

Bolton Borough Council

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Comment text:

Local Government Boundaries Commission Draft Recommendations for Bolton MBC (August 2021)
Response by Bolton Labour Group The Labour Group generally welcomes the proposals put forward by the Commission, with some amendments in the South East part of the Borough. We would like to thank the Commission for the very comprehensive report that explains in detail each of the proposals and the rationale behind them. Farnworth North, Farnworth South and Kearsley. The Boundaries Commission proposals for Farnworth North, Farnworth South and Kearsley show a variance in the populations of -10%, -8% and -14% respectively. In respect to Kearsley Ward, the Commissions conclusion is that this significant variance of -14% reflects the "unique geographic nature of Kearsley at the edge of the Borough." However, the boundary of Kearsley as set in 2004 accepted the argument that the historic area of Kearsley is simply not electorally large enough to justify a 'stand-alone' ward based only on that historic area. The existing ward therefore covers quite a large area of the existing Farnworth area, reaching up to Farnworth town centre, due to close proximity. The Commissions own current recommendation continues to accept this principal, by redrawing the boundary with Farnworth that still includes a large part of Farnworth by using, in the Commissions own words, "road access over the M61". Therefore, the principal that Kearsley Ward cannot be based solely on the urban area of Kearsley remains intact. We contend that this principal is being applied to other geographically separate areas on the edge of the borough, such as Little Lever and Blackrod. The Labour Group contends therefore that the area of the Kearsley ward can be justifiably expanded so that more electoral equity between the wards is achieved. This can be achieved by extending the boundary between Kearsley and Farnworth North, by again using the good road access over the M61, from Church Street to a new boundary at Darley Street, Presto Street, West Street and Bridge Street to the A666. This would ensure that the naturally linked estate centred on both sides of Darley Street (east) remains together. This change will lead to a much smaller variance in the new population of Kearsley. Conversely, if the changes to the Kearsley boundary as justified above, take place, this will mean that the proposed variance of -10% for Farnworth North would be greater. This would be partly rectified by extending the proposed boundary with Great Lever to Green Lane. Whilst Doe Hey Brook does to a certain extend represent open land between the urban areas, the link roads of Bradford Road and Greenland Road are also significant factors. In addition, the populations on either side of Doe Hey Brook use the same facilities and amenities. The Brook does not represent a distinct barrier of identity between Farnworth and Great Lever. Our proposed new boundary would therefore be north along the disused railway line between Glenside Drive and Lever Edge Lane, and east long a small section of Lever Edge Lane, then along Green Lane though to Manchester Road. This would greatly reduce the under population of Farnworth North, whilst keeping the communities as connected by Bradford Road and Greenland Road together, reflecting their strong links with Farnworth. We have no amendments to Farnworth South. Great Lever, Hulton, Queens Park and Hulton As explained under the Farnworth North section, we contend that the boundary between Great Lever and Farnworth North should be drawn at Greenland Road and Green Lane. Whilst accepting the majority of the proposals for the new Queens Park ward, we feel that the commission has drawn the southern boundary of Queens Park unnecessarily deep into the Great Lever area. The concept of Queens Park is a town centre-based ward. The further south along Manchester Road that people live, the less town centre focussed that population is. Therefore, we believe that the boundary between Queens Park and Great Lever should be redrawn to continue along Lever Street, along the small street known as Rose Hill, and eastward to St Peters Way. This would mean that the streets around Luton Street and Croft Lane off Manchester Road would remain in Great Lever, rather than be added to the town centre based Queens Park Ward. The increase in population that this change would make would be more than offset by the loss of population due to the changes to the boundary between Great lever and Farnworth North, leaving the variance of Great Lever less than the current proposed +8%. The population of Queens Park would reduce marginally. We agree with the Commissions recommended boundaries for Hulton and Rumworth. Brightmet, Halliwell, Little Lever & Darcy Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh. We agree with the commission's proposals for these wards Astley Bridge, Bradshaw

& Bromley Cross, Smithills & North Heaton, South Turton. We agree with the Commission's proposals for these wards. However, we feel that the name Astley Bridge would better represent the community of Hall i'th' Wood, if it was named either "Astley Bridge with Hall I'th' Wood" or "Astley Bridge and Crompton". The latter name retaining the title of the previous ward by acknowledging the link road of Crompton Way, connecting the 2 communities. Horwich North, Horwich South & Blackrod, Lostock, South Heaton & Chew Moor, Westhoughton North & Hunger Hill, Westhoughton South. We agree with the Commissions proposals for these wards Cllr Nick Peel On behalf of Bolton Labour Group September 2021

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