

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****BOUNDARY REVIEW SUBMISSION****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present recommendations for a new pattern of electoral Divisions in the County to accommodate the Council size which the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') has proposed.

**Information and Advice**

2. The Committee will be aware that the County Council is currently undergoing an electoral review due to electorate variances of more than 10% in a third of the Council's current electoral Divisions. At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Council approved a Council size submission of 67 Councillors. At the end of October 2014 the Commission announced that it was minded to accept this case and would invite electoral schemes based on this number.
3. At this stage, the Commission is seeking proposals for electoral division boundaries. As well as any submission made by the Council, the Commission will also consider evidence from other local organisations and members of the public. The proposals put forward assists the Commission in drawing up draft recommendations which it then consults on. The original timetable for the receipt of electoral schemes was 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015, but this part of the timetable has been extended to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 for reasons explained in paragraphs 6-8 below. Public consultation on draft Commission recommendations will take place from May – July 2015.
4. Proposals on new boundaries have to take into account the Commission's statutory technical guidance as follows-
  - Electoral equality so that each person's vote carries the same weight across the County and, where possible, that all Divisions have variances of less than 10% (variance being the figure by which a Division deviates from the Councillor: elector ratio across the County)
  - That the new pattern of Divisions reflects the interests and identities of local communities evidenced with practical examples of shared community events, amenities and public facilities with the higher the electoral variance proposed, the stronger such evidence needing to be
  - That the arrangements proposed should provide effective and convenient local government so that Divisions are clearly identifiable, reflect transport and communication links and that electors can engage in affairs of the Division without having to travel through an adjoining Division.

5. Proposals also have to take account of other related guidance, for example, using parishes and polling districts as building blocks, electorate forecasts to 2020 and the constraints of the Commission's timetable.
6. There have been a number of issues regarding the accuracy of projections for 2020 but a final agreed set of figures was published on the Commission's website in November 2014. The total electorate figure to be used for the County in 2020 was agreed at 644,513 which, on the basis of 67 Councillors, provides a Councillor: electorate ratio of 1:9620. As stated earlier in the report, the new pattern of Divisions has to ensure wherever possible that the number of electors per Councillor does not exceed +/- 10% of this ratio.
7. As a number of Districts Councils have recently undergone their own boundary review some of the information necessary to produce workable proposals was not available, namely District ward boundaries. The Commission has acknowledged the difficulties being faced by the County Council in terms of the timing of this review in relation to the timing of those District Boundary Reviews. The Commission therefore granted an extension of time for the submission of new County Council Divisional boundaries to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The Commission was unable to grant any further extension of time as this would affect the Commission's timetable for both the Nottinghamshire review and other timetabled reviews.
8. The Commission has agreed that the County Council may use revised maps and electorate forecasts to 2020 for any of the Districts that were able to provide this information down to a polling district level. This approach has therefore been taken for Ashfield, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe. This has the benefit of enabling proposals to be drafted that reflect the reality of local changes by using new boundaries and polling districts wherever possible.
9. As a consequence, an amended overall Councillor: electorate ratio of 1:9525, (based on a projected electorate of 638,193) has been used in formulating these proposals. Following the further revisions to the District forecasts and the current number of Councillors in each District, the revised Councillor: elector ratio for each District is as follows:-

Ashfield – 1:9566  
 Bassetlaw – 1:9971  
 Broxtowe – 1:8847  
 Gedling – 1:9041  
 Mansfield – 1:9465  
 Newark and Sherwood – 1:9565  
 Rushcliffe – 1:10343

10. On the basis of these figures and on electoral equality grounds and having regard to a future Council size of 67, it is proposed that Rushcliffe should have 10 Councillors instead of the current 9 and that the number of Councillors in Broxtowe should be reduced from 10 to 9. This approach would give rise to revised Councillor: electorate ratios in those Districts of:-

Broxtowe - 1:9830  
 Rushcliffe -1:9308

Using the revised overall Councillor: electorate ratio of 1:9525, both of these ratios are within the +/-10% variance figures (i.e. 8573 / 10,477).

11. On the basis of the previous paragraphs, a pattern of new Divisional boundaries has been drawn up and is submitted for approval at appendix 3. The Committee will recall that currently there are 18 Divisions with a variance of more than 10% of the average. These proposals result in that number reducing to 3. If approved this scheme will produce 67 Councillors in 55 Divisions.

12. To assist consideration the following appendices are attached:-

- Appendix 1 – current County Divisions and electoral variances based on original 2020 electoral projections
- Appendix 2 – proposed new County Divisions and electoral variances
- Appendix 3 – the case for new Divisions
- Appendix 4 – maps (on a District and County overview basis)

13. If approved, this submission will be sent to the Commission who will consider it along with any other representations and suggestions received and then issue draft recommendations which will be consulted upon from May - July 2015. The Commission will then finalise its recommendations and publish these in September 2015.

14. It is therefore important that when this submission is sent to the Commission, it can be clear what support there is for each of the individual District proposals.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. Some Councils choose not to put forward a Council scheme at this stage of the review. It is felt, however, that this approach would not be in the interests of local democracy and accountability and was, therefore, discounted as an option.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

16. To propose a new pattern of Divisional boundaries which takes account of the Commission statutory guidance whilst also having regard to the local issues arising from recent District boundary reviews.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council makes its submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as detailed in this report, including views of elected Members expressed during the debate on the proposals on a district by district basis.

**Mick Burrows**  
**Chief Executive**

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**Constitutional Comments (SLB 29/1/15)**

18. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

**Financial Comments (SEM 29.01.15)**

19. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'None' or start list here

**Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All