

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lancaster City Council

Summary

Who we are:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas.

Electoral reviews:

The purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards – for a local authority.

Why Lancaster?

We are conducting an electoral review of Lancaster City Council to deliver improved levels of electoral equality for local voters.

Lancaster currently has high levels of electoral inequality so that the value of your vote - in council elections - varies depending on where you live in Lancaster.

Council size

The Commission is minded to recommend that Lancaster City Council should be represented by 60 councillors in future: the same as the current arrangements.

The Commission held a public consultation on retaining the current number of councillors or reducing it to 50 or 40 councillors.

During the public consultation, the Commission received evidence in support of all three options put forward. Having considered the evidence, the Commission believes that a council size of 60 members will ensure the council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively and will provide for a pattern of wards that reflects community identities across the Lancaster area.

Electoral arrangements

Our draft recommendations propose that Lancaster's 60 councillors should represent five single-member, eleven two-member and eleven three-member wards across the City.

The Commission believes its draft recommendations meet its obligations - which are set out in law - to:

- Deliver electoral equality for voters.
- Reflect local community interests and identities.
- Promote effective and convenient local government.

The Commission welcomes proposals for alternative boundaries that better reflect the three criteria above.

To view the proposals and maps in detail: consultation.lgbce.org.uk
www.lgbce.org.uk

Stage starts	Description
1 May 2012	Consultation on council size
24 July 2012	Submission of proposals for ward patterns to the Commission
16 October 2012	Commission's formulation of draft recommendations
22 January 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
19 March 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

Prior to the publication of these draft recommendations, the Commission received 41 submissions relating to council size and a further six submissions for new ward boundaries.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

The Commission is now consulting people and organisations across Lancaster on its draft recommendations and welcomes feedback on them.

General analysis

The Commission did not receive any submissions which put forward proposals for the whole of Lancaster. As such, the Commission has largely developed its own pattern of wards.

Lancaster and Rural South

The Commission considered several options to reduce the very high level of electoral inequality in the Ellet ward in the south of the district.

The Commission is proposing to include the Halls of Residence which currently lie in Ellet ward, as well as the parish of Scotforth, in a new three-member University and Scotforth Rural ward. The Commission has opted for this pattern as the alternative combinations considered would either have delivered poor levels of electoral equality for voters or would have divided communities between wards.

With the removal of Scotforth parish and the Halls of Residence Scotforth parish, the Commission proposes to retain the boundaries of the existing Ellet ward, to be represented by two councillors.

In the urban part of Lancaster, the Commission proposes a pattern of wards which is similar to the current arrangements with a number of changes to improve electoral equality for voters or

reflect local community interests and identities.

An example of the changes in urban Lancaster include a proposal that the area around Lancaster Castle and the properties around Blades Street and Aldcliffe Road should form part of the two-member Duke's ward rather than part of the existing Castle ward.

As the existing Castle ward would no longer include the castle under these draft recommendations, the Commission proposes to rename the ward as Marsh ward, which would be represented by two councillors.

The Commission also believes that the village of Aldcliffe has good communication links with Scotforth West and we propose to include these communities together as part of a three-member ward.

Morecombe and Heysham

The Commission's draft recommendations propose a number of changes to the boundaries in this part of the council area to create a three-member Bare ward, a two-member Poulton ward and a three-member Westgate ward. The recommendations involve a number of alterations to the boundaries between these areas which are set out in detail in the Commission's full report and on its website.

The Commission also proposes to alter the arrangements for Torrisholme ward so that it is represented by two councillors in the future. The ward would deliver electoral equality for local voters because the Roeburn Drive development would form part of Skerton West ward as well as transferring the area bounded by Broadway, Bare Lane and South Road into Bare ward.

The Commission proposes that the existing Harbour ward should

be represented by two councillors in future and that its southern boundary with Heysham North ward should be Regent Road.

In turn, and to deliver electoral equality, the Commission proposes to include the area bounded by Balmoral Road, Fairfield Road and Sandyland Primary School as part of Heysham Central ward.

Rural North Lancaster

In several areas, the Commission is recommending to retain the current pattern of local wards for the northern part of Lancaster. As such, we propose to retain the wards of Halton-with-Aughton, Lower Lune Valley, Silverdale and Slyne-with-Hest.

In order to improve electoral equality for Bolton-Le-Sands ward, we propose that a larger part of Crag Bank is included in the ward than is currently the case. Similarly, we propose to add the parish of Warton to the existing Carnforth ward to create a three-member Carnforth & Warton ward.

We also propose that the parish of Gressingham should be part of Kellet ward rather than Upper Lune Valley.

What happens next?

There will now be an eight-week consultation period on the draft recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by **18 March 2013**.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Officer (Lancaster)
LGBCE
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

Or email:
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report and accompanying maps are available to view at:
www.lgbce.org.uk and at
consultation.lgbce.org.uk