

The Rt Hon John Hayes MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

RECEIVED

05 FEB 2016

Review Officer (Lincolnshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

3rd February 2016

Dear Sir,

I am writing regarding the proposals for the new electoral boundaries for Lincolnshire County Council.

Of particular concern to me is the redrawn boundary for the Crowland ward, which is hard to understand and will be, I suspect, highly confusing for local residents and indeed their councillors. The addition of Deeping St James and a significant part of Spalding (a size roughly equivalent to the town of Crowland itself) means that wholly separate settlements, with very different local identities and characteristics, are being lumped together into one electoral ward.

That this new ward does not include the (much nearer) Whaplode Drove village, strikes residents as unreasonable, and so councillors have raised their concerns with me that the new boundary will cause confusion, and, worst of all, would inevitably result in the needs of Spalding becoming prioritised over those of the smaller places represented.

I note that the Boundary Commission report recognises the importance of striking a balance - in the draft recommendations it states that the Commission "are not against the joining of distinct communities to achieve a better electoral balance". Along with local residents, I am unclear how these unusual borders constitute a better balance.

In my view the proposals for Crowland do not constitute the "effective and convenient local government" specified in the Boundary Commission's desired outcomes, and I would like my views on the matter noted in the review.



I would also like to add that I have reservations about cutting the overall number of councillors for the County from 77 to 70. Whilst a reduction of seven councillors may have marginal financial benefits, it has a cost too, in terms of reduced democratic representation; resulting in a heavier workload imposed upon diligent councillors who, in some cases, are responsible for large geographical areas.

I do appreciate that in a rural area where the population is dispersed across small towns and villages that boundary changes are never easy, especially given the financial pressures on local government, but we must have respect for long standing borders, and implementing changes which risk inhibiting cohesive and democratic representation should, I know you will agree, be avoided.

In this spirit, I sincerely hope you will reconsider your proposal for Crowland.

Yours faithfully,



pp **The Rt Hon John Hayes MP**
South Holland & The Deepings
Minister of State
Home Office