

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011

**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance

**Title of Report:** REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** This report summarises the initial proposals for the redrawing of parliamentary constituencies in England by the Boundary Commission for England.

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Bob Price

**Policy Framework:** n/a

**Recommendation:** That City Executive Board comments on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals as follows:

- to support the proposal to transfer Carfax ward from Oxford East constituency into Oxford West and Abingdon constituency;
- not to support the proposed name for the new "Oxford" constituency, feeling that it should retain the name "Oxford East";
- not to support the proposed name for the new "Abingdon and Oxford North constituency, feeling that it should retain the name "Oxford West and Abingdon";

1. The Boundary Commission for England ("the Commission") has been charged with reviewing the parliamentary constituency boundaries on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament. The rules involve a significant reduction of constituencies in England (from 533 to 502) and require that every constituency must have an electorate that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,472.
2. The Commission published its initial proposals on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

3. The proposals affect the two constituencies that cover Oxford as follows:
  - Carfax ward is moved from Oxford East constituency into Oxford West and Abingdon;
  - to rename “Oxford East” as “Oxford”;
  - to rename “Oxford West and Abingdon” as “Abingdon and Oxford North”
4. A Working Group was convened containing a representative of the three party groups on the Council in an attempt to agree an all-party view on the proposals.
5. The Group met on 4<sup>th</sup> October and agreed a response. This is shown in the recommendations to the Board.
6. The Group agreed that the transfer of Carfax ward to Oxford West and Abingdon was the best solution to the problem of the current Oxford East constituency having more electors (81, 665) than the upper threshold being used in this review.
7. The Group also agreed that the proposed “Oxford” constituency should retain the name “Oxford East”. It felt that to call a constituency “Oxford” that did not contain the whole of the city would be confusing to the electorate. In addition the proposal to remove Carfax ward made the constituency more easterly and therefore Oxford East more accurate.
8. The Group agreed that the proposed “Abingdon and Oxford North” constituency should retain the name “Oxford West and Abingdon”. The changes to that constituency are relatively minor and so to change the name from what is known and accepted seems excessive.
9. The deadline for submissions to the Commission consultation is 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011. The recommendations have been submitted as the Council’s formal response subject to the endorsement of the City Executive Board.
10. In the spring 2012 the Commission will publish all the responses it has received. Anyone may then submit further representations with respect to the comments the Commission has received. The Commission will then analyse all the responses and decide whether to alter its initial proposals
11. If it does decide to alter its initial proposals then a further eight-week consultation period will be undertaken, towards the end of 2012.
12. Finally, following the completion of all the consultation periods the Commission will make final recommendations to the Government. The Commission must have done this by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. The changes will take effect at the next general election on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

**Legal Implications**

13. None.

**Equalities Implications**

14. None .

**Financial Implications**

11. None.

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**List of background papers:** Only published works

**Version number:** 1

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid	Monitoring Effectiveness					Current Risk			
Risk Score <b>Impact Score:</b> 1 =Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic Almost Certain								<b>Probability Score:</b> 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 =									
1	The changes are not implemented accurately	4	1	Error in placing each ward into the correct constituency	Ensure that the consequential amendments to the register are double-checked by different colleague	2	1	<b>Action: Reduce</b> Nominate a second L&G officer to check the amendments made by MJ <b>Action Owner:</b> Martin John  <b>Mitigation Control Owner:</b> Jeremy Thomas	<b>Outcome required:</b> Correct constituency areas <b>Milestone Date:</b> March 2012							1	1