

Contact: Debbie Chambers

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Mr Simon Keal
Review Officer (Lancaster)
LG Boundary Commission
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Governance

Sarah Taylor
Head of Governance

Town Hall
Dalton Square
LANCASTER LA1 1PJ

18 March, 2013

Dear Simon

Electoral Review of Lancaster

Please find set out below the City Council's response to the LGBCE's consultation on its draft recommendations:-

The City Council has the following observations to make about the LGBCE's draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lancaster City Council. They relate to two particular issues.

Firstly, the proposal to combine the current single Member Warton ward and two Member Carnforth ward into one three Member 'Carnforth and Warton' ward.

The City Council has received very negative feedback from Carnforth Town Council and Warton Parish Council about this proposal. Both councils feel that it would be highly inappropriate to put Warton and Carnforth together into one ward. Warton Parish Council said:

Councillors were particularly worried and annoyed to hear that the changes have been proposed purely to even up the workloads of district Councillors putting the convenience of those Councillors before the electors. As our current district Councillor serves our ward well and at no time has complained about her workload we see no reason to change.

The City Council therefore wishes to support the views of the local councils of Carnforth and Warton and would ask that the Commission revises the proposal to put Carnforth and Warton together in one ward. The City Council asks this on the grounds that the communities concerned clearly do not feel that this would reflect their local interests and identities, which is one of the key factors the Commission is obliged to consider in its review of the district.

The City Council notes that the Commission is also obliged to consider electoral equality and would ask that a solution for Carnforth and Warton be sought which can deliver electoral equality by moving the boundaries between the current Carnforth and Warton wards slightly so that they can remain as one single Member Ward (Warton) with approximately 1800 electors and one two Member ward (Carnforth) with approximately 3600 electors to meet the requirements of electoral equality. To achieve this it may also be necessary to adjust the Carnforth boundary of the proposed Bolton-le-Sands ward, specifically to keep

parts of Crag Bank within Carnforth ward which the proposals place in Bolton-le-Sands ward. This would also help reduce the variances from average which show -7% for the proposed Carnforth and Warton ward and +8% for the proposed Bolton-le-Sands ward.

The second issue which the City Council is concerned about has also been raised by a local Council. Morecambe Town Council has expressed the view that Morecambe and Heysham would be under represented by the proposals:

...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.

The City Council also wishes to support Morecambe Town Council's comments in this regard, having looked further into the electorate figures which back its claim up:-

The figures for the total district electorate of 108,934 are:-

20 Councillors in 'Morecambe and Heysham' wards representing an electorate of 37,109 gives an average of 1,855.45 (i.e. each Councillor represents 1,855 electors)

24 Councillors in 'Lancaster' wards representing an electorate of 42,984 gives an average of 1,791 (i.e. each Councillor represents 1,791 electors)

16 Councillors in 'Rural' wards representing an electorate of 28,931 gives an average of 1,808.19 (i.e. each Councillor represents 1,808 electors)

These figures do seem to indicate that Councillors in 'Morecambe and Heysham' wards represent - on average - somewhere between 47-64 more electors than Councillors in 'Lancaster' and 'Rural' wards

Please note that this is a response on behalf of the City Council. Further responses may be submitted from the political groups represented on the Council or from individual Councillors. I understand that Carnforth Town Council, Warton Parish Council and Morecambe Town Council have also made their own submissions.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Chambers
Democratic Services Manager