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Dear Simon

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS – GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON WARDING PATTERNS

We are pleased to forward Gedling Borough Council's draft proposal for the future warding of the Borough in response to the Commission's Stage One consultation on future warding patterns.

The Council's proposal has been drawn together by a cross-party Steering Group and has all-party support. The Steering Group has reached unanimous agreement on a single proposal covering the whole Borough.

Attached is a tabular report setting out the proposed wards (with working titles); the number of members for each proposed ward; the projected electorate at March 2018 and the variance from electoral equity. The vast majority of proposed wards have an electoral variance of less than +/-5%. The table also includes commentary on community identity and effective and convenient local government in each of the proposed wards. Maps of each ward and of the three main areas of the Borough are also included, in GIS format as requested.

You will see that the proposed model is for a 41 member Council, rather than 40 members as originally proposed and accepted by the Commission. In taking this forward, Council has had cognisance of the Commission's view that a variance of +/- 1 from the 40 member Council would be acceptable, as long as there are good grounds for such a variance.

Our thinking behind this variance is that it allows for a warding pattern that better reflects community identity and effective and convenient local government, in the Borough as a whole and in parished areas in particular. The pattern proposed creates clearly defined wards, which use main roads as boundaries where these define communities (this is particularly so in the Arnold area), while bridging main roads where this better reflects community identity and modern service usage patterns (such as in Mapperley area, where current boundaries reflect an administrative divide between the former Arnold and Carlton UDCs that goes back almost 40 years but which is irrelevant to modern shopping and service use patterns, for example in the Mapperley shopping area).

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These community identity issues are particularly strong in parish areas, most notably in the eastern parishes of Calverton, Woodborough, Lambley, Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph. Here, the proposed warding pattern: -

- Allows for Calverton and areas looking to it to form a single ward with strong community identity;
- Creates a single member ward (Dumbles) for Woodborough and Lambley, villages of very similar socio-economic characteristics and identity and with a shared transport link
- Creates a ward (Trent Valley) bringing together the parishes of Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph with developments along the A612 that share many characteristics with those parishes.

Conversely, options in this part of the Borough for a 40 member Council that meet with the Commission's key requirement for electoral equity would require the bringing together of communities with few community ties and poor or non-existent connectivity, tending against effective and convenient local government. For example, any solution which places Burton Joyce and Lambley in the same ward would bring together two communities which, though geographically close, are separated by a ridge line connected only by a rural footpath – to reach one from the other requires a journey out of the Borough and, as a result, the villages do not share facilities or services.

Please note that we have not been able to look in precise detail at all of the proposed ward boundaries and there may be instances where a proposed boundary runs through a garden or splits a semi-detached house. We are happy to work with you to address any such minor anomalies in due course, should the overall shape of our proposal be supported.

The Steering Group does not have delegated decision making powers - therefore the final decision on the proposal rests with Full Council, which next meets on 12 September. It is our expectation that the proposal set out in this letter and its accompanying documents will be supported. Following the exchange of emails (20 - 27 June 2012) between Stephen Bray, Corporate Director, and Daniel Edwards, in which it was agreed that the Council could make its formal submission immediately after its 12 September meeting as long as a draft submission is made during the formal consultation period, this letter and its accompanying documents represent the Council's draft submission. Mr Bray will email immediately after the Council meeting on 13 September to confirm the formal submission.

We are pleased to be able to submit a proposal with our unanimous support as group leaders, a proposal which in our view delivers the ambition to reduce the size of the Council, while fully fitting with the Commission's criteria for electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government. We would be happy to discuss details with you further as the review progressed but in the meantime commend this proposal to you.

Yours sincerely

W John Clarke
Leader of the Council

Chris Barnfather
Leader of the Conservative Group

Paul Hughes
Leader of the Liberal
Democrat Group