Comment text:
Submission to the Boundary Commission for new ward boundaries for South Ribble Borough Council in 2015. Submitted by South Ribble Labour Group of Councillors c/o Cllr Michael Titherington, Secretary of the South Ribble Labour Group, The Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland. The South Ribble Labour Group recognises that the current ward boundaries of South Ribble Borough Council are no longer fit for purpose. Following consultation with the South Ribble Labour Group and the wider Labour Party we agreed with the proposal that the overall numbers of councillors be reduced to 50 as from 2015 and that this would necessitate a redrawing of ward boundaries across the borough. In doing so the South Ribble Labour Group would like to make the following general points. 1. We do not support the idea of ‘single member’ wards. We believe that there are several reasons why these are not ideal. During holiday times or during prolonged periods of sickness the ability to call upon a fellow colleague is invaluable. When holding surgeries, knocking on doors or distributing literature we would contend that multiple member wards offer a greater level of support and safety for members. It may also be the case that individual members may have a conflict of interest which may prevent them from acting on behalf of their residents, whereas this is much less likely to affect multiple members. 2. All of our ward suggestions are either two member or three member wards. The limited number of three member wards are proposed in areas where voter numbers, local communities or circumstances make it difficult to apply a two member ward footprint. 3. We concur with the Conservative Group that the current My Neighbourhood Area Forum boundaries are a logical framework around which to try and build the new wards. However, we would point out that this means that the Western Parishes Area Forum, which is always completely Conservative voting, is entitled to 6.6 councillors and yet is allocated seven seats in the Council’s submission. In contrast Penwortham, Lostock Hall and Leyland, where voting is historically more uncertain, are asked to ‘round down’ their numbers of councillors in order to achieve the number of 50. 4. Based upon a calculation using a base of 93,826 electors shared between 50 councillors this gives a member to elector ratio of 1:1876. Therefore the ideal number of voters in a two member ward is 3752 and in a three member ward is 5628. In Leyland, our proposals would result in seven two member wards which, in many respects, keep some recognisable semblance of the old ward boundaries. The major change moves the part of Buckshaw Village which is in South Ribble, to join Church Road and Worden estate to form a new Buckshaw and Worden ward. This allows the streets off Towngate in Leyland to be divorced from Worden estate, which never felt right and join the proposed Leyland Central ward, which is far more accurate in terms of a descriptor for the area. The old Golden Hill ward becomes Broadfield by losing a part of the Town Centre to Leyland Central and gaining the rest of what local people would recognise as ‘Broadfield Estate’ from the former Lowerhouses and Earnshaw Bridge wards. The proposed ‘Lowerhouse and Seven Stars’ ward which includes significant new build proposed at Altcar Lane is an almost perfect fit for the ward.
boundary which was in existence prior to the last boundary change. The smallest ward in Leyland is Leyland East at 3,570 electors (95.1% of the mean) and the largest is Leyland Central at 3922 electors (104.4%). In Penwortham, our submission is for two three member wards and two wards of two members, all coterminous with the boundary of Penwortham Town Council. Charnock ward boundary remains almost as it is, however significant new build at Pickering's Farm ensure that by 2019 the numbers of electors is more than sufficient to support two members. The communities of Kingsfold and Middleforth are joined together in our proposal to produce a three member ward with recognisable boundaries which would make sense to local residents, A similar analysis resulted in a new three member ward called Howick and Priory based upon residential areas along Liverpool Road and a two member ward Broadao which is an extended version of the current Broadao ward. Penwortham's smallest ward, both in terms of numbers and member to elector ratio, is Broadao at 3829 electors (102.0%). Middleforth and Kingsfold, a three member ward, would be the largest in terms of both numbers and member to elector ratio with 5924 electors (105.2%). It worth noting that all of Penwortham's wards are over 100% in contrast to the neighbouring area of Western Parishes is over 500 voters short of the number of electors required to produce the seven councillors that the Conservative are proposing. In Farington, our proposal would have two wards both of two members. Farington East would be marginally smaller at 3634 electors (96.8%) with Farington West having 3706 (98.7%). As stated earlier in our submission these boundaries are not exactly coterminous with Farington Parish Council's current boundaries, however they are logical both in terms of numbers and the placement of boundaries. We would suggest a change to the Parish Council boundary to reflect the new ward boundaries. The remaining areas of the old Central Area Forum is made up of the old Lostock Hall and Tardy Gate wards. In our view the old Tardy Gate ward never worked and some of those houses have been moved in to the new Walton le Dale ward (see later). Combining the old Lostock Hall ward with the remainder of the old Tardy Gate ward would result in a new Lostock Hall ward, represented by with 6005 (106.6%). In Bamber Bridge and the east of the borough we are proposing six two member wards. Samlesbury and Walton is a large geographical area of mostly rural communities which contains the parish of Samlesbury. Even so it has extended slightly in our submission to achieve an electorate of 3450 (91.9%). Coupe Green and Gregson Lane again has been extended to include the far eastern parts of Bamber Bridge along Brindle Rd/Kellet Lane has 3811 electors (101.5%). Bamber Bridge West boundaries remain exactly as they are now but still achieves 3595 electors (95.7%). Bamber Bridge North has lost some streets on the northern edge of Brindle Road to Bamber Bridge East but has some new build to come on the Arla Foods site plus the Fourfields estate from Bamber Bridge East. This leaves a Walton le Dale ward which is formed by the boundaries of Chorley Road, the rivers Darwen and Ribble and the cycle way along the old tramway from Bamber Bridge to Preston. This cycle way already creates a natural boundary along much of its length. In Bamber Bridge and the east, the smallest ward is Samlesbury and Walton with an electorate of 3450 (91.9%). The largest ward is Coupe Green and Gregson Lane with 3811 electors (101.5%). The South Ribble Labour Group wish to submit these proposals in the belief that they work in terms of numbers of electors, the smallest ward 91% of the required number of voters and the largest ward 106%, and that they work in terms of easily recognisable boundaries which would make sense to local residents.