Treacy
- 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 decide:

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

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.

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 North Northamptonshire?

7 We are conducting a review of North Northamptonshire Council ('the Council') as this is a new authority, whose electoral arrangements have not been reviewed since the creation of the authority in 2021. The existing electoral arrangements are interim arrangements, based on divisions of the former Northamptonshire County Council.

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

- The wards in North 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 authority.

Our proposals for North Northamptonshire

9 North Northamptonshire should be represented by 68 councillors, 10 fewer than there are now.

10 North Northamptonshire should have 30 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 unitary authority 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 30 May to 7 August 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 7 August 2023 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 33 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 North Northamptonshire. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the authority. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

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

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ 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 North Northamptonshire	261,951	286,325
Number of councillors	68	68
Average number of electors per councillor	3,852	4,211

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'. Twenty-nine of our proposed wards for North 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.

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

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

25 Initially published figures for the electorate forecast were subsequently revised after suggestions that full account had not been taken of new developments on the outskirts of the major towns of North Northamptonshire. We believe that the figures used for these draft recommendations are the best available, and note that there is considerable benefit in ‘drawing a line’ and ensuring that all interested parties are able to use the same set of electorate forecasts rather than making continual minor revisions.

Number of councillors

26 North Northamptonshire Council currently has 78 councillors, which is an interim arrangement inherited from the legislation setting up the Council. The existing wards were created as electoral divisions for the former Northamptonshire County Council. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing by eight would ensure the Council could carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We based this initial decision for a Council size of 70 on a joint proposal from the Labour and Conservative groups. This proposal noted that, while 70 was the preferred number, the Council could be reduced to as few as 65 members without causing significant difficulties in representation.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 70 councillors: for example, 70 one-councillor wards, 35 two-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

29 We received one submission specifically about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. This suggested that 70 councillors might be too few to provide adequate representation, but did not offer specific evidence in favour of an alternative number.

30 As we developed our warding pattern for North Northamptonshire, we found that a 68-member pattern would ensure a more even spread of councillors across the area than 70 members. Therefore, our draft recommendations are based on a 68-member council. This approach is consistent with our guidance where we explain that it may be necessary to make a small alteration to council size to secure better and more clearly identifiable boundaries.

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 75 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included authority-wide proposals from the North Northamptonshire Council Conservative Group, North Northamptonshire Council

Labour Group and a resident. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the area.

32 The authority-wide schemes provided mixed patterns of one-, two- and three-member wards across North Northamptonshire. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. In some areas, the schemes provided by the Labour Group and the local resident merely proposed the aggregation of polling districts to produce wards, without offering any evidence as to how these proposed wards would reflect the community identity of the areas in question. We do not consider that polling districts typically reflect communities and we were generally not persuaded by proposals that were just based on them.

33 Our draft recommendations are based largely on the Labour Group and Kettering Constituency Labour Party ('Kettering CLP') proposals for Kettering, and the Conservative Group proposals outside this area. They 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.

34 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of North Northamptonshire helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

35 Our draft recommendations are for 13 three-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and five one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 The tables and maps on pages 9–27 detail our draft recommendations for each area of North Northamptonshire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

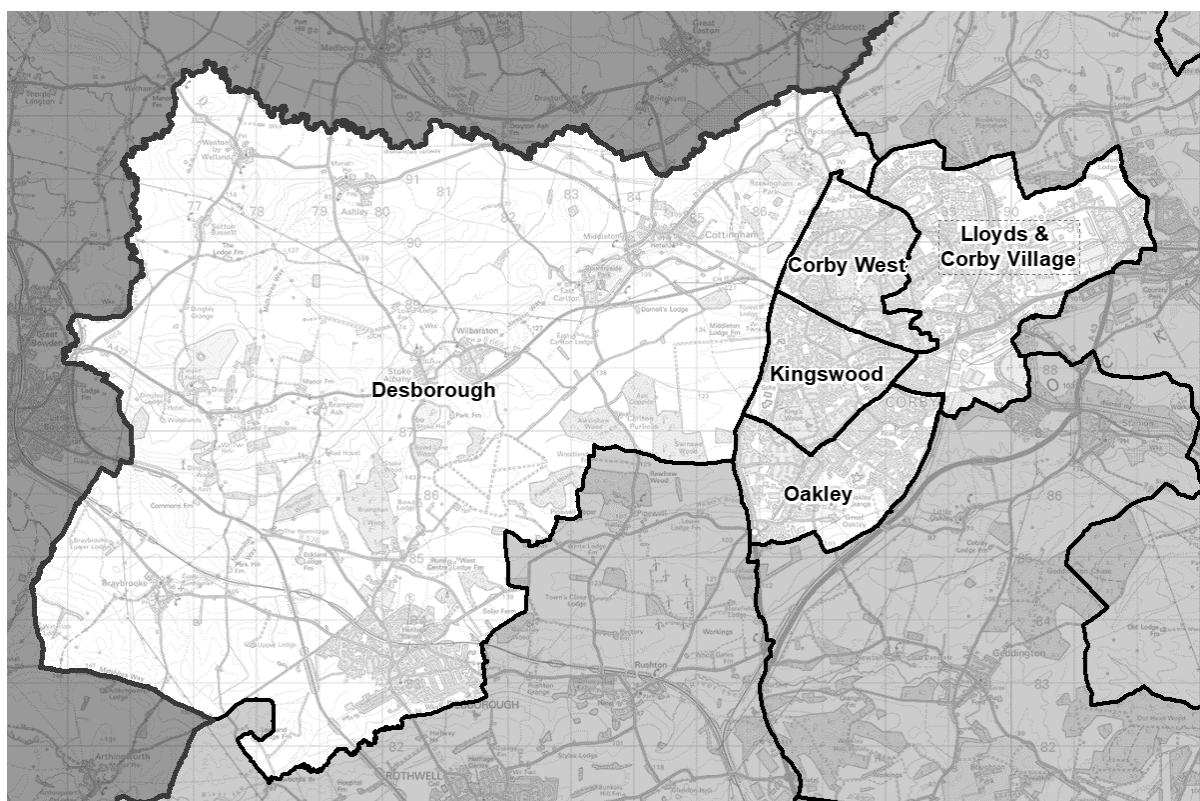
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 39 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

Corby and Desborough



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Corby West	3	-3%
Desborough	3	3%
Kingswood	3	-3%
Lloyds & Corby Village	2	4%
Oakley	3	6%

Corby West and Desborough

39 The Conservative Group proposal for Corby West wards was to retain the existing Corby West ward, together with East Carlton, Middleton, Cottingham and Rockingham parishes. In contrast, the Labour Group proposal used the western edge of Corby parish as a boundary, with the ward expanding further into the town.

40 We visited this area on our tour of North Northamptonshire. Our observations suggested that there were relatively few immediate links between the villages of Middleton and Cottingham, and the town of Corby, and that these villages would sit most naturally in a ward with other rural settlements. Equally, we observed that the A427 Cottingham Road/Westcott Way appears to be a very strong and clear boundary, with no pedestrian access across this road other than one subway in the vicinity of St Brendan's Church and school.

41 We have therefore based our proposals for Corby West ward on those of the Labour Group, while placing the neighbouring rural parishes into a ward extending to the smaller town of Desborough. The Labour Group proposal included a boundary running along Welland Vale Road, which we do not consider offers a particularly strong boundary – we have modified this proposal and moved this boundary to Rockingham Road, which offers a clearer boundary as well as improving the electoral equality of both Corby West and Lloyds & Corby Village wards.

42 The town of Desborough is projected to have in excess of 9,500 electors by 2028 – greater than can be accommodated in a two-member ward with good electoral equality. We therefore propose a three-councillor ward combining Desborough with rural parishes in the north-western area of North Northamptonshire.

43 The Conservative Group proposed retaining the existing Desborough ward with no changes, while the Labour Group proposed a two-councillor Desborough ward and a single-councillor ward covering a large number of rural parishes ranging from Weston by Welland to Grafton Underwood. This ward would not offer good electoral equality, or have convenient access to all parts of the ward, and we have therefore not adopted it. As discussed above (paragraph 41) we have modified the Conservative Group proposal to place East Carlton, Middleton, Cottingham and Rockingham parishes in a Desborough ward. We retain an open mind, both on the boundaries of this ward and the name, and would welcome further evidence as to whether ‘Desborough’ is an adequate name for this enlarged ward.

44 Cllr J. Piercy, of Wilbarston Parish Council, provided evidence of community links between Wilbarston and Desborough, in terms of policing and schooling. Cllr D. Howes argued for wards to be defined clearly as either town- or rural-based, and suggested that Desborough might benefit from being its own ward. While we recognise the attractions of this in isolation, as noted above, even with altering the Council size to 68, Desborough would be forecast to have poor electoral equality as a two-member ward, with 13% more electors than average.

45 A two-member ward focused on the town would have to move a number of electors into a rural ward to achieve good electoral equality. Even if we accepted a level of inequality, a single-councillor ward comprising the rural parishes to the north of Desborough would have to expand as far as Gretton to have good electoral equality. This would have significant knock-on implications for a number of other wards, and we have not adopted it.

46 Councillor E. Lomer-Wood suggested that Dingley parish’s community links were mostly towards Market Harborough, in Leicestershire. While we note the geographic closeness of these areas, we do not have the power to alter the external boundary of North Northamptonshire council as part of this review.

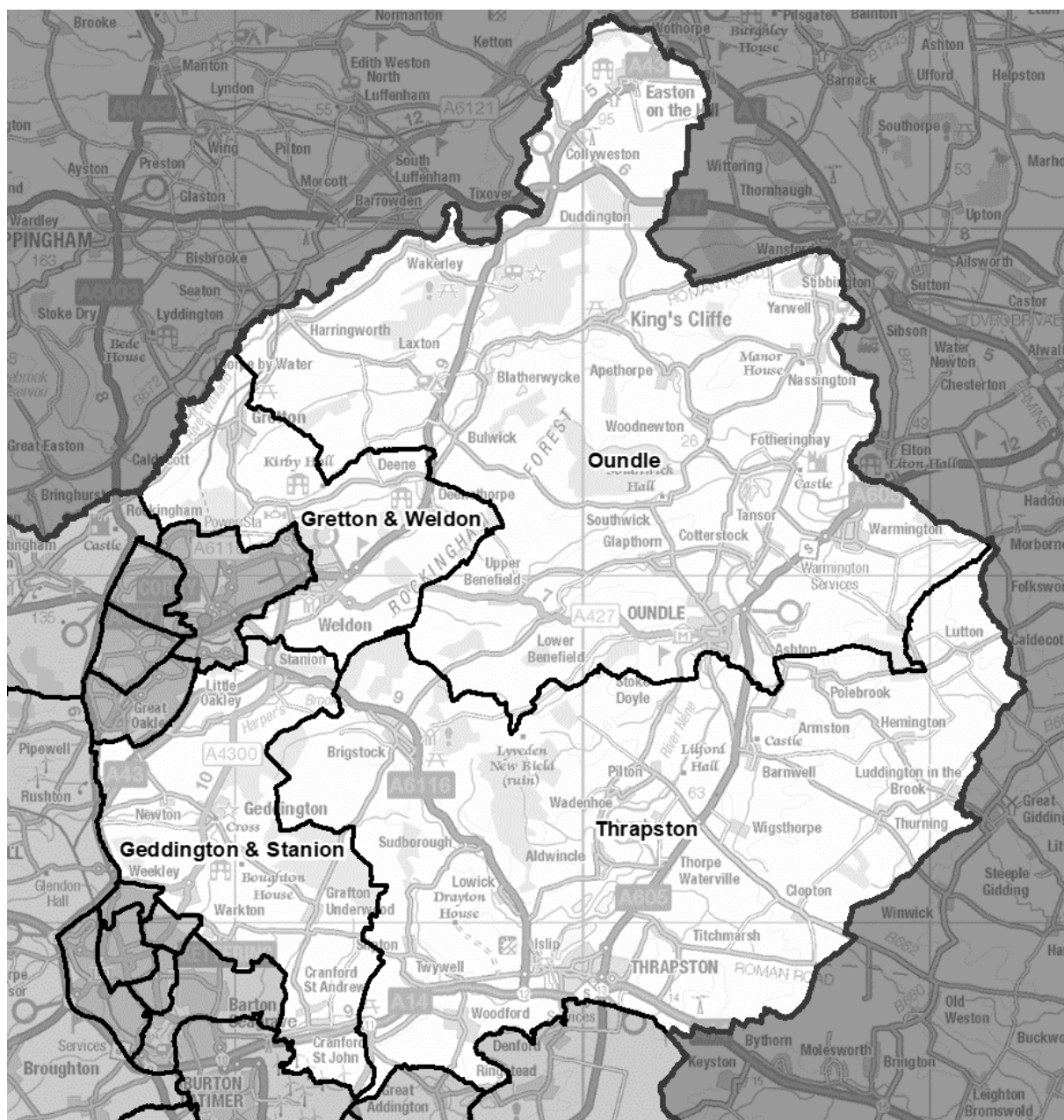
Lloyds & Corby Village, Kingswood and Oakley

47 Both Labour and Conservative groups proposed similar Oakley wards for the southern section of Corby, differing mainly with regard to the area between Oakley Road and Butland Road. The Labour Group proposed placing this area within Oakley ward, while the Conservative Group placed it within Kingswood. Neither provided any significant evidence as to the community identity of this area, so we have adopted the Labour Group proposal which provides for better electoral equality across Oakley and Kingswood wards.

48 The Conservative Group proposal suggested a boundary running along the railway line, with Corby Old Village placed in a relatively large rural ward stretching down to the northern areas of Kettering. In contrast, the Labour Group proposal was for this area to retain its link to Corby, with a ward crossing the railway line linking the Old Village areas to Lloyds.

49 We visited this area on our tour of North Northamptonshire. While the railway line would offer a clear and recognisable boundary, we consider that the community links of the Corby Old Village area are likely to be with the remainder of Corby, rather than having links to villages such as Weldon, Geddington or Grafton Underwood as proposed by the Conservative Group scheme. We have therefore broadly adopted the Labour Group proposal for a two-member Lloyds & Corby Village ward. We have expanded this proposal to include the industrial and employment areas either side of Steel Road and Phoenix Parkway – as these areas are in Corby parish, placing them in a different ward would require the creation of a parish ward with very few electors, in a way which we do not consider would promote effective and convenient local government.

Rural Eastern North Northamptonshire



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Geddington & Stanion	1	7%
Gretton & Weldon	2	6%
Oundle	3	-4%
Thrapston	3	-5%

Geddington & Stanion and Gretton & Weldon

50 We received varying proposals for this area, but do not consider that any of the schemes offered a good reflection of our statutory criteria. We have therefore proposed our own wards as part of these draft recommendations, and welcome

further evidence as to whether our proposals group areas which share a community identity, and facilitate effective and convenient local government.

51 We propose a two-councillor Gretton & Weldon ward, comprising the parishes of these names, together with Deene and Deenethorpe parishes. The Conservative Group proposal placed Weldon in a rural 'Eleanor' ward including electors from the northern section of Kettering, but did not provide any evidence as to how these electors shared a community identity. The Labour Group proposal was for a Weldon & Stanion ward with poor electoral equality (17% fewer electors than average based on 70 councillors overall, 19% fewer based on 68 overall), and a Rockingham Forest ward comprising parishes on the northern edge of the authority from Collyweston to East Carlton. This proposal placed Deene and Deenethorpe parishes in an Upper Nene ward, with 24% more electors than average.

52 Instead of adopting these proposals, we are putting forward our own proposal, focused on placing neighbouring villages in the same ward where possible. We propose one ward linking areas to the north and east of Corby, including a significant amount of development which may in due course become integrated into Corby town, and a second ward with a rural identity combining villages between Corby and Kettering, ranging from Stanion in the north to Cranford in the south. We welcome all comments on both the boundaries and proposed names of these wards.

53 The principle of this proposal was supported by Cranford Parish Council, who expressed a desire to be placed into a single-councillor ward with a clear rural identity, as opposed to being joined to one or other of the neighbouring towns.

Oundle and Thrapston

54 The Conservative Group proposed retaining the majority of the existing Oundle and Thrapston wards, arguing that the existing wards brought together many communities who shared similar interests, and that there was no geographical need to alter the boundaries. In contrast, the Labour Group proposal was for very different wards, including an Upper Nene ward, comprising rural parishes from Wadenhoe to Easton on the Hill. This ward would have 24% more electors than average based on a council size of 70, a very poor level of electoral equality, and we have not adopted it.

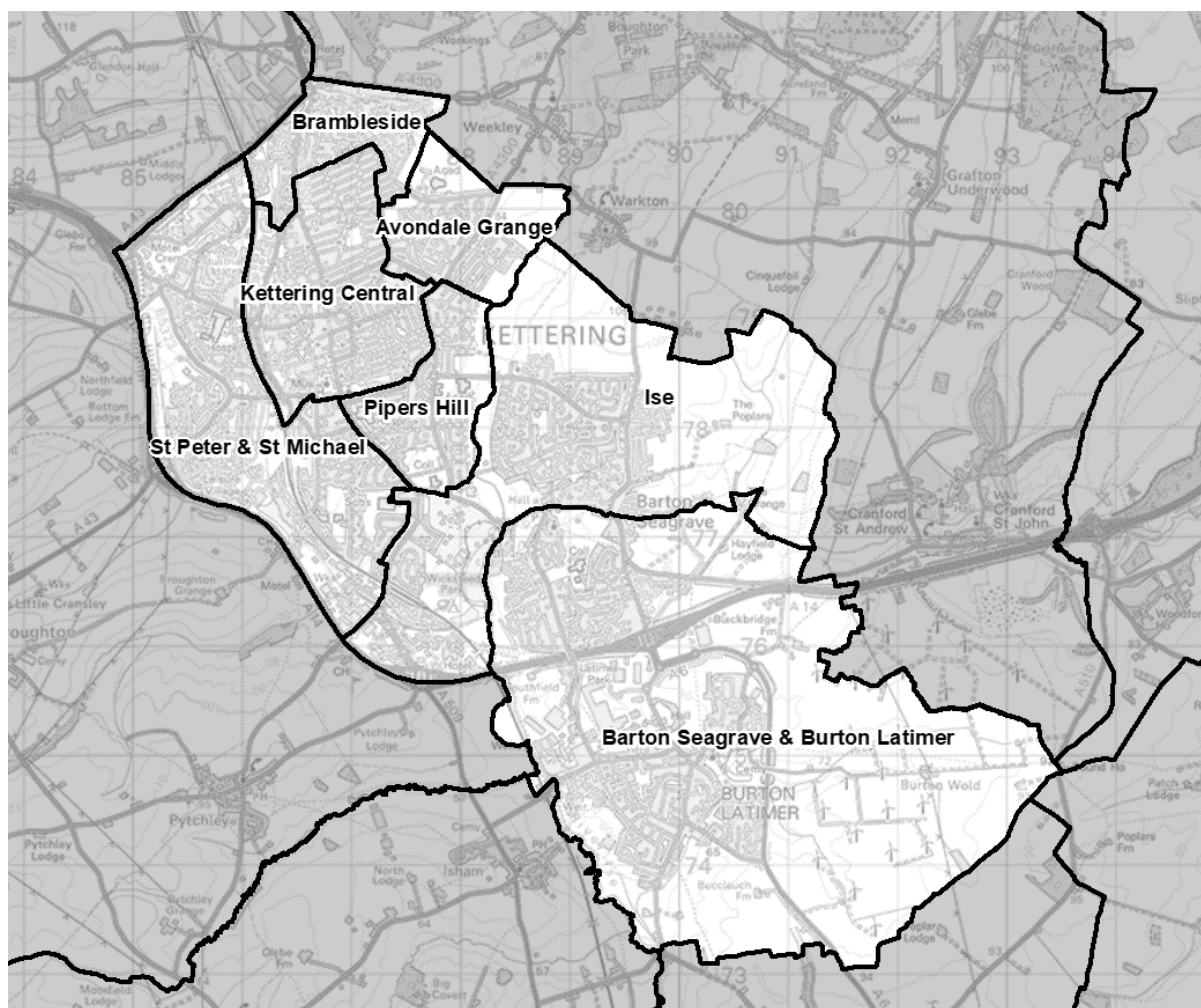
55 We propose to broadly adopt the Conservative Group proposal as part of our draft recommendations, subject to some changes. We received evidence from Apethorpe Parish Meeting that the parishes of Warmington, Cotterstock, Tansor and Ashton have closer community links to Oundle than they do to Thrapston. Hemington, Luddington & Thurning Parish Council provided evidence that the links of these parishes were at least as much towards Thrapston as Oundle, and that they were content with the existing warding arrangement.

56 Following the evidence of the parish councils, we propose to place Warmington, Tansor, Cotterstock and Ashton parishes in Oundle ward. To retain good electoral equality for Thrapston ward, we propose to place Woodford parish in this ward, following the suggestion of a resident who stated that Woodford had much better transport links with Thrapston than with Irthlingborough.

57 The resulting Oundle ward is relatively large in geographical terms. While we received no evidence to this effect, we note that it would be possible to construct a two-member ward focused on the town of Oundle and neighbouring parishes, and a single-member ward comprising rural parishes further north. We would welcome further evidence as to whether this proposal might offer a better reflection of community identity, or result in two wards which were easier to represent effectively.

58 Cllr T. Nicol, of Easton on the Hill Parish Council, suggested that, while he was broadly content with the existing arrangements, the parishes community links were largely towards Stamford, in Lincolnshire. We do not have the power to alter the external boundary of North Northamptonshire Council as part of this electoral review.

Kettering



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Avondale Grange	1	1%
Barton Seagrave & Burton Latimer	3	2%
Brambleside	1	-3%
Ise	2	1%
Kettering Central	3	4%
Pipers Hill	1	5%
St Peter & St Michael	2	6%

Avondale Grange, Brambleside and Kettering Central

59 The Labour Group submission for Kettering, which mirrored that of the Kettering CLP, provided evidence of community identity to support its proposals. The Conservative Group proposals also provided some evidence but, as discussed previously (paragraphs 51–52), placed a significant number of electors from Kettering in a ward reaching the outskirts of Corby, which we have not adopted. The

knock-on implications of this across Kettering means that we have not adopted a number of other Conservative Group proposals.

60 Without proposing any specific boundaries, the submission from Kettering Town Council provided broad support for the Labour Group's proposal, particularly with respect to the distinctions of community identity within the town, and the suggestions that these areas could best be represented with wards of fewer than three councillors.

61 We have adopted the Labour Group/Kettering CLP proposal for Avondale Grange and Brambleside wards. Evidence was provided that the Brambleside estate in particular is a broadly self-contained community, which faces different issues from the Town Centre. Avondale Grange was described in terms of the links created by schools and Weekley Glebe recreation grounds, with services provided in a hub along Stamford Road. Our proposed boundaries for this ward run along Lancaster Road, Connaught Street, Rutland Street and to the south of Elizabeth Road.

62 We have broadly adopted the Labour Group's proposal for a Kettering Central ward, which keeps the entire Town Centre together in a single ward, with boundaries running along and the north of St Mary's Road, and along Windmill Avenue. In contrast, the Conservative Group proposed a boundary running along Montagu Street, Silver Street and Horse Market, resulting in the division of the Town Centre in a way which we do not consider would reflect community identity, or provide for effective and convenient local government.

63 We have modified the Labour Group proposals slightly, to provide a boundary continuing south along the railway line as far as Kettering Station, before running along Station Road as far as Northampton Road. This allows for both Kettering Central and St Peter & St Michael wards to have improved electoral equality.

Barton Seagrave & Burton Latimer and Ise

64 Both the Labour and Conservative groups' proposals retained the existing boundary between Ise and Wicksteed wards, splitting the recent housing development south of Cranford Road in a way which we do not consider reflects the community identity of this area, or offers a strong and clear boundary. We have instead modified the boundary to run to the north of this area, allowing the development on the north side of Cranford Road to be included with their future neighbours in Barton Seagrave & Burton Latimer ward, as well as ensuring that electors on the Grange Farm site have access to the remainder of their ward.

65 The Conservative Group proposed a three-member ward covering Barton Seagrave and Burton Latimer, while the Labour Group proposal was for a two-member Burton Latimer ward, with Barton Seagrave parish added to Ise ward. While

we consider this decision is finely balanced, we have adopted the Conservative Group proposal as part of our draft recommendations, based on both the good electoral equality offered, and the excellent evidence provided of community links between Burton Latimer and Barton Seagrave. Evidence was provided of links between churches, schools and community groups across the two parishes.

66 Our proposed Ise ward joins two communities on the western side of Kettering, joined by Barton Road. It broadly follows the proposal of the Labour Group and Kettering CLP, with the exception of Barton Seagrave which is placed in a ward with Burton Latimer as discussed above. We considered creating single-member wards for the two sections of this ward, but the electoral equality would be very poor, with variances in excess of 50%. We also considered merging this ward with Pipers Hill to create a three-councillor ward, but consider that the boundary between Pipers Hill and Ise along the River Ise is strong and clear, and note that this boundary was proposed by both the Labour and Conservative groups.

67 We accept that, in isolation, the links between the communities in the different sections of our proposed Ise ward are less strong than we might wish. However, we consider that this ward is necessary to provide for a good pattern of wards that balance our statutory criteria across the wider Kettering area.

68 The Headlands Area Residents' Association suggested leaving the existing Wicksteed ward intact. We note that the existing ward ranges from Barton Seagrave to Central Kettering, and has the same issues in the area around Cranford Road as discussed above (paragraph 64). We have therefore not adopted this proposal.

Pipers Hill and St Peter & St Michael

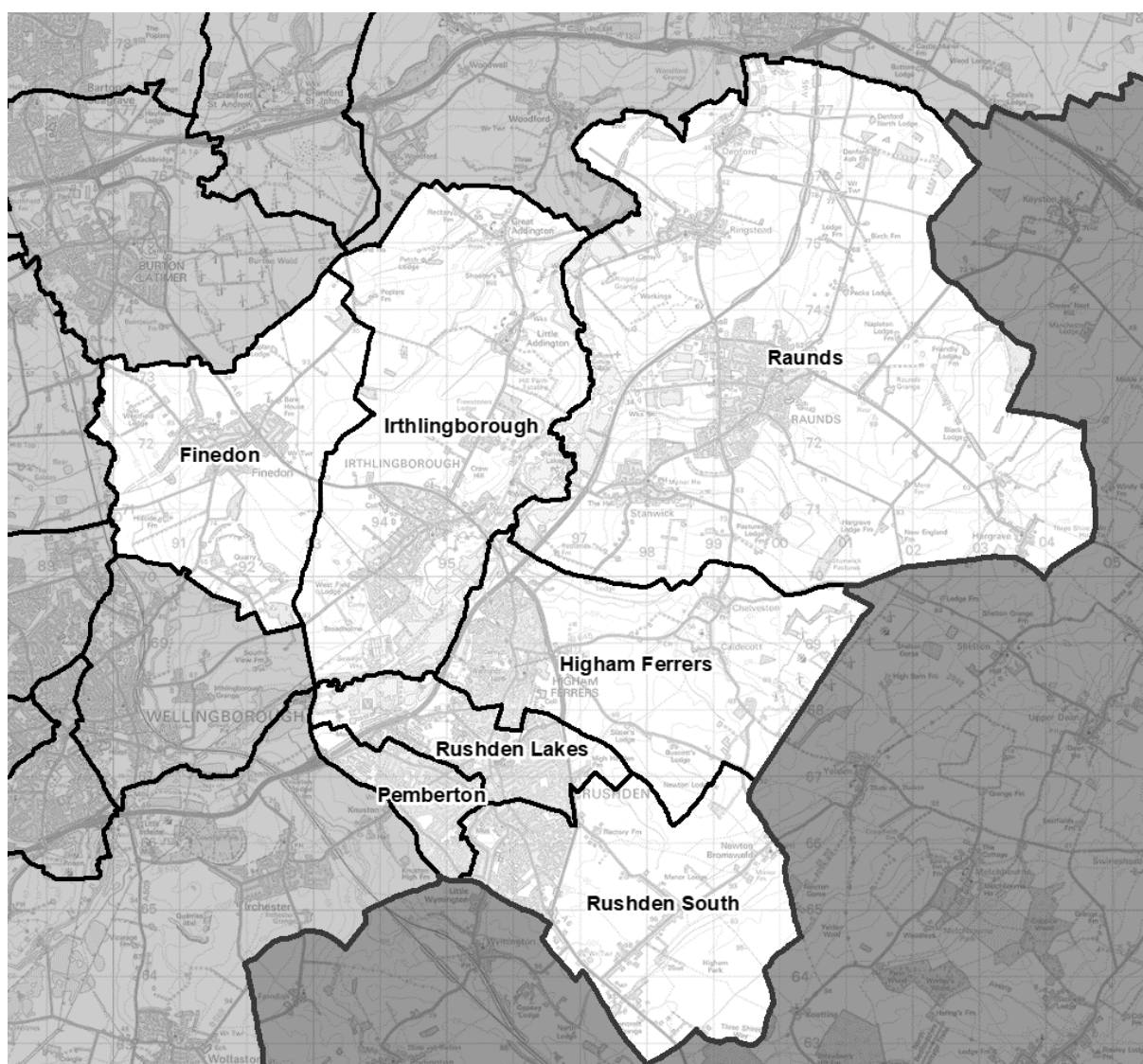
69 We have adopted the Labour Group proposal for Pipers Hill ward. Evidence was provided of community hubs such as Kettering Science Academy and Kettering Rugby Club, and it was noted that the proposed ward offered relatively strong boundaries throughout. The Conservative Group proposal was for a larger, three-member ward covering the eastern portion of Kettering Town Centre, together with the Avondale Grange area. As discussed above (paragraph 62) we have not adopted this proposal.

70 The Labour Group proposed separate, single-councillor wards for St Peter's and St Michael's, retaining the existing boundary to the south of Abbots Way. A number of residents noted that this boundary would split Thurston Drive, and requested that the southern section of this road be placed in a ward with the remainder of the area. The Labour Group proposal for St Michael's also offered poor electoral equality, with 11% more electors than average.

71 We propose merging the proposed wards of St Peter's and St Michael's into a two-councillor ward, which allows all of Thurston Drive to be together, and offers

good electoral equality. As discussed above at paragraph 63, we have further improved the electoral equality of this ward by moving the boundary of this ward with Kettering Central southwards to Station Road. We would welcome further evidence during consultation on these draft recommendations regarding whether our proposed ward shares a community identity, or if a split into two single-member wards with adequate equality might be a better fit for our statutory criteria.

South Eastern North Northamptonshire



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Finedon	1	-7%
Higham Ferrers	2	-2%
Irthlingborough	2	-5%
Pemberton	2	5%
Raunds	3	-8%
Rushden Lakes	2	-5%
Rushden South	2	2%

Finedon, Irthlingborough and Raunds

72 Several submissions suggested that the existing Finedon ward, combining the village and parish of that name with the western section of Wellingborough, was an illogical construction, which brought together two areas with very little in common.

We received no proposals to retain the existing ward. The Labour Group proposed to link Finedon with Irchester, in a configuration which did not allow easy access between the two population centres of the proposed ward. No evidence of community identity was provided, and we have not adopted this proposal.

73 The Conservative Group proposed a three-councillor ward combining Finedon parish with Irthlingborough, Great Addington and Little Addington. In contrast, Wellingborough Conservative Association suggested that these areas should be two separate wards, providing detailed evidence of the separate community facilities which are available in the relevant towns. The Conservative Group provided some evidence of links between the two areas, but much of this was historical, with reference to mining and industrial history, as opposed to present-day links.

74 While we consider the decision finely balanced, we have adopted the Wellingborough Conservative Association proposal for separate wards for Finedon and Irthlingborough. We would welcome further evidence as to whether these neighbouring towns share a community identity, or whether there are sufficient differences between them to justify them being placed in separate wards.

75 The Labour and Conservative groups proposed very similar wards based around Raunds, differing only with respect to Woodford parish, which Labour proposed to join with Raunds. As discussed above (paragraph 56), we have placed Woodford within Thrapston ward, and we have adopted the Conservative Group proposal for Raunds, which places this parish with Denford, Ringstead, Stanwick and Hargrave parishes. This was supported by both Hargrave and Stanwick parish councils, who expressed a desire to retain their links to the town of Raunds.

Higham Ferrers, Pemberton, Rushden Lakes and Rushden South

76 The Conservative Group and Wellingborough Conservative Association proposed very similar boundaries for wards within the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers, and neighbouring parishes. We were told that owing to the relatively rapid development of Rushden, there were few major distinctions of community identity within the town, and that the key distinction was the boundary between Rushden and Higham Ferrers.

77 The Wellingborough Conservative Association proposed a boundary following the parish boundary between Higham Ferrers and Rushden, while the Conservative Group proposed a boundary running to the south of Prospect Avenue, placing this street and neighbouring ones to the north within Higham Ferrers ward. Both of these proposals offered good electoral equality.

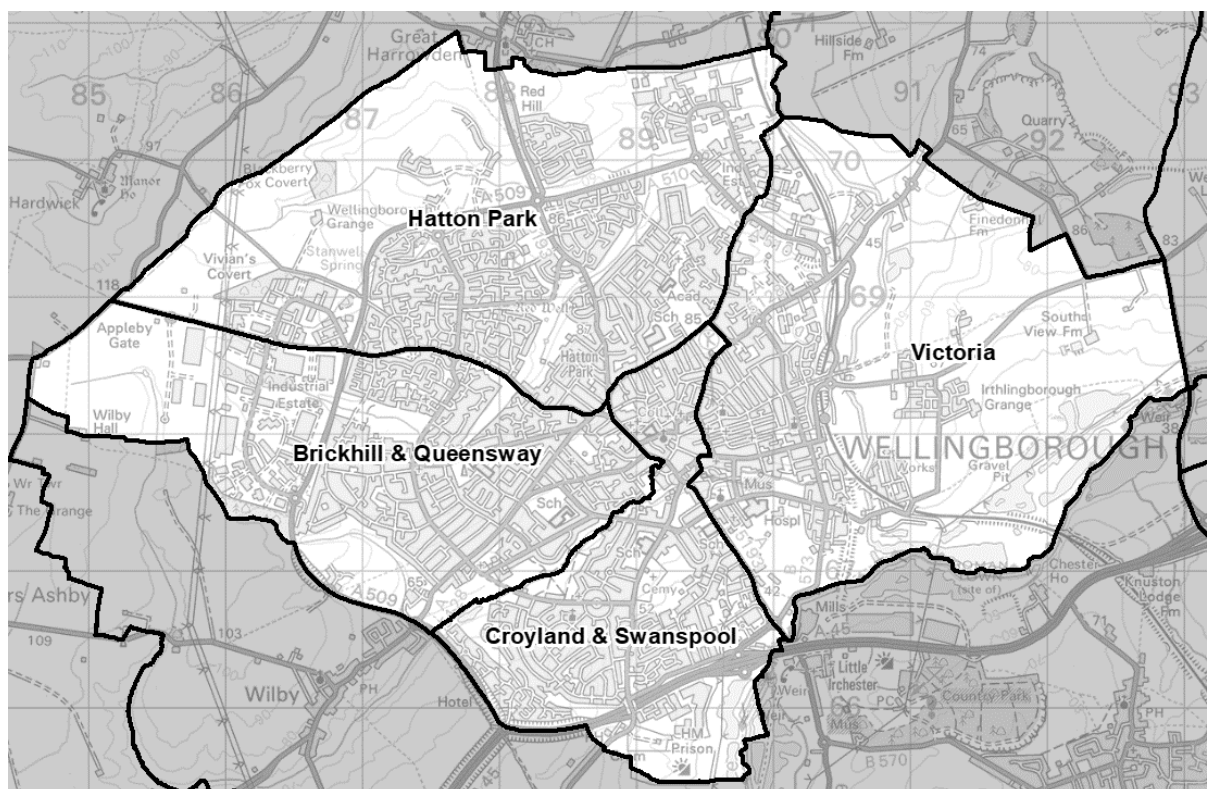
78 We visited this area on our tour of North Northamptonshire, and concluded that Prospect Avenue, Firdale Avenue, The Hedges and St James Close appear to share a community identity with other streets to the north. We have therefore adopted the Conservative Group's proposal, and placed these streets in a Higham Ferrers ward.

79 Across the remainder of this area, we have broadly adopted the proposals of the Conservative Group and Wellingborough Conservative Association. We propose a boundary between Rushden Lakes and Pemberton wards running north of Paddocks Road and Oakley Road, and south of Midland Road. We have modified the proposed boundary between Rushden Lakes and Rushden South slightly to the east of Rushden, to ensure that electors on either side of Newton Road west of the A6 are in the same ward, rather than divided by a boundary running along the road itself. Within the town of Rushden, we use Newton Road as a boundary.

80 We have also modified the proposed boundary near the southern edge of Rushden. The boundary runs to the west and south of Hall Avenue, and rather than using the relatively small street of Ashby Drive as a boundary, we prefer to place the boundary behind houses on this street, ensuring that all addresses on Ashby Drive and Conway Close are within a single ward.

81 Higham Ferrers Town Council argued that the retention of the Spencer area of Rushden in a ward covering both towns would deepen the working relationship between the two areas. However, limited evidence was provided as to community links between the two areas. In contrast, Wellingborough Conservative Association, and Rushden Town Council both provided substantial evidence that the facilities and amenities in the Spencer area were key to residents of Rushden, and that it would not reflect the community identity of this area to place it in a Higham Ferrers ward. We therefore propose a two-councillor Higham Ferrers ward comprising all of Higham Ferrers and Chelveston-cum-Caldecott parishes, together with the area north of Prospect Avenue.

Wellingborough



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Brickhill & Queensway	3	-3%
Croyland & Swanspool	2	10%
Hatton Park	3	4%
Victoria	2	-5%

Brickhill & Queensway and Hatton Park

82 Both the Conservative Group and Wellingborough Conservative Association placed the Redhill Way estate in a rural-based ward, with the Conservative Group proposing to retain the existing Hatton Park ward with no modifications. The Labour Group proposed to place this area in a Wellingborough-based ward with 21% more electors than average. While we have not adopted this proposal owing to the poor electoral equality, we do not consider that placing this area within a rural ward, especially one reaching as far south as Earls Barton, is likely to reflect the community identity of this area.

83 We visited the Redhill Way estate on our tour of North Northamptonshire. We noted that the estate is purely a housing estate, with no retail or leisure facilities other than a small playground. We consider that the community identity of the estate is likely to look towards Wellingborough, where the nearest shops, dining and leisure facilities are. We have therefore modified the proposals we received, in order to reflect this community identity and place the Redhill Way estate in Hatton Park ward,

with the northern boundary of this ward now following the boundary of Wellingborough parish.

84 The majority of the boundary between Hatton Park and Croyland & Swanspool wards runs along Sywell Road and Hardwick Road. The Wellingborough Conservative Association proposed a southern boundary of Hatton Park ward running along Havelock Street and Regent Street. While some evidence of community identity was provided, adopting this boundary in addition to the inclusion of the Redhill Way estate would result in Hatton Park ward having 13% more electors per councillor than average. We have therefore not adopted this, preferring to adopt the Conservative Group's proposal to retain the existing boundary along Gold Street.

85 We have broadly adopted the Conservative Group's proposal for Brickhill & Queensway ward, with the exception of Tithe Barn Road and the buildings on this street. We consider that it will promote effective & convenient local government for the council offices and other facilities in this area to be placed in a ward together with other town centre facilities. The remainder of the boundary follows Swanspool Brook.

86 The Labour Group proposal in this area combined a large number of electors in Wellingborough with rural parishes as far north as Pytchley, while the Wellingborough Conservative Association proposal did not offer good electoral equality when combined with our decisions for Hatton Park. We have therefore not adopted these proposals.

Croyland & Swanspool and Victoria

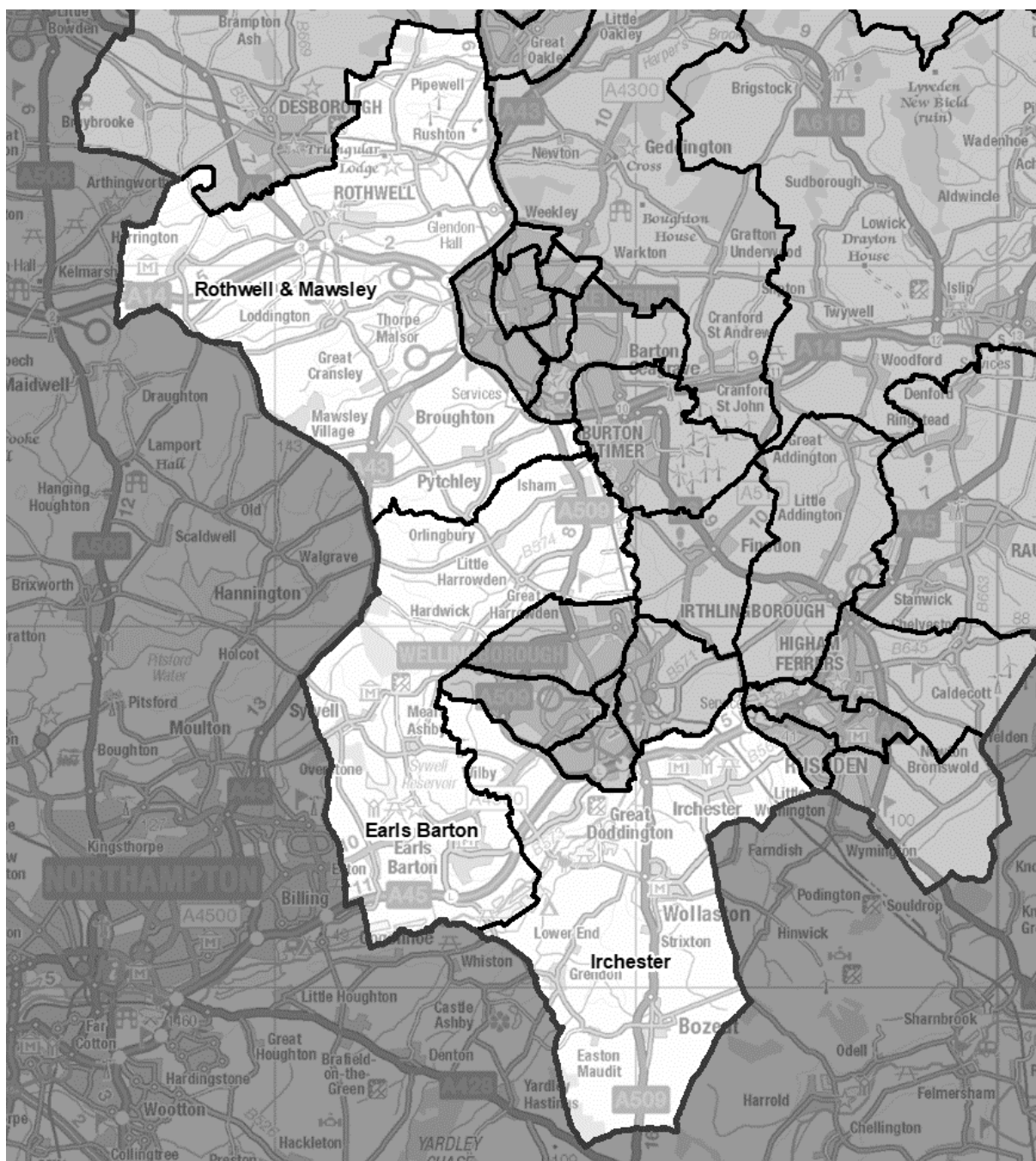
87 With the exception of the change to Tithe Barn Road, discussed above (paragraph 85), we have broadly adopted the Conservative Group's proposals for these wards, with a boundary running along the A5193 London Road, Castle Way, and Victoria Road. The Labour Group's proposals did not offer good electoral equality, while those from the Wellingborough Conservative Association placed electors on Chapman Road and Saxby Crescent in a Croyland ward, but isolated from any other concentrations of electors within this ward. We do not consider that sufficient evidence of community identity was provided to justify this, but would welcome further evidence, particularly from residents of these streets as to where their community identity lies.

88 Both the Conservative Group and Wellingborough Conservative Association proposed placing the area of Wellingborough parish south of the A45 into an Irchester ward. We considered this carefully, particularly as this would solve the issues with electoral equality in Irchester ward (discussed below at paragraph 92). While the A45 undoubtedly offers a strong boundary, we consider that the community identity of electors on Millers Park is likely to lie towards Wellingborough,

and that it would not promote effective and convenient local government for this area, with a projected 118 electors to be a separate parish ward electing a councillor onto Wellingborough Town Council. We have therefore modified the proposal, with our draft recommendations proposing a boundary following the parish boundary, and placing Millers Park and HMP Five Wells into Croyland & Swanspool ward.

89 We have adopted the Conservative Group's proposal for Victoria ward. While the boundary proposed along Nest Lane, Finedon Road and Cannon Street is not particularly strong and clear, our observations on our tour of the area suggested that there were relatively few strong boundaries available within the town of Wellingborough.

Rural Western North Northamptonshire



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Earls Barton	2	7%
Irchester	3	-11%
Rothwell & Mawsley	3	2%

Earls Barton and Irchester

90 The village of Earls Barton is projected to have 5,167 electors by 2028, meaning it cannot stand as a single-councillor ward with good electoral equality, and must be joined to neighbouring rural parishes in either a two- or three-councillor ward. Neither the Labour Group scheme nor the Wellingborough Conservative Association proposals offered good electoral equality, while the Conservative Group proposals did offer good equality, but relied upon the addition of the Redhill Way estate in Wellingborough parish to an Earls Barton ward. As discussed above (paragraphs 82–83), we have not adopted these proposals.

91 We propose a two-councillor Earls Barton ward, ranging from Isham parish in the north to Earls Barton and Ecton parishes in the south. We would welcome further evidence with regard to the community identity of the various parishes in this area, but note that the only way single-councillor wards could offer good electoral equality would be for roughly a thousand electors in Earls Barton parish to be placed in a separate ward from the remainder of the village.

92 The only proposal we received for an Irchester ward which offers good equality was that of the Wellingborough Conservative Association, which proposed adding Wilby and Great Doddington parishes to the southern-most area of the authority, with access along Hardwater Road. We have adopted this proposal, subject to the modification discussed above at paragraph 88, meaning that Irchester ward still does not quite offer good electoral equality, with 11% fewer electors per councillor than average. Nevertheless, based on the evidence we received in our initial consultation, the constraints of the external boundaries of the authority and the relative size of the settlements in this area we consider that this proposal is the best available balance of our statutory criteria.

Rothwell & Mawsley

93 We have adopted the Conservative Group's proposal for this ward, which is focused on the town of Rothwell and extends south to Pytchley parish. Little evidence of community identity was offered, but the only alternative proposal, from the Labour Group, had several issues, such as Harrington parish being placed as a detached portion of a ward to the north of Desborough. We will only propose detached wards in the most exceptional circumstances, and we do not consider that those circumstances exist in this case.

94 Broughton Parish Council expressed a desire to be placed in a ward with other rural communities, rather than the existing arrangement which sees this parish placed in a ward with Burton Latimer. The parish council also noted links with Cransley and Loddington parishes, but was not specific about these.

95 Based on the forecast electorates, it would be possible to create a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Pytchley, Broughton, Mawsley and Cransley with good electoral equality, with the remainder of our proposed ward forming a two-councillor ward focused on Rothwell. We retain an open mind, and would welcome further evidence as to whether this alternative might offer a better reflection of community identity in this area.

Conclusions

96 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in North 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	68	68
Number of electoral wards	30	30
Average number of electors per councillor	3,852	4,211
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendations

North Northamptonshire Council should be made up of 68 councillors serving 30 wards representing five single-councillor wards, 12 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 North Northamptonshire. You can also view our draft recommendations for North Northamptonshire on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

97 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.

98 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, North 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.

99 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 Barton Seagrave, Corby, Kettering, Rushden and Wellingborough parishes.

100 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Barton Seagrave parish.

Draft recommendations

Barton Seagrave Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Barton Town	7
Constable Drive	1

101 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Corby parish.

Draft recommendations

Corby Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Corby West	5
Kingswood	4
Lloyds	3
Oakley	5

102 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kettering parish.

Draft recommendations

Kettering Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
All Saints	4
Avondale Grange	2
Brambleside	1
Hanwood Park	1
Ise Lodge	3
Pipers Hill	2
St Peter & St Michael	4
Wicksteed	1
William Knibb	2

103 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Rushden Parish.

Draft recommendations

Rushden Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Pemberton	7
Prospect Avenue	1
Rushden Lakes	6
Rushden South	7

104 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wellingborough parish.

Draft recommendations

Wellingborough Town Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brickhill & Queensway	7
Croyland & Swanspool	5
Hatton Park	7
Victoria	4

Have your say

105 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 unitary authority or just a part of it.

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

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

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

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

109 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for North Northamptonshire 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.

110 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.

111 Electoral equality:

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

112 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?

113 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?

114 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.

115 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.

116 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.

117 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 North Northamptonshire in 2025.

Equalities

118 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 North Northamptonshire

	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	Avondale Grange	1	3,925	3,925	5%	4,256	4,256	1%
2	Barton Seagrave & Burton Latimer	3	12,104	4,035	8%	12,865	4,288	2%
3	Brambleside	1	3,791	3,791	1%	4,073	4,073	-3%
4	Brickhill & Queensway	3	11,107	3,702	-1%	12,193	4,064	-3%
5	Corby West	3	11,221	3,740	0%	12,261	4,088	-3%
6	Croyland & Swanspool	2	8,413	4,207	12%	9,241	4,620	10%
7	Desborough	3	12,031	4,010	7%	13,022	4,341	3%
8	Earls Barton	2	8,429	4,215	13%	9,017	4,508	7%
9	Finedon	1	3,594	3,594	-4%	3,931	3,931	-7%
10	Geddington & Stanion	1	4,160	4,160	11%	4,487	4,487	7%
11	Gretton & Weldon	2	5,833	2,917	-22%	8,950	4,475	6%

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 %
12 Hatton Park	3	11,708	3,903	4%	13,115	4,372	4%
13 Higham Ferrers	2	7,599	3,800	2%	8,245	4,122	-2%
14 Irchester	3	10,274	3,425	-8%	11,218	3,739	-11%
15 Irthlingborough	2	7,459	3,730	0%	8,030	4,015	-5%
16 Ise	2	8,018	4,009	7%	8,533	4,266	1%
17 Kettering Central	3	12,162	4,054	8%	13,174	4,391	4%
18 Kingswood	3	11,145	3,715	-1%	12,216	4,070	-3%
19 Lloyds & Corby Village	2	7,987	3,994	7%	8,732	4,366	4%
20 Oakley	3	12,455	4,152	11%	13,404	4,468	6%
21 Oundle	3	11,288	3,763	1%	12,138	4,046	-4%
22 Pemberton	2	8,156	4,078	6%	8,853	4,439	5%
23 Pipers Hill	1	4,082	4,082	6%	4,428	4,428	5%
24 Raunds	3	10,914	3,638	-6%	11,621	3,874	-8%
25 Rothwell & Mawsley	3	11,900	3,967	3%	12,850	4,283	2%
26 Rushden Lakes	2	7,352	3,676	-5%	7,985	3,992	-5%

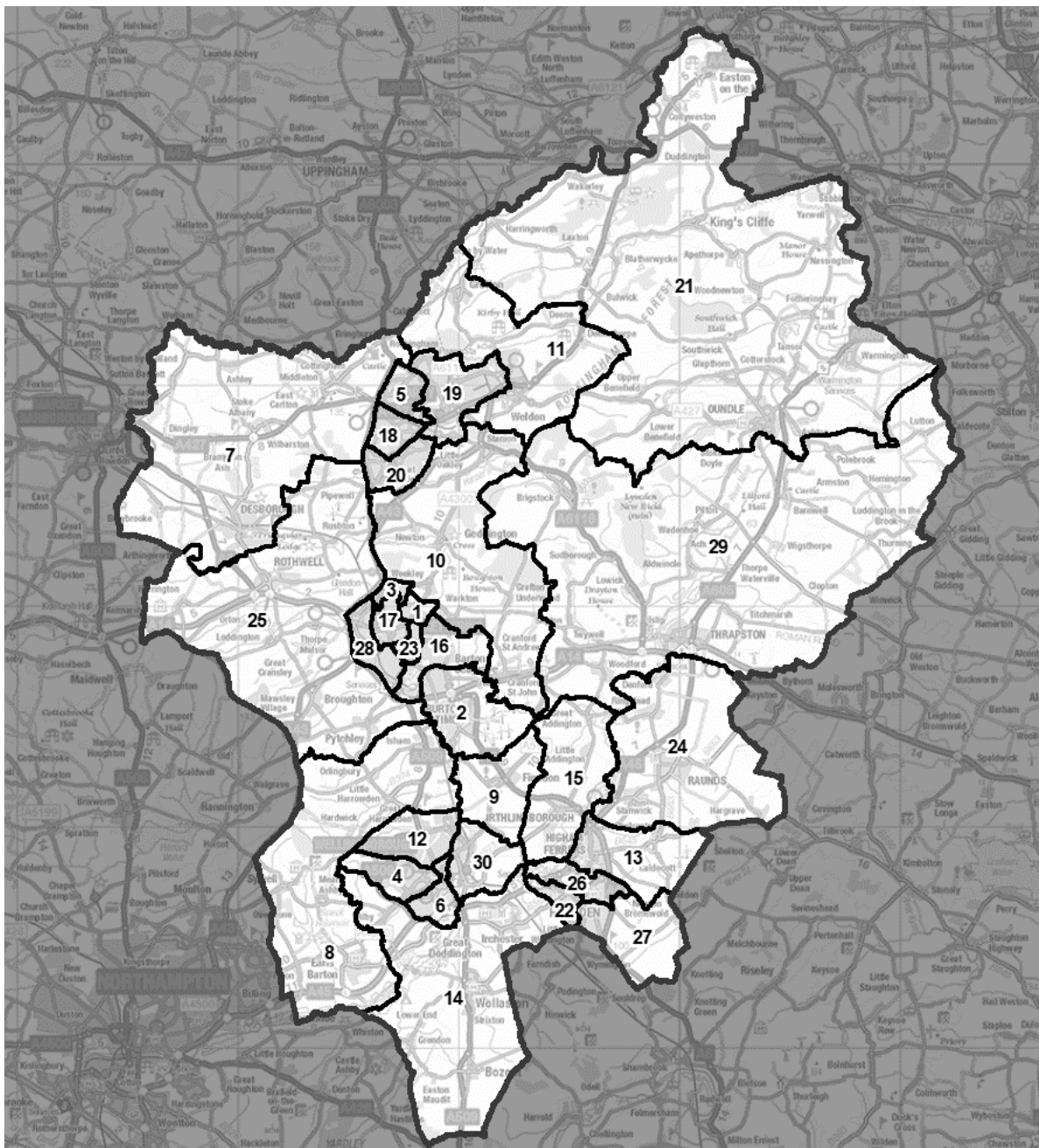
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Rushden South	2	7,890	3,945	2%	8,592	4,283	2%
28 St Peter & St Michael	2	8,329	4,165	8%	8,947	4,474	6%
29 Thrapston	3	11,196	3,732	-3%	11,950	3,983	-5%
30 Victoria	2	7,429	3,715	-4%	7,997	3,998	-5%
Totals	68	261,951	–	–	286,325	–	-5%
Averages	–	–	3,852	–	–	4,211	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North 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 unitary authority. 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	Avondale Grange
2	Barton Seagrave & Burton Latimer
3	Brambleside
4	Brickhill & Queensway
5	Corby West
6	Croyland & Swanspool
7	Desborough

8	Earls Barton
9	Finedon
10	Geddington & Stanion
11	Gretton & Weldon
12	Hatton Park
13	Higham Ferrers
14	Irchester
15	Irthlingborough
16	Ise
17	Kettering Central
18	Kingswood
19	Lloyds & Corby Village
20	Oakley
21	Oundle
22	Pemberton
23	Pipers Hill
24	Raunds
25	Rothwell & Mawsley
26	Rushden Lakes
27	Rushden South
28	St Peter & St Michael
29	Thrapston
30	Victoria

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/north-northamptonshire

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-northamptonshire

Political Groups

- Kettering Constituency Labour Party
- North Northamptonshire Council Conservative Group
- North Northamptonshire Council Labour Group
- Wellingborough Conservative Association

Councillors

- Councillor M. Binley
- Councillor M. Griffiths
- Councillor J. Hakewill
- Councillor D. Howes
- Councillor P. Irwin
- Councillor E. Lomer-Wood
- Councillor T. Nicol
- Councillor J. Piercy
- Councillor M. Turner-Hawes

Local Organisations

- Headlands Area Residents' Association

Parish and Town Councils

- Apethorpe Village Meeting
- Broughton Parish Council
- Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council
- Cranford Parish Council
- Finedon Town Council
- Hargrave Parish Council
- Hemington, Luddington & Thurning Parish Council
- Higham Ferrers Town Council
- Kettering Town Council
- Mawsley Parish Council
- Stanwick Parish Council

- Wilbarston Parish Council
- Rushden Town 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 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.

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England
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50 Victoria Street, London
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Online: www.lgbce.org.uk

www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Twitter: @LGBCE