

To: Board Member, Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships

Date: 13th October 2011

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

**Title of Report: REVIEW OF OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DIVISION BOUNDARIES**

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: The report deals with the draft proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') on a scheme of electoral divisions (electoral arrangements) for Oxfordshire County Council.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price

Policy Framework: n/a

Recommendation:

1. that the City Council should support the Commission's proposed scheme of Electoral Divisions as it relates to Oxford;
2. that the Commission be requested to amend its proposal for warding for Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council as follows:-
 - Risinghurst North parish ward should have 10 councillors
 - Risinghurst South parish ward should have 2 councillors.

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') has conducted a review of Oxfordshire County Council's electoral divisions. It asked interested organisations and the general public for comments on the current arrangements and on possible schemes.
2. The City Council responded to the consultation by submitting a scheme of 14 single-member electoral divisions for Oxford. The submission was approved by City Executive Board on 13th April 2011

(minute 176 refers). The County Council submitted an identical scheme.

3. The Commission considered comments received and published its draft scheme for comment. For Oxford the Commission accepted the City Council submission in its entirety.
4. In view of other suggested schemes the City Council would like to underline its support for the Commission's proposed Jericho and Osney and Isis divisions. The Council is of the view it would be a mistake to force together the distinct communities along the Botley Road and along the Abingdon Road. Whereas Botley Road residents look towards Jericho and Carfax, Abingdon Road residents have more in common with the Donnington and Iffley Village communities to which they are joined by Donnington Bridge and Iffley Lock. Iffley Village is a distinct community from the adjacent Rose Hill estate. Thames Street as a busy main road is a significant urban barrier between the two divisions as proposed by the Commission.
5. The proposals are available to view on the Commission's website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/oxfordshire
6. The Commission also proposes to create an additional parish ward in Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council because the division scheme cuts through an existing parish ward. This is necessary to enable elections to be run but the proposed parish councillor allocation to the two new parish wards is, in our view, incorrect.

The old parish ward had 2268 electors with 12 parish councillors.

It should be as follows:-

| New Parish ward | Electorate | LGCE proposal | City Council proposal |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Risinghurst North | 2037 | 6 | 10 |
| Risinghurst South | 231 | 6 | 2 |

7. Comments on the Commission's proposals are invited by 10th October. After that date the Commission will consider all submissions and aims to publish its final recommendations in January 2012. Once the Commission agrees its final recommendations it will lay a draft order in both Houses of Parliament. Parliament will then have 40 days in which to consider the recommendations. If both Houses are satisfied with the recommendations, the draft order will be 'made' and the new electoral divisions will come into effect at the County Council elections in May 2013.

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Martin John
Job title: Principal Electoral Services Officer
Service Area: Law and Governance
Tel: 01865 252518
e-mail: mjohn@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None
Version number:2.

This page is intentionally left blank