



## THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP OF BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Recommendations from the Conservative Group of Blaby District Council

#### BLABY DISTRICT WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW 2021

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### SUBMISSION

- A. The review group has taken a systemic, pragmatic and holistic approach to the boundary review and acknowledges the reduction in Councillor representation from 39 Members to 36 Members with an idealised forecast electorate representation of 2,344 (+ / - 10%) per Ward Member by 2027 – an electorate range between 2,110 and 2,578 per Ward Member.
- B. At all times, political bias has been avoided with the primary objective of proactively and viably reducing from 39 to 36 Ward Members by increasing electorate numbers to between 2,110 and 2,578 (target range) and ensuring; so far is reasonably practical, voter equality and within a “settlement” or “community” first approach.
- C. The systematic approach first examined and agreed that where there were unique, distinct or stand-alone settlements or communities, these would be re-assessed against the guiding principles in 1 & 2 above and to consider any practical and sensible alternatives.
- D. Where the assessment revealed that any changes would be illogical as they would conflict with effective or established representation or try and conjoin geographically detached settlements, these Wards would be discounted from further consideration on the principle that the forecast electoral numbers would be within the target range or significant justification was evident or present to breach the target range.
- E. The review also recognised that by default, some Wards are heavily urbanised and will not be able to accommodate any notable future growth, the question then being, “does the existing and forecast voter numbers in these existing urbanised settlements fall within the increased representative range. If they do, on what basis is that assessment made, if they do not, can the implementation of new and logical boundaries achieve balanced representation within the target range?
- F. Similarly, the review further recognised that some areas of the Blaby District were very rural in nature and in many cases small in electorate numbers. Where these effects were present and settlement affinity evident, i.e. The Fosse Villages (**Sapcote, Stoney Stanton, Sharnford, Elmesthorpe, Croft, Huncote, Thurlaston, Potters Marston, Leicester Forest West, Aston Flamville, Wigston Parva**) the analysis would assess the distribution and affinities of these rural communities to achieve the most appropriate voter equality.
- G. The review also sought to follow a principle of two-Member Wards, three-Members Wards as a maximum and where at all possible, avoid single Member Wards to ensure continuity of representation at all times.
- H. All proposals within this document are considered to be well-founded, logical, viable, sensible and / or practical with local knowledge being respected and providing guidance.



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**NB:**

***All Wards have redefined Ward names with the single exception of 18. North Whetstone Ward***



**1. Blaby Ward – 2 Member Ward – 5,360 (2,680) 14% var.**

**Blaby** is a stand-alone, urbanised and clearly identifiable community and hosts the largest village retail centre in the Blaby District area.

Under the current Ward pattern, Blaby is divided into two Wards – Blaby North (Saxondale) and Blaby South.

The new single Ward proposal will ensure that the historical areas of Blaby (Blaby Hall and Bouskell Park) are brought into the single community identity rather than sitting within the current Saxondale Ward and older historic Ward assignments are replaced with a more relevant and recognisable name i.e., Blaby.

Good public transport links into the higher-order retail centre of Leicester City exist with significant health, education, car parking, leisure and retail provision all within and adjacent to the Blaby village centre.

The Blaby Ward proposal would unify Blaby as a single identifiable community of 5,360 voters and identifies the River Sence, A426 Blaby bypass, Winchester Road and Blaby Golf Club (within the area of open space and green wedge separation) between Blaby and Countesthorpe as natural and defined boundaries that would ensure a single and common identity.



**2. Braunstone Millfield Ward - 2 Member Ward est: 4,208 (2,104) 10.2% var**

Braunstone as a large, urban settlement has always been defined by key road infrastructure being: -

Braunstone Lane, Narborough Road, M1 motorway and Kingsway with three well established school identities, Millfield, Ravenhurst and Winstanley.

The new **Braunstone Millfield Ward** establishes a more cohesive and identifiable area with clear and consistent boundaries largely centred on and around Millfield School and being: -

Western boundary A 563 Lubbethorpe Way

Southern boundary being south of Narborough Road South to include Kingsway, Hazel Drive, Bilberry, Colbert Drive, Edith Avenue, The Poplars.

North – South boundary being the eastern side of Kingsway (odd numbers) and including Edenhurst Avenue, Monica Road and Frances Avenue

Northern boundary being the northern extremity of Kingsway (Kingsway South) abutting Mossdale Meadows.

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the proposal supersedes and expands the current Millfield Ward so voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be close to or within the target range.***



**3. Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward – 2 Member Ward est: 4,398 (2,199) 6.2% var**

The new **Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward** sits within the boundaries of east and north of Kingsway, Narborough Road South to the Braunstone crossroads, north up Braunstone Lane to the northern extremity of Kingsway North joining the A563 Lubbesthorpe Way to form the western boundary to Mossdale Meadows where it abuts the new Braunstone Millfield Ward (2 above).

Braunstone as a whole built environment, is a large, heavily urbanised settlement which has always been defined by key road infrastructure being: -

Braunstone Lane, Narborough Road and Kingsway with three well established school identities, Millfield, Ravenhurst and Winstanley. In more recent years the A563 Lubbesthorpe Way has introduced a defined and hard infrastructure boundary between “Old” Braunstone and the much newer Thorpe Astley.

The new Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward establishes a more cohesive and identifiable area within “Old” Braunstone with clear and consistent boundaries and centres around and reflects the high and local relevance of Ravenhurst School.

The new Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward is a logical and distinct community with good public transport (buses), road and cycling networks to the higher order retail centre in Leicester City and Fosse Park retail park in neighbouring Enderby Ward with good access to the motorway network, education, employment and retail within or adjacent to the settlement.

The neighbouring Braunstone Millfield Ward (2 above) and the Braunstone Ravenhurst Ward collectively sit within well-defined infrastructure boundaries as indicated above and encompass virtually all of “Old” Braunstone and in the new warding pattern, provide for equivalence of electoral representation with two, two-Member Wards.

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be close to or within the target range.***



**4. Cosby South Whetstone Ward – 2 Member Ward – 4,782 (2,391) 2.00% var**

**Cosby** is a clearly defined settlement and local community with a 2027 forecast voter population of 3,065 making the settlement too large for a single Ward Councillor by exceeding the target mean average by 711 voters (30.75%). Similarly, with 3,065 voters, the settlement is too small for a two-Member Ward @1,522 voters per Ward Councillor and becoming over-represented by 35% as a single settlement.

There is therefore a need to conjoin Cosby with a logical and near-neighbour settlement to balance the mean average voter equality objectives, these can geographically only be either South Whetstone or Littlethorpe.

Littlethorpe is accessed from Cosby via the unclassified and unlit Narborough Road where distinct green wedges of separation exist between Cosby and Littlethorpe and a single, very narrow footway links the settlements. There is no public transport link between the two settlements although Narborough Railway Station acts as a central rail link located between the main conurbations of Narborough and Littlethorpe on the far side of Littlethorpe. Negligible employment opportunities existing between the two settlements of Cosby and Littlethorpe.

Cosby itself sits in the centre of well-used transit routes accessing and commuting across the South Leicestershire villages along Croft Road, Broughton Road, Countesthorpe Road, Cambridge Road and to a lesser extent, Narborough Road, all of which with the single exception of Cambridge Road, are rural in nature and act as defined green wedge areas of separation between neighbouring settlements.

Once extant planning permission has been built-out on the outer curtilage of Cosby on Cambridge Road, only the M1 motorway bridge will separate the built forms of the two settlements of Cosby and South Whetstone with Cambridge Road being a main conjoiner between the two settlements.

Major employment is located on Cambridge Road with Cosby Primary School and Whetstone Badgerbrook Primary School both being the closest proximity primary age catchment area for Cosby with good foot and road access.

A main public transport bus route is long-established between South Whetstone and Cosby along Cambridge Road into Cosby and then outward to Broughton Astley.

There is a clearly defined boundary in place that identifies the South Whetstone Ward boundary being Lutterworth Road (A426), as it is with Cosby, Dog & Gun Lane at the eastern extremity and then following Whetstone Brook towards Warwick Road at the western extremity and supports the conjoining with Cosby as the **Cosby South Whetstone Ward** as viable, sensible, logical and practical.



**5. Countesthorpe & Kilby Ward – 3 Ward Members – 6,397 (2,132) 9.04% var.**

**Countesthorpe:** Countesthorpe is an established and distinct settlement largely detached from near-neighbour conjoining settlements and with a voter population of 6,166.

6,166 would be too large for a two-Member Ward @ (3,083) 31.5% under represented.

6,166 as a three-Member Ward would be a small voter representation of (2,055) and being 12.3% over-represented and outside of the target equality objectives on both considerations.

Countesthorpe sits adjacent to the neighbouring District Authority boundary of Harborough District Council which negates the geographic ability of Countesthorpe to conjoin with near neighbours such as Willoughby Waterleys which sit within the neighbouring District Authority area.

The two small rural settlements of Kilby and Foston with 242 electors are currently conjoined with Countesthorpe being too small to command a stand-alone Ward Member and need to be conjoined to a near neighbour to be electorally viable. Both Kilby and Foston sit on the furthest eastern outreaches of the Blaby District area and have no other near-neighbour settlements to conjoin with, with Countesthorpe being the nearest “in District” neighbour.

It is therefore viable, sensible and practical for Countesthorpe to be conjoined with Foston and Kilby as the collective settlements of Countesthorpe, Kilby & Foston with 6,397 voters (2,132 per Ward Member) 9.04% variance to mean average.



**6. Enderby Ward – 2 Ward Members – 5,037 (2,519) 7.47% var**

**Enderby Ward** serves to re-unite the village of Enderby as a single defined and community orientated settlement whilst also reflecting the more localised boundary of the Parish of Enderby.

Boundaries being Forest Road, Desford Road, M69, Fosse Park and returning along the River Sence, crossing Enderby Road to include the residential areas of Clarence Road, Lime Tree Road, Abbey Road etc.

Good road and transport links are available with significant employment, retail, leisure and education opportunities within the Enderby Ward.





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### **Fosse Villages and Fosse Wards - Preface:**

The Fosse Villages are recognised as a wider collective of the most rural and many smaller settlements within the Blaby District Council area with a recently approved Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Development Plan and the boundary review will be assessed on this basis along with the historical Roman context of the “The Fosse Way”.

The villages within the Fosse Villages represent a collective voter population of 11,679 and being:-

- |                          |                              |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| • <b>Aston Flamville</b> | <b>Croft</b>                 | <b>Elmesthorpe</b>     |
| • <b>Huncote</b>         | <b>Leicester Forest West</b> | <b>Potters Marston</b> |
| • <b>Sharnford</b>       | <b>Sapcote</b>               | <b>Stoney Stanton</b>  |
| • <b>Thurlaston</b>      | <b>Wigston Parva</b>         |                        |

Due to the rural and historic nature of the settlements, two of the main defining boundaries are on the South western extreme (A5 Watling Street) and the south eastern extreme (Old Roman Road / Old Fosse Way) reflecting the long and socially important history of the Fosse Villages.

As a statistical average equivalence of voter representation 11,679 voters would indicate a total Ward Member representation based on a target voter population of 2,344 of 4.98 (5) Ward Councillors across the new Wards of: -

- **Fosse Highcross (2 Ward Members)**
- **Fosse Normanton (1 Ward Member)**
- **Fosse Stoney Cove (2 Ward Members)**

#### **7. Fosse Highcross Ward – 2 Member Ward – 4,490 (2,245) 4.2% var**

**Fosse Highcross Ward** comprises the settlements of **Elmesthorpe, Sapcote, Sharnford, Aston Flamville and Wigston Parva** with all being adjacent to each other and reflecting the five parish boundaries ensuring electoral commonality across the two tiers of local government.

The term Fosse Highcross has been adopted as reflecting both the history of the Fosse villages and Fosse Way and the historic “High Cross” monument being the geographic centre of Roman Britain.

#### **8. Fosse Normanton Ward – 1 Ward Member – (2,311) 1.4% var**

**Fosse Normanton Ward** comprises the settlements of **Huncote, Thurlaston and Leicester Forest West** and all being adjacent to each other and reflecting the three parish boundaries ensuring electoral commonality across the two tiers of local government.



**9. Fosse Stoney Cove – 2 Ward Members – 4,884 (2,442) 4.2% var**

**Fosse Stoney Cove Ward** comprises the settlements of **Potters Marston, Croft and Stoney Stanton** and all being adjacent to each other and reflecting the three parish boundaries ensuring electoral commonality across the two tiers of local government.

The term Fosse Stoney Cove has been adopted to reflect both the history of the Fosse villages and Fosse Way and the internationally recognised National Diving Centre at Stoney Cove.



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### **10. Glenfield Ellis Ward – 2 Ward Members est: 4,406 (2,203) 6.05% var**

The Glenfield Ellis Ward will comprise of an area boundary of the A46 ring road, A50, Loxley Road, Chestnut Road onto Stamford Street, then onto Somerset Drive and Elm Tree Avenue area to B5380 Ratby Lane.

The Glenfield Ellis Ward captures Ellis Park recreation ground and serves to recognise the historic integrity of the Ellis family as the original benefactors of the area.

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be within the target range.***



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### **11. Glenfield Faire Ward – 2 Ward Members – est: 4,252 (2,126) 9.3% var.**

Glenfield Faire Ward sits adjacent to Glenfield Ellis Ward to complete the representation of the Parish of Glenfield as 2 Glenfield Wards.

The northern boundary abuts Glenfield Ellis Ward (above) with the southern and eastern boundary abutting the Leicester City Council boundary up to the A50 negating boundary movements in the east and south.

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be within the target range.***



**12. Glen Parva Ward – 2 Member Ward – 4,806 (2,403) 2.51% var**

The new **Glen Parva Ward** comprises of a single conurbation north of the River Sence and the Blaby Ward (previous). It reflects the Glen Parva parish boundary and is a clearly identifiable and long-established community sitting across the A426 Leicester Road arterial road.

Urbanised in nature, Glen Parva Ward abuts the Leicester City Council Wards of Eyres Monsell and Aylestone and the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Ward of South Wigston leaving no room for boundary change in the inherent natural and electoral boundaries.

There can be no change in the eastern or norther directions due to the neighbouring upper tier authorities. The Wards to the south (Blaby) and west (Whetstone) have clearly defined settlement and community boundaries explored in those new Wards.

The Glen Parva Ward matching the Glen Parva Parish Boundaries cements a logical and distinct community with good public transport (buses), road and cycling networks to the higher order retail centre in Leicester City and Fosse Park retail park in neighbouring Enderby Ward with good access to education, employment and retail within or adjacent to the settlement.



**13. Kirby Muxloe Ward – 2 Ward Members 5,056 (2,528) 7.3% var**

**Kirby Muxloe Ward** sits on the northern side of the A47 adjacent to the Leicester Forest Ward (14. below) with the northern boundary being defined by Rothley Brook and Desford Road.

The eastern boundary will run along the northern side of the A47 (odd number houses) to terminate with the B5380 Ratby Lane with the new ward boundary including the Packer Avenue and Priory Walk areas.

Kirby Muxloe has always been defined by the community and wider communities as a single settlement with a single identity, uniquely distinct from the neighbouring Leicester Forest Ward (14. below) and Ratby (Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council)

Assigning the A47 as the key and identifiable delineator between the two Wards is sensible, viable and practical.

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be within the target range.***



**14. Leicester Forest Ward – 2 Ward Members 5,175 (2,588) 10.4% var**

The **Leicester Forest Ward** consists of all areas south of the A47 and even numbered houses on the Hinckley Road (A47)

Boundary is A47, Braunstone Lane – Park Drive, Fossebrook Primary School, Forest House Lane up to B582 Desford Road.

Adopting the A47 as a defined boundary ensures a clear distinction between the southern community of the A47 (Leicester Forest Ward) and the A47 northern community of what will be the Kirby Muxloe Ward (13. above)

***NB: In the absence of mapping tools, the voter population has been estimated for this Ward but is expected to be close to or within the target range.***



**15. Lubbethorpe Ward – 1 Ward member 3,020 (28.8%) var**

Lubbethorpe (New Lubbethorpe) is a new Strategic Urban Extension with a detailed and extensive Design Code and growing community with a 2027 forecast voter population of 3,020.

Lubbethorpe has been designed to be a stand-alone community from inception, rather than being added onto another community, having all infrastructure needs planned along with residential development such as shops, medical centre, leisure centre, business area and its own dial up transport arrangements as it builds-out in phases.

Lubbethorpe has also recently formed a parish council for the Lubbethorpe area, therefore it is sensible, viable, logical and important that Lubbethorpe should have its own Ward identity and District Ward Councillor representing the community.

The 2023 local elections electoral population is forecast to be over-represented whilst the new community continues to scale-up. By 2027, the Ward is forecast to be under-represented by 676 (28.8%) which is unavoidable but logical and viable for a new community.





**16. Meridian Thorpe Astley Ward – 2 Member Ward – 4,615 (2,308) 1.5% var**

**Meridian Thorpe Astley Ward** sets-out to geographically define the newer and now established large-scale residential community and adjacent commercial areas of the Blaby District area, namely Thorpe Astley (residential) and Meridian (Commercial and Leisure).

The Meridian Thorpe Astley Ward has clearly defined infrastructure boundaries being the M1 motorway (west), A563 Lubbethorpe Way (east) A5460 (south) and Braunstone Lane (north) and is by default a clearly defined and identifiable community.

Thorpe Astley was always designed to be a distinct and identifiable new community but has to date, not been afforded that distinctive identity. The boundary review provides the opportunity to rectify this misnomer of built environment development, community cohesion and history.

Moves are already in place to establish a new parish council for Thorpe Astley to underpin a distinct identity and localised representation. Creating the new **Meridian Thorpe Astley Ward** is therefore a sensible, logical and electorally viable proposal.



**17. Narborough and Littlethorpe Ward – 3 Ward Members – 6,957 (2,319) 1.0% var**

The **Narborough and Littlethorpe Ward** mimics the Narborough & Littlethorpe Parish Council boundary and brings commonality to voter representation across two tiers of local government with Forest Road, Narborough being the clearly defined boundary between Narborough and Littlethorpe Ward and the new Enderby Ward (above)

The western boundary is clearly defined as either the old railway line or further west, the north - south tributary of the River Soar with the southern boundary defined by another tributary of the River Soar.

The Littlethorpe eastern boundary is generally defined by either the M1 motorway or playing fields and allotments abutting the Parish boundary of North Whetstone Ward (below)

The Ward has good road and pedestrian links with Narborough Railway Station being a central public transport hub sitting between the two settlements. Red Hill and Greystokes Primary Schools serve both Narborough and Littlethorpe as the two closest primary schools within the catchment area.

Substantial employment opportunities are within walking distance with Blaby District Council and Santander Carlton Park.



**18. North Whetstone Ward – 2 Member Ward – 4,221 (2,111) 9.9% var**

**North Whetstone Ward** contains the older and more historic elements of Whetstone reflected in house styles and re-purposing of railway land, brick yards and local shops as residential accommodation. The old Great Central Railway provides a linear separation between open space and flood plane to the west of Whetstone and the built environment to the east which is mainly heavily urbanised in nature.

The eastern boundary is defined by the A426 Blaby bypass and abuts and defines the geographic separation between North Whetstone and the new Blaby Ward (above)

North Whetstone is clearly delineated from South Whetstone by Whetstone Brook with the majority of residential development over the last 30 years arising in South Whetstone, south of Whetstone Brook and Dog & Gun Lane.

The northern boundary is defined by the B582 Enderby Road a main arterial route from south Leicestershire villages to the motorway network and Fosse Park retail park.

Good public transport (buses), road and cycling networks to the higher order retail centre in Leicester City and Fosse Park retail park in neighbouring Enderby Ward are available with good access to education, employment and retail within the settlement.

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### Comment text:

Please find attached considered proposal

### Uploaded Documents:

None Uploaded