

# **COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

## **Electoral Review – Warding Patterns**

**13 September 2012**

### **Report of the Democratic Services Manager**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee on the next stage of the Electoral Review of the district and to consider whether the Council should make a warding pattern submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

**This report is public**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Committee considers whether the Council should make a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on warding patterns; and**
- (2) If so, to consider when and how the submission should be drafted and agreed by the Committee to meet the LGBCE's deadline of 15 October 2012.**

#### **(1) Introduction**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that Council has authorised this Committee to consider and approve any submissions to the LGBCE during its electoral review of Lancaster district. The Committee endorsed a submission to the LGBCE regarding Council size on 15 March 2012.
- 1.2 On 24 July 2012, the LGBCE wrote to the Chief Executive (copy letter appended) to inform him that the Commission was minded to recommend a council size of 60 members as the most appropriate for Lancaster City Council. The Commission also announced the start of the next stage of the electoral review, which would be a period of information gathering to develop a new pattern of warding arrangements for Lancaster district.

#### **(2) Information gathering stage**

- 2.1 This second stage of the review is expected to conclude on 15 October 2012. The Commission wants to develop a good understanding of community

identity in the district to help construct a pattern of wards that achieves “good electoral equality, reflects community identities and interests and provides for effective and convenient local government” with “strong, easily identifiable boundaries.”

- 2.2 Officers understand from email correspondence with the LGBCE that it is usual for a council and/or its political groups, to make their own submissions to the LGBCE on warding arrangements

**(3) Proposal Details**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider whether any submission should be made on behalf of the Council regarding warding patterns and, if so, to consider the process for drafting and agreeing the submission in time for the closing date of 15 October 2012.
- 3.2 Any warding pattern proposal should demonstrate how it helps provide effective and convenient local government and, if it would result in any worsening of equality of representation or community identity, the proposal should say why this is acceptable. The LGCBE will give more weight to submissions supported by evidence and argument than those which just present a point of view.

**(4) Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

- 4.1 The Council has the option of making a submission or not. Whether the Council does or does not choose to make a submission at this stage, there will be a further 8 week opportunity to make representations on the Commission’s provisional warding pattern recommendations which are expected to be published in January 2013.
- 4.2 Should the Committee decide that it wishes to make a submission, Members will need to consider how to draft and approve the document. The approach taken might depend on the depth and detail which Members wish to include in the submission. For example,

Option A:

- to discuss the content of the submission at this meeting, with the submission drafted by the Democratic Services Manager after the meeting and agreed by email with Committee Members. (This option might suit a limited submission, such as a simple re-iteration of the Council’s wish to address the electoral imbalance in Ellet Ward by re-drawing the boundary in that Ward. This would reflect the original Council resolution, in March 2011, which led to the review.)

Option B:

- to arrange an extra meeting of this Committee, before 15 October 2012, to draft and agree a submission. (This approach would seem most practical if Members wish to develop very detailed proposals.)

4.3 Members are reminded that any submission must be finalised and submitted to the Commission by their deadline of 15 October 2012.

4.4 There is, of course, the option for political groups and individual Councillors to make their own submissions direct to LGBCE.

**(5) Conclusion**

5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the issues set out in this report in relation to the next stage in the electoral review process.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> <b>(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b></p> <p>None directly arising from this report. The Commission aims to recommend warding patterns that have good electoral equality, reflect community identities and interests and provide for effective and convenient local government.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>None directly arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Information Services:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Property:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Open Spaces:</b> None.</p>

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

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

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Council agenda and minutes 2 March and 16 November 2011.

Council Business Committee agenda and minutes 12 January and 15 March 2012.

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