

Leeds Liberal Democrats – Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Background

1. We take as our starting point the boundary changes implemented for the 2004 Local Elections. These proposals lent heavily on the official proposals submitted by Leeds City Council, and whilst the Liberal Democrats did not agree with all aspects of these proposals, nor did we agree completely with the final outcome, it is our view that taken as a whole the overall package of proposals provided good warding patterns which in the main reflected community identity and provided for effective and convenient local government and for the most part provided for electoral equality. Thus, we consider that if a ward continues to meet these criteria, it should not be changed for changes sake.
2. Where existing Wards continue to meet the criteria for warding patterns effectively, our view is that substantive changes would be unwarranted. Where they do these are minor and should only seek to address anomalies. We understand that the Council is proposing a number of such minor changes, which are likely to be uncontroversial. We will comment on these changes (where necessary) should they be accepted by the Boundary Commission in its draft scheme.
3. With regard to the names given to the Wards, we are not proposing any changes at this stage in the process but may do so once the LGBCE produces its draft scheme. For the small number of wards where we propose a significant reconfiguration, we propose new ward names. These are included further on in the narrative section of this submission and in the table in Appendix 1 to this document. We do not suggest that the names we suggest are perfect and would welcome alternative suggestions.

Our approach

4. We accept that the Boundary Commission is minded to support the City Council's recommendation that the city continue to be represented by 99 Councillors. Although it is our understanding that it is possible at this stage to propose wards which vary in size (i.e. do not have the same number of Councillors), which would then result in all out elections every four years, we do not propose this in our submission. We consider that 33 wards each of which is represented by 3 Councillors continues to be the most appropriate model for Leeds City Council.
5. We have used the Council's algorithm in calculating the size of the electorate in 2021 and we have drawn on figures provided to the Liberal Democrat Council Group to put this submission together using the City Council's maps to work out the total number of new households in each area and then applying the ratio of predicted electors:predicted households for the relevant polling district. At a sub-polling district level, we have as far as possible used official data to calculate values, but without direct access to the Council's software, there may be a small variation between the figures we use and those provided by the Council. We anticipate that these variations will be small and will not undermine the logic of our proposals in terms of electoral equality.
6. We have sought to optimise electoral equality. Where there is variance from the average, we propose this only because it enhances the delivery of other warding criteria.

Our proposals: the city centre and environs

7. It was an aspiration of the last Boundary review to include the whole of the city centre in a single ward. The re-drawn City and Hunslet Ward was thus 20% lower than the average ward size on the 2001 figures and 6% lower than the average based on figures predicted for 2006. This headroom was built in specifically to allow for the anticipated growth in city centre living. In practice, growth in city centre living has far outstripped even the most ambitious of estimates. City and Hunslet Ward is now 29% larger than the average based on 2015 figures and will be 77% larger based on the Council's predicted figures for 2021. This means that whereas previously it was possible to include the whole of the City Centre, Hunslet and part of Beeston Hill in a single ward, the huge growth in population means that this is not now possible. We therefore propose the creation of two wards each of which include part of the city centre.

Establishing an appropriate boundary between the two city wards.

8. We consider that there is merit in creating one ward which includes what is generally thought of by residents as "the city centre" – shops, bars, restaurants, the city station, cultural and civic amenities; there are strong arguments for political leadership and community representation in these areas to be provided from one ward. Most of these features are found within the northern half of the central urban core. The rest of the central urban core (the southern half) tends to be industrial and post-industrial in character - an area which is the focal point for future residential development but is also characterised by new industries. We consider that this should form part of a "southern" city centre ward.
9. It seems to us that if a clear and unambiguous boundary can be identified – one which is unlikely to alter (for example due to development), this is particularly desirable in a densely populated city location. We therefore considered what we felt were the three main options: a) a boundary based using prominent highways, b) a boundary using the river and/or canal c) a boundary using the railway line.
10. Using roads as a potential boundary proves to be difficult in the city centre. We have looked at a number of potential options but it is our view that there is no obvious road or adjoining roads running East to West that both provide for an unambiguous delineation between two halves of the city centre and also effectively address warding criteria. The most obvious potential boundary to the south of the city centre (Water Lane, Hunslet Lane, Hunslet Road) is too far south to provide for good electoral equality, would also divide the Holbeck Urban Village between two wards and does not provide a particularly effective way of addressing community identity. The most obvious boundary north of the river and station would be to use Wellington Street and Boar Lane as a boundary. It is considered that this would not provide for good community identify nor would it provide for efficient and convenient local government; it would divide the shopping area of the city centre into two wards – with shops on the southern side of Boar Lane in a different ward from those on the northern side. It would also mean that the railway station – a key gateway to the city for shoppers and tourists, would not be in the same ward.
11. Using the river as a potential boundary was considered. This is a clear boundary and delineates the "north bank" and "south bank" areas of Leeds City centre. It also has the advantage of keeping the whole of the retail core of the city centre. However it has one distinct disadvantage. It would divide the South Bank Leeds initiative into two wards. The Leeds South Bank Framework is a Council-led initiative to regenerate this southern

part of central Leeds. It aims, amongst other things, to create 35,000 new jobs and 4,000 new homes. Although the South Bank suggests an area immediately south of the river, the Framework area also includes a small sliver of land between Leeds city station and the river (<https://southbankleeds.co.uk/map>). It thus seems desirable to include the whole of the Leeds South Bank area in a single ward. Our conclusion is that using the southern-most railway line provides a solution that best meets the warding criteria. It keeps the whole or the retail civic leisure and cultural core and the Central Railway Station in a single ward but it also keeps the largest regeneration initiative (Leeds South Bank) intact. Our proposals for the city centre and its environs flow from this decision.

City North and Woodhouse

12. Having determined its southerly boundary along the railway, we propose to create a new ward which brings together the whole of the retail and entertainment core of the city centre (including the two major retail outlets, the theatres, art and sculpture gallery and the Leeds arena), the civic quarter (Civic Hall and Town Hall), both higher education institutions and the Leeds General Infirmary (with links to the University of Leeds as a teaching hospital) and most of the purpose built student residential accommodation in the city located outside of Headingley, the Little Woodhouse community and the Little London community (including the whole of the Little London PFI scheme) into a single ward. Many of these residents who live on the fringes of the city centre access the city centre to work and study, or see the city centre as their nearest shopping destination. *The Liberal Democrat proposal thus incorporates the following polling districts to create this new ward (HWE, HEF, HWG, HWH, HWK, CHA-part, CHC, CHD-part, CHI-part).*

City South, Holbeck and Hunslet

13. Having determined its northerly boundary along the railway line, we carefully considered a number of options for this ward that would satisfy the warding criteria. The current southerly boundary of the City and Hunslet Ward incorporates part of Holbeck (the so-called Holbeck Urban Village), but excludes the rest of Holbeck which is currently part of Beeston and Holbeck Ward. Although the Holbeck Urban village is different in nature from the rest of Holbeck - it is an industrial and post-industrial setting which is in the process of redevelopment) whereas the area around Holbeck Moor is a more settled community and is characterised by high rise blocks, social housing and brick back to backs, the Holbeck Moor area is only 15 minutes away from Leeds City Station on foot and it has always been an aspiration of the city to use this proximity to encourage regeneration across the area. Bringing the whole of Holbeck into a single ward, makes sense in terms of community but also makes sense in terms of governance. At present, the three Holbeck polling districts that (BHA, BHG and BHJ) that make up Beeston and Holbeck Ward, are physically separated from the rest of the ward – predominantly the settlement of Beeston - by the M621. This creates a significant physical barrier and thus permeability between the two communities is poor. We therefore consider that statutory objectives in terms of both community and geography would be better met by including these Holbeck polling districts together with the Holbeck Urban Village polling district in a new City Centre South Holbeck and Hunslet Ward. It should also be noted that prior to 2004, Holbeck formed part of the then City and Holbeck Ward. We also consider that Hunslet (essentially the area to the East of Dewsbury Road), has a defined identity and should continue to be in this ward. We also include the part of CHF that lies to the north of the motorway. This is very different in character from the rest of the polling district (essentially industrial) and is thus a better fit with the rest of this ward. *The Liberal*

Democrat proposal thus incorporates the following polling districts to create this new ward (CHA-part, CHD-part, CHE-part, CHF-part, CHH, CHJ, CHK, BHA, BHB, BHJ)

Beeston

14. A consequence of moving the Holbeck polling districts into the proposed City Centre South Ward is that Beeston becomes too small. This is addressed by reuniting Beeston Hill with rest of Beeston Ward (polling districts CHB, CHG and the part of CHF that lies to the south of the motorway). This area is the location of the Beeston Hill PFI housing scheme, it is part of the Beeston Hill 20mph traffic calming zone, residents here use facilities (GP surgeries, Health Centre, Mosques, Churches and Schools) that are located within the existing Beeston and Holbeck Ward, and they use shopping facilities further along Dewsbury Road and on Beeston Town Street. Including this area within a revised Beeston Ward therefore makes sense in terms of community identity. It also removes the large physical barrier of the motorway which divide these polling districts from the rest of the current City and Hunslet Ward by encompassing the whole of Beeston Hill (i.e. the area south of the M621). *The Liberal Democrat proposal incorporates the following polling districts to create the revised ward (BHC, BHD, BHE, BHF, BHG, BHH, BHI, CHB, CHG, CHF- part)*

Headingley and Hyde Park Ward

15. Headingley Ward has decreased considerably in size since the last boundary review. This is in large part due to a reduction in Housing in Multiple Occupation as students move into purpose built accommodation nearer to the universities and the city centre. We therefore propose rectifying this situation by reuniting the rest of Hyde Park (significant parts of the existing Headingley Ward – notable HED and HEE are considered to be part of Hyde Park and are known as such) and also incorporating the Woodhouse Carr community into the new ward. We would also propose including Woodhouse Moor (park) in within the ward – i.e. the part most local park for the majority of residents within this new ward. *The Liberal Democrat proposal incorporates the following polling districts to create this revised ward (HEA, HEB, HEC, HED, HEE, HEF, HEG, HWA, HWB, HWD (Woodhouse Moor only), HWI, HWJ, HWL, HWM)*

Kirkstall and Burley Ward

16. We propose two small changes to Kirkstall Ward to improve electoral equality and to better reflect community objectives. We propose moving part of the existing BSB polling district into Kirkstall to ensure that the whole of the Kirkstall Forge development is located within a single Ward. We also propose to reunite the Burley Lodges (known as the Burley Lawn area) with the rest of Kirkstall and Burley Ward, as was the case in the pre-2004 Boundaries. *The Liberal Democrat proposal incorporates the following polling districts to create this revised ward (KIA, KIB, KIC, KID, KIE, KIF, KIG, KIH, BSB-part, HWC)*

Other changes

17. One additional change relates to Burmantofts and Richmond Hill. To better reflect community identity and to improve electoral equality, we propose to move part of CHI into Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward. This is the area bounded by Regent Street and Skinner Lane that adjoins Burmantofts and Richmond Hill. This area more properly belongs within the Lincoln Green area of the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward. We



also propose to move from into Burmantofts and Richmond Hill the small area of land bounded by the river and South Accommodation Road to more accurately reflect community identify (part CHA).

18. Although we have not commented on it in this submission, we have seen what is proposed in relation to Harewood and Crossgates and Whinmoor in the Council's submission. We consider that these are sensible proposals and support them.

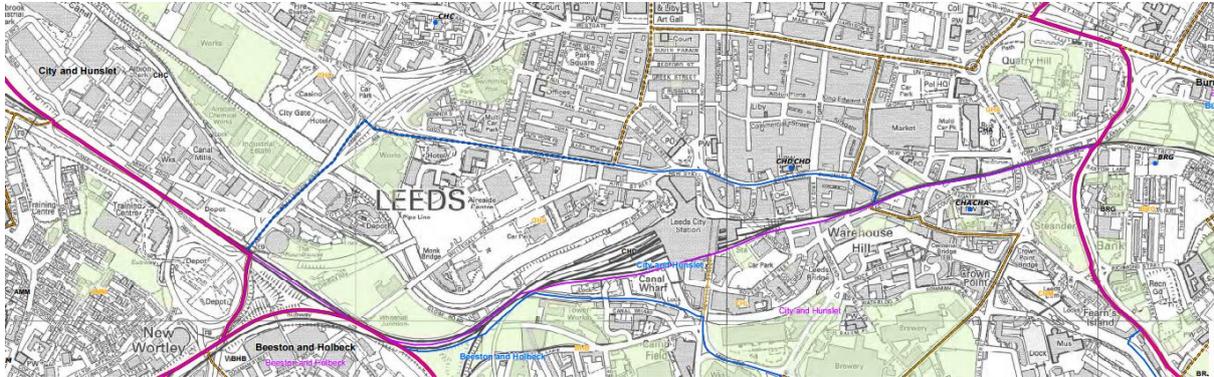
Appendix 1 – Summary of major proposed changes

Old Ward	New ward	Constituent Polling districts	Number of electors (2021)	% Variance
Headingley	Headingley and Hyde Park	HEA HEB HEC HED HEE HEF HEG HWA HWD (Woodhouse Moor only) HWB HWI HWJ HWL HWM	19208	+5%
Hyde Park and Woodhouse	City North and Woodhouse	HWD HWE HWF HWG HWH HWK Part CHA CHC Part CHD Part CHI	19339	+6%
City and Hunslet	City South Holbeck and Hunslet	Part CHA Part CHD CHE Part CHF CHH CHJ CHK BHA BHB BHJ	17338	-5%
Beeston and Holbeck	Beeston	BHC BHD BHE BHF BHG	18845	+3%

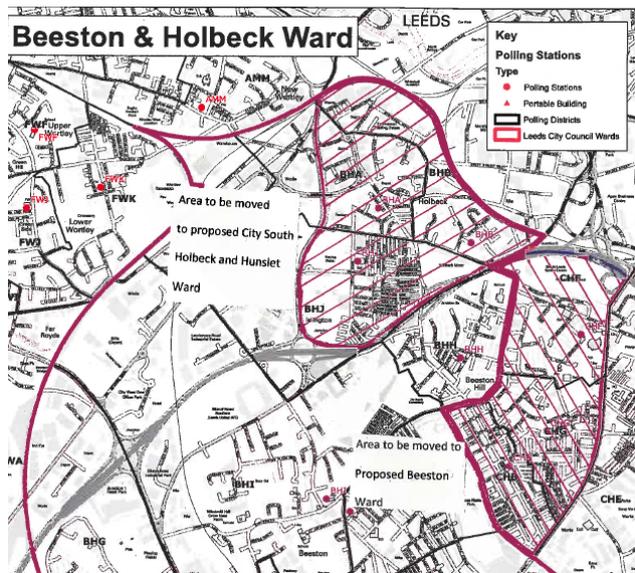
		BHI CHB CHG Part CHF		
Kirkstall	Kirkstall	KIA KIB KIC KID KIE KIF KIG KIH HWC Part BSB	17799	-3%
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	BRA BRB BRC BRD BRE BRF BRG BRH BRI BRJ BRK BRL BRM Part CHI Part CHA	18766	+3%

Appendix 2 – Maps

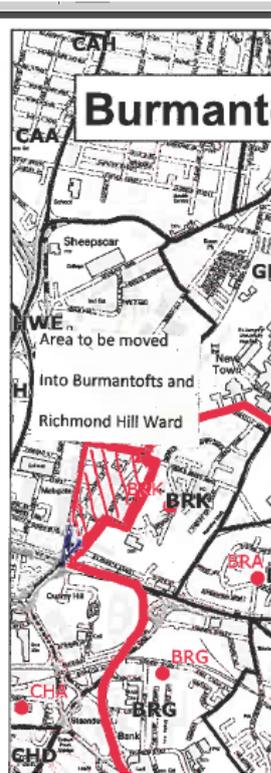
The purple line below shows the proposed boundary between the two new city centre wards, following the railway line



This map shows the Holbeck and Beeston Hill areas which we propose should be moved to City South Holbeck and Hunslet Ward and Beeston Wards respectively.



The map below shows the part of CHI to be moved into Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward



The map below shows part of CHA (bounded by the blue and thick red/yellow and red line to be moved into Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward

