

# The Canterbury Society

5 August 2013

The Review Officer (Canterbury)  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London  
EC1M 5LG

The Canterbury Society opposes the proposed reduction in the number of Canterbury City Councillors from 50 to 38 as we believe that such a change would reinforce the current 'Strong Leader and Executive' system of government, which we regard as having led to a failure to represent the views of residents of Canterbury. We outlined our concerns about this system in the chapter on City Governance in *The Future of our City: A Residents' Vision for Canterbury* ([www.canterburysociety.org.uk](http://www.canterburysociety.org.uk))

Prior to the adoption of the Executive System of governance, Canterbury City Councillors served, on average, on 5.2 committees, whereas the average now is 1.5. This reduction in participation by most councillors has been caused by the Executive system, which concentrates decision making too narrowly within a small group of councillors. The reduction in participation, together with a desire to save money, has led, we believe, to this proposal to reduce councillor numbers.

While we support the aim to ensure that the number of residents being represented by councillors is equitable, it is important to note that currently each Canterbury City Councillor represents, on average, 3,000 residents - the highest figure in East Kent. Reducing the number of councillors will therefore weaken the representation of communities and the electorate in general. We urge a return to the Committee system of government and that no reduction in councillor numbers be considered before we have acquired a democratic and accountable system for the running of Canterbury City Council.

Yours sincerely

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