

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Council	21 July 2015

## ELECTORAL REVIEW OF LANCASHIRE

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has formally commenced an electoral review of Lancashire and is seeking views on future electoral division boundaries for Lancashire County Council. The review was triggered by 29 of the 84 divisions having an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average electorate for an LCC division.
2. A letter of consultation (**Appendix 1** to this report) has been widely circulated seeking views on the review. The deadline for responses is 31 August 2015 and views are requested on a formal Council response to the consultation at this stage. There will be further consultation at future stages of the review.
3. The letter contains links to a number of information sources including LCC's submission on the review and LGBCE guidance on how to propose a pattern of wards. **Appendices 2 and 3** to this report provide electorate information for 2015 and projected to 2021 and a map showing boundaries for County divisions, Borough wards, parishes and polling districts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Members views are sought on whether the Council should make a formal submission to the LGBCE's review of Lancashire's electoral divisions requesting that Chorley is represented by 8 rather than 7 single member county divisions. This would need to be supported with detailed statistical evidence.
5. If this approach is agreed, Members views are sought on the proposed configuration of those 8 divisions based on the LGBCE's criteria of equality of electorate; efficient and convenient local government; and reflecting the interests and identities of local communities.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	√	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

## BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW AND ELECTORATE INFORMATION

7. The electoral arrangements for Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in 2003/04 and this increased the number of divisions (each single member) from 78 to the current 84. Since then there have been increases in population in a number of areas in Lancashire including Chorley and this has been the trigger to the current review.
8. Currently the average electorate served by a County Councillor in Lancashire is 10,474. By 2021 this is forecasted to be 10,766.
9. In Chorley, the average electorate of the current 7 divisions is 11,866 and by 2021 this is projected to be 12,355. It is therefore evident that Chorley is already significantly outside the 10% variance of the average LCC divisional electorate. A spreadsheet of electorate information by ward and division (including down to parish and polling district detail) is attached at **Appendix 2**. This shows in particular that the division of Chorley East is 15% under the average division electorate (for Chorley) and Chorley North is 20% over the average electorate (for Chorley) based on 2015 figures.
10. On the basis of these statistics which were requested by the Boundary Commission (both current and projected to 2021) to assist the review, there appears to a clear case for an additional LCC electoral division within Chorley borough.

## CONFIGURING ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

11. If Members wish to support the argument for an eighth division, there needs to be a well evidenced case put forward with a recommended configuration for the 8 divisions. Whilst electorate changes may appear in just a small number of areas, the impact is likely to be felt by the majority of divisions.
12. The LGBCE has issues guidance on how to configure wards/divisions but the 3 main criteria which must be balanced are:
  - a. **Delivering electoral equality** – each county councillor representing roughly the same number of electors.
  - b. The pattern of electoral boundary **divisions should as far as possible reflect the interests and identities of local communities.**
  - c. The electoral **arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.**
13. The LGBCE has already stated that they expect to recommend 84 divisions (ie no change from the current number overall) and that their recommendations will not cross district council boundaries. They will, as far as possible, ensure coterminosity with existing borough ward boundaries – this helps ensure the delivery of effective and convenient local government. For a number of reasons maintaining coterminosity is desirable, it provides clarity for residents; improved accountability; more effective political management as well as electoral administration.
14. Attached as **Appendix 3** is a map of the Borough showing current divisions and wards – including ward electorate figures projected to 2021. In putting forward any proposals, it is important that the Council uses the 2021 figures to future proof arrangements as far as possible.

It does highlight the fact that a number of Chorley Council ward councillors serve average electorates far higher than others – mostly as a result of the Buckshaw Village development. These are arguments we can raise with the LGBCE in putting forward our submission, however the Commission will not make changes to borough wards under this review – it is not within their remit to do so at this time, but it may prompt a ward boundary review in the future for the Chorley area.

15. Members views are requested on the number and configuration of the LCC divisions in Chorley with a view to the Council making a submission to the LGBCE review of Lancashire’s electoral divisions.

**IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT**

16. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	x	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

**COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

17. There are no comments.

**COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

18. There are no comments.

**GARY HALL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Carol Russell	5196	8 July 2015	***