

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....14th July 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Parliamentary Constituencies Review

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report relating to the Parliamentary Constituencies review currently being undertaken by the Four UK Boundary Commissions in their respective parts of the UK.

The Boundary Commission for England has formally commenced its part of the review.

The Commission was required by statute to allocate a precise number of constituencies to England (calculated from a fixed total for the whole of the UK of 600 constituencies), and it must ensure that every constituency had an electorate that was within 5% of the UK electoral quota. Any other factors which may be considered are subordinate to this “electoral parity” rule.

The number of electors whose names appear on the register of parliamentary electors published between 1 December, 2010 and 1 February, 2011 would be the basis for the review and the recommendations to Government on proposals for changed constituencies.

Using this data, the UK electoral quota had been calculated as 76,641 electors. Therefore every constituency in England must have an electorate that was no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473.

In Stockton’s case, the figures for the 2010 and for 2011 registers of parliamentary electors showed there to be 66,990 and 67,333 electors in the Stockton North Constituency and 73,924 and 74,521 in Stockton South. The relevant details from the Commissions website were provided to Members.

In view of the requirements to meet the rule about the defined number of Constituencies and the 5% electoral parity target, about which there was no choice, the Boundary Commission had concluded that very extensive

and wide ranging changes to the existing pattern and composition of constituencies would be necessary.

In particular the Commission had said that many of the existing constituencies which had an electorate that was currently within the 5% parity target would nonetheless, need to be altered in order to create feasible constituencies in the surrounding area. It could not be assumed, therefore, that simply because an existing Constituency (such as Stockton South) appeared to have an electorate within the parameters of 72,810 and 80,473 it would be immune from change.

Whilst the Commission must satisfy the number of constituencies and electoral parity requirements as a priority, it proposed to take into account as part of the review the local government boundaries as they existed on 6 May, 2010. However, if the need arises, the Commission would divide wards between constituencies.

In addition after consultation, the Commission would be using the European Elections electoral regions as a template for grouping and allocating the 500 constituencies across England.

Based on its electorate, the North East would be allocated 26 constituencies.

The Commission had indicated that its initial proposals were likely to be published in the early part of September (week commencing the 12th) following which there would be a 12 week consultation period during which interested persons could comment on the proposals. The Commission would be visiting each region during this period to hold public meetings to gather views. Representations would be able to be made at the meetings primarily by qualifying political parties (ones registered under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000) and either they had at least one Member of the House of Commons representing a constituency in the region in which the hearing was being held, or had received at least 10% of the votes cast in the region in the most recent parliamentary general election. Other persons considered by the hearing Chair to have an interest in any of the proposals for change would also be allowed to put forward their views.

It was explained that as and when more information about the review and the public hearings was published, Members would be kept apprised.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the information be received.

### 3. Reasons for the Decision

To update Members on the Council's financial position

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled Parliamentary Constituencies Review as he worked in the Member of Parliament for Stockton North's constituency office.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer  
18 July 2011