

**Bolsover District Council**

**Council**

**2 March 2016**

**Review of Electoral Arrangements**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

- To advise members of the planned electoral review of Bolsover District.
- To seek relevant delegations to the Chief Executive to take forward the review in line with statutory timescales.

**1 Report Details**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has advised that as part of its work programme over the next two years, it intends to carry out a full review of the electoral arrangements in Bolsover. *(A similar review will also be carried out in North East Derbyshire during the same time period).*
- 1.2 Under the LGBCE guidelines if either of the following conditions are found to exist, then consideration is given to the need for a review:-
- Any local authority with a ward that has an electoral variance in excess of 30%. This means a ward having at least 30% more (or less) electors in it than the average for the authority as a whole; and/or
  - Any local authority where more than 30% of the wards have an electoral variance in excess of 10% from the average for that authority.

In Bolsover five wards currently have an electoral variance of 10% or greater from the average.

- 1.3 The Commission must conduct its review in accordance with statutory criteria and is bound to have regard to the following:
- a) The need to secure equality of representation;
  - b) The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - c) The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

1.4 The purpose of the review is to address the imbalances in the electoral variances in accordance with the statutory criteria. In so doing, the Commission will decide the pattern of wards for the entire Council including as follows:-

- Total number of councillors (council size)
- Number of wards
- Names of wards
- Boundaries of wards

The proposed review timetable is as follows:-

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>
Preliminary Meetings	February-March 2016
Draft Council size submission deadline	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2016
Final Council size submission deadline	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Council Size Meeting	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
Warding Patterns Consultation	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2016 - 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
Draft recommendations Commission Meeting	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2017
Draft recommendations Published	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
Draft recommendations Consultation	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2017-19 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
Final recommendations Commission meeting	16 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
Final recommendations published	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
Order Laid	October 2017
Implemented	Elections 2019

The LGBCE will, during the preliminary period, assist the Council in the preparations which are needed to participate in the review work, including meeting with councillors.

The lead commissioner for the review, Professor Paul Wiles, will be attending the Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, to discuss the management of the process. A copy of the presentation and members briefing prepared by the Boundary Commission is attached.

- 1.5 There are two key stages within the timetable, namely the submission of proposals relating to the Council size (meaning the appropriate number of councillors for Bolsover District) and the subsequent pattern of electoral ward arrangements once the Council size is determined by the Commission. It should be noted that any person or organisation may submit proposals relating to Council size and electoral warding arrangements.
- 1.6 The first stage of the process for the Council is to submit its proposals in relation to the Council size. The submission must provide a good rationale and evidence to support the number of councillors which the Council believes is required for effective and convenient local government.
- 1.7 In determining the right Council size, the Commission will consider three areas:-
- The governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
  - The Council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
  - The representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the Council on local partner organisations.
- 1.8 All issues should be considered against future trends or plans as well as current arrangements.

## **2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 To advise members of the planned electoral review of Bolsover District and seek relevant delegations to the Chief Executive to take forward the review in line with statutory timescales.

## **3 Consultation and Equality Impact**

- 3.1 Details of proposed consultation are set out in the timetable contained within paragraph 1.4 of the report.

## **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 The options are explained in the report.

## **5 Implications**

### **5.1 Finance and Risk Implications**

Members should note that the review comes at a time when the elections team is managing a Police and Crime Commissioner election in May 2016, an EU Referendum on 23 June 2016 as well as County Council and possible Mayoral Combined Authority elections in 2017. The usual annual canvass arrangements

and the continued impact of Individual Electoral Registration must also be managed during this time.

To assist in taking forward the review, the Chief Executive has commissioned the assistance of a former Association of Electoral Administrators consultant, Peter Smith, who has managed a number of local authority electoral reviews. The cost of this will be met from the Transformation Fund.

**5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection**

As set out in the report.

**5.3 Human Resources Implications**

The main human resource implications will be staff time from the Elections, Governance and ICT/GIS Teams.

**6 Recommendations**

6.1 That Council delegate to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, power to:

- (a) Co-ordinate the Council’s response to the Local Government Boundary Commission’s review of Bolsover District’s electoral arrangements.
- (b) Formulate and recommend to the Council submissions to the LGBCE, in accordance with the timetable, relating to the Council size and the electoral warding arrangements.
- (c) Advise the Council on the Local Government Boundary Commission’s draft and final recommendations, as appropriate, during the review process.

**7 Decision Information**

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No.
<b>District Wards Affected</b>	All.
<b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b>	N/A

**8 Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
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A B	Presentation Members' Briefing	
<b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)		
None.		
<b>Report Author</b>		<b>Contact Number</b>
P Smith and M Kane		