

# Ashby de la Zouch Civic Society



[REDACTED]  
10th January 2016

Email: [REDACTED]

## **Leicestershire Proposed Boundary Changes and Local Government Boundary Commission Submission For Ashby de la Zouch**

We are bitterly disappointed that views expressed by the Town Council, Ashby Civic Society And local Councillors have been ignored.

We continue to strongly object to proposal for new electoral divisions as proposed by Leicestershire County Council July 2015 and accepted by the Boundary Commission.

Despite the County Council's public consultation on its initial proposals lasting only 14 days it attracted 14 objections to the proposal for North West Leicestershire. The proposal to transfer Moneyhill Ward from Ashby to Valley has been replaced by Castle Ward to Valley in their final submission. This new proposal is equally unacceptable.

Ashby is a important successful market town, growing rapidly and voted 8th best market town in which to live in the Guardian survey.

The commission says that as well as having approximately the same number of voters in each division , " the pattern of division should reflect the interests and identity of the local communities as well as promoting effective local government". This currently is what we have.

The proposal put forward by the commission does achieve the aim of electoral equality. However it destroys interests and identity of the community. It also denies effective and convenient local government.

We believe therefore that to destroy the two most important aims to achieve equality of representation is totally unacceptable and amounts to blatant gerrymandering.

Blackfordby is a nearby village to Ashby but has little interest or identity with Ashby town. The Town Council , NWLDC, and the Neighborhood plan all consider Ashby as a coherent town represented and operating as a whole entity. Although Blackfordby is governed by the Ashby Town Council, it is as a matter of convenience.

Currently Blackfordby is represented at district level by their own district councillor and at county level level by the Forest and Measham Councillor.

LCC propose to move Ashby Castle Ward to the Valley division which is a collection of small villages and hamlets distant from Ashby and bearing no relationship or synergy with Ashby.

To have Castle Ward and it's key resources stripped away from the rest of the town and be represented together with numerous tiny hamlets is clearly nonsensical. The proposal to put some of the towns key assets. Ashby Castle, the Bath Grounds open space, the Parish Church and half of the upper Ashby School to be represented by a councillor who's key priority is a series of rural villages and hamlets will not lead to effective government.

We would ask you not to adopt this submission , leave Ashby as one congruent division until such time as it grows to size which demands division, when it can be represented by two coherent town councillors.

The County Council proposals are based around the need to adjust the Valley Ward and the mathematics of equalising wards. they do not consider the integrity and identity issues involved.

The Ashby Division is currently 107% of target size and growth will increase this to 110% by 2021.

The growth predicted for Ashby is very optimistic and although it will be achieved eventually is very unlikely to happen by 2021.

We would therefore propose that no changes are made to the Ashby wards until the next boundaries review.

In the period considered the current Ashby division is within the maximum variation. The civic society proposal for 2021 is still within the 10% limit.

We would therefore respectfully ask that you amend your proposal and leave Ashby as a integrated governed entity.

Regards

C.Tandy:

Vice Chairman, Ashby de la Zouch Civic Society