

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 17 November 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Boundary Review 2018 – Initial Proposals for New Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To introduce the proposals of the Boundary Commission for England, and to seek Members' views on how to respond.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: Members' views are sought as to how the Council might respond to the proposals of the Boundary Commission for England.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Boundary Commission for England is currently conducting a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries on the basis of rules set by parliament in 2011. The rules require the reduction of a number of constituencies in the UK, and to make more equal the number of electors in each constituency. The rules in the legislation stipulate that there should be 600 Parliamentary constituencies covering the UK, a reduction of 50 from the current number. Therefore, the number of constituencies in England must be reduced from 533 to 501. Each constituency must have no fewer than 71,031 electors, and no more than 78,507.

3.2 Timetable for the review:

A. Stage 1 – Development of initial proposals.

The Review was commenced in February 2016, and initial proposals for consultation for each of England's 9 regions were published on 13th September 2016.

B. Stage 2 – Consultation on initial proposals.

The consultation on the initial proposals takes place for a period of 12 weeks until 5th December 2016. Once the consultation has closed, the Commission will collate all of the responses received.

C. Stage 3 – Consultation on representations received.

The Commission is required to publish all of the responses received on their initial

proposals. This will mark the start of a 4 week “secondary consultation” period, likely to take place in Spring 2017. This will enable people to see what others have said and to make comments on their views.

D. Stage 4 – Development and publication of revised proposals.

Once the Commission have received all comments from the initial and secondary consultation stages, they will analyse those representations and decide whether changes should be made to the initial proposals. If changes are required, then they must publish revised proposals for the areas concerned and consult on them for a further period of 8 weeks. This is likely to be towards the end of 2017.

E. Stage 6 – Development and publication of the final report and recommendations.

Finally, the Commission will consider all of the evidence received throughout the review and determine final recommendations. These will be set out in a published report to the Government who will present it, without amendment, to Parliament. The Boundary Commission must report to the Government in September 2018.

- 3.3 In terms of the North West, the Boundary Commission for England has sought to produce initial proposals in which 68 constituencies (each with an electorate within 5% of the electoral quota) will be proposed, and considered how the local areas could be grouped into sub regions. They have divided the North West into sub regions as a practical approach, and they have included Halton in a sub region comprising Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Wirral.
- 3.4 The Initial Proposals Report for the North West is set out here https://www.bce2018.org.uk/download_document?type=0&document_id=14171 and paragraph 63 deals specifically with suggestions relevant to Halton. It has been considered by the Boundary Commission of England that there would need to be a considerable degree of change to the existing Weaver Vale constituency as a result of the changes elsewhere in Cheshire. It is proposed that the Halton Borough Ward of Halton Lea should be transferred and included in the Halton constituency and that the Wards containing Northwich should no longer be in the Weaver Vale constituency. The proposed new Weaver Vale constituency will include the Marbury Ward from the existing Tatton constituency and Wards from the Eddisbury constituency. These changes would result in the new Weaver Vale extending considerably further south to the border with Wales. The Commission still feels that the name of Weaver Vale remains appropriate but they are willing to consider alternatives.
- 3.5 The consultation period runs until 5th December 2016 and Boundary Commission for England are encouraging everyone to give views on the proposals. There is an Interactive Consultation Website, www.bce2018.org.uk and views can be given in writing. There are a series of public hearings being held within the consultation period.
- 3.6 Members are asked to consider how the Council might best respond.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific implications as far as Council policy is concerned. The principle of review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries has been established by Parliament.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 N/a

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no specific issues in respect of equality and diversity arising directly from this report.

9.0 A LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.