

The Chief Officer (Governance)
Town Hall
Lancaster
LA1 1PJ

2 September 2015

Dear Chief Officer

I enclose a paper petition containing in excess of 320 signatures which I submit under Part 10 of Lancaster City Council's Constitution. I have deleted a small number of signatures of those whom I believe do not reside within the wards of Kellet and Halton but that still leaves over 300 signatures of residents who live exclusively in these two wards. Given that the number of signatures exceeds 200 I ask that this petition be submitted to the next meeting of the Council and debated by members in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

Although the concerns raised in the petition have been discussed by representatives of the Parish Councils in the two wards, and apply specifically to these wards, the request in the petition is expressed in such a way as to affect all the parishes in the district, rather than restricting it to just these wards. This is because we believe it would be inappropriate to make the request in a form which affected only the parishes in our two wards to the exclusion of the many other third tier councils in the district.

All those who have signed the petition have had sight of our concerns, as set out in the attached papers. It has been organised by Brian Jefferson of Halton Parish Council and myself and one of us would wish to address the meeting of the Council on 23 September in respect of the petition. I confirm that a copy of the speech will be sent to you no later than seven working days before that meeting.

Yours sincerely

Nick Ward

N.K.D. Ward
Chairman of Over Kellet Parish Council
Petition Organiser

Encl: Petition signed by residents of Kellet and Halton Wards of Lancaster District

Concerns referred to in the attached letter of 2 September 2015

Concern that Lancaster City Council does not hear the Rural Voice.

We are residents of villages in the Halton and Kellet Wards of Lancaster District. Our villages are rural in character and have been sustained as communities separate from the urban centre of Lancaster - in some cases for over one thousand years.

Under the section headed "Improving the Rural Environment", in the Lancaster City Council Planning Handbook 2000, published by Burrows Communications Ltd., it says "In responding to pressures for new development the City Council will look to guard against inappropriate change and protect the character of villages". We are unaware of any change to this commitment by the City Council.

We expect the City Council to

- safeguard the sense of identity of village communities
- protect and enhance the social, economic, and environmental sustainability required by current and future rural residents
- respect the visual amenity associated with the landscapes surrounding rural settlements
- conserve the quality and character of village landscapes and the setting of rural villages
- recognise that landscape containing green spaces is an irreplaceable community asset
- ensure that local rural opinion informs City Council decisions that have an impact on local village communities
- promote city coast and countryside - without sidelining the countryside

We observe recent symptoms of neglect of the rural voice locally, in that

- the executive of this Council does not include elected representatives from rural wards in the District, and
- unlike the situation in 2005, there is no longer a Cabinet member with a portfolio for "Rural Affairs" and
- recent new brand identities for Lancaster and for Morecambe make no reference to the countryside of the District
- there is no adequate forum in which issues of major importance to rural communities, such as the preparation of the Local Plan, can be properly debated.

PETITION

We (the undersigned) are concerned at the symptoms of neglect of the rural voice locally as set out above and we call upon the City Council

- to resolve to work with the Parish and Town Councils in the District and fully recognise their contributions in preserving the distinctiveness and aspirations of our local communities and
- to set up a working group with Council Officers and representatives of rural parishes and of the city council to enable rural views to inform the process of preparing component documents in the Local Plan