

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

**UPDATE ON ELECTORAL REVIEW**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. To note the present position regarding the boundary review and to identify the role the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee will have in the review as it progresses.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that:
  - i. the Committee notes the report and agrees to meet at key points throughout the process to consider the work of the Cross Party Working Group and make recommendations to the Working Group and Council as required; and
  - ii. in order to be able to make a recommendation to Full Council on Council size, this Committee holds an Extraordinary Meeting during the week commencing 22nd July 2013.

**BACKGROUND**

3. Later this summer, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England will begin an electoral review of Doncaster. The first part of the review will consider the total number of councillors that should be elected to the council in future, how many Councillors are needed to allow the Council to take decisions effectively, manage the business and responsibilities of the Council successfully, and provide effective community leadership and representation.
4. They will then go on to consider new ward boundaries to ensure that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters and that local wards reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
5. The Commission will meet with the Elected Mayor, Group Leaders and others before briefing all Council Members on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July. The Commissioners and their staff will outline the process that the electoral review will follow by using a short presentation followed by an opportunity for questions.
6. Parish Council representatives have also been invited to a briefing later the same day.

## DETAIL

7. Before the formal start of the review, the Commission has asked the council to put forward its views about the number of councillors for Doncaster. The council and any other interested parties have until late July to submit their initial proposals to the Commission.
8. In order to reach a decision on Council size, the Commission require significant amounts of data from the Authority, including:-
  - Current electorate figures by polling district, parish and parish ward
  - Electoral Registers
  - GIS mapping of polling districts and parishes
  - Parish electoral arrangements, including wards and numbers of councillors
  - 5 year electoral forecasts to ensure electoral arrangements viable in the long term
  - Political management and decision-making structures - is it influenced by the Council's decision-making processes or is the structure fitted around the Council size?
  - What are the demands of time on elected Members? Could the Council operate more effectively with a different number?
  - What structure does the Council operate for scrutiny of the Council and outside bodies and what demands are placed on Members?
  - How much time Councillors spend in surgeries and ward matters and do we have local area committees?
  - A range of other questions designed to build up a picture of the demands placed on Councillors and the effectiveness of current arrangements.
9. This information is currently being collated and will be made available on the Electoral review page of the Council's website when finalised.
10. Any decision made by the Commission will have regard to submissions made by the Council and others. We do know that the Intervention Commissioners have already made their own submission to the Commission and are recommending a reduction in Council size of around one third to approximately 40-42 Members and a move to whole Council elections, rather than the election by thirds we currently utilise.
11. The Council size submissions are due by the end of the July and a cross-party working group has been established with participants nominated by Group Leaders and one independent member to develop a detailed initial submission from the Council.
12. The first meeting of the working group was held on Friday 28 June 2013. The Chairman of this Committee, Councillor Moira Hood, has been appointed to the working group along with Councillor Phil Cole

who is also a member of this Committee. Councillors Hood and Cole will be able to report on the work of the working group to date.

13. Members will see from the attached timetable at Appendix 1 that the Council's Submission will need to be considered at the Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> July and submitted to the Commission the following day. Other key dates are listed below:-
  - A public consultation on the number of councillors by the Commission is scheduled to start in September.
  - A decision on the number of councillors is due to be taken in November. There will then be a further public consultation on warding arrangements based on the proposed number of councillors.
  - The Commission expects to publish its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements in Doncaster in May 2014 and consult on them until the end of July.
  - Final recommendations will be published in October 2014 before Parliament is asked to give approval in time for elections in 2015.
14. Members will receive regular updates and information will be published on [www.doncaster.gov.uk/electoralreview](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/electoralreview).

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

15. The process for the review is determined by statute and the guidance issued by LGBCE. The options available to the Council and other interested parties are primarily its recommendations on the optimum number of councillors to take decisions effectively and manage the business of the authority and, subject to the LGBCE judgement on Council size, contribute to the debate on any subsequent warding changes that may be required. In both cases the final decision rests with the LGBCE subject only to the ratification of parliament.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

16. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 consolidated the electoral review provisions previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The process for the review is summarised in the guidance published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England which is available on both the Commission's and the Council's website. The terms of reference for this committee include the making of recommendations to Full Council in respect of electoral reviews.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. The cost of the electoral review is met by the Council. The costs to date are limited to officer time and the hosting of material on the

Council's website. Some publicity to encourage participation by the public and others at key stages will be required.

## **REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTRIBUTORS**

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Boundary Commission Guide on Council Size  
Member Briefing

**JO MILLER**  
**RETURNING OFFICER**

## APPENDIX 1

### Timeline

<b>April to October 2013</b>	Preliminary period
<b>8 July 2013</b>	Preliminary meetings
<b>25 July 2013</b>	Full Council
<b>26 July 2013</b>	Council Size Submission due
<b>Late July/Early August 2013</b>	LGBCE meet with Group Leaders/ Cross-Party Working Group to discuss Council's Submission
<b>13 August 2013</b>	LGBCE makes its "minded to" decision on Council size
<b>3 September to 14 October 2013</b>	LGBCE undertakes a public consultation
<b>12 November 2013</b>	LGBCE makes a decision on Council size
<b>26 November 2013 to 3 February 2014</b>	LGBCE undertakes a public consultation on warding arrangements
<b>13 May to 28 July 2014</b>	LGBCE publishes and consults on draft recommendations for electoral