

**To the Chair and Members of the
ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE**

**PROPOSED ELECTORAL REVIEW BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY
COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND IN JUNE 2013**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information on the circumstances regarding the proposed inclusion of a review of the Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission in its 2013 work programme which was announced recently by the Mayor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Committee is requested to note the report.

BACKGROUND

3. The Mayor has an aspiration to reduce the number of Councillors on the Council. This is something that can only be achieved as part of a wider electoral review. The Mayor has met the Boundary Commission to discuss his proposals.
4. The representative from the Commission indicated that they would want certainty that a review would be completed and a decision whether or not to undertake a review would not be made until after all issues around the proposed referendum on the Council's governance arrangements were resolved, including the outcome if it went ahead. The Commission would also require the Mayor to have some support for the review from within the Council.
5. In the event that a review was implemented, the Council would need to produce detailed proposals as part of the process which would require significant input of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee as well as input of the Council. In particular, the Council would need to demonstrate how the political management and governance of the Authority, along with the community representative roles of Councillors would be discharged with a reduced number of councillors.
6. The Commission has already conducted a number of reviews where it has been asked to consider a reduction in the number of Councillors, including Stoke where the number was reduced from 60 to 40. However there has currently not been a review which has seen a reduction as significant as that originally proposed by the Mayor, of two thirds of the Council.

7. Given the length of time that has to be allocated to reviews the Boundary Commission plans its work programme up to 2 years ahead and taking account of the issues agreed that a provisional date for a review could be including in its work programme for June 2013, with a final decision to be taken following the outcome of the consultation exercise, or following the referendum if this went ahead, and following the Mayoral Election in 2013 if that remains in place.
8. Should a review be undertaken, it is likely that it would take 12-18 months to complete. Any changes arising from the review would not be implemented, therefore, before May 2015.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information regarding discussions between the Mayor and the Boundary Commission on a proposed electoral review and there are no other options.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

10. An electoral review would not impact directly on the Council's key priorities but would have an indirect impact on the management and governance of the authority.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The Local government Boundary commission for England was established by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 as an independent body to carry out reviews of Local Authorities. The commission is responsible to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons and carries out reviews in accordance with statutory requirements.
12. In the event of a review being undertaken the Commission would establish a date and timescale for this and the authority would need to operate within the timescale for the review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no particular financial implications associated with this report, however there will be a financial impact associated with the conduct of a review.
14. The 2011/12 Attendance Allowance budget is currently £908,350 (including on-costs) which equates to an average per Member of £14,400 per annum, which would give an indicative cost per Member of any change in Council size arising from any Electoral Review.

CONSULTATION

15. Consultation would be undertaken as part of the review process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

File Note – Meeting with Local government Boundary Commission

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