

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM 16(c)
16 APRIL 2014	PUBLIC REPORT

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SUBMISSION ON WARD BOUNDARIES FOR THE COUNCIL

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S
FROM : Chief Executive
It is recommended that the Council endorses and recommends the submission (attached at Appendix 1) on revised ward boundaries to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Peterborough City Council.

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is responsible for conducting electoral reviews for principal councils. Electoral reviews look at whether the boundaries of wards or divisions within a local authority need to be altered. The LGBCE conducts these reviews to ensure fairer representation at local government elections, in particular taking into account the number of councillors, the number of wards or divisions and whether the wards or divisions should be represented by a single councillor, or jointly by two or three councillors.
- 1.2 The LGBCE initiated a review of Peterborough City Council in 2013. Consequently an Electoral Review Group (ERG) of members and officers has been meeting to review the number of councillors representing Peterborough City Council and the ward boundaries within the City's area. The ERG was led by Jim Stevens, sourced through the Association of Electoral Administrators. Officers in attendance and supporting the ERG's work are the Chief Executive, the Director of Governance and the Compliance Manager (Elections).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The first stage of the ERG began in September 2013 when the LGBCE consulted the public on increasing the number of councillors representing

Peterborough City Council from 57 to 60 councillors. That consultation closed on the 11 November and the LGBCE announced in January 2014 that it considered 60 councillors was the appropriate number of members to represent the citizens of Peterborough.

- 2.2 Following that the LGBCE began a public consultation on the warding arrangements for the City's area, which ran from the 14 January to the 1 April 2014. The submission attached as Appendix 1 is the Council's response to that consultation. The submission was sent on the 1 April in accordance with the consultation deadline but the LGBCE has agreed to take into account the minutes of this Council meeting as the formal endorsement of the submission.
- 2.3 The ERG met six times during the period of the consultation to consider the factors which contribute to the future electoral arrangements for Peterborough. The ERG is a cross party group of members and senior officers, with additional views being invited from all members of the Council by Jim Stevens, the project lead. The primary factors for consideration are the future growth of the City to 2019, particularly large housing developments, which were obtained from planning growth predictions and the requirement of the LGBCE that Peterborough should aim for three member wards across the City's area.
- 2.4 The submission recommends 20 three member wards across the City with a further single member ward for the Barnack area. Although this will increase the overall number of councillors to 61, the Council is requesting the Barnack ward is considered as a specific exception to the general principle of three member wards. In other wards within the City the submission aims to achieve an overall councillor to elector ratio of 1:2460 with variances which support the future growth of the City.

3. NEXT STAGES

- 3.1 Once the LGBCE has considered all the representations submitted in response to the consultation it will publish a report, which will set out in detail a pattern of wards which the LGBCE will invite further views upon. This final round of consultation is expected to begin in July 2014 for a further 12 week period during which the Council will again have the opportunity to make submissions to the LGBCE on the proposals. The consultation documents will be available to view in the Town Hall reception area from the date of publication.
- 3.2 The LGBCE will formulate final recommendations for ward boundaries following the July consultation and is expected to make final recommendations in early 2015.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications as the review of ward boundaries is still undergoing a consultative process. Once the LGBCE has finalised its

recommendations the Council will be in a position to consider whether there are any financial obligations arising from the revised boundaries.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 56 of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires that from time to time the LGBCE reviews and makes recommendations about the electoral arrangements for a principal council. Peterborough City Council is a principal council.
- 5.2 Schedule 2 of the 2009 Act sets out the statutory criteria which the LGBCE, and therefore the Council's submission, has to have regard to. These are
- 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
- 5.3 The LGBCE begins its consideration with a presumption that local authorities which elect by thirds, as at Peterborough City Council, will operate under a uniform pattern of three member wards. The LGBCE will depart from that presumption where the recommended pattern would not meet the statutory criteria set out at paragraph 5.2

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 Notes and agenda of the ERG.
LGBCE Electoral reviews technical guidance July 2012

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