

COUNCIL

15 January 2018

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS – RCC RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All		
Exempt Information		No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:		Mr T Mathias, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns)	
Contact Officer(s):	Debbie Mogg, Director for Resources	01572 758358 dmogg@rutland.gov.uk	
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Ward Councillors	All		

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Approves the RCC response to the LGBCE consultation on draft recommendations (Appendix A).

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the RCC response to the Draft Recommendations on new electoral arrangements for Rutland County Council published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on 5 December 2017.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The LGBCE have considered all submissions to the initial consultation on warding Patterns (including the RCC submission approved by [Full Council in September 2017](#)).
- 2.2 In summary the Draft Recommendations from the LGBCE propose that:
 - Rutland should be represented by 27 councillors; one more than there is now.

- Rutland should have 15 wards; one fewer than there is now.
- The boundaries of nine wards should change, and seven will stay the same.

(The full report can be found at

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/36426/Draft-Recommendations-Report.pdf)

2.3 Appendix B shows a comparison table of the current arrangements; the proposals put forward by RCC; and the LGBCE Draft Recommendations.

2.4 Interactive maps can be viewed on the consultation portal at:

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/9957>

2.5 The current period of consultation runs from 5 December 2017 to 19 February 2018.

3 RELEVANT CRITERIA

3.1 The LGBCE will only consider relevant criteria when looking at evidence and proposals for warding arrangements. The draft recommendations contain comprehensive guidance on what evidence will be considered as significant, but in summary proposals must:

- provide electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters;
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links;
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries; and
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

4 CONSULTATION

4.1 The Constitution review Working Group (CRWG) met on 15 December 2017 in order to consider the draft recommendations. The response letter (Appendix A) is based on discussion at that meeting and member feedback to the draft recommendations.

4.2 The CRWG considered the proposals put forward by RCC remained the best option in view of all the relevant criteria, but it was clear that given the lack of responses from other organisations/individuals (Ward Members, Community Groups, Parish Councils etc...) it had not carried significant weight in the view of the LGBCE.

4.3 Following discussion with Barleythorpe Interim Parish Council it was confirmed that Barleythorpe had submitted a response to the initial consultation in support of the RCC Proposal on council size and warding patterns. This had not been reflected in the LGBCE report and this omission has been raised as an issue by Barleythorpe Parish Council.

- 4.4 An email was sent out to Members on 19 December 2017 requesting that Councillors submit their own views on the Draft Recommendations to the LGBCE, as well as encouraging Parish Councils and other relevant groups and organisations to submit responses to the consultation in order to ensure that the LGBCE have significant and relevant evidence upon which to review their draft recommendations and decide whether they should be altered.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 During the first phase of the LGBCE consultation a variety of proposals on council size and warding patterns were considered, all of which resulted in substantial movement of ward boundaries and failed to meet the statutory criteria.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications connected with the submission of this response to the LGBCE.
- 6.2 Should the LGBCE accept the evidence put forward in the RCC response and approve the original RCC submission on council size and warding patterns, the proposal to increase the number of members to 28 would require the budget for members' allowances to be increased by £7,540 per annum (Based on the current members' basic allowance of £3,770 per annum). There also likely to be other incidental costs such as expenses, provision of IT equipment etc. This increase would have to be included within the budget setting process for 2019/2020.

7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 provides that the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England must be reviewed from time to time. The LGBCE has a rolling programme of electoral reviews and Rutland has been identified as having poor levels of electoral equality with 5 out of 16 wards having a variance of greater than +/-10%.
- 7.2 Schedule 2 (3) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 states that in making recommendations the Local Government Boundary Commission for England must have regard to:
- a) the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the county council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council,
 - b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular—
 - i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and
 - ii) the desirability of not breaking local ties when fixing boundaries,
 - c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and

- d) the boundaries of the electoral areas of any district council whose area is within the area of the county council.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening form has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no community safety implications.

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

11 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The proposals put forward in the LGBCE Draft Recommendations are considered to rely too heavily on achieving electoral equality, with little regard to the real impact on the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local governance. It is therefore proposed that the LGBCE be asked to reconsider the original proposal on council size and warding patterns put forward by RCC in September 2017 (with the slight amendment of moving Eggleton to Martinthorpe Ward, rather than Hambleton as in the original proposal).

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Council Report No. 169/2017.

13 APPENDICES

- 13.1 Appendix A – RCC Response to LGBCE Consultation on Draft Recommendations
- 13.2 Appendix B – Comparison Table

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.