



HELSTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Chris Dawson Town Clerk



27th July 2017

Review Officer (Cornwall)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
Millbank
LONDON
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Dear Sirs

Electoral Review for Cornwall

I am writing in response to your letter dated 13th June 2017 requesting Helston Town Council's views on the Commission's proposal of 87 councillors for Cornwall Council from 2021. The Town Council discussed the matter and the questions contained in your letter at its meeting on 20th July 2017.

1. Do you think 87 is the right number of councillors to be able to take decisions effectively?

No. Reducing the number of Cornwall Councillors this dramatically was considered to be an erosion of local democracy. Cornwall Council is already officer-led and a reduction in councillor numbers would require even further delegation of decisions to unelected officers. This would also place unacceptable added pressure on the officers as Cornwall Council continues to stream-line its workforce to meet its savings targets.

2. Would a council size of 87 enable the Council to represent the interests of all Cornwall's communities?

No. Cornwall is obviously a rural county and the argument has been put many times that to maintain an equality of electors per Division would result in some Divisions covering a huge geographical area and include multiple parishes. To serve such multiple parishes would require so much time that prospective candidates would be restricted in the main to the wealthy and retired – a further erosion of democracy.

Ask any councillor why they stood for election and the answer will be to serve their local community with committee work being secondary. Any reduction in councillor numbers will reduce their ability to take on this local casework effectively unless there is dedicated Cornwall Council officer support in much the same way as a Member of Parliament has a small support team.

3. If you don't agree that Cornwall should be represented by 87 councillors, what would your alternate number be, and why?

Since the creation of Cornwall Council, Helston has had the anomaly of returning two and a bit Cornwall Councillors with the Helston Town Council West Ward being included in a Division with the nearby town of Porthleven. This Division includes the most deprived residential area of Helston and a major public open space in the form of Coronation Park and Boating Lake and therefore it is considered that it should be served by a councillor dedicated to Helston.

Calculating the numbers from the projected electorate figures for 2023, for Helston to return two Cornwall Councillors would require a county-wide number of 101. Accepting that this figure is not on the table, Helston Town Council supports Cornwall Council's resubmission of 99 Cornwall Councillors which could still return two councillors for Helston within the +/- tolerance.

Other comments

The Town Council does not agree that the existing Community Network boundaries should remain rigid throughout this process. There is no apparent reason why the Community Network boundaries could not be re-drawn at the conclusion of the review.

Thank you for considering Helston Town Council's submission.

Yours faithfully

Mr C Dawson FILCM, MAAT
Town Clerk