

Fifth Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Report by Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive

1 Purpose of Report

The Fifth Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Review Commission for Scotland commenced in February 2014. On 19 March 2015 the Review entered a two month consultation period with Councils. In respect of Midlothian the Commission propose:

- To improve overall forecast parity (for each ward);
- To make changes to ward boundaries by Gladstone's Gait, Bonnyrigg;
- To make no changes to Ward 1 - Penicuik, Ward - 3 Dalkeith, Ward 4 - Midlothian West and Ward 6 - Midlothian South;
- To make no changes to the number of Councillors in each ward; and
- To make no changes to ward names.

Full details of the proposals are contained in the Commission's document "*Midlothian Council Area – Proposals for wards*" which is attached at Appendix 1 hereto.

2 Background

2.1 As the first part of the Review process representatives of the Boundary Commission - Mr Ronnie Hinds (Chairman) and Mr Colin Wilson (Commission Secretariat) – met on 24 March 2014 with the Council's Political Leaders viz:- Councillor Thompson, Councillor Russell (substituting for Councillor Milligan) and Councillor Baxter. The Review process and methodology processes were explained with reference to the Commission's Guidance Booklet (which had been previously circulated to all members of the Council).

2.2 At that meeting the view was taken that Midlothian would not be making a formal response to the Commission at that stage. However, it was noted that the formal 12 week period of consultation would commence on 29 May 2014 and that the Council would, if it was so minded, make representation during that part of the Review process. This stance was communicated by letter to the Commission.

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- 2.3** Midlothian Council, at its meeting on 24 June 2014, having noted that the Boundary Commission intended to recommend to Scottish Ministers that the numbers of Electoral Wards and Elected Members in Midlothian remain unchanged, agreed to note the position and this was communicated to the Commission.
- 2.4** The latest stage in the Review procedure commenced on 19 March 2015 and ends on 19 May 2015. This stage informs Councils of the Boundary Commission's developed proposals for wards and invites responses from them. After that the Commission will consider any responses received before commencing (probably) in July 2015 a further public consultation period (of at least 12 weeks).

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The Boundary Commission proposals are that the *status quo* subsist in Midlothian in regard to the number of Councillors. This would mean that there would be no additional resource implications.

3.2 Risk

There are no additional risks arising from the proposals.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☒ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not relevant.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Maintaining the *status quo* would have no impact.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not relevant.

3.7/

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The Local Government Boundary Commission carry out the Review process with public consultation on their proposals via their interactive consultation portal and by inviting email/written submissions.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

The Commission is carrying out the Review to ensure as far as possible electoral parity and to take into account of deprivation and population distribution.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not relevant.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues.

4 Recommendations

The Council is invited to comment on the Local Government Boundary Commission's developed proposals for Midlothian in respect of their "*Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements*".

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Background Papers:-

- Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland – Guidance Booklet.
- Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland - "*Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements*" – Midlothian Council Area – *Proposals for wards (March 2015)*".