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Review Officer (Nottinghamshire)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
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ELECTORAL REVIEW OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS CODDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL – 2nd SUBMISSION

References:

- A. Draft Recommendations on Electoral Arrangements dated June 2015.
- B. Coddington Parish Council Submission dated 16 January 2015. (Attached)
- C. Draft Recommendations on Electoral Arrangements (NSDC) dated 15 October 2013.
- D. New Electoral Arrangements - Newark and Sherwood District Council dated March 2014.
- E. LGCBE: Electoral reviews: Technical guidance dated April 2014.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGCBE) has invited comment on its draft recommendations (Reference A) for the new electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire County Council (Notts CC). In its first submission, Reference B (attached), Coddington Parish Council (CPC) supported Notts CC's initial proposal that Coddington should remain part of the Collingham division. Reference A proposes that Coddington should be transferred to the Newark East division.

2. When preparing Reference B, CPC also had in mind the discussion surrounding the LGCBE's recent review of the electoral arrangements for Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC), where we had sought, unsuccessfully, to be included in the Beacon Ward, west of the A1. Particularly, we had in mind your comment in Reference C, para 42, concerning the defaced Beacon Ward/Coddington boundary "*However, we consider in this case that the A1 presents a strong barrier and reflects the community in this part of the district*". We had also noted your observation in Reference D, para 45, dismissing, without detailed explanation, CPC's arguments for linkage with Beacon Ward "*While we have considered the alternative suggestions made, we consider that persuasive evidence has not been received to modify our draft recommendations in this part of the district*". CPC is therefore extremely disappointed with your proposal to place Coddington in the Newark East division and tied, therefore, to the Beacon ward, contradicting your previous review.

3. At a district/ward level CPC still believes firmly in the strength of our thriving community links with the Beacon (Newark East) community. However at county/division level, as we stated at para 3 of Reference B, Coddington's interests are different in detail (sand and gravel extraction, highways/traffic, and rural policing) and have specific direct relevance to the Collingham division, not to Newark East. This variance is a matter of fact: a continuing functional process and not a mere rural-versus-urban argument. We shall discuss this further below, but without repeating the detail already contained in Reference B; we have, however, now added a supporting map (Attachment 2). We shall also cover other continuing concerns, and offer an alternative proposal for the Newark East and Collingham divisions.

ELECTORAL EQUALITY

4. Reference A (p.36, Table A1) shows reasonable electoral equality across Newark and Sherwood District but the notes at p.23 (Collingham) state clearly that Coddington (and Barnby-in-the-Willows) have been transferred to Newark East to secure that equality whilst satisfying the criteria for road links in the Farnon & Trent division. The NSDC results also show a very high degree of coterminosity. We understand the extra difficulties that the LGBCE meets in achieving electoral equality and their other aims above. In the case of Coddington, however, we strongly suggest that the LGBCE has not gone far enough beyond those core criteria and has not taken advantage of the flexibility offered in para 4.54 of Reference E to better reflect the county-level priorities of Coddington. We shall discuss this further at paras 6 and 7.

COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND IDENTITY

5. In Reference B, para 3, CPC addressed the details of Coddington's principal concerns dealt with at county/division level through our county councillor. Specifically, Newark East has no involvement in gravel extraction, whilst its own pressing traffic issues have no direct relation to those of Coddington and, by extrapolation, those of the Collingham division. We have the following further comments on areas of common interest:

a. **Safer Neighbourhood Group.** Minutes show that the nature of concerns and issues are rural theft (tractor, horses and equipment theft), speeding through villages and lorries ignoring the weight restrictions. The PCSOs for Winthorpe, Barnby and Coddington attend with police input, which is very supportive for these neighbouring communities. Such a grouping does not exist in Newark East.

b. **Public Rights of Way/Footpaths.** Since submitting Reference B, this subject area, also, has jointly concerned CPC, our divisional councillor and Notts CC's Countryside Access officers. Newark East has few such issues, whilst our councillor has a significant commitment division-wide, with the consequent experience and contacts at desk-level in Notts CC. Ironically, CPC's current footpath and rights of way projects will also, in due course, involve neighbouring parishes remaining in the Collingham division under Reference A. Moreover, there would be substantial rights of way considerations, involving both Langford parish and the divisional councillor, with the development of local sand and gravel quarrying.

c. **NSDC – Newark Showground Policy Area (NSPA).** This development area is identified by the NSDC Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD). Attachment 2 shows the NSPA, which involves Coddington, Winthorpe and Langford. The DPD states "*The District Council will work with the **County Council**, the **Highways Agency**, **Parish Councils** and the various landowners to prepare a Master Plan for the whole policy area to secure appropriate enhancement and development of the site.*"(<http://www.newarksherwooddc.gov.uk/planning/localdevelopmentframeworkldf/>).

Returning to our highways/traffic concerns, the document also highlights the need to address access restraints relating to the A1/A46/A17 junctions.

EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6. We are not persuaded that the current proposals will provide the most effective local government for Coddington. The first concern lies in the divergent interests at county level between Coddington and the remainder of Newark East, whilst we also have reservations related to boundary matters:

a. Publication of Reference A has enabled CPC to establish its relative position within Newark East. Given a 2020 electorate of 1211 (source: NSDC July 2015) Coddington will represent just 12.6% of the division's electoral strength. There is a strong likelihood that Coddington's own divergent interests would suffer from loss of representation, just by the balance of work and prioritisation of major interests, being such a small element of the division. Moreover, the scope for duplication of divisional councillors' efforts with Collingham division, arising from Coddington's key common areas, would be wasteful, potentially divisive, and an inefficient representative tool. Given the pressures on our councillors this is not effective local government. The status quo provides greater coherence at the divisional level, benefitting Notts CC as a whole. The announcement this month that Highways England is developing a scheme to improve local major road intersections further illustrates the pressing need to retain the Collingham division's current capability for a cohesive approach to traffic issues, as well as to the significant, and related, potential sand and gravel extraction scheme, and to the NSPA .

b. Reference A (page 25, Newark East comments) refers to "...identifiable boundaries." This is not so, in Coddington, where Attachment 2 illustrates the area of the KNOWHOW depot complex, which is already a defaced boundary, and the indistinguishable line with Collingham division, to the west of the A1. Furthermore, gravel extraction would lead to a substantial defacing of the boundary between Coddington and Langford parishes. Moreover, Attachment 2 also demonstrates the NSPA crossing, and potentially defacing, the proposed divisional boundary.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

7. Having studied the related published maps we show, in Attachment 3, how we believe that there is flexibility, vide Reference E (para 4.54), to vary the Newark East divisional boundaries to better reflect Coddington's divergent county-level interests. In the north-west corner, a small rectangular salient protrudes into the division from the Bridge ward (Collingham division). This salient has been identifiable as Polling District BC (<http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/voting/pollingplaces/>) since 1 May 2015, and the implementation of ward changes from the last review; predicted 2020 population of BC is 990 (source: NSDC July 2015). Further, this small area does not have any peculiar socio-economic features to distinguish it from neighbouring areas west of the railway line. Transferring BC to Newark East would reverse the salient whilst reducing the division boundary to 2 more identifiable sides of a triangular area – Appletongate, on the west side, and the main east-coast railway line. Further to the east, the current potentially weak divisional boundary between Coddington and Winthorpe/Langford, would be restored to the *strong barrier* (Reference C: *op.cit.para 2 above*) of the A1. The numerical impact on electoral equality would be minimal and self-balancing overall: Collingham's variance would reduce from – 4% to -1%, while that of Newark East would increase from -1% to -3% (rounded).

CONCLUSION

8. CPC acknowledges the LGBCE's proposals for the Newark East division on electoral equality, coterminosity, and achieving transport links in neighbouring Farndon & Trent division. However, the nature of CPC's county-level interests separates them from those of the rest of the Newark East division. There remains a substantial symmetry with the Collingham division both in terms of effective governance and its internal major divisional issues, and in furtherance of NSDC's statutory planning objectives. We therefore submit that polling district BC (Collingham/Bridge) be included in Newark East, and Coddington be returned to the Collingham division. The principal objectives of the LGBCE in this part of NSDC will not be compromised. The strength of divisional boundaries will be improved and Coddington's interests will be more balanced, with holistic representation.

Yvette Wellard
Clerk to Coddington Parish Council

Attachments:

1. Coddington Parish Council Submission dated 16 January 2015.
2. Map: Major Roads, Quarry, NSP Area and KNOWHOW Depot crossing Divisional Boundaries.
3. Map: Amendments to Proposed Divisional Boundary Changes.

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGCB) has invited comment on the drawing of division patterns for 67 councillors for Nottinghamshire County Council in the future. Coddington Parish Council (CPC) is a ward within the Collingham division; CPC believes that the parish should remain within that division.

2. **Electoral Equality.** We submit that the Collingham division, including ourselves, is, in large part, predominantly rural. If adjustments are necessary for equality then these should affect the western, urban, parts of the division.

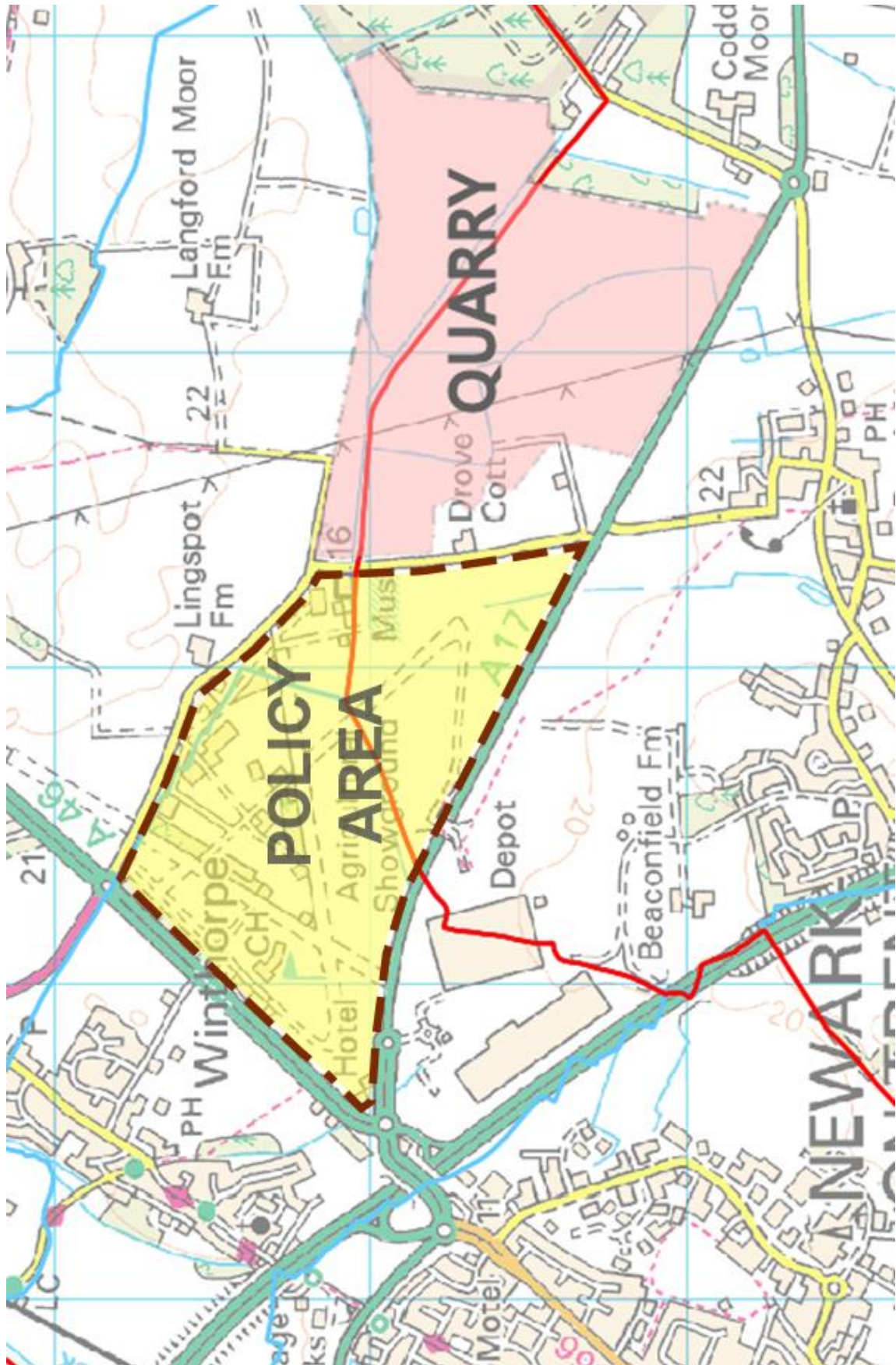
3. **Community Interests and Identity.** Coddington adjoins 3 parishes within the division: Winthorpe-with-Langford (meet jointly), and Barnby in the Willows. There are specific relationships with these, with several common interests also reaching further across the division:

a. **Rural Policing.** In conjunction with our 3 neighbouring parishes, above, we form a Safer Neighbourhood Group which meets regularly to review local issues and concerns with police representatives.

b. **Sand and Gravel Extraction.** Under the current Nottinghamshire County Council (Notts CC) Minerals Plan, the Collingham division has 8 sites. The latest consultation, for the next 15 – 20 years, also includes a proposal for an additional site, within Coddington and Langford, containing very substantial reserves in County terms. We believe it important that representation of Coddington's interests would be best served at county level by one councillor who has understanding and experience across a number of such sites. We note below how this becomes particularly relevant with regard to associated transportation and highways issues.

c. **Highways.** There are 3 major highway routes within the division which merge within Winthorpe-with-Langford and meet the A1. From the east comes the A46 (Highways Agency). Notts CC has responsibility for the A17 from the south east, through Barnby and Coddington parishes. From the north, the A1133 (Notts CC) runs through the division to join the A46. The junctions of these routes with the A1 are already overloaded and under-designed, without considering future minerals traffic from Coddington along the A17. CPC and Winthorpe also have common cause with the Newark and Nottinghamshire Showground, situated between the A46 and A17, and its associated traffic problems. Moreover, the Newark-based national distribution centre for KNOWHOW, a major warehouse complex, straddles the boundary between Coddington and Winthorpe. It accesses the A17 close to the aforementioned A17/A46/A1 junction complex. Lastly, a minor road linking Coddington to the A46 at Winthorpe constitutes a busy "rat-run" giving access from south of Newark to the A17 and A46. In essence, the major highways issues of Coddington, and of Barnby, are linked to those of Winthorpe, Langford, and the remainder of the Collingham division. Again, resolution of these issues would be served most efficiently with one representative councillor, by continuance of the current electoral arrangements.

Attachment 2. Major Roads, Quarry, NSP Area and KNOWHOW Depot crossing Divisional Boundaries.



Attachment 3. Amendments to Proposed Divisional Boundary Changes.

