

Our Ref: CR/PD  
 Your Ref:  
 Date: 24 August 2015

Town Hall  
 Market Street  
 Chorley  
 PR7 1DP

William Morrison  
 Review Officer (Lancashire)  
 Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Millbank Tower  
 Millbank  
 LONDON  
 SW1P 4QP

Dear Mr Morrison

**CHORLEY'S RESPONSE TO FIRST STAGE CONSULTATION ON THE REVIEW OF ELECTORAL DIVISIONS IN LANCASHIRE**

In response to the proposals to review the electoral divisions of Lancashire, Chorley Council considered the matter at a Council meeting on 21 July 2015 and reached all party agreement on a formal response.

**POPULATION GROWTH IN CHORLEY – 8 divisions**

We are aware that population growth in certain districts including Chorley, has prompted the review. Members have expressed concern at the timing of the review – firstly undertaking the review in isolation from a review of borough wards which could also address population growth and secondly, starting it halfway through the County Council's electoral cycle. It is therefore imperative that the final recommendations are published no later than 5 April 2016. If there is any slippage on timing, Councillors feel that the review should be postponed until after the May 2017 County Council elections.

We have noted in the LGBCE documentations that there is an expectation that there will continue to be 84 County Councillor seats. Below are 2015 and projected 2021 electorate statistics.

	2015 current average electorate per division	2021 projected average electorate per division
<b>Chorley District</b>	11966	12355
<b>Lancashire County area</b>	10709	11083

These figures highlight that the average electorate of divisions in Chorley is currently significantly higher than the Lancashire average and that continues to be the case into 2021.

Based on these figures it would seem to be essential that Chorley's electoral divisions increase in number from 7 to 8, as the only way to address such inconsistency.

This is strongly evidenced by the supporting documents to this response which show expected growth by county division, borough ward, down to polling district level.

## **CONFIGURATION OF 8 DIVISIONS IN CHORLEY**

Our proposals for change are therefore based on 8 divisions. This requires significant consequential change to the configuration of divisions to achieve the required equality of electorate, by division - whilst also meeting the LGBCE guidance on reflecting the interests and identities of local communities and the promotion of effective and convenient local government. The **attached two alternative proposals** have a similar footprint with Proposal 1 keeping current whole borough ward boundaries within proposed divisions and Proposal 2 also maintaining coterminosity, with the exception of moving one polling district to accommodate a parish council area. Both proposals offer slightly different configuration of divisions but both have the approval of the full Council and we submit the following supporting evidence:

### **1. Delivering electoral equality for local voters**

As indicated above, the eighth division is required to bring the Chorley average in line with the rest of Lancashire. There has been, and will be further significant new housing development and the 2021 figures are based on the Council's Local Plan which has been found to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate and has been formally approved by the Council in 2015.

The proposals have sought to achieve electorate equality and stay within the 10% variance recommended. The proposed new divisions (including suggested new names) are set out below including the variances from the projected Lancashire division average. The proposals have sought to retain whole wards within divisions, making it easier for electors to understand who represents them and making it clear to those elected, who they represent. Coterminosity is a clear recommendation in the LGBCE guidance on the configuring of divisions to help maintain effective and convenient local government.

In achieving this however, one division (new Chorley Rural East) is 47 electors outside the 10% variance (highlighted in red below). The electorate is under, rather than over, the average and we think such a very small projected number should not render this proposal unacceptable as it is far outweighed by the benefits of coterminosity.

The proposals generate the following average electorates and variances

## Proposal 1

8 proposed new divisions	Average electorate forecast for 2021	variance from LCC average (forecast to 2021)
1 Euxton with Buckshaw	11781	+6.30
2 Clayton with Whittle	10859	-2.02
3 Hoghton with Wheelton	10242	-7.59
4 Chorley Rural East	9928	<b>-10.42</b>
5 Chorley North	10198	-7.99
6 Chorley Rural West	11805	+6.51
7 Chorley Central	10299	-7.07
8 Chorley South	11375	+2.63

A map of the proposed new divisions is attached. Chorley Rural East is a large area geographically, very rural for much of the area and representing 3 distinctive borough wards (with a total of 5 borough councillor seats) and a significant number of parish councils including some very small ones like Rivington and Anglezarke. The number of potential electors outside the 10% variance is extremely small at 47 and therefore insignificant.

## Proposal 2

8 proposed new divisions	Average electorate forecast for 2021	variance from LCC average (forecast to 2021)
1 Chorley North West	11781	+6.30
2 Chorley North	10859	-2.02
3 Chorley Rural North	10242	-7.59
4 Chorley Rural East	9928	<b>-10.42</b>
5 Chorley East	10198	-7.99
6 Chorley Rural West	10766	+2.86
7 Chorley West	11976	+8.06
8 Chorley South	10737	-3.12

Again a map of the proposed new divisions is attached. As in Proposal 1 above, the projected electorate for the proposed Chorley Rural East division leaves it outside of the 10% variance from the average by only 47 electors.

## 2. Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities

The proposals maintain the current borough wards (with a small exception in proposal 2). These are well established areas, represented by borough councillors elected on a by thirds basis. Most wards are 2 and 3 member wards but there are a number of single member wards in the most rural areas.

The areas where there has been large scale housing development (predominantly Buckshaw Village) are no longer adequately represented electorally and if left unchanged,

the current division (Chorley North) would be considerably outside the variance. The proposals therefore seek to address concerns in key areas like Buckshaw village.

The proposals brings together both North and South Euxton borough wards into one division, reflecting the fact that these areas form one community and are represented by one parish council. They were previously split across 2 divisions.

The proposals seeks to maintain whole parishes within divisions where possible recognising that parishes do reflect local communities. However this is not entirely possible and the very large parishes of Coppull; Clayton le Woods; and Whittle le Woods are across two divisions – as they are currently. Proposal 2 does however, seek to reduce the number of split parishes by moving one polling district, which places all of Coppull Parish in one division.

### **3. Promoting effective and convenient local government**

The key benefit of our proposals, as highlighted above, is ensuring coterminosity. The proposals follow existing ward boundaries which in themselves, reflect local communities. This is an important factor and key in the LGBCE guidance which states that “where existing district ward boundaries match the boundaries of electoral divisions, we call it coterminosity where coordination between the two councils in question can help to deliver effective and convenient local government.”

We hope you will give the utmost consideration to our proposals which have been well thought out and introduce change where population growth makes this essential, but also recognise and retain important existing boundaries for the benefit of the elector, the elected and the effective delivery of local services.

if you would like discuss any aspect of the proposals or the rationale behind them, or require any additional information, please contact either Phil Davies (Electoral Services Manager) [phil.davies@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:phil.davies@chorley.gov.uk) or Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager) [carol.russell@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:carol.russell@chorley.gov.uk) .

Yours sincerely



**Chief Executive**

Email: [gary.hall@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:gary.hall@chorley.gov.uk)

Tel: 01257 515104