



Morecambe Town Council  
Morecambe Town Hall  
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Morecambe  
LA4 5AF.

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The Review Officer (Lancaster),  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England,  
Layden House,  
76-86 Turnmill Street,  
London  
EC1M 5LG

15<sup>th</sup> March, 2013

Dear Sir,

**Re: Local Government Boundary Commission – Review of Electoral Arrangements:  
Lancaster and Morecambe**

The Town Council has considered the Commission's draft proposals in respect of the review of electoral Arrangements for Lancaster and Morecambe and at its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, made the following observations and objections:

**(1) That this Council makes the following observations to the Local Government Boundary Commission:**

**(a) With regard to the proposals as they would affect the whole Lancaster City Council Area:**

- The proposals claim to seek a balance in population levels; however they do not appear to have taken into account major residential planning permissions that have been granted and developments that may take place due to forthcoming road development and major government energy policy decisions. For this reason the Council believes the proposed boundary changes are flawed and may require significant revision in the near future.
- Morecambe and Heysham would be under represented as there would be fewer councillors per head of population in the Morecambe and Heysham urban area compared to the Lancaster urban area i.e. 24 councillors in Lancaster, 20 in Morecambe and 16 in rural areas. This is surely unfair towards the Council Tax payers of Morecambe and Heysham as they would be clearly under represented compared to Lancaster. This appears to have been caused by giving more representation to the students at Lancaster University who are in temporary accommodation and do not pay Council Tax.
- The extension of Skerton into Torrisholme and the Parish of Heaton with Oxcliffe will be seen by residents as wholly unacceptable, as these areas have regarded themselves as part of Morecambe for many decades. Skerton wards rate highly on national ward deprivation levels with commensurate lower property values and higher insurance premiums. The boundaries are also poorly defined and will lead to confusion over ward representation.
- The proposals appear to be based on assumptions/predictions that the electorate within the current Harbour Ward will reduce by 19%. The Council is at loss to understand how this prediction has been arrived at and on what evidence such a large reduction in local population is estimated. There are

areas of Morecambe which has a very transient population although there is no recent evidence of such net losses in population occurring within the town.

**(b) With regard to the proposals as they would affect the Morecambe Town Council Area:**

- Councillors have established relationships with Local communities over a number of years, and the proposals within the Morecambe Town Council part of the district would divide existing communities, which could result in loss of community identity and even loss of property value, and this Council believes that Communities should matter more than simply numbers.
- The alterations to the Bare and Torrisholme boundaries as proposed are both illogical and ill defined. The existing railway boundary is a clear and unambiguous divide which clearly represents existing communities. The proposals would clearly divide this existing community and lead to confusion over ward boundary representation and resistance to the draft proposals from residents.
- The proposed changes to the Poulton and Torrisholme boundaries are a retrograde step, as they would remove from the ward a significant level of mixed good quality residential development. This would result in the new Poulton ward being regarded as a more disadvantaged area together with having reduced councillor representation, together with potential reputational decline resulting in similar problems that occur in the West End of Morecambe.
- The proposals would result in the boundaries for City Council wards and some Town Council wards not being the same e.g. Poulton, Bare and Torrisholme. This will lead to confusion amongst residents, and this Council would urge the ward boundaries of the Town Council to mirror those of the City Council. For example some electors will be in the Bare South Ward for the Town Council and Poulton on the City Council.
- The proposals for Morecambe are inconsistent and do not appear to equalise/enhance councillor:elector ratios. Indeed, there would be three wards on the Town Council where representation would be significantly less than 1:1000.
- The Town Council believes that across the political spectrum there is agreement that the proposals are wholly inappropriate and even morally wrong, whereby significant changes have to be proposed primarily because of the effect of Lancaster University students which would create unfair representative issues for electors of Morecambe and Heysham.

**(c) The effect of IER**

The Council is aware that the topic of IER was raised with you by Lancaster City Council, when the review originally started. Whilst the Council acknowledges IER doesn't come fully in to force until 2015, it feels that the number of electors in the University ward will reduce substantially as they'll have to register themselves, rather than being included in a spreadsheet from the University office.

This therefore concerns the Council as significant changes would have been implemented as per your current proposals to equalise ward representation, when in affect the University ward could suffer a substantial reduction in electors and unnecessary changes to the whole structure of the District and in particular to the wards within Morecambe Town Council as outlined above.

In your draft proposals you asked for views on how to tackle the issue rather than simply just objections.

The Town Council's response would be that the current arrangements work very well within Morecambe, with established communities and that to maintain an appropriate and fair representation that the electorate understands **the status quo should be maintained**, especially when the likely affects of IER are also considered.

I trust you will take these views into account and on behalf of the Council I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,



David Croxall  
Town Clerk