

We have just submitted our response to the Boundary Review Committee, the text of which follows:

A) Introduction

1. Positive Action Group (P A G) is a political lobby group, not a political party. It is a 'not for profit' Association the objectives of which are to promote an awareness and understanding of politics and citizenship. We encourage members of the public to participate actively in politics by taking part in discussions, making their views known, voting, standing for office and holding public office.

The Association is funded by membership subscription and donations.

2. It is noted that any recommendations of the Boundary Review Committee 2011 will not be considered for the General Election 2011.

3. The terms of reference of the Committee are as stated in the approved Tynwald Motion July 2010:

"That, pursuant to section 11(5) of the Representation of the People Act 1995, Tynwald requests the Governor in Council to recommend the appointment of a Boundary Review Committee to review the number and boundaries of the constituencies for election to the House of Keys and to report thereon to Tynwald"

B) Discussion

1. P A G suggests that addressing a fundamental inconsistency within the current electoral process will enable the Committee to meet its terms of reference.
2. P A G believes that the democratic process, via the act of voting, should be equitable. By that we do not mean that the popular adage 'one person, one vote' need be adhered to in the Isle of Man, but it is essential that voters have confidence in the total electoral process.
3. The existing constituency boundaries are based on geography and tradition combined with an attempt to attain an average equal number of voters per M H K.
4. In trying to satisfy these conditions in 1986 (the Butler report) ,it appears that the principle of equality of voting was disregarded. It means that in certain constituencies each voter has more than one vote and is thus being advantaged by having more than one parliamentary representative.
5. Based on the the figures provided in the document 'Electorate on 1st October 2010' it is easy to extrapolate the imbalance:

Constituencies with 3 MHKs - Onchan, Rushen (Combined total 13,678 voters)

Constituencies with 2 MHKs - Douglas East, Douglas North, Ramsey, Douglas South, Douglas West (Combined total 23,361 voters)

Constituencies with 1 MHK - Ayre, Castletown, Garff, Glenfaba, Michael, Peel, Malew & Santon, Middle. (Combined total 21,976 voters)

Thus out of a total published electorate of 59,015 (1st October 2010), 23% will have 3 votes each, 40% will have 2 votes each and 37% will have 1 vote each.

[Graphically that inconsistency is simply understood - See Appendix 1]

6. P A G agrees with comments about Democratic Values at paragraph 3.2 of previous Boundary Review Committee Interim Report (January 2006):

"However as great, if not greater importance in maintaining the principle of one man, one vote, is the concept of equality of representation. The current amalgam of one, two and three seat constituencies which means that a voter in one constituency is able to cast three votes, whereas a voter in the next constituency is only able to cast one, can be considered a far greater inequality than the current variation in numbers of voters per constituency - addressing one problem in isolation could only be, at best, a partial solution."

7. P A G considers that the existing constituency arrangements provide a democratic deficit for at least 77% of electors and it is this factor that we urge the Committee to address.

8. In so doing three possible boundary outcomes will emerge:

(i) 24 constituencies each returning one member

(ii) 12 constituencies each returning two members

(iii) 8 constituencies each returning three members

9. P A G favours the third option of 8 x 3 member constituencies, believing that such a configuration may facilitate constitutional reform in the future.

C) Conclusion

1. P A G regards equality of representation to be the fundamental principle that should guide the Committee to its own conclusions.

2. P A G favours the formation of 8 constituencies each returning 3 Members of the House of Keys.

Appendix 1

Hello!



Hello!



I am a 25 year old mother of two and I live in Onchan. I have *three* votes



Hello!

I am a 35 year old mother of two and I live in Laxey. I have *one* vote



Hello!



I am a 16 year old student and I live in Port Erin I have *three* votes.



I am a 16 year old Student and I live in Peel. I have *one* vote.

