

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Electoral Review Working Group

REPORT NO: LDS101

DATE: 11 July 2013

TITLE:	Electoral Review of South Kesteven – Warding Patterns Submission	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Statutory Requirement	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Paul Carpenter Portfolio: Governance and Communication	
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INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: Equality and Diversity	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required: N/A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council’s website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Electoral Reviews – Technical Guidance: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/er-web-version-jul11.pdf</p> <p>Council Size Submission: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/reviews/south-kesteven/council-size/lgbce-1318-south-kesteven-council-size-appendix-a-2013-02-12.pdf</p> <p>Letter from Boundary Commission: http://www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/reviews/south-kesteven/stage-1/south-kesteven-info-gath-chief-exec-pdf-2013-05-28.pdf</p> <p>Equality Analysis: http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=261&MId=2982&Ver=4</p>	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Council approves the draft submission on proposed warding arrangements which is attached to this report at Appendix A, for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**
- 1.2 That the Council delegates authority to the Electoral Review Working Group to make any alterations to the submission resulting from the meeting.**

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is conducting a review of the electoral arrangements for South Kesteven with the revised electoral arrangements being introduced at the next ordinary District Council elections in May 2015.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 12 July 2012, the Council appointed a working group to develop detailed proposals. Councillors Adams, Cooke, Davidson, Howard and Adam Stokes were appointed to the working group. Councillor Woolley was appointed in place of Councillor Cooke at the meeting held on 18 April 2013.
- 2.3 On 21 May 2013 the LGBCE adopted a council size of 55 members for South Kesteven and invited all interested parties to propose a new pattern of warding arrangements based on a council size of 55 councillors.
- 2.4 The Electoral Review Working Group have met on seven occasions since mid May to determine the proposed warding arrangements as detailed in the draft submission as attached at Appendix A to this report.
- 2.5 The purpose of this report is to obtain approval of the draft submission which this Council agrees should be made to the Boundary Commission relating to the future warding patterns for the Council.
- 2.6 Following this stage of the review, the Boundary Commission will consider all submissions received and will publish draft recommendations during October 2013.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix A is the proposed Warding Patterns submission which, if agreed, will be sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 3.2 When proposing the new warding patterns, the following set criteria have been taken into account by the working group:
 - Equality of representation
 - Reflecting community identities and interests
 - Providing for convenient and effective local government

- 3.3 The object of the review is to ensure a consistent level of representation across the area of the local authority. This means ensuring that, as far as possible, each councillor represents the same number of electors.
- 3.4 Matters that could be taken into account during the electoral review are:
- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council (council size)
 - The number and boundaries of wards
 - The number of councillors to be elected for each ward
 - The name of each ward
- 3.5 The Boundary Commission guidance clearly states that the following cannot be considered as part of the electoral review:
- Changes to boundaries between local authorities
 - Changes to parish boundaries
 - Creation of new parishes
 - Changes to electoral arrangements of parish and town councils unless they are as a direct consequence of proposed changes made to district wards
- 3.6 The deadline for submission of warding pattern proposals to the Boundary Commission is 5 August 2013.
- 3.7 The LGBCE require the review to be based on the forecast electorate figures for 2019 which is 114,022. Based on a council size of 55 members, the average number of electors for each Councillor is 2,073. Wards are permitted to be within a variance of +/-10%.
- 3.8 The proposal is for a mixture of one, two and three member wards as follows:
- 55 councillors across 31 wards with :
 - 10 single member wards
 - 18 two member wards
 - 3 three member wards
- All of the proposed wards have achieved the elector : councillor ratio within the required variance of +/- 10%.
- 3.9 The submission document details the proposed warding structure with maps together with evidence and rationale to support it.
- 3.10 The draft submission has been prepared in accordance with the technical guidance of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 3.11 Should any amendment to the submission be required following this meeting it is proposed that delegated authority be given to the working group to consider and make amendments to the final submission.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council may choose not to make a submission to the LGBCE however it would then impose a warding structure without the involvement of the Council.
- 4.2 Other interested parties, such as political parties, parish councils or local residents may make their own submission to the LGBCE which would also be considered alongside the Council's submission.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The review has had significant staffing implications which have been absorbed by the Legal and Democratic Services team. Evidence and assistance has been provided by the Planning Policy team and IT. Following the completion of the review, a full review of all polling districts and polling places will need to be carried out which will have further staffing implications.
- 5.2 Travelling expenses are payable to Councillors appointed to the working group. Provision is made within the Legal and Democratic Services budget for the payment of travel expenses.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and no exceptional / high risks have been identified.

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 7.1 A stage 1 equality analysis has been completed and is available as a background paper to this report. No adverse impact was identified. Every consideration was given to ensure equality of representation throughout the process.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report.

9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 9.1 The change to the number of Councillors will have financial implications. A review of members' remuneration is currently being carried out and will take into account the financial implications of the reduction in the number of Councillors from 58 to 55. Any proposed changes to the warding arrangements may have an impact on the cost of elections although it is not expected to impact significantly.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 10.1 Local authority boundary reviews are carried out to review the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions and the number of councillors to be elected to each. Electoral reviews are

initiated primarily to improve electoral equality. This means ensuring, so far as is reasonable, that each councillor elected to the authority represents the same number of electors. The Local Government Boundary Commission is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect and does this by making an Order. The local authority then conducts local elections on the basis of the new arrangements set out in that Order.

10.2 The Boundary Commission and provision for review was introduced by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – draft submission on proposed warding arrangements