

**Electoral Review – Arrangements for making  
Submissions to the Local Government Boundary  
Commission on behalf of the Council**

**30 September 2020**

**Report of the Head of Democratic Services**

To seek a decision on whether a response on behalf of the Council should be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to any or each of their consultations during the electoral review of Lancaster City Council, or whether responses are best left to individual Councillors or Political Groups.

**This report is public**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That Council considers the options in Paragraph 4 of this report and forms a view.**
- (2) That, if option b) is chosen, Council Business Committee be given delegated authority to consider and approve submissions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Council, both on council size and on warding patterns, and on any other matter that may arise in the course of the review.**
- (3) That, if option c) is chosen, Council determines the size, composition, membership and Chair of the working group at this meeting.**

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Members will recall that last month the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) for England recently provided Members with a remote presentation regarding the electoral review of the district, the first phase of which – determining Council size - has now commenced.
- 1.2 As explained at the briefing, the LGBCE's review will first decide the council size, that is, the number of councillors, and then the number of wards, the ward names and boundaries. The arrangements recommended by the Commission following the review will take effect for the next city council elections in May 2023.

- 1.3 The Commission will itself consult widely during the review process. Until December 2020 representations are invited regarding the appropriate size for the Council, and subsequent consultations will be to decide upon appropriate warding patterns. There will be the opportunity at each consultation stage for political groups and individual members to put forward their views. However, Council may also wish to formulate submissions on behalf of the Council as a whole. This report seeks a view on that matter.

## **2.0 Timetable for each Stage of the Review**

- 2.1 The Commission has indicated that it hopes to have received enough evidence by the time it meets on 19 January 2021 to make a decision on the most appropriate council size for the Council. Commissioners have therefore requested evidence from the Council, political groups and members by 8 December 2020 on the most appropriate council size for Lancaster City Council. They have indicated that they will seek written evidence in support of proposals and will require a good rationale for what is proposed, particularly where any substantial change is suggested. After the briefing in August, the Commission provided Councillors with an information pack, which was emailed out to Members by Democratic Services. This explains how to make effective representations and sets out the criteria the LCBCE uses for drawing up new electoral arrangements. If any Councillor has not received a copy for any reason, this is available by email from the Head of Democratic Services on request. The Commission will test the rationale and underpinning assumptions in any proposal. All proposals will need to be based on technical evidence, for example on governance arrangements and committee places.
- 2.2 Once a decision has been taken on council size, the Commission will start its next consultation on 26 January 2021. This will invite proposals for new ward boundaries.
- 2.3 The Commission will use responses to that consultation to draw up its own draft recommendations for new boundaries across Lancaster District. The Commission will then consult on the proposals it has made in July and August 2021. Respondents will be able to comment on them and propose reasoned alternatives.

## **3.0 Process During the Last Review**

- 3.1 There is no requirement for any submissions to be made on behalf of the Council as a whole. It is a matter of choice. During the LGBCE's last review of the City Council between 2012-2014, responses were made on behalf of the Council by Council Business Committee (CBC). CBC's terms of reference in the Constitution include "To determine the method of response and, where necessary, agree responses, on behalf of the Council, to requests for responses to consultations made to the Council."
- 3.2 The responses submitted by CBC during 2012/2014 were mainly restricted to administrative issues that might arise during the running of local elections. Given the number of political groups on the Council it was felt it would be difficult to reach any kind of consensus otherwise. It should be noted that the Head of Democratic Services and Elections Manager could submit their own responses regarding these issues, if the Council chooses option a) above.

## **4.0 Options**

4.1 There is a number of options available, including:

- a) Not to submit a response on behalf of the Council and to leave this up to individual groups on the Council and/or individual Councillors.
- b) To submit a response on behalf of the Council at some or all stages of the consultation process and for Council to delegate this responsibility to the Council Business Committee.
- c) For Council to establish a Boundary Review Working Group at this meeting, tasked with drafting and submitting consultation responses on behalf of the Council at some or all of the consultation stages.

## 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to make a decision regarding a Council response to the LGBCE consultations during the course of the current electoral review.

<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)
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None directly arising from this report.

<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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There are no legal implications arising from this report.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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Any changes to the size of the council may have financial implications, but not until 2023/24. These changes once identified will be built into the estimate process at the appropriate time.

<b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Human Resources, Information Services, Property and Open Spaces:**  
None

<b>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b>
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The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

<b>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b>
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The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Debbie Chambers <b>Telephone:</b> 01524 582057 <b>E-mail:</b> dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk
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None