

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO COUNCIL

14 JULY 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

SUMMARY

This is an update for Council regarding the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies being undertaken by the Boundary Commission for England.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the report be noted.
2. Responses received to date on the initial proposals be noted and be submitted to the Boundary Commission for England by 2 August 2021.

DETAIL

Background

1. Members will recall that no action was taken as a result of previous parliamentary constituencies reviews being postponed by Parliament. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) have now been tasked to conduct a review of the parliamentary constituencies in England based on the updated rules in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020. The BCE must complete the current review and make a formal report to the Speaker of the House of Commons before the 1 July 2023.
2. Parliamentary Boundaries reflect the area where the electorate vote for their MP, the review will examine these areas and make proposals for a new set of boundaries. The Act requires there to be a fixed number of 650 constituencies.
3. The North East region has been allocated 27 constituencies (currently it has 29). The BCE's initial proposals have aimed to wholly contain each of these constituencies in the North East region.
4. The BCE is also required by the Act to ensure that each proposed constituency has an electorate as at the 2 March 2020 that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota. This quota has been calculated at 73,393. Accordingly, each constituency must have an electorate that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.

Initial Proposals

5. Taking these requirements and other statutory factors into account, the BCE published its initial proposals for England, including the North East on the 8 June 2021.
6. Other statutory factors include:
 - Special geographical considerations e.g. mountains lakes rivers
 - Local Government boundaries as they exist or were in prospect on 1 December 2020
 - Boundaries of existing constituencies
 - Any local ties
 - The inconveniences attendant on such changes

Initial Consultation Period

7. The 8 week period of consultation by the BCE on its initial proposals began on 8 June 2020. The BCE is required to consider all written representations made to it during this time and representations will be published alongside the initial proposals.
8. The BCE will be encouraging all interested parties to contribute views through their consultation website <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>
9. The results to date from consultation with elected members and political groups of the Council are summarised at **Appendix 1**.

Secondary Consultation

10. Following the 8 weeks consultation period, the BCE will publish on its website all of the representations it has received for each region
11. Once the representations have been published, there will be a further statutory secondary consultation period for 6 weeks, during which people can submit to the BCE written comments on the published representations.
12. In addition the BCE is required to conduct a minimum of between 2 and 5 public hearings in each region of England, number and location to be determined by the BCE. Anyone wanting to make an oral presentation at a hearing is encouraged to book in advance with the BCE. A record of all public hearings will be made and published.
13. After the end of the secondary consultation period, all of the representations received from the initial consultation and all written and oral presentations made during the secondary consultation period will be considered and reports will be prepared for the for each region. The reports will summarise and consider each of the representations, and if the BCE's initial proposals should be revised in light of the representations.
14. Following this, the BCE will publish a report in each region, stating whether or not revisions have been made to its initial proposals for that region. All of the written

representations submitted during the 6 week secondary consultation period and transcripts from the public hearings will be published at the same time.

15. If the initial proposals are revised, there would then be a further, final period of 4 weeks for written representations to be made to the BCE on the revised proposals for that region.
16. Once the BCE has taken into account any final representations made in the four weeks consultation period they will make their final recommendations for the whole of England, it will then draft and submit a formal report to the Speaker of the House of Commons. The report, which will be published, once it has been laid before Parliament, will contain a description of the review in each region, a textual description of all of the final recommendations, and a set of maps to illustrate the existing constituency boundaries and those proposed by the final recommendations.
17. The submission of the formal, final report will conclude the review process.
18. Cabinet considered the matter at its meeting held on 24 June 2021 and a copy of the relevant minute extract is attached to this report.

Next Steps

19. Early 2022 consider the published responses to initial proposals during the six-week 'secondary consultation'
20. Late 2022 consider the published revised proposals during the four-week written consultation
21. June 2023 consider the final report and recommendations.

CONSULTATION

22. Consultation with the Cabinet Member, leading Politicians and all Members of the Council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

23. Not applicable

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

24. Not applicable

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

25. Not applicable

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

26. Not applicable

RISK ASSESSMENT

27. Not applicable

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

28. All wards and Councillors have been consulted.

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| <u>Background Papers:</u> | Not applicable |
| <u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u> | The report affects all wards |
| <u>Property Implications:</u> | Not applicable |

Education related? No