



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

6 August 2013

Middlesbrough Local Government Boundary Review- Submission

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission draft recommendations for Middlesbrough. I received my copy of the new draft electoral map and I am concerned about some aspects of the new proposals.

Middlesbrough Borough Council agreed a set of new boundary proposals and they were submitted as the council's official position on how the borough should be structured. These proposals were developed in the cross party Overview and Scrutiny Board and were agreed at Full Council with support from the Labour Councillors and several Independents.

These proposals acknowledged, and spoke to, the criteria as laid out by the Boundary Commission. Each ward was kept to within plus or minus of 5% of the set population size per councillor. The draft recommendations do not succeed in achieving such a target with six wards having a discrepancy of 6% or more above or below the relevant population figure per councillor. I realise that the 5% figure is an arbitrary one set by the council. However, it is preferable for the difference between the desired population size per councillor to be lower rather than higher and that is an outcome achieved by the council's map but not by the commission's.

The council's submission included a detailed map of the borough with population sizes per councillor and any variations and a detailed explanation of how the proposed ward map took account of local communities. All this detail was exhaustively discussed by elected members in the Overview and Scrutiny Board and agreed at a meeting of the full council. However, several submissions from some individual local councillors are mentioned in the draft proposals as arguments in support of the commission's recommendations. Their submissions are not in any way detailed, do not include maps or refer to population size per councillor. I am concerned that such submissions, which do not plead any evidence in support, are given any credence in your deliberations.

My primary issue with the draft proposals as written by the Local Government Boundary Commission is that Middlesbrough Borough Councillors who represent, and live in, Middlesbrough submitted a ward boundary map which kept to the commission's stated criteria and was agreed by the full council with cross party support following scrutiny by the cross party Overview and Scrutiny

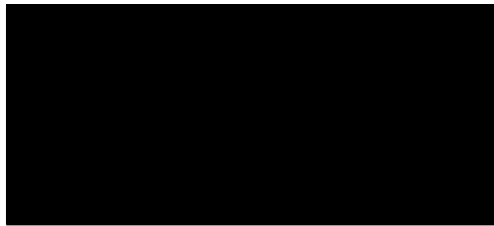
Board. Whilst it would be unreasonable to expect the commission to accept the council's submission wholesale I would have at least expected the council's views to have been given significant weight and for your draft recommendations to bear some relation to those of the duly elected representatives of Middlesbrough Council. It is clear from your recommendations that very few if any of the council's suggestions have been accepted and the draft map bears little or no resemblance to the one put forward by the council.

Whilst I readily acknowledge that the commission will reach its own conclusions, the recommendations as drawn, totally ignore the views of the majority of the elected representatives of Middlesbrough.

I trust that the commission will note my support for the representations made by Middlesbrough Council and also note my very significant concern and some considerable disappointment that the thoughtful, well-informed and considered contributions of the vast majority of the members of Middlesbrough Borough Council are being ignored.

I would humbly request that the commission reconsider. I would very much appreciate a note on receipt of this letter and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Andy McDonald MP
Member of Parliament for Middlesbrough