

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

PRINCIPAL AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW – LANCASTER AND WYRE 30th June 2011

Report of the Head of Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider a request from the Local Government Boundary Commission for the Council's views on a suggested boundary review

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee considers whether it wishes to support the suggested review of the boundary between Lancaster and Wyre in the Lower Dolphinholme area, and authorises the Head of Governance to respond to the Boundary Commission accordingly.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A letter has been received from the Local Government Boundary Commission with reference to a request made by a Wyre resident in 2007 for a boundary change to bring Lower Dolphinholme within the Ellel ward of Lancaster City Council rather than being in the Wyresdale ward of Wyre Borough Council. A copy of the letter of the 25th May 2011 with enclosures is at Appendix 1. The letter indicates that the Boundary Commission would not seek to start a review without the support of both Lancaster City Council and Wyre Borough Council. The views of this Council are therefore being sought.
- 1.2 The Boundary Commission conducts two types of review. In a principal area boundary review such as is being suggested, the boundary between two principal councils would be considered. In an electoral review, the electoral arrangements of a Council, such as the number of councillors, names, numbers and boundaries of wards, and number of councillors per ward are considered.
- 1.3 One of the reasons for conducting an electoral review is electoral imbalance between wards. Some Members may recall that in March 2011, the Council noted that the electoral imbalance in Ellel is currently greater than 45%, and resolved that officers make representations to the Boundary Commission to establish whether the Commission would be willing to undertake an electoral review of the district for implementation prior to the 2015 city council elections, and that it be suggested that this could be addressed by redrawing the boundary line in Ellel ward, without the necessity to review the whole district.
- 1.4 At the time the letter of the 25th May was received, no response had been received from the Boundary Commission in relation to the request for electoral review. Clearly the suggested principal area review could affect

further the electoral imbalance in Ellel, and the Head of Governance sought clarification from the Boundary Commission on this point. This resulted in a letter of the 6th June 2011, at Appendix 2, which indicates that a principal area boundary review would be carried out in advance of an electoral review.

- 1.5 The procedure for a principal area boundary review is for the Boundary Commission to undertake consultation, which normally lasts for a period of six weeks. Once the review has been completed the Commission makes recommendations to the Secretary of State. When considering what boundaries to recommend, the Commission must have regard to the need to secure effective and convenient local government and the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The suggested boundary change is being put forward at the request of a Wyre resident on the basis that the change would reflect the identity and interests of the local community. The proposed change appears to be relatively minor, affecting relatively few electors whose transfer from one authority to another would have a negligible impact on electoral quality in either principal Council.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to consider whether or not it would support the suggested boundary review.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Copies of this report have been sent in advance to the ward members, and to the clerk to Ellel parish council, offering the opportunity to pass on their views to the Committee.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 4.1 The options open to the Committee are for it to take the view that it would either support or would not support the proposed review, and to authorise the Head of Governance to inform the Boundary Commission accordingly. Another option would be to refer the matter to full Council for consideration.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee's views are sought.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising directly from this report. The Boundary Commission would undertake a consultation process with affected residents if it were to proceed with a review.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Boundary Commission is at this stage seeking a view as to whether the Council would support a review. If a review is undertaken it will be undertaken by the Commission in accordance with the statutory requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As this would be a relatively minor change, it would not have any significant financial implications for the Council. Any administration costs associated with the changeover would be met from within existing budgets.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her role as Head of Governance, and there are no specific Monitoring Officer comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letters from Boundary Commission 25th
May and 6th June 2011

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