

**Meeting of the Full Council**  
**Meeting to be held on 17 December 2015**

Report submitted by the Director of Governance, Finance and Public Services

**Part A**

Electoral Division affected:  
All

**Electoral Review of Lancashire County Council's Area**  
(Appendices 'A', 'B' and 'C' refer)

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**Executive Summary**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking an electoral review of the County Council's electoral arrangements. The review is being undertaken because of electoral imbalances that have arisen since the last review in 2003/04.

The review process will result in an order on new electoral arrangements being laid in Parliament in May 2016, with new arrangements taking effect in time for the County Council elections in May 2017.

The Boundary Commission on 17 November published for consultation its draft recommendations for Electoral Division Patterns for the County Council, and the Full Council is asked to consider recommendations from the Political Governance Working Group on any response to the Boundary Commission.

The Political Governance Working Group has met on 19 November and 7 December to consider the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations. The Working Group on 7 December received two submissions from political groups to the Boundary Commissions draft recommendations which are detailed in the report.

**Recommendation**

The Full Council is recommended to;

1. Note the draft recommendations published by the LGBCE for Electoral Division Patterns for the County Council

2. Approve two amendments to the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations, one in the Preston City area and one in the Pendle District area, as detailed in the report and on Appendices 'A' 'B' and 'C', for submission to the Boundary Commission.
3. Note that Political Groups/Parties, individuals and other bodies can make submissions on the draft recommendations direct to the Boundary Commission before the consultation deadline which ends on 11 January.

## **Background and Advice**

The Full Council at its special meeting on 2 September approved a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) consultation on future Electoral Division Patterns for the County Council, following recommendations made by the Political Governance Working Group.

The review as a whole is looking at the size of the Council and the boundaries of the current 84 Electoral Divisions, and is being undertaken because of electoral imbalances that have arisen since the last review in 2003/04.

During the consultation period, which formally ended on 31 August, the Commission invited evidence from organisations, including local authorities, and members of the public on the most appropriate Division patterns for Lancashire to assist the Commission to draw up draft recommendations. Political Groups/Parties were also able to submit their own submissions direct to the Commission.

The Commission published its draft recommendations for consultation on 17 November 2015 until 11 January 2016. The Commission will publish its final recommendations in April 2016 with a view to an Order being laid before Parliament in May. The new electoral arrangements will be in place for the County Council elections in May 2017. Political Groups/Parties, individuals and other bodies can submit proposed changes to the draft recommendations direct to the LGBCE within the consultation period.

The Boundary Commission had previously agreed, based on an earlier submission by the County Council, that it was 'minded to' recommend a council size of 84. It has been accepted from the outset that to achieve a council size of 84, and to address current and expected electorate imbalances, there will have to be a decrease within Preston District area of one Councillor and an increase within the Chorley District area by one. This was reflected in the County Council's submission.

The County Council's proposals were very much based on LGBCE Guidance, aiming to ensure that each Division is within the 10% above or below the electorate threshold required, and supported the retention of single member electoral divisions to continue to maximise accountability and geographic representation. However the submission did include two proposals for two member Divisions in Hyndburn and Ribble Valley to overcome particular electoral variance difficulties.

In drawing up its recommendations for a pattern of electoral divisions, the Commission had to apply its three statutory criteria:

- To deliver electoral equality where each county councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county.
- That the pattern of Divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
- That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

The Commission has decided to recommend a Council size of 84 Members, 80 single member Divisions, and 2 'two' member Divisions, one in Hyndburn and one in Pendle. District areas have the same number of Councillors as present except for Preston 9 and Chorley 8. The full recommendations including maps can be found here: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5383>.

The Commission received consultation responses from: Local Residents; Parish and Town Councils; County Councillors; District/Borough and Parish Councillors; Local Authorities; MPs; Political Groups and a number of local organisations

Copies of all the submissions to the Commission, including the County Council's Full submission document, can be found here under 'Consultation on division arrangements':

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/lancashire/lancashire-county-council>

The Working Group met on 19 November and gave initial consideration to the LGBCEs draft recommendations, and agreed that it would not consider any proposals that had previously been considered by the County Council and which had not been accepted by the Commission.

The Working Group received a summary analysis of the LGBCE's recommendations which can be viewed [here](#)

Officers had also prepared maps of those District areas where the LGBCE were recommending differences to the proposals previously submitted by the County Council. These can be found [here](#)

Maps of the five Districts (Burnley, Fylde, Ribble Valley, Rossendale and West Lancashire) where the LGBCE are not proposing any changes to the proposals (other than a Division name change in West Lancashire) submitted by the County Council can also be found [here](#)

The LGBCE have provided an electorate pro-forma spreadsheet [see here](#) which shows the electorate breakdown of each Division together with a sheet with the existing electorate for comparison.

The Working Group decided to refer the draft recommendations to Political Groups and asked for any suggested amendments to the LGBCE's recommendations to be submitted to Democratic Services by Monday 30 November. The Working Group met again on 7 December to consider any recommendations it wished to put to Full

Council to enable any response to be submitted within the consultation period to the LGBCE.

The Working Group received the following two submissions for amendments to the Boundary Commission's draft recommendations from Political Groups:

1. A submission from the Labour Group to address community identity issues in the Preston East and South East Electoral Divisions, particularly for the communities of Moor Nook and Ribble Village. The proposals are detailed on Appendix 'A' and the map produced at Appendix 'B.'
2. A joint 'cross party' submission from County Councillors Christian Wakeford and Mohammed Iqbal', to amend the newly named Pendle Hill and Brierfield and Nelson Electoral Divisions to improve community identity and electoral quality. In essence the proposal is to revert to the current 'Pendle West and Brierfield and Nelson North Electoral Divisions' to maintain the existing strong community, social and economic identities within the respective Divisions. The Electoral Divisions would be made up of the following polling districts:

Brierfield and Nelson West- Polling Districts: BL,  
BM,BN,BO,BQ,BR,BS,BT,WH,WI - Electorate: 11,367 - Variance: 2.6%

Pendle Hill - Polling Districts: BA,BB,BC,HI,HJ,HK,HL,OL,RA1,RA2,RB,RC -  
Electorate: 11,541 - Variance:4.1 %

The proposal is shown on the map attached at Appendix 'C' which identifies the Boundary Commission's proposed boundaries and the existing LCC proposed boundaries.

A further submission had been made to officers from the Liberal Democrat Group to make minor amendments to the Preston North and Preston West Electoral Divisions. However officers found that there appeared to be inaccuracies with the existing electorate data and boundaries for two of the affected polling districts and the Working Group agreed that this proposal should be referred to the City Council to resolve any problems with the existing electorate data and boundaries, to allow any submission to be made direct to the Boundary Commission by the Liberal Democrat Group.

It was noted that Political Groups/Parties, individuals and other bodies could make submissions on the draft recommendations direct to the Boundary Commission before the consultation deadline which ends on 11 January.

## **Consultations**

N/A

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## **Risk management**

The LGBCE has a statutory duty to undertake an electoral review of a Council's electoral arrangements once the electoral variance threshold triggers the need for a review. This is the case in Lancashire and the County Council has an obligation to review its electoral arrangements and ensure that it makes recommendations to the Commission on Council size and electoral arrangements that enable Councillors to effectively represent their communities and to meet the requirements of the County Council to effectively serve its community.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
LGBCE Electoral Reviews Technical Guidance	April 2014	Roy Jones 01772 533619

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A