

Principal Councils' submissions to the "Striking the Right Balance" and "On The Right Lines" Consultations

This PDF document contains submissions from the principal councils T - W in the consultation.

Some versions of Adobe allow the viewer to move quickly between bookmarks.

Click on the submission you would like to view. If you are not taken to that page, please scroll through the document.



test-valley-consultation-r
esponse-2010-12-23



thurrock-council-consu...



walsall-council-consult...



wandsworth-borough-...



warwickshire-county-c...



waveney-district-suff...



west-dorset-consultati...



west-somerset-consult...



wycombe-district-coun...

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:14
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: CONSULTATION FW:Test Valley Borough Council
Attachments: RightBalanceResponse.doc; OnTheRightLinesResponse.doc

David Owen Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Crisp, Lynda [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cllr Carr, Ian
Sent: 23 December 2010 13:26
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: RESPONSE TO LGBCE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Attached please find the consultation documents duly completed.

Ian Carr
Leader of Test Valley Borough Council
Andover
Hampshire

Response to the LGBCE consultation document – Striking the right balance – a consultation on policy and procedures for electoral reviews

Q1a – Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

Yes. This enables Local Authorities to get a better understanding on which to base their response to their electoral review

Q1b - Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

Yes.

Q2 – If the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

Yes.

Q3a - Is a criteria-based approach to determining council-size desirable?

Yes. It enables the size of the council to be based on the workload and not just mathematical calculations to ensure equality of representation. For more complex authorities (unitary or county) more members would be required to spread the workload. In a non-unitary area where the level of functions provided is less, then fewer members would be required. Just using 'electoral equality' as a criteria for the determination of councillor numbers does not necessarily reflect the workload that they would be required to undertake.

Q3b - Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included.

Yes

Q4a – Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

Yes

Q4b – Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of reviews is helpful?

Yes – provided the local authority has the resources to cope with the additional workload in the shorter period.

Q4c – Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

Yes - although it may be necessary to adjust meeting timetables where necessary to fit the review timetable

Q5a – Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years’ time?

Yes - The approach to electoral forecasts set out in paras. 46 and 47 of the consultation document seem sensible particularly in the current economic climate where forecasts for long term population growth might be unreliable as planned developments may not proceed as planned.

There could be problems with trying to balance electoral equality at the first election following a review for an area where development proceeds more quickly than expected which would result in electoral equality not being achieved and the position further deteriorating at subsequent elections. In these circumstances a further review would be required to correct the position. If a review did not seek to balance electoral equality at the first election following a review, then this situation would not arise and further reviews would not be required immediately.

Q5b – How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years’ time?

This is a problem in the current economic climate as planned developments may not necessarily proceed to fruition as first envisaged. This is something on which a view may need to be taken at each particular review taking into account known local circumstances and the economic climate at the time of the review and economic forecasts in five years’ time.

Response to the LGBCE consultation document – On the right lines? – a consultation on policy and procedures for principal area boundary reviews

Q1a - Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

Yes – it clarifies and defines the process

Q1b – Under what circumstances should ‘compound’ reviews be carried out?

A ‘compound’ review might be required if a number of local authorities were considering merging into a single unitary council but there were parts of their areas which were on the periphery that did not wish to be part of the new unitary area and wish to be ‘attached’ to adjoining areas not being included in the proposed unitary area.

Q2a – Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

Yes – the criteria are wide ranging

Q2b - Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of criteria?

Yes – if not then how can the process be justified.

Q3 – Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved.

Yes – the ‘gateway’ process would be particularly useful and is welcomed as this would identify at an early stage in the process if such a review was justifiable and worthwhile

Q4 – Is the Commission’s approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

Yes – evidence of local support for a proposal would be crucial.

Q5 – Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

Yes – the financial implications of a proposal are as equally important as evidence of local support

Q6 – Is the Commission’s overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Yes – as it follows the proposals in the consultation document on the policy and procedures for electoral reviews.

Q7 – How much notice of the Commission’s intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give Councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of change on their boundaries?

This would depend on the resources available to gather the evidence and produce the required business case. A minimum of nine months to one year would be required to undertake the required planning and preparation process prior to the commencement of the formal review. It would also depend on where the review fitted into the electoral cycle as this would have a significant effect on the resources of the local authority and its ability to be able to respond. Reviews would be best carried out in a year when there were no scheduled elections.

Q8 – Are there any other matters which might be subject to appropriate prompts?

No. The list of prompts suggested is comprehensive.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:20
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: Consultation FW:Thurrock Council
Attachments: LGBC Responsev1.doc

David Owen Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Stuart, Alison [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2010 16:31
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: Thurrock Council's response to the Consultation

Dear Sirs

Please find enclosed the response by Thurrock Borough Council to the Consultation papers entitled ' Striking the Right Balance' and 'On the Right Lines' due by 31 December 2010.

Regards

Alison Stuart

Principal Solicitor- Regeneration
Legal Services
Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

[REDACTED]
DX: 141040 GRAYS 3
[REDACTED]

The information in this e-mail and any attachment(s) are intended to be confidential and may be legally privileged. Access to and use of its content by anyone else other than the addressee(s) may be unlawful and will not be recognised by Thurrock Council for business purposes. If you have received this message by mistake, please notify the sender immediately, delete it and do not copy it to anyone else. Thurrock Council cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this message as it has been transmitted over a public network.

Any opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Thurrock Council.

Any attachment(s) to this message has been checked for viruses, but please rely on your own virus checker and procedures.

Senders and recipients of e-mail should be aware that under the UK Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation these contents may have to be disclosed in response to a request.

All e-mail sent to or from this address will be processed by Thurrock Council's corporate e-mail system and may be subject to scrutiny by someone other than the addressee.

This message has been checked for all known viruses by the MessageLabs Virus Control Centre. For further information visit

<http://www.messagelabs.com/stats.asp>

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND ON A CONSULTATION ON POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ELECTORAL REVIEW.

Question 1a

Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

It is helpful as it ensures a clear, transparent process that should achieve consistency across all Local Authorities.

Question 1b

Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The principles set out are appropriate and adequate in the circumstances.

Question 2

Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The classification of review is appropriate and adequate in the circumstances.

Question 3a

Is a criteria-based approach to determining council-size desirable?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

It is agreed that a strict mathematical criteria for council size or an imposed national formula would dilute the emphasis upon localism. The Council considers that 49 Councillors continues to be the appropriate size for the Council taking into account the relevant wards within the borough.

Question 3b

Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

As with many Local Authorities, the borough faces significant challenges. In keeping with the Localism agenda, a criteria based decisions approach would allow Local Authorities to allocate resources where it is most necessary and in view of the local needs.

Question 4a

Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The stages of the review are clearly set out and appropriate for the requirements

Question 4b

Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The reduction of the duration of the review periods would be cost effective and in keeping with the Council's austerity measures.

Question 4c

Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Thurrock Council are reviewing the number of Council meetings and considering reducing the same which would promote efficiency and savings for the Council.

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Electoral equality and maximisation of equality are of requisite importance. The shift in emphasis to electoral equality should not seek to undermine or be perceived as undermining community cohesion. To shift this emphasis would provide greater weight to the reflection of the current distribution of electorate rather than the reflection of anticipated distribution, thus ensuring the local authorities focus on the electorate that is relevant as opposed to an anticipated or forecast electorate which is subject to change. This would also

support community cohesion as the Authority would be dealing with its present electorate and thus able to manage their needs and requirements more effectively, Thurrock Council has a transient electorate with the influx of a wide range of differing communities to the borough.

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The regeneration aspirations and plans of the Council need to be considered. The Council would need to continue to monitor the emergence of new communities and to consider how best to respond to their electoral needs.

ISSUES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO CONSIDER

SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CHANGE

Prompt: Does the proposal have substantial support amongst the Local electors affected by the proposed change?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

This largely depends upon the electorate giving support. There was a turnout of about 20% to 40% in Thurrock for last year's elections. Many of Thurrock's residents do not register to vote and we have a transient population, with the main influx being from the Eastern European community. There is lack of engagement in the voting procedure. To address this, Thurrock Borough Council provides roadshows in relevant communities or wards where there is apparent voter apathy.

EFFECTIVE AND CONVENIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Prompt: Are there proper arrangements to ensure that the future provision of services will meet the needs of the local people?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Public awareness and discussion around electoral changes are key – these are the sorts of issues where if handled without care they tend to leave years of suspicion. The voluntary and community sector in particular is more likely to act as a catalyst for involvement and needs a longer period of consultation in order to effectively debate and agree a co-ordinated response. Thurrock Borough Council ensures that there are effective means for engaging the community.

REFLECTING COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Prompt: What changes are required to ensure that were the proposed change is implemented, electoral equality will be established and communities appropriately represented.

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

At the present time, monitoring of the electorate, is anonymous and Thurrock Borough Council undertakes a nationality check to see who is registered to vote.

Effective engagement of all communities and vulnerable persons would continue to be monitored by the requisite departments. Electoral equality would be established by constant monitoring processes.

Prompt: Further, what is your rationale for the number of elected members required for the authority(ies) to effectively discharge its functions?

THURROCK COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Thurrock Borough Council is an area where there is likely to be significant development over the next 10-15 years, the role of democratically elected councillors is crucial in securing improvements to quality of life within the Borough and it is essential that Councillors have the necessary understanding and knowledge of the issues which affect their areas.

Prompt: What arrangements will enable those communities affected by a boundary change to engage with their new Council?

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Some wards generate more casework than others and this can vary with individual councillors. Having more than one councillor from each ward has enabled the representative role to be carried out effectively and ensured both consistency and that all wards are covered.

VALUE FOR MONEY.

Prompt: What are the conclusions for the 'value for money' exercise for the proposed change?

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The Council consistently considers value for money exercises.

Prompt: Has this been certified by all relevant section 151 officers?

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The s151 officer is aware of this consultation exercise.

Prompt: How will the implementation of change demonstrate to council tax payers, value for money?

THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Any proposals would be commensurate with the generating greater involvement of local communities in their governance and representation and the onus on the Council to comply with austerity measures.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:24
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: consultation FW:Walsall Council On the Right Lines
Attachments: Document9.doc

David Owen Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Allsop Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2010 17:16
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: On the Right Lines - consultation response

Please see attached

Peter Allsop
Electoral Services Manager
Electoral Services Office
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TH
[REDACTED]

Link to Council election website; <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/elections.htm>

Disclaimer :

IF THIS EMAIL IS MARKED PRIVATE OR CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE RESPECT THAT AND DO NOT FORWARD IT TO ANYONE ELSE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR. *The information in this message should be regarded as confidential and is intended for the addressee only unless explicitly stated. If you have received this message in error it must be deleted and the sender notified. The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of Walsall MBC unless explicitly stated. E-mails sent or received from Walsall MBC may be intercepted and read by the Council. Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with Council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purposes of essential maintenance or support of the e-mail system*

On the Right Lines - Consultation

The matters the commission would like to hear about are:

Question 1a - Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

A. Yes. *It is helpful in that it allows a reduction in resources and time for those that are relatively small matters.*

Question 1b - Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?

A. *Where all the authorities affected are in agreement*

Question 2a - Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

A. *Council is in agreement with the criteria*

Question 2b - Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

A. Yes

Question 3 - Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

A. Yes

Question 4 - Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

A. Yes

Question 5 - Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

A. Yes

Question 6 - Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

A. Yes

Question 7 - How much notice of the Commission's intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

A. *6 months, particularly if it were a type D review. However, it would need longer if a council / national election were held within this period.*

Question 8 - Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

In addition to thinking about the questions, you might want to add comment about things which don't appear in this document: please feel free to do so.

A. None

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:24
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: consultation FW:Walsall Council Striking the Right Balance
Attachments: Document8.doc

David Owen Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Allsop Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2010 17:14
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: Striking the Right Balance - consultation response

Please see attached

Peter Allsop
Electoral Services Manager
Electoral Services Office
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TH
[REDACTED]

Link to Council election website; <http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/elections.htm>

Disclaimer :

IF THIS EMAIL IS MARKED PRIVATE OR CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE RESPECT THAT AND DO NOT FORWARD IT TO ANYONE ELSE WITHOUT THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR. The information in this message should be regarded as confidential and is intended for the addressee only unless explicitly stated. If you have received this message in error it must be deleted and the sender notified. The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of Walsall MBC unless explicitly stated. E-mails sent or received from Walsall MBC may be intercepted and read by the Council. Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with Council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purposes of essential maintenance or support of the e-mail system

Striking the Right Balance - Consultation

The matters the commission would like to hear about are:

Question 1a - Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

A. Yes. Principles are the foundation of a process and their statement adds to the transparency of that process

Question 1b - Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

A. Yes

Question 2 - Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

A. Council supports the classification of reviews to enable the efficient allocation of resources to them.

Question 3a - Is a criteria based approach to determining council-size desirable?

A. Council supports the view that there should be a sound business management case for determining council size

Question 3b - Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

A. Council supports the elements outlined.

Question 4a - Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

A. Yes

Question 4b - Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

A. Yes. Too often time is wasted where the issues are small and interest low.

Question 4c - Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

A. Yes. It is suggested that the period for consultation on draft recommendations for a type A review could be reduced to 6 weeks, the same as for a type B review

Question 5a - Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

A. Council supports this shift in emphasis to the next election, although if development is certain, within a 1-3 year timeframe, that that should be accounted for. Beyond 3 years the degree of uncertainty must increase.

Question 5b - How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

A. As we have seen in recent decades, economic recessions are not that uncommon and new housing starts are often one of the first areas negatively affected. As mentioned in Q5a, a 1-3 timeframe can provide a high degree of certainty but beyond that the level of uncertainty increases. Council feels it is better to get it right in the short term with a high degree of certainty rather than risk getting it wrong trying to anticipate 5 years out.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:34
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: Consultation FW:Wandsworth Borough Council
Importance: High
Attachments: Wandsworth response - Striking the right balance - 24 December 2010.doc; Wandsworth response - On the right lines - 24 December 2010.doc

David Owen
Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Kennett, Neil [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 December 2010 16:39
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: LGBCE Consultation on Policy and Procedures for Electoral review and Principal Area Boundary review - Wandsworth Borough Council response
Importance: High

Please see attached the London Borough of Wandsworth responses to the LGBCE Consultation on Policy and Procedures for Electoral review and Principal Area Boundary review.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Neil Kennett
Head of Electoral Services

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[Website: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/vote](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/vote)

From: Owen, David [mailto:David.Owen@lgbce.org.uk]
Sent: 26 November 2010 14:08
To: kersten.England@york.gov.uk
Subject: LGBCE Consultation on Policy and Procedures for Electoral review and Principal Area Boundary review

Dear Chief Executive

I am e-mailing Chief Executives regarding the recent launch of a consultation by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

LGBCE was established on 1 April 2010 when it took over responsibility for the conduct of Electoral Reviews of principal councils and Principal Area Boundary Reviews from the Boundary Committee of the Electoral Commission. This year, we have been carrying out reviews using the policies and methods formulated by our predecessors. The Commissioners have also been thinking about how reviews might be carried out in the future. They want us to be more responsive to the wishes of local authorities and people in their areas for reviews into their boundaries and their electoral arrangements.

LGBCE's new consultation is about how those reviews should be carried out.

I am attaching the consultation documents to this message. I hope that you may be able to look at the documents and would be delighted to receive any views you may have on them.

We have also put our consultation documents on our website. Clicking on the link below will take you to the relevant webpage

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/major-consultation-of-english-local-authorities>

Here you can open either document in a separate window.

Our consultation period runs to 31 December, after which we will consider responses. If we are to make changes to our current methods, we will not introduce them until April next year. We will prepare and publish new guidance to those who may want to contribute to a review before we conduct a review under new procedures.

I do hope that you will find the consultation and the Commission's ideas interesting and that you may let us have your views. If you would like to know more about the consultation, do not hesitate to contact me.

I am e-mailing Council Leaders in similar fashion

Regards

David Owen
Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532

Fax: 0270 7296 6227

e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

IMPORTANT:

Confidentiality: This email and its attachments are intended for the above named only and may be confidential. If they have come to you in error you must take no action based on them, nor must you copy or show them to anyone. Please reply to this email and highlight the error.

Please visit the Council's website at: www.wandsworth.gov.uk

London Borough of Wandsworth

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Consultation

Striking the right balance. A consultation on policy and procedures for electoral reviews

Question 1a

Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

Yes

Question 1b

Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

Yes

Question 2

Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

Yes

Question 3a

Is a criteria –based approach to determining council-size desirable?

Yes

Question 3b

Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

Yes

Question 4a

Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

Yes

Question 4b

Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

Yes

Question 4c

Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

Yes

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

Yes

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

The Commission should consult on a frequent basis with the local authorities in the appropriate areas to enable them to forecast the patterns of electorate where short-term imbalances exist in order to achieve good electoral equality in five years' time.

**Patrick Watson
Assistant Director of Administration
Support & Democratic Services
24th December 2010**

London Borough of Wandsworth

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Consultation

On the right lines? A consultation on policy and procedures for Principal Area Boundary Reviews

Question 1a

Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

Yes

Question 1b

Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?

'Compound' reviews should be carried out when a proposed large-scale review or a merger provides the opportunity to address other boundary anomalies with adjacent areas.

Question 2a

Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

Review criteria relevant - Yes

Should there be other criteria - No

Question 2b

Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

Yes

Question 3

Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

Yes

Question 4

Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

Yes

Question 5

Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

Yes

Question 6

Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Yes

Question 7

How much notice of the Commission's intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

As much advance notice as possible should be given by the Commission of its intention to undertake a review in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence required.

Question 8

Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

No

**Patrick Watson
Assistant Director of Administration
Support & Democratic Services
24th December 2010**

Your ref: [REDACTED]
My ref: [REDACTED]
Your letter received: 23 December 2010

**Customers, Workforce and Governance
Directorate**
P.O. Box 9, Shire Hall
Warwick, CV34 4RR
DX 723362 Warwick 5

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England,
Layden House,
76-86 Turnmill Street,
London,
EC1M 5LG

David Carter, MA LLB
Strategic Director of Customers Workforce
and Governance

Tel: 01926 412564 Fax: 01926 476881
E-mail: [REDACTED]
www.warwickshire.gov.uk

By email: futures@lgbce.org.uk

24 January 2011

Dear Sirs,

RESPONSE TO ON THE RIGHT LINES AND STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE CONSULTATIONS

I write on behalf of the Warwickshire County Council in response to your letter dated 14 December 2010 to the Leader and Chief Executive. In answer to the question you raised about future electoral or PAB reviews the Council has no particular wish to engage in either type of review at this time. As you set out in your letter the Council has other priorities at the moment and does not see either type of review as providing any solution to address those issues.

Whilst the published consultation deadlines have passed I understand we are still able to comment on the above consultations and the views of the Council are set out below.

On the Right Lines

Question 1a

Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?
The classification is helpful and in our view appropriate.

Question 1b

Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?
We consider that compound reviews should only take place where all councils involved including the original sponsors are in agreement.

Question 2a

Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?
Generally the review criteria appear appropriate. However we would wish to see in relation to two-tier areas a requirement for councils to address coterminosity within their proposals for electoral arrangements and the need to improve coterminosity in any proposals coming forward. Also see our comments below.

*Working for
Warwickshire*

Question 2b

Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria? *We would comment that evidence to support the criteria 'value for money' may be difficult to achieve for a Type A review as by definition it would have no financial impact and a negligible effect on electoral equality. Similarly we assume that the criteria value for money would be met in relation to Type B reviews if the assurance referred to in paragraph 46 is given otherwise the evidential basis for the review will need to change. It would be helpful to clarify whether this is the intention.*

Question 3

Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved? *The initiation process is clear and reasonable, however it should also deal with the need to address the issue of coterminosity in any consequential electoral arrangements in two-tier areas and how the proposed changes would improve coterminosity. The initial meeting with the councils affected should address timetabling issues for the collation of evidence. Whilst the standard time-frames may be a useful guide these should always be subject to a realistic assessment based on the complexity and amount of information which may be required and the timing of the review e.g. August is always a difficult month.*

Question 4

Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?
Yes.

Question 5

Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?
Yes.

Question 6

Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Again the issue of coterminosity in two-tier areas needs to be addressed. We consider that the current practice of not taking into account coterminosity in district level reviews needs to change and this issue should be addressed in both county and district reviews.

Question 7

How much notice of the Commission's intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?
See our comments above.

Question 8

Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

Again it would be useful to have a prompt relating to coterminosity in two-tier areas so the issue is addressed from the outset.

Striking the Right Balance**Question 1a**

Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?
Yes but see our comment below.

Question 1b

Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

We consider the issue of coterminosity in two tier areas needs to be addressed whether the review is at district or county level. Whilst we recognise the statutory requirements are limited to the latter this would in our view be good practice and enable sensible building blocks to be developed. The current arrangements create significant potential difficulties for later county reviews and anomalous outcomes which are confusing for the electorate.

Question 2

Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

We welcome the proposals to reduce some of the bureaucracy surrounding reviews by introducing a triage element and an opportunity to deal with council size in an alternative way for Type A and B reviews. The classification of reviews is helpful.

Question 3a

Is a criteria –based approach to determining council-size desirable?

Yes but see our comments below.

Question 3b

Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

We agree that a strict mathematical approach to council size based on the number of electors would be unhelpful and that the factors set out in paragraph 40 of the consultation paper provides a better basis. However we consider that another element should be included 'the partnership agenda' as this significantly impacts on the role of elected members.

Question 4a

Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

Yes

Question 4b

Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

Whilst we understand the aspiration to shorten the overall timescale for the reviews we have reservations about doing so by cutting into the time for public consultation (based on the norm of 12 weeks) particularly for example if the period of consultation covers a Christmas or summer holiday period. We can see that there may be an argument for doing so if there is sufficient advance publicity about the consultation period but we believe that should be the exception not the norm.

Question 4c

Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

No. Council meetings here are generally on a 2 monthly cycle. In terms of reports normally final reports have to be produced at least 2 weeks in advance to enable their collation and publication to the meet statutory timescales for publication. This means drafts circulating at least 4 weeks before any meeting and cuts into the time for collation of information and consultation for making a response. The triage stage should address an outline timetable for the review.

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

This is a question of balance. The consultation paper indicates that 5 year election forecasts have been generally good but there are some cases where developments have not materialised and caused major long-term balances. The exact number or percentage has not been quantified. We believe the system should use the basis which provides the most robust long-term arrangements overall and given what is said in the consultation paper that appears to be five year forecasts rather than the first election following the review.

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

This can only be achieved through discussion with the relevant local authorities about the likelihood of proposed housing developments coming to fruition. Forecasts are not an exact science. You could apply the same methodology to the previous five years to see how that matches up with the current electorate patterns.

Yours faithfully,



David Carter
Strategic Director of Customers Workforce and Governance

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:44
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: consultation FW:Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council
Importance: High
Attachments: Response to consultation 'On the Right Lines'.doc; Response to consultation 'Striking the right balance'.doc

David Owen

Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

3rd Floor Layden House

76-86 Turnmill Street

London

EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532

Fax: 0270 7296 6227

e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Arthur Charvonia [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 December 2010 11:12
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: Responses to consultation
Importance: High

Dear Sirs

Please find enclosed joint responses from Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council

28/01/2011

to your two consultation papers, 'On the right lines?' and 'Striking the right balance'.

Yours faithfully

Arthur Charvonia

Assistant Chief Executive

WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL and SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

What Would YOU Do?

www.waveney.gov.uk

wwyd@waveney.gov.uk

Please consider the environment: think before you print this email

Confidentiality: This email and its attachments are intended for the above named only and may be confidential. If they have come to you in error you must take no action based on them, nor must you copy or show them to anyone; please reply to this email and highlight the error.

Security Warning: Please note that this email has been created in the knowledge that Internet email is not a 100% secure communications medium. We advise that you understand and accept this lack of security when emailing us.

Viruses: Although we have taken steps to ensure that this email and attachments are free from any virus, we advise that in keeping with good computing practice the recipient should ensure they are actually virus free.

On the Right Lines?

A consultation on policy and procedures for principal area boundary reviews

Joint response of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils
Emailed to futures@lgbce.org.uk

Question 1a

Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

The classification of the PABRs is helpful and appropriate. Our only concern is whether sufficient consideration has been given to overlapping effects of any changes made at District, County and Parliamentary level on each other. This could push what may otherwise have been a Type A up into a Type B or C?

Question 1b

Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?

Compound reviews should always be avoided but the Commission should be open to carrying out brief reviews of any anomalies in adjacent areas (if requested) shortly after any substantive review is approved by the Secretary of State. These should be restricted however to matters where there is almost universal agreement of the changes required and they can be implemented without detrimentally impacting upon the implementation of the substantive changes.

Question 2a

Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

The statutory criteria are fixed and can not be altered as part of this consultation so no comment is made regarding them.

In our opinion no other criteria should be applied beyond the statutory. Local support and value for money should not be criteria for the Commission.

The Commission have confirmed in paragraph 49 that it is not for the Commission to take a view on the financial business cases. As confirmed it is for the section 151 Officers who are 'best placed, professionally and otherwise, to determine the effect of a boundary change on the finances and services of their authority'. Section 151 Officers already have statutory responsibilities to their authorities. No request could be made to the Commission without a Council report and with the approval of the section 151 officer. Value for money is

therefore a matter for the Councils involved, the section 1051 officers, and ultimately may be a factor for the Secretary of State; but should not be a criteria of the Commission in determining whether to conduct a review or whether to recommend a change to the Secretary of State.

Similarly 'local support' should not be a criteria for the Commission to determine whether to conduct a review or whether to recommend a change to the Secretary of State. The Coalition Government is intent on reducing the financial and bureaucratic burden on local government and driving up the empowerment of communities to do things their way, increasing local control of public finance, and strengthening accountability to local people. In doing so the role of the Council and local Councillors is changing. The current 'contract' between the councillor and the citizen is changing. Councils and Councillors are to become more directly accountable to their citizens for example through 'arm chair auditors', Community Rights (e.g. to buy) and Neighbourhood Planning.

In response many Councils are also adopting different local government models for the future which will also impact upon the nature of their roles and relationships with their electorate (these include the Barnet 'Easy Council', Suffolk 'divestment model' and the Lambeth 'John Lewis' Council).

The aspirations of the political leadership of Councils will therefore be critical to the future shape of local government in shifting from a government centric to citizen centric approach. This requires a shift away from opinion polls and consultations to having ongoing regular and rich conversations about what communities want their places to be like - developing a greater understanding about how people live their lives and why they do. This is about Local Government being open and transparent with its information but also about the dilemmas, trade-offs and choices it faces. Only through this type of rich conversation will Councils earn permission from its citizens (where they can not be directly empowered to do so themselves) to make the right long term decisions for them.

This is a much more complex sense of the relationship between the Council and its electorate that moves away from the traditional thinking of the Council having an idea, and then measuring local support through a local poll and / or neighbourhood meetings. It also radically shifts the relationship in terms of local accountability. Local support should not therefore be a criteria either for the Commission or the Secretary of State to assess. Again, like the business case, it is local communities and not the Commission who are 'best placed' to determine this and it is a matter which would ultimately be measured at the ballot box.

This would also dramatically simplify and reduce the cost of such reviews. Review costs should (if not already intended) be borne by the relevant Councils. This would act as a sufficient safeguard against

frivolous requests for reviews.

The Commission do not then need criteria as to whether to conduct a review. It should be the Council's right to request and pay for a review. The only issue for the Commission is then a matter of prioritising its workload. The statutory criteria will then be the sole considerations for the Commission in formulating its recommendations for the Secretary of State. This would also remove the need for the Commission to consult upon its recommendations (other than in relation to electoral arrangements) as they would obviously be open for comment prior to the Secretary of State reaching his decision.

Instead the focus of the Commission can be on gathering information in relation to securing effective and convenient local government and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. The views of the local government family should carry significantly more weight than any other views in determining how to secure effective and convenient local government, as again local government is 'best placed' to make this assessment. Ultimately the Commission should then advise the Secretary of State in terms of reflecting the identities and interests of local communities and any changes to electoral arrangements, which they are 'best placed' to advise on.

Question 2b

Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

There is no issue with local authorities and others being able to assemble evidence in relation to the final criteria. The critical aspect will be the level of detail required and the timescales involved (see below).

Question 3

Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

Subject to the amendments proposed above the initiation process is clear. In addition however there appears to be a presumption from the terminology used against reviews being carried out (e.g. "determines whether the proposed change would impair the councils' capacity to deliver services whilst improving effective representation"). As stated above reviews should be available as of right and there should be a presumption in favour of implementing the local authorities' preferences.

Additional guidance should also be made available to Councils regarding requesting any reviews, particularly in terms of the timescales involved. This is critical to enable Councils to budget in future years for such reviews and essential in terms of electoral changes if they are

designed to take effect from the next elections (see response to 'Striking the Right Balance').

Question 4

Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

The Commission's approach to local support is clear but for the reasons stated above in our opinion it is not in touch with modern local government and the Localism agenda. For clarity, for the reasons given above, we believe there should be no requirement to provide evidence of local support for any of the Types of review.

Question 5

Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

As stated above the approach with regard to financial implications is clear, reasonable and should be extended to 'local support' and 'securing effective and convenient local government'.

Question 6

Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

The overall approach is clear and welcomed. See also our response to 'Striking the Right Balance' but broadly we welcome the attempt to run any electoral review in parallel with the PABR.

More consideration may need to be given however to Type C reviews where the local authorities operate different electoral cycles.

Question 7

How much notice of the Commission's intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

This should be more of an iterative process as discussions will have begun with the Commission at a much earlier stage at the Councils' request, and prior (under the current proposal) to the Commission formally resolving to conduct a review.

As the level of work involved following those first meetings will vary depending upon what Type of review is anticipated the time needed will similarly vary. The current proposals for a Type D review would obviously require the greatest level of work by the Councils. This would take between 6 to 9 months from inception to submission to the

Commission under the current proposals. This timescale is unlikely to change even if the changes proposed above were adopted; although less evidence would formally need to be submitted to the Commission (statutory criteria only).

The fundamental issue for the Councils will be whether the Commission maintain the need for a local poll under Type D. In the event that this is required then the costs of this process would mean that ideally it would be included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and it would definitely need to be included in the previous year's budget. This could therefore significantly effect the timing from the point of the Commission recommending a poll to it actually being conducted.

Question 8

Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

Additional prompts would be useful for Councils to consider implementation issues and timescales.

Striking the right balance

A consultation on policy and procedures for electoral reviews

Joint response of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils
Emailed to futures@lgbce.org.uk

Question 1a

Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

Setting out the principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is essential in order to enable electors (who the Commission are stated as principally serving) to clearly understand the purpose and scope of the process. It will also enable Local Government to have clear expectations and minimise any wasted resources.

Question 1b

Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

Broadly the principles are appropriate and adequate however there are some critical amendments and queries that we would make. These are:

The sentiments expressed in paragraphs 23 and 24 by which the Commission clearly states that its work is to serve the electorate (not the political parties), and ensuring that effective and convenient electoral arrangements are put in place that establish the conditions for a fair and representative democracy at the local level (fairness being defined as far as is practicable ensuring equal influence on the council through each vote) should be enshrined more clearly within the bullet point principles under paragraph 24.

The Commission's commitment to minimise the resource costs of reviews should similarly be enshrined within the bullet point principles of what the Commission will do.

The first bullet point emphasises the 'prevailing inclination' towards localism. This can not be disputed although it is clearly also a politically driven principle. The Council fundamentally agrees that localism should be a fundamental principle within electoral reviews but that it should not just be linked to the current national politics but should stand alone in its own right as a principle for electoral review. In addition use of the word 'localism', given its national prominence at present, leaves the word open to misinterpretation. There is much debate nationally as to what the Coalition Government means by expressions such as

'Localism' and 'Big Society'. In our opinion the Commission therefore needs to be extremely clear as to what it means in using the expression 'localism'. For example it could have been assumed (although it is clear from elsewhere in the consultation document, and bullet point 7 that it does not) that 'localism' would mean an automatic presumption towards ratios of more councillors to electors. (See also comments regarding 'Localism' in response to question 3b below.)

The third bullet point refers to the use of criteria to select which areas will be reviewed. It is unclear however which criteria are being referred to or whether they will form part of a later consultation. Type C reviews should take precedence over Types A and B.

The fourth bullet prioritises the need to review areas where the greatest number of electors are affected by an imbalance. This is too simplistic and some reference needs to be had to the Commission balancing the needs of a large number of electors affected by an imbalance with the needs of a smaller number of electors but where there is a significantly larger imbalance. In programming reviews the Commission therefore needs to conduct a proportionate balancing exercise between the number of electors affected and the size of the imbalance. It also however needs to fully consider the criteria referred to under the third bullet point (see above paragraph).

It should be enshrined within the ninth bullet point that the views of the local government bodies and democratically elected representatives will carry greater weight in determining future council sizes than those of 'other key partners'.

Question 2

Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

The classification of types of review into A, B and C is both appropriate and adequate. We fully endorse the sentiments expressed in paragraphs 25 to 35.

It may be of more assistance however to cross reference the different 'Types' against the first column in Appendix B (Figure 3) so that it is clear which methods will be used to assess council size under each Type. At present Appendix B (Figure 3) would otherwise seem to suggest that there are actually 13 'Types' rather than just 3.

Question 3a

Is a criteria-based approach to determining council-size desirable?

The criteria based approach to determining council-size is desirable. In

particular we fully support the sentiments expressed in paragraphs 36 to 41.

Question 3b

Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

Broadly the elements currently set out for the criteria-based decisions are appropriate but are not complete and do not adequately reflect the changing role of Local Government.

They do not explain how the Commission will apply the four bullet points under paragraph 40, in terms of balancing the business and democratic roles. Three of the bullet points relate to managing the business and only one to the representative role. Will managing the business take priority over the representative role?

They also fail to adequately reflect the representative role in its full context. Although the review may be of one tier of government, there are other elements that make up the total local representation for the elector. These may include town or parish councillors, district or borough councillors, county councillors, MPs and MEPs. The criteria therefore needs to reflect that the representative role and potential ratios may vary where these many different layers of representation exist.

Finally, and most importantly, they also fail to reflect the full extent of the Coalition Government's thinking in terms of 'localism'. The Government is intent on reducing the financial and bureaucratic burden on local government and driving up the empowerment of communities to do things their way, increasing local control of public finance, and strengthening accountability to local people. In doing so the role of the Council and local Councillors is changing. The current balance of decision making, scrutiny and quasi-judicial processes are shifting away from the Council towards for example 'arm chair auditors', Community Rights (e.g. to buy) and Neighbourhood Planning.

In addition many Councils are adopting different local government models for the future which will also impact upon the nature of their democratic and business roles (these include the Barnet 'Easy Council', Suffolk 'divestment model' and the Lambeth 'John Lewis' Council). The aspirations of the political leadership (as expressed in paragraph 33) will therefore be critical to the criteria in determining the size of the council. The criteria therefore need to reflect these changes; as must the principles under paragraph 24.

Question 4a

Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 2 clear and appropriate?

Figure 2 is not clear at all and adds little value. Regardless of the 8 different starting points (NB this is different again from the 3 Types under Figure 1, and the 13 under Figure 3) they all follow the same path across the page until they reach the decision diamonds on the right of the page. It would be far more useful if Figure 1 was used as the sole table and then any additional elements added as necessary from Figures 2 and 3.

The Question in the consultation paper itself actually asks if the stages of the review shown in Figure 1 are clear and appropriate. As stated above Figure 1 is the best of the diagrams as it clearly sets out each stage.

Question 4b

Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

The desire to reduce the periods for each type of review is not just helpful but is essential. Unfortunately however the current proposals do not go far enough. Under all three Types the reviews will take far too long to complete.

Up to 34 and 36 weeks for the relatively simple Types A and B reviews is excessive. 10 weeks to consult on Type A reviews is unnecessary and a supplementary consultation period should not be available. This would reasonably reduce Type A reviews to a maximum of 20 weeks.

Similarly Type B can be dramatically reduced. Paragraph 27 envisages that opinions regarding proposed change will be sought during the consultation on draft recommendations stage but this does not appear to be properly reflected in Figure 1. We would propose overlapping stages 1 & 2, and 3 & 4 to again reduce the overall review time to a maximum of 24 weeks.

Finally the prospect of a Type C review taking up to a year to complete is totally excessive. Again stages 1, 2 & 3 should be run in parallel for up to 8 weeks. The information and consultations should be merged and shortened and the final preparation of recommendations shortened. It must be noted that such an electoral review is unlikely to be taking place unless prior consultation / local poll has been conducted by the Council(s) to even trigger the process with the Commission. Further 18 week periods of information gathering and consulting the public should therefore be entirely unnecessary. Type C reviews should again take a maximum of 24 weeks.

The Commission must go much further if it is to achieve the aspirations it sets out in paragraph 13. Although the plan is to move away from the current 6 steps (Preliminary through to Stage 4 - in paragraph 28) Figure 1 appears to create 8 steps instead. The current proposals are far from 'speedy'. As long as the process and procedures are clearly laid out

then shorter periods will remain deliverable for all involved.

Question 4c

Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

The frequency and timings of formal Council meetings will not be an issue and can be called to suit the Commission's timescales if necessary. If properly planned it should also be possible to minimise the number of times Council needs to even formally meet during the electoral review process.

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

Yes this appears to be a sensible approach. The Commission either needs to adopt a proper prediction role over the longer term or move to a more realistic period. It is extremely difficult to predict over the longer term and in a five year period it is unlikely that dramatic change will have happened as major housing developments take a long time to obtain planning and then be built. It is therefore more realistic to focus on the present and foreseeable future i.e. the resolving the current issues ahead of the forthcoming elections.

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

See above.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:15
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: consultation FW:West Dorset District Council
Attachments: D-Response.LGBCE Consultation Papers.doc

David Owen
Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Mike Hickman [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2010 13:58
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: Responses to consultation papers 'On the right lines?' and 'Striking the right balance'

Dear Sirs

With regard to the above, please find attached our response to these consultation papers. If you require anything else, please let me know.

Yours faithfully

Mike Hickman
Electoral Services
West Dorset District Council
[REDACTED]

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

This communication is intended solely for the person (s) or organisation to whom it is addressed. It may contain privileged and confidential information and if you are not the intended recipient (s), you must not copy, distribute or take any action in reliance on it. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify the sender by return and confirm that its contents have been destroyed and copy the message to ITSupport@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

Individuals are advised that by replying to, or sending an e-mail message to West Dorset District

Council, you accept that you have no explicit or implicit expectation of privacy.

In line with the Surveillance and Monitoring Policy, any e-mail messages (and attachments) transmitted over the Council's network may be subject to scrutiny.

Any view or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of West Dorset District Council or any of its individual departments.

West Dorset District Council is not liable for any consequences of accessing this electronic transmission. Attachments to this e-mail may contain software viruses which may damage your systems. West Dorset District Council have taken reasonable precautions to minimise this risk, but we advise that any attachments are virus checked before they are opened.

In the event of any unauthorised copying or forwarding, the recipient will be required to indemnify the Council against any claim for loss or damage caused by any viruses or otherwise.

Telephone enquiries should be directed to the Councils switchboard on 01305 251010.

WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON PRINCIPAL AREA BOUNDARY REVIEWS

Question 1a

Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

Answer 1a

Yes. The proposed classification would enable us to understand what type of review is to be undertaken and the details of the various stages.

Question 1b

Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?

Answer 1b

We agree that the affected authorities should be consulted and agreement sought before the scope of a review is extended. 'Compound' reviews should only be undertaken where the Commission receives a joint request from councils.

Question 2a

Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

Answer 2a

The proposed statutory and other criteria are relevant. However, with regard to the other criteria, we consider that evidence of local support should come primarily from parish/town councils and other representative organisations.

Question 2b

Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

Answer 2b

Yes. Working closely with other local organisations, we should be able to provide the necessary evidence.

Question 3

Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

Answer 3

We agree with the initiation process as outlined, particularly the suggestion for pre-reviews and gateway stages. We also support the proposed procedures for the different types of review.

Question 4

Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

Answer 4

Whilst we agree with the general approach, we do not support the use of a referendum to gauge local opinion. Experience of 'community governance reviews' has shown that most individuals are more likely to focus on how the change would affect them, rather than the wider community. This is particularly the case where proposals would result in a change in council tax. In addition to the ineffectiveness of local polls, we are also concerned at the potential costs involved. We would prefer the Commission to be guided by consultation with parish & town councils and other representative organisations. Where public consultation is sought, we feel that it should be of a more general nature.

Question 5

Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

Answer 5

Yes. The suggested requirements are proportionate to the type of review being undertaken.

Question 6

Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Answer 6

Yes. The suggested approach is proportionate to the type of review being undertaken.

Question 7

How much notice of the Commission's intention to undertake a review would be necessary in order to give councils sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

Answer 7

We consider that councils should be given a period of at least six months notice.

Question 8

Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

Answer 8

We consider that the proposed 'prompts' are sufficient.

WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
ELECTORAL REVIEWS

<p>Question 1a Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?</p>
<p>Answer 1a Yes. It is helpful for all interested parties to know from the outset what the general principles will be.</p>
<p>Question 1b Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?</p>
<p>Answer 1b Whilst the suggested principles are appropriate, it is important that a pragmatic approach is taken in their application to achieve "...a fair and representative democracy at local level." Many councils are made up of a mix of geographically small but densely populated urban areas, together with larger but more sparsely populated rural areas. When considering Warding arrangements, the implementation of a 'one size fits all' approach is impractical.</p>
<p>Question 2 Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?</p>
<p>Answer 2 Yes. The proposed classification would enable us to understand what type of review is to be undertaken.</p>
<p>Question 3a Is a criteria based approach to determining council-size desirable?</p>
<p>Answer 3a We support a criteria based approach to establishing the size of a council.</p>
<p>Question 3b Are the elements set out above for criteria based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?</p>
<p>Answer 3b We consider that proposed elements for criteria based decisions will adequately take account of the different council management processes.</p>
<p>Question 4a Are the stages of the reviews as shown in Figure 1 clear and appropriate?</p>
<p>Answer 4a Yes.</p>
<p>Question 4b Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?</p>
<p>Answer 4b Yes.. We consider that the proposed timescales are appropriate for the type of review</p>

being undertaken.

Question 4c

Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

Answer 4c

In general we consider that the timescales are sufficient. However, some parish councils meet infrequently, so may have difficulty achieving some of the proposed timings.

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

Answer 5a

Yes. We would support such a move.

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

Answer 5b

The Commission could need to consider planning permissions not yet implemented, together with any future development potential proposed by the Local Plan. In addition, population predictions from the Office of National Statistics may be used.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:06
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: Consultation FW:West Somerset Council
Attachments: Council Response to the Consultation Documents doc

David Owen
Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
 3rd Floor Layden House
 76-86 Turnmill Street
 London
 EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
 Fax: 0270 7296 6227
 e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Bruce Lang [redacted]
Sent: 22 December 2010 11:03
To: Owen, David [redacted]
Subject: RE: LGBCE Consultation on Policy and Procedures for Electoral review and Principal Area Boundary review

Dear David
 I refer to your e-mail below which Councillor Tim Taylor, the Leader of our Council, has asked me to respond to.
 Please find attached responses, approved by the Leader, on behalf of West Somerset Council, to the two consultation papers.
 If you require any further clarification on the contents of the responses, please do not hesitate to contact me.
 Regards
 Bruce
 Bruce Lang
 Corporate Director
 West Somerset Council

From: Owen, David [mailto:David.Owen@lgbce.org.uk]
Sent: Fri 26/11/2010 13:56
Subject: LGBCE Consultation on Policy and Procedures for Electoral review and Principal Area Boundary review

Dear Leader

I am e-mailing all Council Leaders regarding the recent launch of a consultation by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

LGBCE was established on 1 April 2010 when it took over responsibility for the conduct of Electoral Reviews of principal councils and Principal Area Boundary Reviews from the Boundary Committee of the Electoral Commission. This year, we have been carrying out reviews using the policies and methods formulated by our predecessors. The Commissioners have also been thinking about how reviews might be carried out in the future. They want us to be more responsive to the wishes of local authorities and people in their areas for reviews into their boundaries and their electoral arrangements.

LGBCE's new consultation is about how those reviews should be carried out.

I am attaching the consultation documents to this message. I hope that you may be able to look at the documents and would be delighted to receive any views you may have on them.

We have also put our consultation documents on our website. Clicking on the link below will take you to the relevant webpage

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/major-consultation-of-english-local-authorities>

Here you can open either document in a separate window.

Our consultation period runs to 31 December, after which we will consider responses. If we are to make changes to our current methods, we will not introduce them until April next year. We will prepare and publish new guidance to those who may want to contribute to a review before we conduct a review under new procedures.

I do hope that you will find the consultation and the Commission's ideas interesting and that you may let us have your views. If you would like to know more about the consultation, do not hesitate to contact me.

I am e-mailing Chief Executives in similar fashion,.

Regards

David Owen
Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

Click [here](#) to report this email as spam

West Somerset Council would like your feedback on the service you have received from us. Please could you take a couple of minutes to provide your feedback by clicking here:
<http://tinyurl.com/32ra9sl> You could win £100 of High Street Shopping vouchers!

Please Read:

- 1 This message is sent in confidence for the addressee only. The content of the email and its attachments are considered proprietary information and should not be disclosed.
- 2 This e-mail constitutes privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, you must not disclose, copy, circulate or in any other way use or rely on this information.
- 3 E-mails to and from the council are monitored in accordance with lawful business practices.
- 4 The views expressed in this message are personal and must not be considered to be the official views of West Somerset Council.
- 5 Whilst every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure that this e-mail message has been swept for the presence of computer viruses the company accepts no responsibility for any damage caused by viruses.

<http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk>

This message has been scanned for viruses.

West Somerset Council Response to the Consultation Document issued by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in November 2010 'On the right lines'

The document provided consultation on policy and procedures for Principal Area Boundary Reviews (PABR).

The Council's response is set out below addressing the questions posed throughout the consultation document.

Question 1a

Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

Answer

Yes, by providing the proposed classification it is possible for the action to be taken to be proportionate to the issue being considered.

Question 1b

Under what circumstances should 'compound' reviews be carried out?

Answer

Where it would be expected to be more expedient and efficient than by carrying out separate review processes. This could be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Question 2a

Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

Answer

The criteria stated are relevant and perhaps there should also be some emphasis put on sustainability/viability going forward to ensure that any new areas created will be viable in the long term.

Question 2b

Do you think that local authority and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

Answer

Yes as long as there was sufficient time given to gather and analyse the information and that the Boundary Commission provide clear and helpful guidance.

Question 3

Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

Answer

In principle, the proposals look clear and reasonable in theory as long as the right balance is achieved between the pressure to undertake reviews quickly against ensuring that sufficient time and capacity is available to enable the local authorities concerned to assemble information, undertake analysis and formulate proposals. It would be better to take more time and produce high quality and sustainable proposals than rush things leaving long-term problems to resolve later.

It is also not clear how a fundamental disagreement between two local authorities over a particular proposal would be resolved – presumably the Boundary Commission would act as arbitrator?

Question 4

Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

Answer

Yes – it is important that all councils affected by a proposed review should be fully signed up and supportive of any proposal. Undertaking consultation is important but sufficient time and resource must be made available to ensure that this is undertaken properly and transparently.

Question 5

Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

Answer

Yes – it is very important that the financial implications of any significant proposed change (type C and D reviews of the document) are carefully explored and robustly tested before such proposals are seriously put forward for implementation.

Question 6

Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Answer

Yes - the proposals seem sensible and proportionate.

Question 7

How much notice of a review would be necessary if councils are to have sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

Answer

It is difficult to be specific in response to this question without fully appreciating what will be expected of Councils. For example, if local authorities are expected to properly consult with the wider community on any proposals then this will take a number of months in itself particularly in a rural area like West Somerset where there are over 40 Parish and Town Councils and many of them only meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. A straightforward type A review could well be handled with up to three months notice, under type B of up to six months. A type C and particularly a type D proposal could require anything up to 12 months notice should local authorities be expected to properly gauge wide community opinion on any proposals it may wish to put forward.

Question 8

Are there any other matters which might be subject to appropriate prompts?

Answer

The prompts set out in the section of the document would appear to be extensive and cover all the key aspects.

Any other comments

From the experience that this Council has had of a recent electoral review, the main challenge it faced was having the time and capacity to gauge wider community proposals to fit in with the timetable that was set. Guidance and support of the Boundary Commission can be key in helping a local authority to meet any required timetable. The reality is, however, that in the current economic climate of Councils having to cut back on budgets and staffing that this issue is likely to become an even greater challenge as time goes forward.

West Somerset Council response to the consultation document issued by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in November 2010 'Striking the right balance'

This is a consultation process on policy and procedures for electoral reviews.

The Council's responses are set out below addressing the questions set out in the consultation document.

Questions 1a

Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

Answer

Yes – having recently undergone an electoral review – which only happens quite infrequently to a particular area – it was easy to see how there could be misunderstandings of what such a review would be about. Therefore, clarification at an early stage would be most helpful.

Question 1b

Are the principles set out above appropriate and adequate? If not what other principles should be adopted?

Answer

The principles listed appear to be very extensive and cover all the key eventualities.

Question 3a

Is a criteria based approach to determining council-size desirable?

Answer

The principle in having a transparent and understandable approach is sound as long as there is confidence in the criteria used.

Question 3b

Are the elements set out above for criteria based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not, what other elements should be included?

Answer

From West Somerset Council's experience, one of the challenges being on the receiving end of an electoral review was that inevitably comparisons were made on a statistical basis with other areas. It is therefore important that any review should take into account specific local issues and characteristics. In West Somerset's case, these include being a very sparsely populated rural area and therefore issues important here are likely to be quite

different to those of a densely populated urban area. If such localism cannot be brought to the fore under the headings used then it may be sensible to actually add an additional heading of local areas' characteristics to ensure that appropriate consideration and weight can be given to these matters.

Question 4a

Are the stages of the reviews as shown in figure 1 clear and appropriate?

Answer

To the uninitiated the table does, at first glance, appear quite complicated; never the less there is a clear logic to the detail and there is sense in having varying time periods depending on the complexity of the review being undertaken.

Question 4b

Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

Answer

There is obviously no point in, to quote a phrase, 'using a sledge hammer to crack a nut', so with more straightforward reviews a shorter timescale makes sense. There is a danger, never the less, of trying to rush these processes particularly if it is intended that all interested parties have the time to both understand and respond to proposals. On balance it is considered that time pressures should not take precedence over the need to get to the best answer for the local community.

Question 4c

Does the time scale for each stage provide opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

Answer

This picks up on the response to the previous question, particularly in terms of getting input from the local community. Parish and Town councils will often meet only bi-monthly (and in some cases in rural areas only quarterly) and this often means that the consultation period will need to take considerable time to be truly inclusive – definitely months rather than weeks.

Question 5a

Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years' time?

Answer

Yes, in so far as it would reflect far more certainty and make more sense to the local community and, as the document says, a lot can change in the five-year time span which make such forecasts at a high risk of being very inaccurate.

Question 5b

How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five years' time?

Answer

This can only be done on a case-by-case basis depending on the depth of information provided and robustness of argument. There will always be an element of risk in terms of basing actions on what is predicted to happen over a five-year timescale.

Other Comments

Having recently experienced an electoral review in West Somerset, a key issue was the importance of clear guidance and support from the Commission – which West Somerset did receive and were most grateful for.

The other key issue was meeting challenging deadlines and timescales. For example, the key initial consultation phase had a response deadline of 'just after Christmas' which meant that nearly the whole of December was effectively lost to the process as many Parish/Town Councils did not meet over this period. As it happened, the Council was not able to meet the deadline despite calling a Special Council meeting at the beginning of January. Inclement weather meant that the meeting was cancelled and so a further meeting had to be called and the Commission did allow for an extension to the timetable for this to happen. Never the less, perhaps it would be best to avoid setting deadlines at this time of year altogether. It is better to allow for more time so that all parties can feel that they had a fair opportunity to contribute. Due regard also needs to be taken of the local resources available to support the review; West Somerset is the smallest, in terms of budget and staffing, District Council in the country and in theory the process and requirements placed upon this council was just the same as for any local authority. This was effectively managed due to positive a liaison between members and officers at the council and officers at the Commission. If any new process can take such flexibility into account then it would be welcomed.

Dunkeyson, Nicholas

From: Owen, David
Sent: 17 January 2011 15:07
To: Gregory, Eleanor
Subject: consultation FW:Wycombe District Council
Attachments: Electoral reviews - response.doc; PABR - response.doc

David Owen Policy & Research Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
3rd Floor Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 020 7664 8532
Fax: 0270 7296 6227
e-mail: david.owen@lgbce.org.uk

www.lgbce.org.uk

From: Julie Mills [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 December 2010 11:51
To: Futures@ (LGBCE)
Subject: Responses to consultations

Good morning

Attached are my responses to the two consultation papers issued recently, on PABRs and Electoral reviews. I am afraid that I have to submit these as my own response, rather than that of the District Council, as I have been unable to get approval from the Head of Division (who is on sick leave, and unlikely to return until next week, when I myself will be on leave).

I'd be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt.

Regards
Julie Mills
Electoral Services Manager
Wycombe District Council

[REDACTED]
Website - www.wycombe.gov.uk

***** HELP US TO REDUCE PAPER USE *****
***** DO NOT PRINT THIS EMAIL UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY *****
***** DISCLAIMER *****

Any opinions expressed in this email are those of the individual and are not necessarily those of Wycombe District Council.
This email and any files transmitted within it are strictly confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or

entity to which it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient of this email you must not copy, distribute or use the communication in any other way. If you do receive this email in error please contact the sender as soon as possible and delete the email and any attachments. Wycombe District Council may monitor the contents of email sent and received via its network for the purposes of ensuring compliance with its policies and procedures.

Wycombe District Council has scanned this email and attachments for viruses but does not accept any responsibilities for viruses once this email has been transmitted. The recipient is responsible for scanning emails and any attachments for viruses themselves.

This message has been scanned for viruses by MailControl, a service from BlackSpider Technologies.

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Boundary Commission for England- Consultation paper Dec 2010 Electoral Reviews

Question 1a Do you think that setting out principles by which electoral reviews are conducted is helpful?

Yes, if an authority can be assured that those principles will be adhered to, and any deviation fully justified

Question 1b Are the principles set out appropriate and adequate? If not, what other principles should be adopted?

Yes

Question 2 Is the classification of types of review set out appropriate and adequate?

Yes - an authority needs to be aware of the differences between the possible types of review to enable them to plan ahead and prepare accordingly

Question 3a Is a criteria-based approach for determining council size appropriate?

Yes, for the same reason as (2) above. Any authority which is to undergo a review, whether at its own instigation or that of the Commission will need to prepare fully in advance, and if necessary set aside appropriate funding and resources.

Question 3b Are the elements set out above for criteria-based decisions appropriate and adequate? If not what other elements should be included?

The three types of review given are adequate in summary, but it would be helpful if more detail as to the criteria could be given to assist an authority in its preparation eg examples of where an authority review would fall into type A and not B, or vice versa etc.

Question 4a Are the stages of the reviews clear and appropriate?

Yes. However it would be useful to have some format/template to use as a basis for the formal requesting of a review, and/or the provision of evidence required etc.

Question 4b Do you think that trying to reduce the duration of review periods is helpful?

Yes, as long as there is no compromise made on the procedure or recommendations as a result

Question 4c Does the timescale for each stage provide sufficient opportunity for councils and other bodies to make necessary decisions, having regard to the frequency and timing of formal council meetings?

The timetable for formal council meetings must be taken into consideration when a review is planned, and if necessary, slight adjustments made to take account of the existing timetable, or delayed meetings.

Question 5a Should LGBCE shift the emphasis to maximising electoral equality at the first election to follow a review from the maximisation of equality in five years time?

Yes. Although equality in five years' time is obviously important, a lot can happen in that time, and it is more important to ensure electoral equality in current times, as well as thinking that far ahead. Providing there are no substantial and unforeseen changes to the forecast, a review should be able to take both into consideration. Unforeseen circumstances would mean that a further, possibly more minor, review would have to be carried out.

Question 5b How should we decide whether a forecast of future patterns of electorate is sufficiently reliable to encourage us to recommend short-term imbalances in favour of good electoral equality in five year's time?

I am not sure whether a forecast of 5 years can be considered 100% reliable in any situation, as circumstances can change without much notice. However a good review will take both immediate equality and accurate a forecast as possible into consideration, and try to make recommendations

Julie Mills
Electoral Services Manager
22/12/10

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Boundary Commission for England- Consultation papers Dec 2010 Principal Area Boundary Reviews and Electoral Reviews

Question 1A Do you think that classifying PABRs is helpful and is the proposed classification appropriate?

Yes, but it would be helpful if an example/one or two different scenarios were given at the classification description stage, to enable authorities to have a better understanding of what type of classification they would be looking at.

Question 1B Under what circumstances should compound reviews be carried out?

Only if the eventual review was unlikely to cause delays by having to look at minor but controversial anomalies. I would expect the Commission to ask the local authority to identify such potential issues and evaluate those before commencing any compound review.

Question 2a Are the review criteria relevant and/or should there be other criteria?

They are relevant but perhaps need to be gone into in more detail, perhaps with examples?

Question 2B Do you think that local authorities and others would be able to assemble evidence showing how a proposed boundary change would have merits in terms of the criteria?

Yes, but this may take a lot of work hence the need for more detail at the beginning of the review. It would also be very useful if any templates could be provided showing what evidence would be required, and the format in which that evidence should be produced.

Question 3 Is the initiation process clear and reasonable? If not, how could it be improved?

Yes - the process is clear and reasonable. In summary, need to follow three simple steps :

1. Set out the required outcome for all authorities concerned
2. Determine whether this is in the Commission's powers
3. Set out the process, giving due regard to individual circumstances, and make allowances for any issues which may delay or interrupt the process (e.g. timing of council meetings)

Question 4 Is the Commission's approach to evidence of local support clear and appropriate?

Yes, but it would be helpful if we could know what format the evidence is required in e.g. notes of verbal discussions to be included?, written reports, copies of what documents would be required, what would require formal meeting minutes etc.

Question 5 Is the assurance required about the financial implications of proposed changes clear and reasonable?

Absolutely. However would anything else be required other than the S151 Officers support e.g. formal report approved by Head of Finance? Relevant Committee?

Question 6 Is the Commission's overall approach to consequential electoral arrangements clear and reasonable?

Yes - must be pragmatic. Need to look ahead to decide whether an electoral arrangements review will also be required, and if so, whether it can be undertaken at the same time as the PABR, or whether it would have to be undertaken afterwards? Need to look into electoral arrangements of all authorities affected.

Question 7 How much notice of a review would be necessary if councils are to have sufficient time to prepare the evidence to demonstrate the merits and other impact of a change to their boundaries?

3-4 months minimum? Need to take into consideration timing of Council/committee meetings and other major issues such as local elections, or even national elections/referendums.

Question 8 Are there any other matters which might be the subject of appropriate prompts?

Establishing the clear reasons why a review is appropriate.

Julie Mills
Electoral Services Manager
Wycombe District Council

22/12/10