

Response to:

Local Government Boundary Commission

New electoral arrangements for Rushcliffe Council (Draft Recommendations)

October 2021

1. Introduction

We (the undersigned) strongly object to the ward boundaries proposed in the Draft Recommendations for the Soar Valley and Barton in Fabis wards.

It appears that in regard to these wards, the review has been driven by a desk top exercise based on inadequate knowledge of the nature of the area and links between communities.

As a result, although the Draft Recommendations state (para 4) that the commission had three main aims, the focus appears to have been on achieving "*electoral quality*" and does not sufficiently reflect and take account of the "*community identity*".

2. Summary proposal

2.1 Stage 1 proposal

One Councillor ward: Sutton Bonnington, Normanton on Soar, Stanford on Soar
2,150 electors (-12.1% variance from average).

Two Councillor ward: Gotham, Thrumpton, Ratcliffe upon Soar, Kingston upon Soar and Barton in Fabis (including Fairham Pastures development).
4,295 electors (-12.1% variance from average).

2.2 Stage 2 proposal

We note that (para 80) states that "*we cannot recommend changes to external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review*"

However, it would be the intention (by 2027 or earlier) to petition Rushcliffe Borough Council to undertake a **community governance review** to alter the Barton in Fabis parish boundary with the objective of forming a **one councillor ward** for the **Fairham Pastures development** as soon as the electoral size of the Fairham Pastures Development is viable,

As at 2027 Fairham Pastures (excluding Barton in Fabis village) is projected to have 2,051 electors (-16% variance from target)

Barton in Fabis village (excluding Fairham Pastures development) would remain with Gotham, Thrumpton, Ratcliffe upon Soar and Kingston upon Soar as a **one councillor ward**.

As at 2027 this ward would comprise 2,244 electors (-8% variance from average)

3. Rationale and commentary

3.1 Barton in Fabis Ward

Community Identity

The Draft Recommendations (October 2021) will result in Barton in Fabis village being split away from 4 similar village communities that it has had historic links with over centuries (Thrumpton, Gotham, Kingston upon Soar and Ratcliffe upon Soar). These historic ties are reflected in modern day community links (see submitted documents as evidence)

a) Parochial church links (see submitted document '453 Church Magazine' and note listing of 5 parishes)

b) Parish Councils / Parish Meetings representing the 5 communities meet jointly on a regular basis under the Chairmanship of our existing Borough Councillor on issues of mutual interest (see submitted document 'meeting invitation'). An example is the co-ordination of responses to the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan. Other examples are joint submissions on planning issues and the impact of the redevelopment of Ratcliffe upon Soar power station

c) Joint campaigns across subsets of the 5 villages. Example being opposition to the proposed quarry at Barton in Fabis from Barton, Thrumpton and Gotham (see submitted document)

d) Gotham, as the largest community of the 5, provides the only shop, library, pubs and doctor's surgery and therefore the 5 communities listed above have a joint interest in the provision of such services and work together on issues relating to these.

e) Frequent social contact between the communities for social and community events.

Lack of strategic fit between Barton in Fabis village and Fairham Pastures development

The Draft Recommendations would result in Barton in Fabis village being subsumed long term in to a vastly bigger urban extension whose residents and concerns will be very different from those of a rural village. It is also worth noting that whilst Barton in Fabis village is in the Green Belt, the Fairham Pastures development is not which will require the Parish Council to review all planning applications and associated matters in terms of two distinct sets of criteria.

The comments from our current Borough Councillor Rex Walker are noted in the report (paras 36 & 37) regarding the difference between the more suburban character of the Fairham Pastures development and the small rural village of Barton in Fabis (c200 electors). It is highly regrettable that these comments, made on behalf of all of us, have not been acted upon.

Fairham Pastures development

The Fairham Pastures development will in future comprise an electorate considerably in excess of that projected in 2027 and estimated at 7- 8,000. It is important that this area is allowed to have its own representation to reflect the concerns of this growing and more suburban community.

For the above reasons we therefore propose (Stage 1) that Barton in Fabis (including Fairham Pastures development) continues to be linked with Gotham, Thrumpton, Kingston upon Soar and Ratcliffe upon Soar and that (Stage 2), the Fairham Pastures development is separated to form a ward on its own.

3.2 Soar Valley Ward

As is noted in the Draft Recommendations (para 41) the establishment of a Soar Valley ward "*was not proposed to us*". This was for a good reason as the Soar Valley ward as outlined is

an artificial construct based solely on an accident of geography in terms of the existence of the Soar Valley. As already noted above, the parishes of Gotham, Thrumpton, Kingston upon Soar, Ratcliffe upon Soar and Barton in Fabis village share many common community interests which are local to their area. They share fewer community links with villages and communities in the area further south (Sutton Bonnington, Normanton on Soar and Stanford on Soar). These latter communities gravitate more towards East Leake and Loughborough.

For the above reasons we therefore contend that the concept of the Soar Valley ward does not reflect current community identity and propose that Sutton Bonnington, Stanford on Soar and Normanton on Soar should form one ward (similar to current ward arrangements). Gotham, Thrumpton, Kingston upon Soar, Ratcliffe upon Soar and Barton in Fabis should form a separate ward (again similar to current ward arrangements, but as a ‘two councillor’ ward)

10/11/2021

Signed on behalf of:

Sutton Bonnington Parish Council:

Stanford on Soar Parish Council:

Normanton on Soar Parish Council

Gotham Parish Council:

Kingston upon Soar Parish Council:

Ratcliffe upon Soar Parish Meeting:

Thrumpton Parish Meeting:

Barton in Fabis Parish Council:

