

To the Chair and Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

ELECTORAL REVIEW – NEW WARD BOUNDARIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has been carrying out an Electoral Review of Doncaster. The first part of the review considered the total number of councillors that should be elected to the Council in the future.
2. The LGBCE are considering new ward boundaries to ensure that each Councillor represents roughly the same number of voters, and that wards reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
3. Final recommendations from the review will be published by the LGBCE on 25th November 2014 and, following ratification by Parliament, be put in place for the 2015 'all out' Council elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. It is recommended that the committee:
 - I. Note the current position of the Electoral Review being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and expected announcement date;
 - II. Consider the possible implications of the election timetable outlined in the body of the report.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. There will be a reduction in the number of Councillors representing citizens. There are currently 63 Councillors, three in each of 21 Wards, elected by "thirds". In the future:
 - There will be 54 or 55 Councillors, with each Councillor representing a similar number of electors,
 - Wards will be different sizes; with one, two or three Councillors representing each Ward.

- All Councillors will be elected at the same time in 2015, ‘all out’ Council elections, and again in 2017 to align with the four year Mayoral election cycle.

BACKGROUND

6. The first part of the Electoral Review considered the Council size, the total number of Councillors that should be elected to the council in future. This was based on 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. The LGBCE recommended that an appropriate number of Councillors would be 54, a reduction from the current number of 63.
7. Public consultation on the LGBCE’s draft warding recommendations to accommodate the reduced number of Councillors took place from 27th May to 11th August 2014. Following feedback from local people and groups, the LGBCE made several changes to the draft recommendations. This included substantial alterations to ward boundaries in four areas of Doncaster and an increase in the proposed number of councillors from 54 to 55.
8. An extra phase of consultation ran from 24th September to 26th October 2014. Further detail is provided on the LGBCE’s web site <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/yorkshire-and-the-humber/south-yorkshire/doncaster-fer>
9. LGBCE’s web site also includes interactive mapping where it is possible to generate indicative maps with revised ward boundaries <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/2215>.
10. The criteria applied by the LGBCE, and its evidential and procedural requirements, are set out in its detailed technical guidance <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/policy-and-publications/guidance>
11. The Department of Communities & Local Government have ordered Doncaster to have whole Council elections from 2015, rather than elections by “thirds”, and then again in 2017 to coincide with the Mayoral Election. This also means that there is no longer a requirement to have three Councillors in each Ward.
12. The table below outlines the electoral cycle. There will be three elections on polling day in May 2015, which will be our biggest call on staff ever.

2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Election • All out Council Election (all Councillors) • All out Parish Council Elections
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police & Crime Commissioner Election
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral Election • All out Council Election (to bring Councillor elections in line with the Mayoral Election)

- 2019 • European Election
- 2020 • General Election
- 2021 • Mayoral Election
- All out Council Election
- All out Parish Council Elections (Parish Councillors had office extended to 6 years in 2015)

13. Final recommendations from the review will be published by the LGBCE on 25th November 2014 and, following ratification by Parliament, be put in place for the 2015 elections.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

14. Not applicable, report for information purposes only.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

15. Not applicable, report for information purposes only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY PRIORITIES

16.

Priority	Implications
We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.	The revision of Council size and Ward boundaries intends to provide good, electoral equality across the borough.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

17. There is an assumption that the LGBCE will provide the Council with appropriate technical or geographic information to enable the revised boundaries to be administered effectively in time for the elections in May 2015.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. 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

19. The cost of the Electoral Review has been met by the council. The costs have been limited to officer time and the hosting of material on the council's website.
20. The proposed change in the number of councillors from 63 to 55 (a reduction of 8) will reduce the amount of Councillor Allowances payable. The full year saving equates to £96,960 (based upon the current 2014/15 allowance rates). Because the reduction in Councillors will not take place until the May 2015 election, the saving will be delivered over 2 financial years:

	Full Year Saving	2015/16 Saving	2016/17 Saving
Ward Boundary Changes (reduction of 8 Cllrs)	96,960	88,880	8,080
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EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

21. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act. Also to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

CONSULTATION

22. This report has no significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement		Crime & Disorder	
Human Resources		Human Rights & Equalities	
Buildings, Land and Occupiers		Environment & Sustainability	
ICT		Capital Programme	

BACKGROUND PAPERS

23. Report to Elections and Democratic Structures Committee: 'Electoral Review - Proposals for New Ward Boundaries' dated 28th January 2014.

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