



Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation document on the draft recommendations for new ward boundaries across Buckinghamshire.

The Granborough Parish Council has considered the draft recommendations for new ward boundaries across Buckinghamshire and wishes to submit the following comments on the proposals. Granborough Parish Council has deliberately limited its comments primarily to the proposals around the Winslow area and the Granborough Parish area. In addition, it wishes to make several observations on the process and outcome as a whole.


Granborough Parish Council considers that its time as part of the Winslow ward, has been a successful and productive one, and deeply regrets the draft proposal that it should no longer be part of that ward, but rather be included in a large ward centred on Quainton (i.e., the "new" Quainton Ward). Whilst it recognises that the proposed new ward is an amalgamation of rural parishes which are different to Winslow, Granborough Parish Council does not consider that it has as many links with these Parishes, whereas as one of the closest villages to Winslow it has many links with the market town, and decisions made there need to reflect the needs of Granborough residents whenever feasible. Some examples of the links Granborough has are health facilities (doctors, dentist), schools, library, restaurants, and local shopping. Whilst other Parishes in the proposed ward may also make that claim, they are by simply geographic location, nearer to other centres.

Granborough Parish Council therefore believes its residents would be better served by remaining within the Winslow ward.

Granborough Parish Council is concerned that the single Buckinghamshire Council Member representation will adversely impact on communication between that Member and the Parish Council. As a part of the existing Winslow Ward the area is represented by three Members, this has allowed virtually 100% attendance at the Parish Council Meetings by at least one Member where an interchange of information has been possible. Granborough Parish Council is concerned that with eight Parishes in the proposed ward, such links will not be possible for one Member and the valuable Buckinghamshire Council representation at Parish Council meetings, reduced. This would not be the case if Granborough and other Parishes adjacent to Winslow formed a larger Winslow ward and thus multiple member representation.

Granborough Parish Council therefore again believes its residents would be better served by remaining within the Winslow ward.

With the above concerns in mind, Granborough Parish Council fails to understand why this approach has not been used, considering that is exactly what has been done for Buckingham and the surrounding parishes, creating a three Member ward. If the view that Winslow is different from the surrounding Parishes is accepted by the Commission, then the same must hold true that Buckingham is different from its surrounding Parishes, particularly as Buckingham is the second largest settlement in the north of the county after Aylesbury.



Granborough Parish Council is of the view that too much emphasis has been given to keeping the number of Members down to the ninety-eight, which was the figure originally proposed by Buckinghamshire County Council in its Unitary Authority bid. And at the time was used as an area of savings. At the time of the consultation on the bid, Granborough Parish Council was not alone in considering the number too low to allow good liaison and representation with the various Parishes. It is therefore interesting to note that with experience, Buckinghamshire Council indicated they would prefer a figure of 120. However, it would appear that the Commission considers the figure of ninety-eight to be the target. By sticking with this overall figure, it appears unclear how the future growth of tens of thousands of new homes, predominantly in the north, is being accounted for.

Granborough Parish Council is also concerned that the proposed ward structure (at least in the Winslow area) does not relate to the boundaries of the Community Board. Whilst the Granborough Parish Council does not have a suggestion as to how to address this issue, and perhaps it is more one for the Buckinghamshire Council to address, it appears to be something which is a key part of both the Buckinghamshire Council's community involvement strategy, and in securing funding for local projects and in particular Highways related projects, but these appear to have had no weight in how proposed wards are determined.

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