

REPORT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Policy Committee of the further Electoral Review of Nottinghamshire to be carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and to determine how the Council organises its response to the process.

Information and Advice

2. In July 2013 the Boundary Commission confirmed that an electoral review of the County Electoral Divisions in Nottinghamshire would be undertaken in 2014/15. The Commission can undertake Further Electoral Reviews of individual Local Authorities where there has been a significant change in population or localised increases in major housing developments, resulting in electoral imbalances.
3. The Commission's analysis of the 2012 electorate data for Nottinghamshire confirmed that significant imbalances exist in the county which meet their criteria for carrying out a further electoral review to improve electoral equality. The analysis showed that 18 (33.33%) of the 54 electoral divisions have an electoral variance from the average for the authority in excess of 10%.
4. The review will cover the entire county not just the electoral divisions where there is evidence of electoral inequality and consists of three phases:
 - 1) Preliminary Period – Information Gathering.
 - 2) Stage 1 – Council Size i.e. Proposals for the total number of councillors/electoral divisions.
 - 3) Stage 2 – Area Definition i.e. Proposals for revised boundaries and names of electoral divisions.
5. Work on the preliminary period of the review which requires a range of information to be provided to the Commission will need to be undertaken over the coming months. Data from various sources including the District/Borough Councils will be used to produce a range of information including:-
 - Summaries of current electorate by Polling Districts, Parishes, Parish Wards, Wards and Districts (2013).

- Projections of total electorate by Polling District, Parishes, Parish Wards and District (2017)
 - Details of Parish Electorate arrangements
 - GIS Maps generated using data from the electoral registers
6. This information will be used in stage two of the review to help determine the boundaries of electoral divisions although additional information particularly relating to communities will be taken into account.

STAGE 1 – COUNCIL SIZE

7. Stage 1 of the review requires the authority to submit proposals on the council size it considers necessary to run the council. The Commission's guidance on the first stage of the review states that council size should allow for effective and convenient local government by determining the appropriate number of members needed to allow the council and individual councillors to conduct the council's business most effectively. Arrangements also need to reflect communities and allow for fairness of representation.

NEXT STEPS

8. Once the council size is agreed, draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire, including the proposed electoral division boundaries and names, will need to be submitted to the Commission. These will be the subject of a formal 8-12 week public consultation. Final recommendations will then be published and in place for the 2017 county election.
9. In preparing a response to the review it is proposed to establish a working group of relevant officers which would support a Member project steering group. The member project steering group would enable in-depth consideration of the issues prior to reports, as and when necessary, being presented to the Policy Committee/Full Council. This work will require additional specialist assistance over the review period and it is proposed that the Corporate Director Policy, Planning and Corporate Services be authorised to make arrangements for this following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Other Options Considered

10. None - the Council is required to assist the Commission in undertaking the review.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To enable the Council to participate in the electoral review.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That it be noted that a further electoral review of Nottinghamshire will be carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission.
- 2) That a cross Party Member Project Steering Group comprising Leader and Deputy Leader, Chairman of Finance and Property Committee, Business Manager Majority Group, Leader of the Conservative Group, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Leader of the Independent Group be established to consider issues around the review prior to their consideration by Policy Committee/Full Council.
- 3) That the Corporate Director Policy Planning and Corporate Services be authorised to make arrangements for procuring additional specialist assistance to support the process, following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Mick Burrows
Chief Executive

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 03/09/13)

13. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report. It is responsible for functions relating to elections and local democracy which are not reserved to Full Council.

Financial Comments (SEM 06/09/13)

14. The financial implications are set out in 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.

- Letter to Chief Executive 17th July 2013 from Local Government Boundary Commission.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All