



# B O S T O N

## B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

REPORT TO:	COUNCIL
DATE:	18 JANUARY 2016
SUBJECT:	CONSULTATION ON NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	N/A
REPORT AUTHOR:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

### **SUMMARY**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has conducted a review of the electoral arrangements for Lincolnshire County Council as the Council currently has high levels of electoral inequality where some councillors represent many more or many fewer voters than others.

The LGBCE has now published its draft recommendations of the review which suggests reducing the number of County Councillors from 77 to 70 and retaining single seat divisions. The affect of the proposal for Boston would be a reduction of 1 County Division/Councillor for the Borough area. The Commission has also put forward suggested names for the new electoral divisions.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of the electoral arrangements for Lincolnshire County Council.
2. To consider if the Council wishes to make a formal response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the draft recommendations.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To provide an opportunity for the Councils view to be taken into account by the LGBCE.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Not to respond to the draft recommendations.

## **REPORT**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has conducted a review of the electoral arrangements for Lincolnshire County Council to ensure that the number of voters represented by each County Councillor is approximately the same across the county.
- 1.2 The three main considerations in conducting the review are set out in legislation and are to:-
- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents;
  - Reflect community identity and
  - Provide for effective and convenient local government.
- 1.3 The review process started in May 2015 with interested parties being invited to submit proposals for division patterns across the county to the LGBCE. In July 2015 the Commission started analysis and formulation of its draft recommendations which were published in December 2015.

### **2. Draft Recommendations**

- 2.1 Based on the evidence received during the preliminary phase of the review, the LGBCE has recommended that the total number of County Councillors for Lincolnshire be reduced from 77 to 70 and that the current pattern single-member divisions be retained.
- 2.2 In formulating the draft recommendations the Commission identified that a council size of 70 would allow for a better allocation of members across the county and provide for a pattern of divisions which would achieve a better balance between the statutory criteria. The 70 members would be allocated across the district council areas as follows:-
- Boston – 6 members
  - East Lindsey – 13 members
  - Lincoln – 8 members
  - North Kesteven – 11 members
  - South Holland – 9 members
  - South Kesteven – 14 members
  - West Lindsey – 9 members
- 2.3 The affect for the Boston Borough area would be a reduction of 1 County Council Division and Councillor.
- 2.4 The Commission has also suggested names for the new electoral divisions in the Boston Borough Council areas as follows:-

Proposed Division Name	Description
Boston North	The area to the east of the River Witham between Witham Way Country Park, Boston High School and the Boston United Football Ground. Also the area west of the River between Beech Wood and North Forty Foot Bank.
Boston South	The area south of North Forty Foot Bank and north of South Forty Foot Bank.
Butterwick and Wrangle	Comprises the six whole parishes of Butterwick, Benington, Freiston, Leverton, Old Leake and Wrangle and part of Fishtoft parish.
Holland Fen and Sutterton	Comprises eight whole parishes of Algarkirk, Amber Hill, Bicker, Fosdyke, Holland Fen with Brothertoft, Sutterton, Swineshead, Wigtoft, and the northern part of Kirton Parish.
Skirbeck	The area to the east of Boston College to the Fishtoft parish boundary and beyond to the Bladon Estate.
Wyberton and Marshes	Comprises the parishes of Wyberton and Frampton, the southern part of Kirton parish and the Skirbeck Quarter of Boston.

- 2.5 The proposed division boundaries also affect current electoral arrangements for the parishes of Fishtoft and Kirton, as it is suggested that the parishes are split between divisions.
- 2.6 The draft recommendation for Fishtoft is that the parish be split into 3 wards of Willoughby Hills (returning four members), Hawthorn Tree (returning six members) and Fishtoft (returning one member). The total number of councillors on the Parish Council remains at 11.
- 2.7 For Kirton, the draft recommendation is that the parish be warded into Kirton Meeres (returning six members) and The Cots (returning six members). The total number of councillors on the Parish Council remains at 12.
- 2.8 An interactive map showing the proposed division boundaries and parish ward boundaries is available at [www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/east-midlands/lincolnshire/lincolnshire-county-council](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/east-midlands/lincolnshire/lincolnshire-county-council) A map showing both the current and proposed division boundaries and suggested names is attached at Appendix A, and a larger version is on display in the Members Lounge.

### 3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The LG BCE has now started its consultation on the draft recommendations and interested parties have until 8 February to submit representations on the proposed division boundaries and names.

- 3.2 When considering all responses to consultation on a new pattern of wards or electoral divisions, the Commission only takes its decisions on the basis of evidence and argument put forward, therefore any views must contain an explanation and reason behind the consultation response.
- 3.3 Giving an opinion without explanation is unlikely to persuade the Commission. For example, details of community interests such as the location and use made of local facilities, services and local organisations demonstrating how a community manifests itself will carry greater weight than submissions that simply assert that an area has community identity. In turn the Commission will give weight to the following three criteria:-
- The new pattern of divisions should mean that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters as elected members elsewhere in the authority
  - Division patterns should as far as possible reflect community interests and identities and boundaries should be identifiable
  - The electoral arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government and reflect the electoral cycle of the council.
- 3.4 In light of representations received the Commission will review the draft recommendations and consider if they should be altered. The final recommendations will be published in May 2016, after which the changes proposed must be approved by Parliament before coming into force at the Lincolnshire County Council elections to be held in May 2017.

## **CONCLUSION**

Council is asked to consider if it wishes to respond to the LGBCE proposals for new County Council electoral divisions and names within the Boston Borough Council area, and if so, suggest alternative options with evidence and argument to substantiate those suggestions.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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None for Boston Borough Council.
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<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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None for Boston Borough Council.
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<b>ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS</b>
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None.
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## CONSULTATION

None.

### APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	Map showing current and proposed division boundaries and suggested names.
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### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Electoral Review of Lincolnshire – Draft recommendations	<a href="https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5183">https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5183</a>

### CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.