

Carnforth Town Council



LGBCE Draft Proposals for Lancaster District

Carnforth Town Council Response

Summary

Carnforth Town Council strongly objects to the Draft Proposals on the grounds that they do not adhere to Schedule 2 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

The Council further objects on the grounds that the Proposals have not stated clearly how Schedule 2 has been applied.

The Council proposes that its original suggestions contained in the response of 17th October 2012 be followed.

The Principles of the 2009 Act

The relevant portion of the Act¹ lays down four rules to which the LGBCE must 'have regard to'. They are:

- a) the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the district council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council,
- b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular—
 - i. the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and
 - ii. the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties,
- c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government,

There is no weighting given in the primary legislation. All four criteria are to be considered equally. The proposals do not give equal weight to the criteria.

¹ Sch 2, §2, (3) (a-c)

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The Identities & Interests of Local Communities

The Act is very specific on this matter and the proposals break these rules. The boundaries proposed are **not easily identifiable** because:

- There is considerable open countryside between Bolton le Sands and Crag Bank but no open countryside between Crag Bank and the rest of Carnforth.
- The same applies to areas within Slyne and Bolton-le-Sands

The boundaries have not been drawn up with regard to **not to break any local ties**:

- Carnforth Town Council demonstrated that it was a unique & distinct community in its submission.
- It demonstrated that Crag Bank identifies with Carnforth and not Bolton-le-Sands
- It demonstrated that it had substantially different interests to Warton. Therefore, any proposal to lump Carnforth in with Warton would **not reflect the interests of local communities**.

Effective & Convenient Local Government

Carnforth Town Council demonstrated in its submission that having electors from Crag Bank vote in one Town Council and a different City Council area caused confusion and inefficiency and was a deterrent to democracy.

Failure of Process

The Draft proposals mention the submission by Carnforth Town Council but do not state how all the requirements of Schedule 2 have been taken into account and do not address the *identities and interests of local communities*, as required by the Act.

This is a failure to apply the criteria properly and is open to challenge on that basis.

The Review also fails to take into account Carnforth Town Council's observations on development in the Town and the inclusion of 440 additional electors in 2018.

Alternative Proposals

Carnforth Town Council's original proposals give due weight to all four criteria and balance them so that a **reasonable** compromise between ward size and community identity is maintained.

This response Adopted by Resolution of Carnforth Town Council on 20th February 2013

ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TO THE LGBCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to giving our response to the Stage 2 Consultation on the Commission's Draft proposals for Lancaster District, Carnforth Town Council would respectfully request that you revisit the information which you provided and which formed the basis of your final recommendations with regard to the 2000 Review of Lancaster City Council and in particular Paragraphs 73, 75 and 82.

In identifying the respective locations of Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne with Hest Paragraph 73 quotes:

“they have relatively high levels of electoral variance, namely 3 per cent fewer, 21 per cent more and 24 per cent fewer than the district average respectively (5 per cent below, 19 per cent below and 26 per cent below by 2004). Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with Hest wards currently comprise the parishes of the same name”.

Paragraph 75 states:-

“Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed modifications to all three wards, with the part of Bolton-le-Sands parish to the south of the junction between the A5105 coastal road and the A6 by-pass being transferred to a revised Slyne-with-Hest ward, to improve electoral equality. In addition, they suggested that the part of Carnforth ward to the East of Crag Bank Lane and to the south of the railway line should be included in Bolton-le-Sands ward, arguing that this would provide a better level of electoral equality than the existing arrangements”.

Paragraph 82 states:-

“We have considered carefully the representations made to us during Stage 3. Whilst we acknowledge that the proposed warding of Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands is not an entirely satisfactory proposal, we have not been persuaded by subsequent submissions to move from our draft recommendations. We acknowledge the concerns expressed by Carnforth Town Council. However, as previously discussed, we consider that its proposal would result in a high degree of electoral inequality both initially and in 2004 and, on balance, we remain unpersuaded that this is justified in Carnforth. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final, notwithstanding the proposed parish ward amendment. The proposed Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with Hest wards would initially vary 1 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 1 per cent above the respective district average (respectively (3 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2004). Details of the proposed boundaries are show on the large map at the back of the report and in Appendix A”.

This Council is aware that the current Electoral Review was undertaken, in particular, as a result of the 2012 variance in Ellel Ward occasioned by the inability of the Commission to recognise and anticipate the probability of the expansion of student accommodation at Lancaster University.

In adopting the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Party proposed modifications contained within Paragraph 75 of the 2002 Review (which involved transferring 884 electors from Bolton-le-Sands to Slyne with Hest and their suggestion affecting part of Crag Bank (which involved 888 electors being transferred to Bolton-le-Sand) and your acknowledgement in Paragraph 82 that this was “not an entirely satisfactory proposal” Carnforth Town Council believes that the Commission has created and perpetuated a totally unnecessary “domino effect” in comparison to the 2004 predictions.

We feel it is appropriate here to express our extreme concern regarding your comments in paragraph 82 viz:-

With the transfer of additional electors from Carnforth ward to Bolton-le-Sands ward, the two member Carnforth ward is forecast to have 13% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. To improve electoral equality we propose that this ward is combined with the parish of Warton to form a three-member Carnforth and Warton ward. The settlements have a strong road connection along Mill Lane and Warton Road. This ward is forecast to have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2018.”

Appendix A - Table 1A: Draft recommendations for Lancaster City Council shows that in addition to the 888 Crag Bank electors transferred to Bolton-le-Sands in the 2000 Review, the Commission is proposing to transfer an additional 483 electors in this Review and combine the rump of the original Carnforth electorate with Warton.

This, in effect means, with the transfers effected in the 2000 Review (886) and your current draft proposal (483), the Crag Bank electorate will have been reduced by a total of 1,369 electors and the proposed combined ward of Carnforth and Warton being forecast as having 8% fewer electors per councillor by 2018 it will be second only to the combined proposal for University & Scotforth Ward at -11% for both 2012 and 2018.

As stated elsewhere, Carnforth Town Council strongly objects to these Draft proposals as not adhering to Schedule 2 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. In this respect, the Commission has singularly failed Principle b) which is quoted in full elsewhere.

Additionally, Carnforth and Warton are two entirely separate and different communities and the only unsustainable reason quoted in support of is that they “have a strong road connection along Mill Lane and Warton Road”. In view of the objections expressed in this response together with the likelihood of further loss of identities and interests of our local community and future breaking of local ties occasioned by the Draft proposals, Carnforth Town Council is firmly of the opinion that the Commission should produce alternative proposals on an urgent basis.

Adopted by Carnforth Town Council on 20th February 2013.

FIG 2: THE COMMISSION'S FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS 2000						ELECTORAL DATA LANCASTER				
Ward	Electorate	Variance	Electorate	Variance	Polling	Electorate	Variance	Electorate	Variance	
Name	1999	From Av%	2004	From Av%	District	2012	%	2018	%	
Bolton le Sands	3,438	-1%	3,488	-3%	BLSA No 1	2,545	-6%	2,317	-14%	
					BLSA NO 2	886		807		
						3,431		3,124		
Carnforth	3,333	-4%	3,370	-6%	CARA No 1	1,858	-2%	1,919	1%	
					CARA No 2	1,234		1,274		
					CARA No. 3	483		499		
						3,575		3,692	8%	
Slyne-with-Hest	3,505	1%	3,522	-2%	SLYA	2,669	-3%	3,396	-7%	
					SLYB	844				
						3,513				
Warton	1,885	8%	1,880	4%	Warton	1,951	7%	1,846	1%	

APPENDIX A - TABLE A1 : DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS					
Ward	Electorate	Variance	Electorate	Variance	
Name	2012	From Av%	2018	From Av%	
2.Bolton-le-Sands	3,914	8%	3,623	-1%	
4. Carnforth & Warton	5,043	-7%	5,039	-8%	
	3,513	-3%	3,396	-7%	