

SUBJECT:	LGBCE ELECTORAL REVIEW PROGRAMME 2013-2014 – LINCOLN – DRAFT WARD BOUNDARY PROPOSALS
DIRECTORATE:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
LEAD OFFICER:	STEVE SWAIN, PRINCIPAL DEMOCRATIC OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise on a proposal by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a review of the Council's electoral arrangements.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has advised that, as part of the development of its work programme 2013 -14, Lincoln has been identified as requiring an electoral review. The LGBCE is the responsible body for the conduct of electoral reviews i.e. the internal electoral arrangements of an authority (the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards).

- 2.2 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 division or ward that has an electoral variance in excess of 30%. This means a division or 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 divisions or wards have an electoral variance in excess of 10% from the average for the authority.

- 2.3 On the basis of the December 2011 electoral register, 36.36% of the wards within Lincoln have an electoral variance of over or under 10% (see analysis at **Appendix 1**).

The LGBCE has concluded, therefore, that an electoral review should be undertaken for Lincoln.

- 2.4 Statutory Criteria requires the LGBCE to review electoral arrangements from "time to time". The last review for Lincoln was concluded in 2006 when a number of the wards in the City had their boundaries realigned. When conducting electoral reviews the LGBCE 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.

2.5 The LGBCE has a timescale for the review process, as set out below:

Preliminary period	June 2013 – Jan 2014
Council size consultation	Jan – Feb 2014
Submission of information and proposals for ward boundaries	April – Jul 2014
Draft recommendations consultation	Sept – Dec 2014
Completion of review: final recommendations published	Feb 2015

3. The Review

3.1 Each year, the LGBCE audits the levels of electoral imbalances arising in each English local authority area in order to establish whether there is a need for an electoral review. Imbalances can arise from changing demographics and new developments, and movement of electors between local authority areas, as well as within individual areas.

3.2 There are two elements the LGBCE takes into account when assessing the need for an electoral review. Both relate to the level of electoral representation within a local authority area. Electoral inequality exists when voters are either over-represented or under-represented by their local councillor(s) in relation to average levels of representation for the authority as a whole.

3.3 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 division or ward that has an electoral variance in excess of 30%. This means a division or 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 divisions or wards have an electoral variance in excess of 10% from the average for the authority.

3.4 On the basis of the December 2011 electoral register, 36.36% of the wards within Lincoln have an electoral variance of over or under 10% (see analysis at **Appendix 1**).

The LGBCE has concluded, therefore, that an electoral review should be undertaken for Lincoln.

3.5 Council size is the starting point in any electoral review as it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards of the authority. The LGBCE cannot consider the patterns of wards without knowing the optimum number of electors per councillor, which is derived from dividing the electorate by the number of councillors to be elected to the authority. Following a period of consultation earlier this year the LGBCE have advised that Lincoln should have 33 councillors. This concurred with the City Council's submission made as part of the consultation.

- 3.6 The LGBCE are now consulting on ward boundaries and attached as **Appendix 2** is a draft submission. In addition to support the submission are **appendices 3 and 4** which are the figures to support the submission and plan of the proposals. The City Council must submit its proposals by the 7 July and it has to be agreed by Full Council.
- 3.7 When conducting electoral reviews the LGBCE is bound to have regard to the following:
- The need to secure equality of representation;
 - The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - The need to secure effective and convenient local government

All of these factors have been considered when preparing the draft Submission.

- 3.8 Constitutional Review Group considered the proposals and agreed that they should be submitted, without amendments, to the Ethics and Engagement Committee on the 23 June and then on to Council on the 24 June 2014.

4. Strategic Priorities

- 4.1 A full review will enable the Council to improve its local government arrangements, to ensure the delivery of fair, effective and convenient local government to citizens.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

- 5.1.1 There is no specific budget for a full local government boundary review and therefore all costs will have to be absorbed within the Council's existing budget.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

- 5.2.1 The Boundary Commission must adhere to certain rules when undertaking a review. The main piece of legislation which they work to is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. This act consolidates and amends 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.

5.3 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

- 5.3.1 All local government electors within Lincoln have the opportunity to make representations to the LGBCE in respect of council wards and size. The LGBCE must have regard to the need to secure effective and convenient local government and take into account the identities and interests of local communities.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That, subject to any amendments, the draft Submission and supporting documents be submitted for approval to Full Council

Key Decision No

Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply No

Call in and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply? No

Does the report contain Appendices? Yes - 4

List of Background Papers: No

Lead Officer: Steve Swain
Principal Democratic Officer
Telephone 873439