

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Democratic Services Manager

TO: Civic Affairs Committee

26/6/2015

WARDS: All affected

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

1 INTRODUCTION

The report invites the Committee to comment on the draft recommendations for Cambridgeshire County Council city divisions made by the [Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#) and recommends a City Council response to the consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) To oppose the two member member division recommended by the Commission for Castle/Newnham and to propose instead two single member divisions for Castle and Newnham with Madingley Road being the boundary line as submitted by the City Council to the Commission in January 2015.
- ii) To support the County Council's opposition to two member division in the city.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) is reviewing the Cambridgeshire County Council electoral arrangements. This Committee considered and agreed at its 28 January 2015 meeting a response to the Commission's consultation which was proposing division arrangements for the County which would result in 63 councillors, from the current 69, which in turn would mean 12 councillors for the city from the current 14.

- 3.2 The Commission published its draft recommendations on 12 May and invites comments on these up to 6 July. It then intends to publish final recommendations on 29 September, with a view that the County Council elections in May 2017 will be run on the new pattern of divisions.
- 3.3 In drawing up a pattern of electoral divisions, the Commission's three main considerations are set out in law to:
- improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
 - reflect community identity
 - provide for effective and convenient local government
- 3.4 The Commission's recommendations for the city are set out in appendix 1. It took into account revised electorate figures for the city as resolved by Committee on 28 January (see paragraphs 14-16 of its report). The Commission also reviewed its proposals on division patterns (paragraphs 21-25) based on projected electorates, again as resolved by the Committee on 28 January. The City Council's submission approved by Committee from January is in appendix 2.

The proposed two member division-Castle/Newnham

- 3.5 The Commission's draft recommendations propose an overall Council size of 61, with the city allocated 12 councillors, but from 11 divisions. It proposes a two member division- Castle/Newnham (with three more two member divisions proposed in the County). This proposal is surprising in so much that there had been no expression of preference by the County Council nor the City Council for anything other than single member divisions. Although the Commission is making judgements based on its criteria (and it states that it has made a site visit to Castle/Newnham), it could be argued that this proposal doesn't satisfy enough the need to reflect the community identity criteria for Newnham and Castle, the centres of which are at either ends of the proposed merged division. Unlike the Commission, we think that Madingley Road is a clear community distinguisher which is recognised in both those local communities. The Commission should also be reminded that the projected variances by 2020 based on the city's submission in January would be +5% for Castle and 0% for Newnham, well within the Commission's electoral levels of variance.

- 3.6 At the time of publishing this report it is understood that the County Council will object to the recommendation for two member divisions and it is proposed that the City Council also objects to the proposal for Castle/Newnham.
- 3.7 The Commission's draft recommendations for the remainder of the city broadly adhere to the city's submission from January 2015 and there are no officer comments on these.
- 3.8 The Committee resolved at its January meeting that co-terminosity between the county divisions and city wards is very desirable for good governance and were a two member division created then this would break that.
- 3.9 As reported in January to the Committee, whatever pattern of divisions the Commission finally proposes there would be consequences in terms of administering the electoral register and elections:
- i) A full polling district review would need to be carried out before December 2016 (potentially starting in June 2016).
 - ii) The 2017 elections would need to be managed by placing several polling district registers in one polling place (station) and keep them as far as possible to the current polling place arrangements. Especially as it would be confusing and expensive (and probably impossible) to engage a separate building for each district. It would be sensible to retain the current polling place arrangements as much as possible, because if a city council by-election were to happen on the same day, we would need to keep voting for that by-election in the same building.

4. **OPTIONS**

The Committee can choose not to submit a response to the Commission's draft recommendations.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Financial Implications** there are none

(b) **Staffing Implications** - the administration of elections will be more complicated without co-terminosity (for however long that period will

be) and this will need to be carefully managed. This is on top of the significant transitional change we are still managing with Individual Electoral Registration.

- (c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**
- (d) **Environmental Implications**
- (e) **Procurement**
- (f) **Consultation and communication**
- (g) **Community Safety**

None of the above apply to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report: No background papers.

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Date originated: 16 June 2015
Date of last revision: 16 June 2015