

Lancaster District Labour Party Local Government Committee

Introduction:

Lancaster District Labour Party Local Government Committee covers the area of Lancaster City Council and represents the views of both Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency Labour Party and Lancaster and Fleetwood Constituency Labour Party.

Through the Labour Group on Lancaster City Council we submitted our recommendations that Lancaster City Council should remain a 60 Councillor authority. The following responses to the boundary commission proposals therefore have that as our starting point.

Summary Proposals From Lancaster District Labour Party Local Government Committee:

1. The seats of Warton and Carnforth should remain distinct from each other. There is no historical or community link between the two seats and their merger is not supported by the local community. Carnforth should also retain the area know as Crag Bank which has strong links with Carnforth and none with the proposed area of Bolton-le-Sands.
2. We broadly agree with the proposals for Lancaster city central wards. Though Dukes ward should, as it contains Lancaster Castle, be renamed Castle ward.
3. Overton Ward should cede back the area of Heysham that was until recently in Heysham South and has always historically regarded itself as a part of Heysham. This includes McDonald Rd, Connaught Rd, Londonderry Rd, Oakville Rd and Westmoor Grove. In order to enable parity of representation in numbers, Overton Ward should take on the area of Grosvenor Park which is presently in Westgate Ward but is within the Heaton with Oxcliffe rural parish. This move means that Overton City Council Ward would then encompass the three parishes of Heaton with Oxcliffe, Overton and Middleton and would add to community cohesion and reduce confusion.
4. Heysham Central should still take Heysham Village into its boundary to maintain its numbers, but should cede the area North of Furness Road to Heysham North and therefore remain a 2 seat ward.
5. Heysham North's boundary should be to the south from Furness Rd as far as Brook rd, so maintaining its historical identity and maintain parity of representation and remain as a 2 seat ward.
6. Harbour ward is being reduced in its number of City Councillors due to data suggesting that 19% of the population will reduce in the time period noted by the commission. We strongly dispute this assumption. This is an area of high social

deprivation, and even if one factors in a transient population, the notion that the overall population will reduce to that extent is seriously flawed. Harbour ward should nonetheless take on the area north of Brook Rd and the area known as Sandylands which identifies itself more strongly with Morecambe than Heysham and therefore remain as a 3 member ward.

7. Poulton Ward should accept the recommendation that it should lose the area surrounding South Rd to Bare Ward which it most easily identifies with. Poulton should however take back its seaward traditional boundary up to Seaborne Rd and including St Margaret's rd. This would restore the historical Poulton boundaries and fit with local expectations. It would also enable Poulton to remain a 3 seat ward.
8. The remainder of the Morecambe based wards are agreeable from our point of view though it is of concern to the local community that Morecambe loses a city councillor in either scenario.
9. The Commissions recommendations that Morecambe Town Council should remain a 26 seated parish and be carved into disproportionate chunks is both illogical and unworkable. The Commission should either find a way of maintaining the link between the City Council numbers that give their parish council cohorts or should recommend that Morecambe Town Council be reduced in number using the same formula that presently exists (where a 2 seat city council ward, there gives 3 parish councillors. Where a 3 seat city council ward, there gives 5 parish councillors).

Detailed Proposals From Lancaster District Labour Party Local Government Committee:

(1) Proposed alternative arrangements for Harbour, Heysham North and Heysham Central wards

We agree with the Commission's proposed eastern boundary for Harbour and southern boundary for Heysham Central (including the transfer of Heysham Village into that ward). We would replace the Commission's proposed boundaries between these wards, as follows:

For the boundary between Harbour and Heysham North, we choose the postal boundary between Morecambe and Heysham, as used by Royal Mail and essentially based on the former parish boundary. Our justification: there is still a strong community identification with being in Morecambe or Heysham; the proposed "Heysham North" includes even more of what is, historically and to many people still, Morecambe; restoring the old boundary gives a 3-seat Harbour ward of circa 6000 electors that can be expected to decline by circa 300 electors by 2018, thus giving good electoral equality.

For the boundary between Heysham North and Heysham Central, we follow the existing boundary along Woodlands Drive and then, where that road meets Fairfield Road, we divert south of the existing boundary, along the middle of Draycombe Drive, Furness Road and Seawell Avenue, and so out to sea. Our rationale: the proposed boundary is not too dissimilar to the longstanding boundary between the wards; it ensures good electoral equality.

We calculate that the electorates in the proposed wards (2013 figures) are: Harbour 6000, Heysham North 3419, Heysham Central 3609. We propose 3 seats for Harbour, 2 for Heysham North and 2 for Heysham Central - the same as at present. The electors per councillor would be: Harbour 2000 (10.1% above average, though this should reduce to under 5% by 2018 due to population decline), Heysham North 1710 (5.9% below average), Heysham Central 1805 (0.6% below average).

(2) Proposed alternative name for the proposed Duke's ward

We believe that, as the proposed Duke's ward contains Lancaster Castle and there has been a "Castle ward" in Lancaster for many decades, the proposed Duke's ward should instead be named Castle ward.

(3) Proposed alternative arrangements for Heysham South, Overton and Skerton West wards

We agree with the Commission's proposal to move the Bel-Air Park into Heysham South; furthermore, we believe that all parts of Heysham currently located in Overton ward should be moved back into Heysham South ward. There is little commonality of interest between the communities in that part of Heysham and the residents of Middleton and Overton. We think the transfer of Heysham Village into Heysham Central ward provides an opportunity to reunite natural communities by transferring those parts of Heysham south of the A683 from Overton ward into Heysham South ward. We thus propose that the non-parished parts of the current Overton ward be moved into Heysham South ward.

This would leave Overton significantly undersized; to rectify this, we propose that the Grosvenor Park estate, currently situated in Torrisholme ward, be transferred to Overton ward. The Commission currently proposes to move this estate into Skerton West ward. The great majority of the Grosvenor Park estate is situated within the parish of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Parish Council both reside in Grosvenor Park, according to the Parish Council's website, so if Grosvenor Park can be

said to have any natural community affinities, it is with Heaton-with-Oxcliffe, not Lancaster (so transferring to Skerton West would not be ideal) or Morecambe (so remaining in Torrisholme would not be ideal). To ensure a sensible boundary is created, we also propose moving the (non-residential) White Lund estate, and the land surrounding the ASDA superstore, from Westgate ward to Overton ward.

If all of polling district OVEB were added to the Commission's proposed Heysham South ward, its 2013 electorate would by our calculations be 5518. With 3 councillors, this works out at 1839 electors per councillor, just 1.2% above average. We note that the Commission forecasts an increase in Heysham's population, but we believe it is desirable to obtain electoral equality for the electorates that exist now, not the electorates that may exist in future. If OVEB were removed, and TORA and TORB added, to Overton ward then its 2013 electorate would by our calculations be 2064. With 1 councillor, this is 13.7% above average.

(4) Proposed alternative arrangements for the University of Lancaster

We support the proposal to transfer that part of the University campus currently located in Ellel ward (polling district ELLH) to University ward. There is a clear commonality of interest between the residents of Cartmel College and Lonsdale College at the University and the residents of the other seven colleges at the University.

We do not support the proposal to transfer Scotforth parish from Ellel ward to University ward. The communities of Bailrigg, Burrow Heights and Langthwaite are clearly distinct from the student community resident on campus, and there are obvious commonalities of interest between Scotforth parish and the rest of Ellel ward. We would, therefore, keep Scotforth parish within Ellel ward, even at the expense of some electoral equality. We believe Ellel ward (minus ELLH) should continue to elect 2 councillors while University ward (now including ELLH) should elect 3 councillors.

Should the Commission agree with us, it would be natural for the name of the ward to remain "University". We further believe that, even if the Commission sticks to its original proposals, the title of the ward should remain "University"; we support short ward names wherever possible and believe that, as campus residents would make up the overwhelming majority of the ward, the title "University" would still be a fair description.

On behalf of Lancaster District Labour Party

Darren Clifford
Secretary, Local Government Committee