

DRAFT - North West Leicestershire District Council's Response to the Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) initial recommendations for the local government boundaries for North West Leicestershire District Council, *New electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire District Council* published on 3 September 2024.
- 1.2 We thank the LGBCE and the inspectors for the work they have done and in particular, note that they have considered points raised by all parties that responded.
- 1.3 The basis of the proposal is the criteria set out by the LGBCE and:
- I. Where possible has taken into account historic links i.e. areas have previously been in different wards; and
 - II. Where possible parliamentary boundaries have been respected; and
 - III. In drawing boundaries, consideration was given to natural boundaries- major roads, railway lines, industrial estates etc.
- 1.4 It is, therefore, noted that the inspectors have carried out the review in line with the Council's request for single member wards. The proposal to increase the number of councillors by one to 39 councillors to ensure electoral equality across the district is also noted. It is also noted that in the most part the LGBCE has come to similar conclusions to those contained in the Council's initial proposals submitted in May 2024.
- 1.5 All members of the Council have been given the opportunity to feed into the Council's response and comments from individual ward members have been included in the response. The Council's Electoral Review Working Party, established to consider responses to consultations such as this, have also met to consider the Council's response.

2. Castle Donington

- 2.1 The Council notes that inspectors have broadly agreed with our proposals and agree with the LGBCE proposal to retain the existing boundary between Castle Donington Castle and Castle Donington Park as set out at paragraph 43.

3. Kegworth

- 3.1 The Council notes the recommendations for the Kegworth wards and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraph 46.

3.2 The Council received the following comment from the current Kegworth ward member:

The solution for retaining 'Kegworth South' and 'Kegworth North and Daleacre Hill' more or less unchanged and is in line with my wishes and those of Kegworth Parish Council. The continuity with changes introduced only for the 2015 election will enable residents of the two parishes to feel secure with their District representation and the name changes will bring better identification. The very minor change for the handful of houses near The Otter pub makes sense.

3.3 The Council received a comment from the current ward member for Daleacre Hill who advised that she was supportive of the proposed name for her ward, Kegworth North and Daleacre Hill as were both the two parish Councils that sit within the ward.

4. Breedon, Belton, Long Whatton and Worthington

4.1 The recommendations for the wards are noted and the Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 50 – 52.

4.2 The Council received the following comment from the current Kegworth ward member:

The new proposal for Breedon and Long Whatton makes sense not only for the named communities and Diseworth, as described by the Commission, but it also helps focus the representation of the proposed Isley Woodhouse development at the heart of this proposed ward.

5. Ashby de la Zouch

5.1 The recommendations for the wards, along with the additional ward for Ashby to be known as Ashby Hastings are noted. The Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 53 - 64.

5.2 The current ward member for Blackfordby has noted the proposals for the ward and feels that, as noted at paragraph 54, as Blackfordby village is distinct from the town of Ashby de la Zouch, that the name of the ward should remain as Blackfordby to better reflect community identity.

5.3 The Council has received the following comment from four dual hatted District and Parish Members and the current ward member for Ashby Woulds

I am responding on behalf of myself and three current Ashby parish ward members, along with the member representing Ashby Woulds. We all believe that the new ward should retain the name Ashby Blackfordby, as suggested by the Commission, because part of it falls within the Ashby parish and part within Ashby Woulds parish. As such we believe the name should reflect its close ties with the Ashby communities. The Commission rightly points out that the ward forms part of the Ashby cluster of wards and we believe that its name should reflect this.

5.4 As the Council has received differing views on this element, it would ask that the commission considers these along with any other comments received as part of the consultation to make a fair decision.

6. Appleby, Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe

- 6.1 The recommendations for the wards as set out in paragraphs 65-69 are noted.
- 6.2 The current ward member for Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe has submitted the following comments for consideration:

I am broadly supportive of the LGBC recommendations for the simple reason that it seems to concentrate the more significant boundary changes into the areas that have seen the most significant population growth, leaving wards that have had more modest growth relatively unchanged.

In particular, I'm delighted that my village of Donisthorpe would not be cut in half (NWLDC plan A) or absorbed into a 3-member conglomerate with all the attendant potential operational difficulties (NWLDC plan B) . However, I'm unhappy that my current ward stands to lose Acresford, creating an unfortunate misalignment between District and Parish boundaries – but I do understand the need to maintain Appleby at -10% variance or better, so if there's no other way to achieve this then so be it.

*I note that the LGBC recommendations as they stand would leave Ashby Woulds ward at +7% and Donisthorpe & Oakthorpe ward at -6% ; to even these out now , and to reduce the possible need for future boundary changes , I believe a number of properties **physically** part of Donisthorpe village but currently in Moira parish could be transferred by a minor boundary tweak . Namely :*

Donisthorpe Lane
Park Road
Poplar Avenue
Shortheath Road
Measham Road
School Street

7. Coleorton, Heather, Measham, Packington and Ravenstone

- 7.1 The recommendations for the wards are noted and the Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 70 – 76.

8. Ibstock and Ellistown

- 8.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.

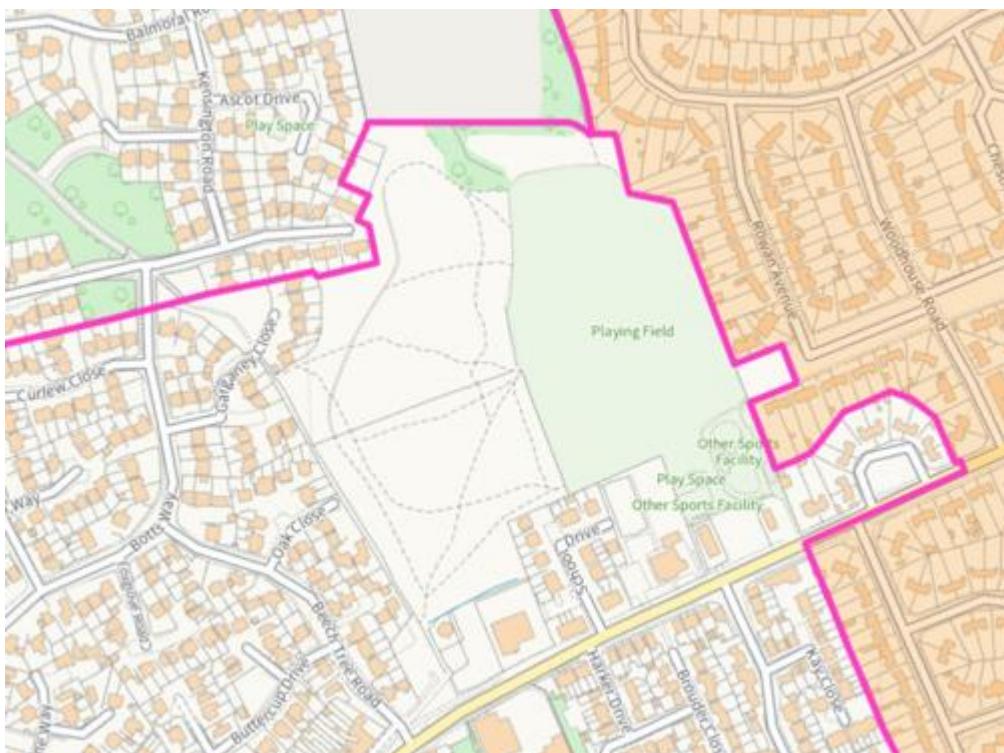
9. Hugglescote & Donington le Heath

- 9.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.
- 9.2 The current ward member has requested that Dennis Street, St. John's Close, Old Church Close, Grange Road 2-24, Ashburton Road 1-82, Central Road 2-68 Holly Bank, Peggs Grange is moved back to the St Johns ward. It is felt that by moving St. John's Church and the surrounding roads that are associated with the church out of the St. John's ward, the St. John's ward no longer reflects its community identity.

10. East of Coalville

- 10.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.

10.2 Since the submission of the draft warding proposal, the current ward members for the wards East of Coalville have asked if consideration could be given to moving the ward boundary between Greenhill and Bardon. The playing fields that sit within the Bardon Ward (The playing field area that is green in the plan below) have historically been known as Greenhill Playing Fields and always been classed as part of the Greenhill Estate and will reflect local community identities and interests. The plan below shows the exact area to be considered, and it is noted that the movement will not impact on the housing figures.



11. West of Coalville

11.1 The Council notes that inspectors have broadly agreed with the Council's proposals and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 99-102.

12. Swannington, Thringstone and Whitwick

12.1 The Council notes the recommendations for the wards and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 103 - 105.

12.2 Both the Electoral Review Working Party and a ward member for one of the current Whitwick wards have suggested that consideration be given to moving the boundary between Whitwick South and Swannington to proceed up the centre of Thornborough Road, along the small part of Church Lane and then up Brooks Lane to the junction with North Street/Talbot Lane. This would make the main throughfare a more identifiable boundary, particularly along Brooks Lane rather than running the ward boundary through the housing estate. The % variance would not be overly impacted.

13. Conclusion

13.1 In conclusion, the Council thanks the inspectors for the work. The draft recommendations are a sensible and fair solution to the challenge of a growing population in North West Leicestershire. In particular, the warding patterns are the correct ones.

13.2 The further amendments suggested in this report seek to refine points around community identity for the Commission's final proposals.

13.3 In summary, the options for the LGBCE to consider are as follows:

- That further consideration is given to the need to move Acresford from the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward to avoid the misalignment of District and Parish boundaries.
- That consideration is given to the movement of the roads as detailed in the above paragraph 6.2 to even out the variances between Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe.
- That due to the differing views received around the name of Ashby Blackfordby, the commission considers these along with any other comments received as part of the consultation to make a fair decision.
- To reflect better community identity, the boundary between Greenhill and Bardon be moved to include the Greenhill Playfields within the Greenhill ward, noting that the move does not impact any housing numbers.
- That consideration is given to moving the ward boundary between Whitwick South and Swannington to proceed up the centre of Thornborough Road, along the small part of Church Lane and then up Brooks Lane to the junction with North Street/Talbot Lane.