

Sefton

Personal Details:

Name: [REDACTED]
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Organisation Name: (Member of the public)

Comment text:

Dear Sirs,

I enclose my observations in respect of the best warding plan for Sefton MBC.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Attached Documents:

- Sefton boundaries [REDACTED].pdf

PROPOSED SEFTON MBC RE-WARDING: A SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Overview

Noting the Commission's preliminary intention to retain a council of 66 for the unitary Sefton Borough, it becomes immediately apparent that this cannot be achieved while achieving genuine equality of representation for the various well-defined communities within the Borough without the creation of at least three wards each of which would have to artificially include a significant 'orphan' part of one community 'tacked on' to a ward dominated by another separate community - and with substantial areas of unpopulated green space between the constituent parts of these wards.

Any equitable re-warding of the borough involving 22 three-member wards would require the creation of one ward which was largely Formby including a significant southern part of Southport (Ainsdale); one ward which was mostly Crosby including a piece of south Formby and one ward which was mostly either Bootle or Southport containing a significant western piece of the Sefton East Parishes. Any solution involving all three elements would be undesirable on its own. Any solution involving only two of the components should, surely, not be acceptable on any 'community' considerations.

The only way to avoid the undesirable outcomes outlined above while retaining a 66-member council would be to either make the separate communities of Crosby and the Sefton East parishes be significantly under-represented (while still being within the 10% variance 'quota') compared to the communities of Southport and Crosby - or to adopt a much more radical approach, for example involving the creation of two-member wards each holding elections for four year terms on a bi-annual basis: there would be eleven such wards in Southport and five in the eastern parishes; three in Formby and fourteen in 'Bootle & Crosby' to make a 66-member council.

There is less than a 2 per cent difference between a 66-member council and a 63-member council. It would seem illogical, therefore, for the Commission to

retain adherence to a 66-member council rather than making a minor size when the consequences of adhering to a 66-member council would be significant and undesirable as those described above.

Southport (presently seven Wards)

Whatever the number of Borough councillors, equitably, the distinct council for Southport, on both current and projected electorate numbers, should be one third of the council members: ie 21/63 or 22/66 Sefton Borough council.

However, such inter-community equity in representation cannot be obtained by a 66-member council without the placement of an 'orphan' area of Ainsdale into an overwhelmingly-Formby ward. Any such invasion of the presently 'pure' Ainsdale Ward from the South would also require some commensurate transfer (well over 1000 electors) from the present Birkdale Ward into a new 'Ainsdale/Birkdale South' ward. Any such new ward would then be crossed by the recently BCE-determined boundary between the Southport and the Sefton parliamentary constituencies. Such a change is undesirable in itself and completely unnecessary if the present seven Southport wards are large enough exactly as they are at present. If such a change were to be implemented, it would also be requisite otherwise-unnecessary further changes required to make the various Southport wards more equal in electorate size to each other.

Sefton East Parishes (presently Park, Sudell and Molyneaux Wards)

Sefton East parishes could equitably retain 9 councillors in either a 66- or 63-member council but should best obtain reasonable parity of representation with the rest of the Borough, as the new housing in the area expands significantly, by moving the parish of Sefton from Park Ward in a 63-member council to join the neighbouring Thornton parish within Manor Ward. A transfer of anything up to 1000 voters from Sudell Ward to Park Ward within the Maghull/Lydiat area of Sefton East would be a numerical choice which is presently shared by these wards is essentially a numerical choice. The electorate's principal community reference point for both wards is 'Maghull'.

Genuine equity of representation for the Sefton East parishes within a 66-member council would require a considerably more radical solution, creating a new 'orphan' Sefton East Parish elements within one or more Bootle or Crosby wards.

Crosby (presently Manor, Blundellsands, Victoria and (part) Church Ward)

Manor Ward should 'lose' about 1000 voters to Blundellsands Ward from the Villiers Estate. There are no significant 'community identification' divides in the 'central Crosby' area, so the choice of which streets to move between wards is largely a numerical-balancing one. The other logical alternative for numerical balancing - of moving part of Victoria Ward into Blundellsands Ward - would have the disadvantage of breaching the Bootle/Sefton Central parliamentary constituency boundary.

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Bootle (presently Netherton, Derby, St Oswalds, Ford, Linacre and [part]

Bootle and Crosby would, between them, 'lose' a ward in this 21-ward mostly from the present under-sized wards of Bootle: the resultant seven Crosby' wards would then have a very similar average number of electors to the seven wards of Southport and of the three Sefton East Parishes war

leave it to those with greater detailed knowledge of the local areas concerned to suggest precisely where the ward boundaries should be drawn to achieve this aim, however the underlying principle is that the two principal community identities most concerned for all the electors concerned are 'Bootle' (incorporating North Wirral, Litherland and Seaforth) and 'Crosby'. The present Church Ward already follows the historic Bootle-Crosby boundary and the present (and proposed) parliamentary constituency of 'Bootle' likewise encroaches even further into 'Crosby'. It is believed that approximate numerical equality of ward electorates can be achieved by drawing the boundaries in ways in 'Bootle' without creating significant community fracture.

Formby (present Ravenmeols and Harington Wards)

Lastly, I would ask that the commission look hard at the present two Formby wards. There is no logic to the shape and communications of these wards: Ravenmeols Ward's present shape is peculiar and far-from-compact. The only significant sub-community within Formby is 'Freshfield' in the north. Hence, the boundary between the two Formby wards should be more sensibly drawn east-west, creating a northern 'Freshfield' ward and a more compact southern 'Formby' ward.

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