



ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL

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Aldeburgh Town Council's Response to:

Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on proposed boundary ward changes

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Aldeburgh Town Council views with some concern proposed changes to the ward boundary structure in East Suffolk.

ATC understands the rationale behind the proposals but suggests a bespoke solution rather than the current proposals based purely on the size of the electorate.

Aldeburgh may well have a relatively small number of people registered to vote, but this figure does not realistically represent the actual number of people in the town at any one time. We would submit that, in the case of Aldeburgh, the size of the electoral register should not be the final arbiter in determining the number of ward representatives for the town and the immediate area.

Aldeburgh has a large number of second homes, the occupants of which do not always register to vote, and it is also a destination resort for hundreds and thousands of holidaymakers each year.

To base the proposed ward changes on the electoral register is, ATC believes, a simplistic solution to a perceived problem.

The demands made on the Town and District Councils during the busy summer months and at weekends throughout the year are immense. ATC believes that one ward representative would simply not cope with this workload.

The current proposals seem at odds with the East Suffolk Tourist Strategy, which sets out in detail a blueprint for encouraging visitors to towns such as Aldeburgh. ATC believes there is little point in attracting people to the Aldeburgh area if there is insufficient ward representation to resolve the myriad of issues which arise during busy periods.

ATC notes the geographic size of the proposed area, to be called, putatively, Sandlings. While this area might conform to the statistical parameters of the proposed ward changes, little consideration seems to have been given to the practical difficulties of a single ward member adequately fulfilling his or her duties as a District Councillor. It is difficult to believe that the democratic process for local people is well-served by these proposals.

ATC also notes information provided within the boundary change consultation document. In inviting participants to propose new ward boundaries, the advice is as follows: "In promoting effective local government, the geographic size and links between parts of the ward should be considered."

ATC argues that the geographic size of the proposed area called Sandlings, the links between the ward and the provision of a single ward representative militates against good local governance.

A large number of local people have contacted Aldeburgh Town Council to register their disapproval of the proposed boundary changes.

Many have pointed out that the name of Aldeburgh is set to disappear under the current plans, pointing out that the town is synonymous world-wide with tourism and culture. Residents believe it sends a very poor message to the broader community when the local authority downgrades representation for abstract, statistical reasons.

ATC believes that special consideration should be given to Aldeburgh in determining the number of ward representatives. The equation between the electoral roll and its visitor numbers inaccurately portrays the requirements of the populous and it is vital that this point is given the most serious consideration.