

Starkie, Emily

From: Allison Burton [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 April 2018 19:57
To: reviews
Subject: Boundary Commission Review - Dover, Kent
Attachments: Response re Dover Town ward boundary re.docx

Please find attached this Council's response.

Regards,



Allison Burton - M.A. Hons, CiLCA
Town Clerk
Dover Town Council,

[REDACTED]
Website: www.dovertowncouncil.gov.uk

Response re Dover Town ward boundary re-organisation proposals from Dover Town Council

It is most important for the residents of Dover town that any changes “achieve good electoral quality while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. “ In a time of falling turnout in elections and communities struggling to retain their identities in a time of high development and change, the traditional sense of place amongst our residents must be valued to avoid further disengagement with the electoral process and from local government. This is far more important than any fleeting political gains by parties currently running administrations. Dover has a high percentage of people whose families have lived in the town for several generations; there is a strong strand of local oral history with individuals knowing the houses and streets where their parents and grandparents lived and raised families.

Dover has a distinctive physical geography comprising a series of valleys and plains containing communities with longstanding sense of place. In Tower Hamlets and St Radigunds in particular there is a very strong sense of identity and any changes to boundaries which are at odds with people’s sense of belonging will be deeply unpopular and will lead to confusion and disengagement.

In 2000/1 this council responded to a review of wards stating that “there are no easy, direct routes between the valleys”. This remains the case – there remain six natural communities driven by geography and coinciding with the current wards of Buckland, Castle, Maxton & Elms Vale, Town & Pier, St Radigunds and Tower Hamlets.

This council would prefer the boundaries to remain as they currently are whilst recognizing that District councils offer poor value and there may be a need to reduce the number of councillors on them. A better approach to amending the current ward boundaries would be to create a Unitary Council in East with much greater decision making at a local level delegated to Parish Councils, which know their areas much more closely and can take a community centred view.

If change must be considered then the officer report from DDC forwarded as part of the Labour Party response for Dover is preferable to the adopted response of the politically motivated district council Proposal which takes no account of what is best or most natural for Dover town’s communities. In addition the views of Cllr Susan Jones are a good reflection of community feelings in St Radigund’s and this council would feel affinity with her proposal for St Radigund’s.