

Cumberland

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Comment text:

Related subject: I am mostly focussing on the former Carlisle and District and Allerdale

The boundary commission is most definitely doing the right thing in increasing councillor numbers in Cumberland, as currently, we are being stretched as councillors by the demands and challenges of setting up a new authority as well as having the capacity to fully contribute to council committees whilst also advocating for our residents. Also having moved from a two-tier system where each ward could have up to three or maybe four councillors serving residents the demands of being sole ward councillors alongside the wide-ranging services that the council provides are significant.

With regards producing a ward map for the whole of Cumberland, that did not feel appropriate for us, given we know the areas where we are and surrounding areas to different degrees. But did not feel we knew the communities in South Cumberland well enough to put lines on maps just to make the numbers work as we have been witnessing in the production of other maps. So, we are focussing our comments on the former Carlisle district which we know very well and also north Allerdale, which we also know and understand through living and working there.

We have been kept informed about the Council's proposal and have had the opportunity to feed into their initial draft proposal but ultimately the plan which they have produced is that of the leading group in the council and has not taken on board some of the issues we have raised. We only got to see their final proposals today, February 24th, the deadline day for submissions, and only in spreadsheet form (which I am unable to visualise) and so I am plotting these onto a map so that I can fully understand the implications. Until today we had been working from their previous draft which was very different and raised many concerns.

We have also seen the proposal being put forward by the Liberal Democrat group. With regards to their map we are broadly in agreement with the wards they have suggested from Brampton, Corby and Hayton and Irthing to the east across to Brough and Dalston on the western and southern outskirts of the former Carlisle and District and touching into the former Allerdale council. However, beyond that, looking at their map, it does not make so much sense for some of the communities of the former Allerdale that we know and so our support for their submission goes only as far as Brough and Dalston to the west.

With regards to urban Carlisle and surrounds we feel that there is clearly much more local knowledge and understanding of communities and wards in the Liberal Democrat submission than the Cumberland Council proposal. North of the river Eden in urban Carlisle the Lib Dem suggestions make much more sense for our communities than those in the Cumberland Council proposal. And their plans for the south of Carlisle and Carlisle City centre also make sense for the communities as we know them.

The community of Stanwix in Carlisle is distinctly the communities just north of the river Eden that come off Scotland Road and Brampton Road. That is polling districts CA-MA, MB, MC & MD. District ME, Whiteclosegate also comes off Brampton Road and is still part of urban Carlisle. With regards Belah ward, the split to the existing ward by Kingstown Road (the A7 north) that they are suggesting also makes sense, given the developing housing estate Tarraby view, to the east between Carlisle and Houghton. Currently these housing estates are split between Stanwix and Belah which doesn't make sense in terms of access and community. So, to create the Houghton and Kingstown ward which they are suggesting, very much makes sense. Their splitting CA_AG to put the new Gleeson estate with Greymoor Way, which comes off the Aspen Grove estate which is in CA_AE, also completely makes sense. On the ground it is difficult to distinguish between the two areas and they will face the same issues. Currently they are an isolated bit of housing estate belonging to the Stanwix Rural councillor so the Lib Dem proposal makes much more sense.

Equally their proposal for Belah ward makes sense. The communities of Lowry Hill (CA_AA, CA_AB) and Belah and St Anns CA_AC and Etterby (CA_AD), although different demographics share the same community amenities. Children from Belah go to school in Lowry Hill, since their primary school was closed. The same unreliable bus service serves both communities. The natural divide between Stanwix and Belah is the change from the A7 being Scotland Road to it becoming Kingstown Road. The only thing we question in the Lib Dem suggestion in this area is where is the split in CA_MD would be to add into Belah ward. We are not entirely sure where they have made the division. Waverley Gardens could make sense as there is a cut through from there into Belah estate if it is a matter of numbers. But beyond that it feels to be encroaching more into Stanwix.

Looking today, as we have, at the proposals Cumberland Council are submitting for the North Carlisle area however really does not seem to show understanding of the communities. The suggestion splits the community of Stanwix in two, instead linking half of it to Belah and Etterby. It leaves the bit of Greymoor Way (the split in the Lib Dem proposal in CA_AG) in a completely separate ward from the streets which it is connected to. The link of ward CA_AH (Cargo, Stainton and Crindledyke) to Lowry Hill has been a past connection in the former Carlisle and District City council wards as there are shared concerns around industrial and waste processes in the area. At that point too the natural linking ward was CA_AD

(Etterby Road and Stainton Road). However, to add Kirkandrews-on-Eden, Grinsdale and Beaumont makes no sense. There is no community link between these communities and the River Eden (which has no easy pedestrian route between them that can be crossed). Those villages / hamlets link much more from a community perspective to Burgh-by-Sands and west Carlisle, rather than the communities in North Carlisle.

The suggestions for rural Carlisle to the East look good. Keeping Brampton town as one ward makes good sense as it is all one parish council and community. And two separate rural wards to the north and south of Brampton also make sense for the communities as we know them. Previous iterations of the map had split Brampton, which made no sense for the community at all. We have not had the capacity to scrutinise the council's plans in this area but those put together by the Liberal Democrats seemed reasonable suggestions.

With regards to Allerdale we have specifically looked at the council's submission to the east of Cockermouth. The split of the former Bothel and Wharrels ward into Cocker and Marron make sense as do the additions to the northern part, now described as Bothel and Newlands. The connection of Sandale to Ireby makes sense from a community perspective. The neighbouring ward of Dalston and Caldbeck also joins a coherent area.

We would like to have had time to properly scrutinise the council submission to be able to provide more comment but at this point, so close to your deadline it has not been possible.

Attached Documents:

None attached