

Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

23 June 2021

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the method of responding to the Boundary Commission for England's consultation in its initial proposals for England's Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) To consider the options, set out in paragraph 3.0 of this report, regarding how the Council might respond to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) at each stage of the consultation process during the BCE's Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.**
- (2) To note that the first stage public consultation on the BCE's initial proposals ends on 2 August 2021 and that individual Councillors and/or political groups are invited to submit their comments.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) formally launched its 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies in January 2021.
- 1.2 The aim of the review is to make constituencies more equal in terms of the numbers of electors each contains as, due to population changes since the last review, the number of electors in some constituencies is much higher than in others. The BCE is required by legislation to equalise the number of electors in each constituency; in doing so, the number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543. Full information, including maps, is available on the BCE's website <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>
- 1.3 On 8 June 2021, the BCE published its initial proposals for new constituencies. An eight week consultation period ending on Tuesday 2 August 2021 is now underway, inviting comments on those initial proposals. This will be followed by a further two rounds of consultation in 2022, which will additionally include a number of public hearings. Following the conclusion of all three consultation periods, the Commission will look at all the evidence received and form its final recommendations, to be presented to Parliament by July 2023 for approval, with the new constituencies taking effect at the next General Election.

2.0 Consultation Process: Initial Stage

2.1 The initial Proposals for a new Lancaster County Constituency and a new Morecambe and South Lakes County Constituency are appended.

2.2 This report asks whether Council wishes to respond to the BCE and, if so, how that response might be formulated, setting out some possible options below.

3.0 Options

- a) **Not to make a response at all as a Council but leave it to political groups and individual Councillors to respond as they wish and for the Returning Officer to respond on the practicalities of the proposals for administering elections.**

An opportunity to raise issues as a Council would be missed with this option.

- b) **To make a written response as a Council on the administrative issues that arise for delivering elections on the proposed boundaries. (Political groups and individual Councillors can still make their own responses as they wish.)**

This option would allow Members to flag up particular issues as a Council, which may pose practical difficulties at election time. It would also allow groups and individual councillors to raise any political issues in their own responses.

- c) **To make a written response as a Council on the proposals in general. (Political groups and individual Councillors can still make their own responses as they wish.)**

The Council's political composition may mean that a response under this option would be difficult to agree, since there are bound to be political ramifications with any proposals for boundary changes.

Whilst there is no preferred option, if Members do wish to submit a response on behalf of full Council, the officer recommendation would be to delegate the formulation of response at all stages of the process to Council Business Committee (CBC). CBC is already authorised to make responses to the Local Boundary Commission for England on its ongoing review of the City Council's ward boundaries and it is a function of the Committee make consultation responses on behalf of the Council..

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

None directly arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

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 Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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REVIEW OF PARIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

The initial proposals published by the Boundary Commission for England on 8 June 2021 mean that the Lancaster and Fleetwood and Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituencies would cease to exist in their current form.

The proposal looks to create a Lancaster County Constituency of 19 wards. This will comprise the following 11 City Council wards:

Bulk, Castle, Ellel, John O'Gaunt, Lower Lune Valley, Marsh, Scotforth East, Scotforth West, Skerton East, University and Scotforth Rural and Upper Lune Valley.

Also included in the proposed Lancaster County Constituency would be eight Wyre Borough Council wards:

Brock-with-Catterall, Calder, Garstang, Great Eccleston, Hambleton and Stalmine, Pilling, Preesall and Wyresdale.

The remaining 16 City Council wards (shown below) form part of a proposed Morecambe and South Lakeland County Constituency, which would have 19 wards in total.

Bare, Bolton and Slyne, Carnforth and Millhead, Halton-with-Aughton, Harbour, Heysham Central, Heysham North, Heysham South, Kellet, Overton, Poulton, Silverdale, Skerton West, Torrisholme, Warton and Westgate.

Also included in the proposed Morecambe and South Lakeland County Constituency are three South Lakeland District Council wards:

Arnside and Milnthorpe, Bowness and Levens (part) and Burton and Crooklands.

The electorate for the proposed constituencies would be

Lancaster – 75,521

Morecambe and South Lakeland – 74,037