

# Folkestone Town Council



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3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013

FAO: William Morrison, Review Officer  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London  
EC1M 5LG

Dear Mr Morrison

## **Electoral Review of Shepway**

I am writing further to your letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013 formally announcing the electoral review of Shepway District Council.

As Folkestone Town Council is directly affected by the electoral review, members discussed the proposed submission by Shepway District Council outlined within their public report A/12/49 at its meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013 and unanimously resolved:

*'That Folkestone Town Council supports the continuation of District and Town wards remaining coterminous'.*

Folkestone Town Council currently has 18 Councillors serving coterminous wards with the existing district wards, and has a projected electorate of 36,275 by December 2018. Folkestone Town Council understands the importance of electoral equality but hasn't reviewed its optimum number of electors to members which currently stands at 1:2015 over eight wards, since forming in 2004.

Shepway District Council have stated that their proposed new district ward boundaries would mean it is not possible for Folkestone Town Council to remain coterminous and initially proposed amalgamating the town's wards into four large wards.

Folkestone Town Council is strongly opposed to four large wards believing that they do not reflect the interests and identities of the local communities. Your guidance reiterates that it is important that wards and boundaries reflect, as far as possible, the interests and identities of the area's communities. Shepway District Council has subsequently agreed to support the suggestions of individual towns and parishes.



Folkestone Town Council supports consistency with the current ward names rather than compass names, as ward names are important to local people and they should reflect communities and avoid confusion wherever possible, and therefore supports the following ward names:

<b>Proposed Ward</b>
Cheriton & Morehall
Folkestone East
Park
Foord
Harbour
Central
Harvey West

With the understanding that, Shepway District Council, are proposing a 1:3000 ratio for District Councillors, and to meet its resolution to remain coterminous, Folkestone Town Council, has considered the implications of maintaining the status quo of 18 members, but believes equality isn't immediately practical across the seven new wards:

<b>Proposed Ward</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Electorate Equality Ratio 1:2015</b>
Cheriton & Morehall	8690	4	2172
Folkestone East	5920	3	1973
Park	3004	2	1502
Foord	2829	2	1414
Harbour	5768	2	2884
Central	8464	4	2116
Harvey West	1600	1	1600

36275 electorate  
2015  
= 18 councillors

Folkestone Town Council has compared its number of members and electoral equality with a variety of other town councils, and several have more than 25 members with a ratio of less than 1:1000

Weston-Super-Mare	31	Wokingham	25
Woodley	25	Aylesbury	25
Morecambe	26	Bracknell	27
Kendal	28	Great Aycliffe	30

Folkestone Town Council appreciates that the:



*"LGBCE are able to make recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements (i.e. the number of Councillors for the parish and for each parish ward, and the number, names and boundaries of parish wards) as part of an electoral review. However, this is restricted to parish Councils that are affected by our recommendations for changes to district wards and/or county divisions."*

As such, Folkestone Town Council would like to propose reducing its ratio to 1:1500 (which is still the highest ratio in the district), and recommends that the following scenario which ensures electoral equality is considered as part of the overall 'Electoral Review of Shepway.'

<b>Proposed Ward</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Electorate Equality Ratio 1:1500</b>
Cheriton & Morehall	8690	6	1448
Folkestone East	5920	4	1480
Park	3004	2	1502
Foord	2829	2	1414
Harbour	5768	4	1442
Central	8464	6	1410
Harvey West	1600	1	1600

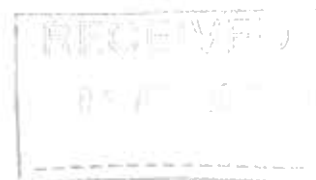
$$\frac{36275 \text{ electorate}}{1500} = 25 \text{ councillors}$$

Folkestone Town Council is a progressive Council, which is one of the largest in the country, and its 18 members work tirelessly for the benefit of the town's residents.

Folkestone Town Council actively seeks to take over devolved services and is currently negotiating with Shepway District Council for the devolution of the towns parks and gardens (the budget for which equates to the equivalent of the current towns precept) and Kent County Council for the return of the Museum collections (valued in excess of £1.5m).

The Council's current committee structure works well but these will need to be reviewed as the Council takes on more responsibility, as it is feasible that the committees would need to be restructured or increased.

In conclusion, Folkestone Town Council would like to remain coterminous and supports the seven names for the district wards; it also believes that the proposal outlined above for a 1:1500 ratio, fulfils the criteria as laid down in statute, as all wards meet the criterion of electoral equality and where there are separate communities in the same ward, they have been put together to create a harmonious ward pattern.



Folkestone Town Council therefore commends its resolution and proposal for the wards of Folkestone town, to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, for consideration during the electoral review of Shepway District Council.

Yours sincerely



**Jennifer Childs**  
**Town Clerk**

