

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (LGBCE)**

**‘A review of the number of councillors, wards and ward names for North East Lincolnshire Council’**

***A consultation response to the Commission from ‘Independents for North East Lincolnshire’ (a group of five independent councillors who sit on North East Lincolnshire Council)***

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## 1. Preamble

This consultation response is made by the five Independent members of North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) who sit as a group 'Independents for North East Lincolnshire'. In formulating this response, we have used our collective experience and strong community ties across the Borough to explore the best options that maintain community cohesion, enhance the necessary bonds between residents and their elected representatives and which take into account long-established community identities and boundaries. We have also taken into account likely increases in population growth and the increasing workload on councillors which will be accelerated as the 'Mayoral Combined County Authority' for Greater Lincolnshire comes into being.

We have encouraged residents in our wards and community groups and leaders to have their say and actively engage in the consultation process.

## 2. Summary

Our proposal to the LGBCE is that the number of councillors be increased from 42 to 43, that the current number of fifteen wards be retained, and that ward boundaries are adjusted as required to remove large discrepancies in resident/councillor ratios.

## 3. Number of Councillors

The current, long-standing number of councillors serving on NELC is 42, which equates to **1 councillor per 2,790 residents**. By 2023, using conservative NELC estimates the population will have grown from 117k people to 123k. The ratio at that time, with the 43 councillors we propose would be **1 councillor per 2,860 residents**.

There are other factors which also need to be considered:

- Local Government Association (LGA) census statistics show that unitary authority councillors work on average, 25+ hours per week on council business and another 5 hours on political affairs. That equates to 0.8 FTE. This is borne out by our own experience as councillors. If the hours required increase still further, it will become increasingly difficult for some sectors of society - working parents for example, to feel able to serve as councillors and give public service.
- It is already difficult to find people with the desirable professional experience and skills to stand for election. The majority of councillors are stating that the workload is increasing, not decreasing. As just one example, it is being mooted within NELC that a councillor in each ward is nominated as a 'Children's Champion'.
- NELC will, in 2025, become a key part of the Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Lincolnshire. That will inevitably lead to increased workload; principally for the Leader and Deputy Leader, who will sit on the governing body, but also for other councillors who will need to take up oversight and minor board roles.

Although NELC has, by a majority decision, proposed maintaining the current number of councillors at 42 (accepted by LGBCE), we would strongly suggest that an increase by one to 43 councillors would have a negligible material impact in terms of cost or council officer support resources and would actually benefit the Borough.

#### **4. Number of Wards**

It is proposed by NELC that the number of wards be reduced from 15 to 14. This has been arrived at simply by dividing the number of councillors (42) by 3, and arriving at 14. This approach has taken an inflexible approach to the number of ward councillors per ward and assumes that it is mandatory that **every ward must have 3 ward councillors.**

We propose that a more flexible approach is taken by LGBCE due to extenuating circumstances, and that two wards, for reasons that will be outlined in the next section, should be given a dispensation to operate with 2 councillors.

A reduction from 15 wards to 14 wards inevitably means that one ward is disbanded, and that there is then a ripple effect on ward boundaries right across the Borough. We suggest that it is the best interest of residents to minimise electoral disruption to 'as low as reasonably practicable'. NEL already has disappointingly low voter turn-out in local elections; anything that might further reduce that needs to be considered very carefully.

Our proposal **maintains the number of wards at 15**, which we feel has been a model proven to work extremely well over many years and provides the right balance in terms of identifiable ward location and boundaries and manageability for councillors and officers alike.

#### **5. Ward Boundaries**

Many options have been considered within NELC as to which ward would be dismantled in order to reduce the number to 14 and how the wards can then be equalised in terms of the ratio of residents/councillor. Although that ratio is important, there are other factors to be considered:

- Some wards have much higher levels of deprivation, crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, poor quality housing etc. This leads to much higher casework loads for councillors i.e., equal numbers of residents doesn't necessarily equal same amount of councillor hours required.
- Some wards may require a much more pro-active approach to others. This may be because of lower literacy rates, more prevalence of English as a second language and lack of confidence in using IT. Councillors in those wards need to maintain a more visible presence and perhaps use more direct communication in the form of newsletters to be properly effective.
- Maintaining an established community might be preferable to breaking it in order to produce perfectly balanced numbers.

In carefully considering ward boundary movements in terms of meeting LGBCE technical guidance and the likely impact on communities and residents, The Independent Group has examined three options:

**5.1 The retention of 15 wards - our proposed option.**

**5.2 The amalgamation of West Marsh and East Marsh Wards - the option proposed by NELC officers.**

**5.3 The removal of Freshney Ward - the option proposed by NELC following a vote taken by councillors at a Full Council Meeting.**

*At the conclusion of each option, we have appraised it against a score card of relevant criteria.*

### **Option 1: Retain 15 wards**

In proposing this option, we have examined in detail exactly where the expected increases in population in NEL are likely to occur, taking into account the current Local Plan and importantly, the very clear intent from Government to rapidly increase house building in order to meet its target of 706 new houses in NEL per annum for the foreseeable future.

The growth in population is projected to come in the villages surrounding Grimsby and Cleethorpes, with a very large number, up to 3,500 being built in what is known as the Grimsby West Urban Extension on a large area of green-field land lying immediately to the West of Freshney and Yarborough Wards. We have considered that wards likely to be impacted by large quantities of house building in, or adjacent to them need to have the capacity to grow, whereas wards in the urban areas are unlikely to see significant change.

This proposal allows for all wards to be in tolerance in terms of resident numbers:

#### **Breakdown by Ward**

##### **Croft Baker - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – **8788 NO CHANGE**

##### **East Marsh - 2 councillors (reduction of 1)**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 7060

EM1 move to Heneage Ward – 1452 (estimate)

**New Total – 5608**

East Marsh has lost a large number of electors due to demolition of tower blocks and other housing. Moving EM1 to Heneage ward would allow East Marsh to drop to two councillors and maintain electoral equality.

##### **Freshney - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 7236

Plus Macauley Park housing Estate +450 (approx.)

**New Total – 7736**

The relatively new Macauley Park Estate currently part of WM4 and adjacent to FR5 would be added in to FR5 to rebalance electoral equality. The main access to this estate is from FR5 and as the estate is quite new, we believe that community ties to the West Marsh will not be well established so this change would have minimal community impact. Freshney would still be outside the +/- 10% variance but the with some significant areas for new housing in the local plan situated around Freshney ward, this will rebalance the electoral numbers over time.

### Haverstoe - 3 councillors

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8004 **NO CHANGE**

Haverstoe is at -9% on electoral equality so consideration can be given to moving parts of HU1 or HU5 into Haverstoe to rebalance this.

### Heneage - 3 councillors

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8663

Minus HE2 to Sydney Sussex Ward – 1346

Plus EM1 from current East Marsh ward – 1452 (estimate)

**New Total – 8769**

This small change along with a similar small change on Sydney Sussex ward balances electoral equality and we do not foresee any significant community impact.

### Humberston - 3 councillors

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 10949

Minus HU5 from current Humberston and New Waltham ward - 1993

**New Total – 8956**

Humberston and New Waltham currently has one of the highest numbers of electoral inequality across the borough at +25% and this needs to be addressed. The submitted North East Lincolnshire council proposal removes HU5 and HU6 from this ward but that takes the electoral inequality to -13%. Our proposal is to only move HU5 into the Waltham ward which with the other changes, gives much better electoral equality and less community impact.

### Immingham - 3 councillors

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9449

Minus IM1 - move to Wolds Ward – 513

Minus IM2 - move to Wolds Ward– 1081

**New Total – 7855**

Immingham is a standalone town. The villages of Habrough (IM1) and Stalingborough (IM2) are separated by some distance from Immingham and also have their own Parish Councils, We feel they belong in the rural Wolds ward which contains most of the rural villages. There are very few community ties between Immingham and these villages. This would put the electoral equality for Immingham at -10.5%, but we feel this would be acceptable given its distinct identity. There are also several areas in and around Immingham allocated to housing in the local plan, which over time will rebalance the electoral equality. If the commission felt that this inequality was too great, then consideration could be given to leaving Habrough in the Immingham ward as this is much more remote village from Grimsby town center than Stallingborough and most children from this village will attend secondary school in Immingham. Also, Habrough does not border any other ward other than Immingham and is some distance from the renamed Wolds and Villages ward. It is also likely to have more

crossover and community ties with Immingham. Children from Stallingborough will mostly go to Healing Secondary school in the current Wolds ward due to its proximity.

**Park - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9273 **NO CHANGE**

**Scartho - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9449 **NO CHANGE**

**South - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8849 **NO CHANGE**

**Sidney Sussex - 3 councillors**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8135

Plus HE2 from current Heneage ward – 1346

**New Total – 8273**

This small change along with a similar small change on Heneage ward balances electoral equality and allows East Marsh Ward to absorb three of the West Marsh ward polling districts. We do not foresee any significant community impact.

**Waltham - 3 councillors (increase of 1)**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 6280

Minus WA1 from the current Waltham ward – 216

Plus HU5 from current Humberston and New Waltham ward – 1993

**New Total – 8057**

As the Waltham ward will be increasing from two to three councillors, it will require additional electors to rebalance the electoral equality. This minor change rebalances electoral equality in both the existing Waltham and Humberston and New Waltham wards, whilst having the least community impact. New Waltham village would now be in two separate wards under this option. The parish council would be retained but split into two parish wards for the purpose of elections to the parish council. It is anticipated that a Community Governance Review would be required.

**West Marsh (2 councillors, no change)**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 5355

Minus Macauley Park housing Estate in WM4 – 350 (approx.)

**New Total – 5608**

West Marsh would be just outside the +/- 10 % figure but there are future housing development plans around the Alexandra dock area.

**Wolds and Villages - 3 councillors (increase of 1)**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 6915

Plus IM1 from current Immingham ward – 513

Plus IM2 from current Immingham ward – 1081

Plus WA1 from current Waltham ward – 216

**New Total – 8725**

The Wolds ward will be increasing from two to three councillors, it will require additional electors to rebalance the electoral equality. We propose to add Habrough (IM1), Stallingborough (IM2) and Ashby Cum Fenby (WA1) into the new Wolds and Villages ward. These three polling districts are all villages with their own Parish councils and distinct identity, with considerable separation distances from other areas of their current wards, so we see little impact to those communities by this change and feel that the distinct villages outside the main urban area belong in the rural Wolds ward. Although the Wolds ward will cover an even greater geographical area, most of the villages in this ward also have Parish or Village councils. This additional layer of local government will aid the work of ward councillors in providing effective and convenient local government.

**Yarborough**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8583 - **NO CHANGE**

The final elector numbers per ward based on the 2030 electoral forecast can be seen below.

Name of ward	Number of Cllrs per ward	Electorate 2030	Variance 2030
Croft Baker	3	8,788	2.4%
East Marsh	2	5,608	-2.0%
Freshney	3	7,586	-11.6%
Haverstoe	3	8,004	-6.7%
Heneage	3	8,769	2.2%
Humberston and New Waltham	3	8,956	4.4%
Immingham	3	7,855	-8.5%
Park	3	9,273	8.1%
Scartho	3	9,449	10.1%
Sidney Sussex	3	9,481	10.5%
South	3	8,849	3.1%
Waltham	3	8,057	-6.1%
West Marsh	2	5,005	-12.5%
Wolds and Villages	3	8,725	1.7%
Yarborough	3	8,583	0.0%

**Summary of Option 1:**

Criteria	1: Retain 15
Equitable ratio of residents to Councillors	✓
Creates capacity for Councillors to do their jobs	✓
Reflects Community ties	✓
Builds stronger communities	✓
Does not disrupt current plans	✓
Drives prosperity	✓
Scales local good work	✓
Enables access to amenities	✓
Follows flow of residents to public services like schools	✓
Contributes to our green agenda	✓
Connects community groups and resources	✓
Clearly identifiable ward boundaries	✓
Transport links across the ward	✓

We believe that this proposal best meets the desirable criteria we have applied, which is also aligned with the technical guidance of LG BCE Boundary Commission.

**Option 2: Amalgamate West Marsh and East Marsh Wards**

This option was initially proposed by NELC Officers but unanimously rejected by councillors who sat on the NELC 'Boundary Review Working Group'. The two smallest wards, the East and West Marsh would largely merge as WM1/2/3 become part of a combined ward with East Marsh ward, plus some changes. This option would also have the following impact:

- Area WM4 would transfer to the immediately adjacent Freshney Ward, moving 1170 people. The entrance road to the new Macauley Park estate is in FR5 and it is currently separated from other housing in WM4.
- Area EM1 transfers to Heneage Ward with whom the 1500 residents have strong ties. Area HE2 would transfer 1300 residents to Sidney Sussex, again reflecting community ties and shared use of amenities.

There are pros and cons to the effective creation of a new 'Marsh' or 'Town' ward. The pros include:

- Opportunities for combined community regeneration centred around Grimsby Town Centre including the new Horizon 'Youth Zone' complex.
- Establishment of community group synergies across the new ward.
- An opportunity for 'rebranding' which would reduce the (sometimes unfair) negative connotation associated with the labels 'East Marsh' and 'West Marsh' with the creation of a new 'Town Ward' perhaps.
- Similarities in the challenges facing both existing wards which would allow a greater focus of resources.

- More scope for focused regeneration as the newly formed 'Mayoral Combined County Authority' gains more powers and autonomy.

The cons include:

- A reduction in the number of councillors representing deprived wards, giving a reduced voice in the Town Hall.
- Having statistically, a ward with some of the highest unwelcome indicators in the country with respect to crime numbers etc which may increase stigma for residents.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the long history of the two areas having distinct identities and the wishes of residents and community groups from both wards would need to be appraised.

### **Breakdown by Ward (all 3 councillors)**

#### **Croft Baker**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8788 **NO CHANGE**

#### **Name TBA (E & W Marsh)**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary - 7060

Minus polling district EM1 from current East Marsh ward 1452

Plus polling district WM1 from current West Marsh ward – 1892

Plus polling district WM2 from current West Marsh ward – 1388

Plus polling district WM3 from current West Marsh ward – 736

**New Total – 9624**

The new Marshes ward would absorb WM1, WM2, WM3 and lose EM1 to rebalance electoral equality. Whilst East and West Marsh do have a strong community identity and consultation with those communities would be needed. As well as housing, WM1, WM2 and WM3 contains the main shopping, banking, retail and entertainment areas for Grimsby, so there will already be a crossover of the communities. The commercial port area is already contained within the two wards. There are also various schemes underway to regenerate the town center and surrounding area.

#### **Freshney**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 7236

Plus Macauley Park housing Estate - 450 (approx.)

**New Total – 7686**

Due to Freshney's clearly identifiable boundaries that separate it from adjacent wards there are no easy solutions to balance electoral equality today. The relatively new Macauley Park Estate currently part of WM4 and adjacent to FR5 would be added in to FR5 to rebalance electoral equality. The access to this estate is from FR5 and as this estate is quite new. Freshney would still be outside the +/- 10% variance but the with some significant areas for

new housing in the local plan situated around Freshney ward, this will rebalance the electoral numbers over time.

### **Haverstoe**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8004 **NO CHANGE**

Haverstoe is at -9% on electoral equality so consideration could be given to moving parts of HU1 or HU5 into Haverstoe to rebalance this.

### **Heneage**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8663

Minus HE2 from current Heneage ward – 1346

Plus EM1 from current East Marsh ward – 1452 (estimate)

**New Total – 8769**

This small change along with a similar small change on Sydney Sussex ward balances electoral equality and allows East Marsh Ward to absorb three of the West Marsh ward polling districts. Significant community impact is not foreseen.

### **Humberston**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 10949

Minus HU5 from current Humberston and New Waltham ward - 1993

**New Total – 8956**

Humberston and New Waltham currently has one of the highest numbers of electoral inequality across the borough at +25% and this needs to be addressed. The submitted North East Lincolnshire council proposal removes HU5 and HU6 from this ward but that takes the electoral inequality to -13%. Our proposal is to only move HU5 into the Waltham ward which with the other changes, gives much better electoral equality and less community impact.

### **Immingham**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9449

Minus IM1 from current Immingham ward – 513

Minus IM2 from current Immingham ward – 1081

**New Total – 7855**

Immingham is a standalone town. The villages of Habrough (IM1) and Stallingborough (IM2) are separated by some distance from Immingham and also have their own Parish Councils, We feel they belong in the rural Wolds ward which contains most of the rural villages. There are very few community ties between Immingham and these villages. This would put the electoral equality for Immingham at -10.5%, but we feel this would be acceptable given its distinct identity. There are also several areas in and around Immingham allocated to housing in the local plan, which over time will rebalance the electoral equality. If the commission felt that this inequality was too great, then consideration could be given to leaving Habrough in the Immingham ward as this is much more remote village from Grimsby town centre than

Stallingborough and also does not border and is some distance from the renamed Wolds and Villages ward. It is also likely to have more crossover and community ties with Immingham.

### **Park**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9273 **NO CHANGE**

### **Scartho**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 9449 **NO CHANGE**

### **South**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8849 **NO CHANGE**

### **Sidney Sussex**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8135

Plus HE2 from current Heneage ward – 1346

### **New Total – 9481**

This small change along with a similar small change on Heneage ward balances electoral equality and allows East Marsh Ward to absorb three of the West Marsh ward polling districts. We do not foresee any significant community impact.

### **Waltham**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 6280

Minus WA1 from the current Waltham ward – 216

Plus HU5 from current Humberston and New Waltham ward – 1993

### **New Total – 8057**

As the Waltham ward will be increasing from two to three councillors, it will require additional electors to rebalance the electoral equality. This minor change rebalances electoral equality in both the existing Waltham and Humberston and New Waltham wards, whilst having the least community impact. New Waltham village would now be in two separate wards under this option. The parish council would be retained but split into two parish wards for the purpose of elections to the parish council. It is anticipated that a Community Governance Review would be required.

### **Wolds and Villages**

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 6915

Plus IM1 from current Immingham ward – 513

Plus IM2 from current Immingham ward – 1081

Plus WA1 from current Waltham ward – 216

### **New Total – 8725**

As the Wolds ward will be increasing from two to three councillors, it will require additional electors to rebalance the electoral equality. We propose to add Habrough (IM1), Stallingborough (IM2) and Ashby Cum Fenby (WA1) into the new Wolds and Villages ward. These three polling districts are all villages with their own Parish councils and distinct identity, with considerable separation distances from other areas of their current wards, so we see little impact to those communities by this change and feel that the distinct villages outside the main urban area belong in the rural Wolds ward. Although the Wolds ward will cover an even greater geographical area, most of the villages in this ward also have Parish or Village councils. This additional layer of local government will aid the work of ward councillors in providing effective and convenient local government.

### Yarborough

Estimated 2030 electorate based on current boundary – 8583

Plus WM4 from current West Marsh ward – 1339

Minus Macauley park – 350 (approx.)

### **New Total – 9422**

With the new Marshes ward, Yarborough would absorb WM4 except that Macauley Park housing estate would be moved out of WM4 and moved to FR5 for reasons outlined above . There are good examples where the community ties between YA1 and WM4 polling districts already exist:

- The shopping area and supermarket that sit either side of Cromwell road, border the West Marsh ward and are used extensively by residents of both current wards.
- The Cromwell Social club which also sits on the border of the two wards is frequented by residents of both wards.

The final elector numbers per ward based on the 2030 electoral forecast can be seen below.

Name of ward	Number of Cllrs per ward	Electorate 2030	Variance 2030
Croft Baker	3	8,788	0.0%
Marshes	3	8,888	9.5%
Freshney	3	8,893	-12.6%
Haverstoe	3	8,004	-9.0%
Heneage	3	8,769	-0.3%
Humberston and New Waltham	3	8,956	1.9%
Immingham	3	7,855	-10.7%
Park	3	9,273	5.5%
Scartho	3	9,449	7.5%
Sidney Sussex	3	9,481	7.8%
South	3	8,849	0.6%
Waltham	3	8,057	-8.4%
Wolds and Villages	3	8,725	-0.8%
Yarborough	3	9,001	8.9%

**Summary of Option 2:**

Criteria	
Equitable ratio of residents to Councillors	✓
Creates capacity for Councillors to do their jobs	X
Reflects Community ties	✓
Builds stronger communities	✓
Does not disrupt current plans	✓
Drives prosperity	✓
Scales local good work	✓
Enables access to amenities	X
Follows flow of residents to public services like schools	X
Contributes to our green agenda	✓
Connects community groups and resources	✓
Clearly identifiable ward boundaries	✓
Transport links across the ward	X

In summary, there are some strengths in this proposal but it does not fully meet the criteria we applied, aligned with that of the Ward Boundary Commission.

**Option 3: Dismantle Freshney Ward (The NELC proposal)**

It is fair to say that the majority decision taken by NELC councillors to propose that the Freshney Ward be the one to be removed in 2026 is contentious. All three councillors in the ward are part of the Independent Group and as such, we feel able to comment on this proposal with a good degree of authority.

The Freshney ward is separated from other wards by natural, easily identifiable boundaries. The Eastern boundary is the Freshney river and its surrounding green spaces; to the South and West is open countryside and to the North lies the Humber Estuary. These boundaries and separation distance to other wards make the Freshney ward unique to all other urban wards in the Borough.

**Community**

- There are very strong community ties across the ward. The 'Freshney Forward' community group has been in existence for 18 years. It meets monthly with alternate meetings in either the Wybers Estate or the Willows Estate. This community group, which has representatives from across the ward is extremely active, putting on large community events throughout the year and also supporting various smaller activities.
- The Wood Park community group are also very active within the ward and established and maintain a children's play park which is used by children right across the ward.
- There is one distinct place of worship within the ward in St Nicholas Church (FR3) which serves the whole ward and many members of the community have been married there and have children christened there.
- There are two distinct shopping precincts, one on the Willows (FR4) and one on Wybers Wood (FR1), which service the wards two main housing populations, with Great Coates being in the middle and within easy reach of either.

- There are also two community focused pubs in the ward, one at each shopping precinct, which bring the community together and are frequented by residents from across the ward.
- There are two community centres in the ward in Great Coates Village Hall and the Bishop Edward King Centre on The Willows. These act as community hubs for the ward, and are the centres for many community events. There is no community centre in FR 1 and 2 - community centres in FR3 and FR4 are used.
- Great Coates Woman's Institute, one of the UK's oldest, has members from across the ward and has at different times met in the Bishop Edward King Centre on the Willows Estate and Great Coates reading rooms and Great Coates village hall and it is involved in various community events.
- The 'Great Coates in Bloom' group, which is nationally renowned, has helped create community cohesion across the ward.
- The ward has evidenced its community spirit and links when it came out in favour of saving the nursery in the village that was threatened with closure in 2023. Over 150 residents from across the ward came to an open meeting at Great Coates Village Hall.

### **Schooling**

- The ward has one nursery school and three primary schools which then feed into the one secondary school that the majority of Freshney ward children attend. This further enhances the sense of community. Great Coates Primary School is actually situated on the Willows estate and is a short walk from Great Coates through the adjoining path.

### **Transport**

- The 5 & 6 bus routes also link the ward together with regular services between The Willows and Wybers Wood and accessible from Great Coates through the same adjoining footpath. Great Coates also has a railway station with regular services to Grimsby Town and Cleethorpes. This is very accessible to residents of The Willows and is a short walk along the adjoining footpath.
- Safe walking and cycling criteria around the ward – Wybers Wood and the Willows are separated only by one road with a pelican crossing.
- Great Coates is home to an industrial estate where many locals from all 3 areas choose to work due to being in their home ward.

### **Other**

- There is also a war memorial on the wall of Great Coates nursery school which has an annual remembrance ceremony, and is attended by residents from right across the ward which further binds the community together.
- The ward, along with the Yarborough Ward and Wolds ward are likely to be impacted by the Grimsby West Development which plans to deliver 3,500 homes over 20 years. These homes will need to be absorbed into an existing ward until significant enough for its own ward.
- The ward is place where generations of family stay. Children often purchase houses here because their parents still live here and they attended school here. This enhances the community links and strength.

### Previous Ward Review

In the last boundary review in 2001, it was proposed that Great Coates should move into the Wolds ward, and include electors in Freshney ward from Marsh or Yarborough wards. This was rejected by the boundary commission who stated:

*“When formulating our draft recommendations we looked carefully at the proposals to include the village of Great Coates in a rural Wold Parishes ward and the arguments that Great Coates has a strong community identity of its own. However, having visited the area, we considered that the electors of Great Coates have stronger community links with the electors of Freshney ward than they do with electors in the parishes of Wold Parishes ward, from whom they are separated by a considerable geographical distance. We also considered the subsequent need to include in Freshney ward electors from Marsh or Yarborough wards, if Great Coates village no longer formed part of Freshney ward and concluded that the electors of Freshney ward have stronger community links with the electors of Great Coates than they do with electors of Marsh ward or Yarborough ward”.*

In the twenty-three years since that review, those community links have significantly strengthened.

### Community Feedback:

We have had replies from around 200 residents of the ward as part of our community engagement prior to responding to this proposal. We have also consulted with Great Coates Parish Council, Great Coates Village Nursery, John Whitgift Secondary, Great Coates Primary, Willows Primary, Brownies, Great Coates WI, other NELC councillors, ex councillors, ex residents, etc and the local MP. Without exception, they dispute that the dismantling of this ward is in line with the best interests of residents or your criteria. We have encouraged them to submit their own responses but below are some quotes from feedback we have received:

*“I lived on the Willows all my childhood/teenage years with friends across willows, wybers and great coates. They are and always will be one area. I now live in Great Coates and proud of our linked heritage”* **Great Coates resident**

*“Children from Great Coates can walk to either Wybers or Willows schools”* **Great Coates resident**

*“The Willows is massively owner occupied now”* **Willows resident**

*“You can walk down a cutting from Great Coates to the Willows and Wybers across the road. Furthermore the Church is where the residents of Wybers get married. When I lived on Wybers my boys went to Great Coates nursery”* **Wybers Wood resident**

*“I am saddened and angered by this, he (Council Leader) clearly has no idea of the connections between the 3 areas, how close they are geographically, it beggars' belief”* **Wybers Wood resident**

*“This would undermine the interest of voters in the Freshney Ward by reducing the percentages of those directly affected by local issues”* **Willows resident**

*I have lived in this ward all of my married life & our beautiful village of Great Coates and Wybers Wood have played a huge part in bringing a great community together. Not only the churches over the years but our schools and community involvement”* **ex Labour Freshney Ward Councillor.**

## **Breakdown by Ward**

### **As per NELC Consultation response proposal**

#### Summary

Criteria	Option 3- Freshney Ward
Equitable ratio of residents to Councillors	X
Creates capacity for Councillors to do their jobs	X
Reflects Community ties	X
Builds stronger communities	X
Does not disrupt current plans	X
Drives prosperity	X
Scales local good work	X
Enables access to amenities	X
Follows flow of residents to public services like schools	X
Contributes to our green agenda	X
Connects community groups and resources	X
Clearly identifiable ward boundaries	X
Transport links across the ward	X

It is clear that on appraisal, this option does not meet the criteria we have applied. We do not consider that the NELC proposal aligns with the technical guidance of the LGBCE .

## 6. Conclusion:

We understand that looking to make any changes, does not come without impact. Our favoured option of retaining 15 wards seeks to minimise this whilst balancing all of the other criteria the Ward Boundary Commission set.

The table below again, summarises all three options and how they are assessed against the key elements of the Ward Boundary Criteria.

Criteria	Option1: Retain 15 Wards	Option 2: Amalgamate E & W Marsh Wards	Option 3- Lose Freshney Ward
Equitable ratio of residents to Councillors	✓	✓	X
Creates capacity for Councillors to do their jobs	✓	X	X
Reflects Community ties	✓	✓	X
Builds stronger communities	✓	✓	X
Does not disrupt current plans	✓	✓	X
Drives prosperity	✓	✓	X
Scales local good work	✓	✓	X
Enables access to amenities	✓	X	X
Follows flow of residents to public services like schools	✓	X	X
Contributes to our green agenda	✓	✓	X
Connects community groups and resources	✓	✓	X
Clearly identifiable ward boundaries	✓	✓	X
Transport links across the ward	✓	X	X

We believe that the decision to reduce to 14 wards, retain 42 councillors and then separately look at how we can make the pattern of wards fit this decision, has given a poor outcome. The two decisions should have been looked at in tandem so analysis could be performed, to give the best outcome for the electors of North East Lincolnshire.

We have consulted with the great Coates Parish Council, community groups, school heads and individuals within the Freshney ward to gauge their feelings and these views have shaped our submission. As councillors, we have strong links within our ward and have also made efforts to seek the views from those in other wards. We have encouraged Freshney ward, and residents of other wards to take part in the boundary commission consultation to ensure that their voices are heard.

# North East Lincolnshire

## Personal Details:

**Name:** Mr Steve Holland

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Postcode:** [REDACTED]

**Organisation Name:** Independents for North East Lincolnshire (District or county councillor)

## Comment text:

**Related subject:** North East Lincolnshire

Please find attached a consultation response made on behalf of 'Independents for North East Lincolnshire'; a group of 5 councillors who sit on North East Lincolnshire Council.

## Attached Documents:

- submission-to-lgbce.pdf

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**From:** Lyndsey Downes <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 26 November 2024 16:14  
**To:** reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>  
**Cc:** reviews <reviews@lgbce.org.uk>  
**Subject:** Re: Query regarding NELC

Hi thanks for that.

I do wish to now add a further note to the submission, attached, which I was part of.

The housing growth numbers cited by NEL were most certainly inaccurate and did not support the idea of additional wards or councillors but I wish to argue against that more strongly now as I understand the reply below.

I have attached a leaflet which was received by local residents only this and last week from the intended developer for the Grimsby West Strategic site. They included a website you may wish to peruse. <https://www.grimsbywest.co.uk/>

This is a development for 3500 homes to be built on the west side of Grimsby and is an allocation in the current Local Plan.

Within the body text of the attached flyer it states that when reviewing the Local Plan (now massively overdue!)

"The Council have identified a preference for an Option that includes maintaining Grimsby West as a Strategic Allocation, as these proposals will provide a major contribution to new housing and infrastructure in Grimsby."

The LA have already publicly supported this planned housing growth and yet their ward boundary submission completely overlooks it and underestimates the planned growth needed to swallow up a development of this size in addition to new and current land allocations within its plan.

The houses at Grimsby West will be built over a long period of time, that is a given. The developer has stated they will go for outline planning for all 3,500 "early in 2025"

If we are to believe that this will be 3500 homes over even 25 years, that's a build rate on average of 140 a year, an additional 840 in the next 6 years as a very low estimate.

These homes are being built on the periphery of the Wolds and Freshney and Yarborough Wards. These wards will, as they are on the edge of town, expect to see the most growth in the next 6 years within NEL, therefore any tolerance of -10% will soon be absorbed.

If we believe the HEDNA that our population growth will be minimal then we expect to see wards in the centre of town further decrease in number at the expense of wards on the west of town. This council can not have its cake and eat it. If the centre of town needs to deplete yet further to allow new homes to be built (owing to demand) then they should address that in their submission and local plan preferred option.

However, NELC have shared a narrative in their local plan review of growth. Long but important to read, here is and NELC press release on its housing target growth:

***The draft review sets out forecasts from national data experts Experian, which outlines at least 2,600 new jobs could be created in the borough by 2042. However, this does not include additional jobs, which could come from future growth within the renewables sector, and importantly, opportunities that the Humber Freeport could bring.***

***The Government's Freeports programme aims to attract investment on sites where normal tax and customs rules do not apply, and brings opportunities for growth, investment, and innovation within the wider Freeport boundary. The Humber now has this status, which is centred around its four port locations of Hull, Goole, Immingham, and Grimsby. It is predicted that this could mean up to £650m of investment injected into the region, providing a catalyst for jobs growth.***

***Taking the above and other opportunities into account, industry leaders predict another 1,960 jobs could be created by 2042, in the following areas:***

- ***Humber Zero (Part of the zero carbon Humber vision involving hydrogen production) +200 jobs (excluding 2,500 minimum 3-year construction jobs);***
- ***Humber H2ub (Part of the zero carbon Humber vision involving hydrogen production) +150 jobs;***
- ***Gigastack (Part of the zero carbon Humber vision involving wind energy/hydrogen production) +180 jobs;***
- ***Immingham Green energy terminal (Hydrogen production) +1,000 jobs;***

- *RWE Grimsby Wind Farm Hub (operations and maintenance) +60 jobs;*
- *Orsted Wind Energy +250 jobs;*
- *Hornsea Wind Energy +120 jobs.*

*The draft review recommendation is for 415 new homes to be built annually using the lower Experian figure of 2,600. It adds however that, in setting that as a requirement, some flexibility will be required to bring forward further sites if that jobs figure is surpassed looking forward to 2042.*

*Cllr Swinburn added: "This council wants people who work in our borough to also live here as this will maximise the economic benefits to the area.*

*"However, we realise that economic development not just here, but country-wide, can be influenced by various factors that directly impact jobs growth, either positively or negatively. When looking at the housing targets, this has been considered.*

*"Of course, we realise that for people to enjoy living and working in North East Lincolnshire it is not just good homes that we need. We also need to continue our journey of regeneration, and that is what we are doing with the work currently taking place within Grimsby Town Centre, and in Cleethorpes. We must not be afraid to look at how we can move this area forward, and do all we can to maximise the opportunities that we have now and in the future."*

*An expert's view: Dr Jingxia Wang, is a lecturer in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the University of Sheffield.*

*She says: "The link between jobs and homes in a Local Plan is one of the most important elements. It is the recipe for a good quality of life for local people.*

*"Public consultations give policymakers at all levels the chance to dig down so that they can understand the challenges faced by local residents, such as the relationship between where they live, where their children go to school and how far away they work. It is an opportunity for people to announce their needs and for planners to hear them. There will always have to be compromises, but the public viewpoint is important to the look and feel of a region to provide the best quality of life for residents."*

If we believe the councils optimistic growth model within the HEDNA (growth model, with a proposal over 400+ homes a year- Experian plus) then we have more than enough evidence that sustain the number of wards and increasing some ward of 2 councillors to 3 being a convincing case. I am unsure as to why one council strategy is pushing growth, to suit one agenda, whilst another is not, to suit it reducing the number of councillors. It is important to establish the truth. Whilst not all housing is

direct net gain, no local authority in its right mind would pursue any further hollowing out of its town centre and add to its empty homes issue.

Furthermore, NEL Housing target has been increased to more than 700 by the new labour government and so there is yet more weight to the argument that the number of wards needs to be maintained. using the new proposed method, we would be impacted as below:

North East Lincolnshire  
Yorkshire and The Humber  
Current- 190  
Labour  
proposed- 706    increase-  
272%

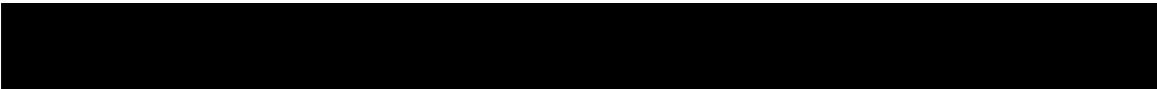
The argument becomes yet more compelling to retain or even increase to more than 15 wards, and increase the number of councillors. Over 80% of the 5 year housing supply can be determined to be delivered by the Grimsby West Development and so if we are to look at the more generous impact of that on the surrounding wards, even 30% of the 706 annual houses = 211 homes per annum. x 6 years this is 1270 new homes- 2 additional councillors. To keep parity with the resident to councillor ratio we will actually need to increase to upwards of 46 elected members. Our proposal is 43 but there really is strong evidence that even that is not enough and I am sure as part of the review you will interrogate the data presented.

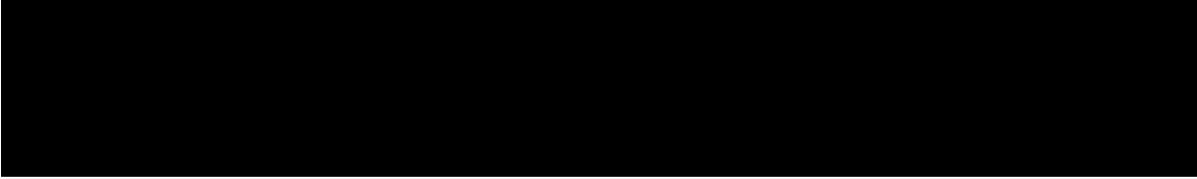
Noting the location of these homes gives rise to the argument that removing the Freshney Ward makes no sense at all and reducing the number of wards equally, no sense. The 2024 electoral numbers published - 117,712 with an estimated increase to 122,988 (less than 5% growth) does not equate with a 272% increase in the number of houses we build. Add to this we have over 2000 empty homes. over 6000 homes with planning permission not yet built and there really is a compelling argument to increase the numbers of elected members. Any decision not to will quickly become outdated as the London based parliament seeks to shift growth up north.

When Grimsby West community starts to develop it is reasonable to expect until it can form a ward of its own, (or 2!) these homes will be absorbed into the wards it is built alongside and so retaining those wards becomes critical for future proofing this decision. I hope you will take the views of residents on this matter seriously as there is a high level of disillusion around this matter,

Lyndsey Downes

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