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Summary

Who we are

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

Electoral review

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions should there be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

Why Lincoln?

We are conducting an electoral review of City of Lincoln Council as the Council currently has high levels of electoral inequality where some councillors represent many more or many fewer voters than others. This means that the value of each vote in city council elections varies depending on where you live in Lincoln. Based on December 2013 electorate data, 36% of the city's wards currently have a variance of more than 10%. Of these, one ward – Carholme - has an electoral variance of 34%.

Our proposals for Lincoln

City of Lincoln Council currently has 33 councillors. Based on the evidence we received during previous phases of the review, we consider that retaining the existing number of members will ensure the Council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively.

Electoral arrangements

Our final recommendations propose that City of Lincoln Council's 33 councillors should represent 11 three-member wards. None of our proposed 11 wards would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for Lincoln by 2020.

We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Lincoln.

1 Introduction

1 This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review City of Lincoln Council's ('the Council') electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the city.

What is an electoral review?

2 Our three main considerations in conducting an electoral review are set out in legislation¹ and are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

3 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

4 We wrote to the Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on council size. We then held three periods of consultation, first on council size, second on warding patterns for the Council and finally on our draft recommendations. The submissions received during our consultations have informed our final recommendations.

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
7 January 2014	Consultation on council size
29 April 2014	Warding pattern consultation
8 July 2014	Analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
16 September 2014	Draft recommendations consultation
9 December 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations
17 February 2015	Publications of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

5 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Alison Lowton
Sir Tony Redmond
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

2 Analysis and final recommendations

7 Legislation states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors² in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

8 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum.

9 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors as shown on the table below.

	2013	2020
Electorate of Lincoln	63,942	67,433
Number of councillors	33	33
Average number of electors per councillor	1,938	2,043

10 Under the final recommendations, none of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of greater than 10% from the average for the city by 2020. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Lincoln.

These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Lincoln Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

11 See Appendix B for details of submissions received. All submissions may be inspected at our offices (by appointment). All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

12 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2020, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2015. These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and projected an increase in the electorate of 5% to 2020.

13 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

² Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Council size

14 The Council submitted a proposal to retain the existing council size of 33 members during a preliminary consultation on council size. We were persuaded that the Council had provided strong evidence to justify this proposal based on both the governance and decision-making role of the authority and the workload of elected members. We therefore consulted publicly on a council size of 33 members.

15 In response, we received nine submissions. These were from Councillor Renshaw (Lincolnshire County Council – Lincoln East), Lincoln & Gainsborough United Kingdom Independence Party (Lincoln & Gainsborough UKIP) and seven local residents. The Council did not submit further comments during this consultation period.

16 Of the nine submissions received, seven opposed the current council size of 33. One local resident suggested a council size of six as they argued it would not be cost effective to retain the current number of councillors. Two local residents proposed a council size of 22 with one of them stating that this would save money and reduce conflict within the Council. Another local resident suggested a council size of 25 would be a more than adequate number as Lincoln is a ‘small and compact area’. Two other local residents were generally opposed to the current size and governance structure of the Council but made no specific comments on a preferred council size.

17 We received one submission from a local resident who, while supporting a council size of 33, expressed concern that the Commission is more concerned with electoral equality than achieving conterminous electoral division and city ward boundaries.

18 Lincoln & Gainsborough UKIP stated that too many councillors represent Lincoln and proposed that if the ward boundaries were based on Lincolnshire’s electoral division boundaries, Lincoln would require 10 wards. It proposed a council size of 10 with elections every four years. Councillor Renshaw also proposed that the city’s wards should be based on county divisions. However, he made no specific comments on a preferred council size. We also received a request from a local resident to further reduce Lincoln’s council size to 11.

19 Having carefully considered the evidence received, we are of the view that the City Council’s proposal to retain the existing council size would ensure both effective and convenient local government and effective representation of local residents. We considered that a more substantial reduction could affect the Council’s ability to discharge its statutory functions effectively. We therefore consulted on warding arrangements based on a council size of 33 members.

Warding patterns

20 We received seven submissions during the initial consultation on warding patterns for Lincoln. These included two city-wide proposals, from the Council and Lincoln, Sleaford & North Hykeham Liberal Democrats (Lincoln Liberal Democrats). We also received representations from five local residents.

Draft recommendations

21 We received four submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included submissions from the City of Lincoln Council, Councillor Hills (Lincoln Conservative Group, a county councillor and one local resident.

Final recommendations

22 Three of the submissions received commented on our proposals for the south of the city. One submission commented specifically on council size.

North Lincoln

23 We did not receive specific comments or alternative warding patterns for the north of Lincoln. In the absence of any evidence, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We are satisfied that our five proposed wards will secure good electoral equality by 2020 and reflect community identities and effective and convenient local government.

Central Lincoln

24 We did not receive specific comments or alternative warding patterns for the centre of Lincoln. In the absence of any evidence, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We are satisfied that our two proposed wards will secure good electoral equality by 2020 and reflect community identities and effective and convenient local government.

South Lincoln

25 We received three submissions relating to our proposals in the south of Lincoln. The Council, while not making a formal representation, commented that it was surprised that Blyton Road and Kelstern Road had been transferred into Birchwood ward.

26 Lincoln Conservative Group did not support our proposals to transfer the above-mentioned roads into Birchwood ward. The Group also suggested a change of ward name for Birchwood ward to either Doddington Park ward or Birchwood West ward. Hartsholme ward would be renamed Birchwood East ward.

27 Councillor Jones (Bracebridge division) largely supported our draft recommendations with the exception of our proposals for Bracebridge ward. Councillor Jones proposed that Bracebridge ward be renamed South Witham or Witham to reflect the River Witham which passes through the ward.

28 We have decided to confirm our warding patterns for the south of Lincoln as final. We consider that Councillor Jones, proposed ward name change would better reflect communities and have decided to adopt the ward name of Witham as part of our final recommendations.

Detailed wards

29 The tables on pages 8 – 11 detail our final recommendations for each area of Lincoln. Where we have moved away from our draft recommendations, we have outlined how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory criteria of:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for convenient and effective local government

North Lincoln

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
Abbey	3	4%	This ward comprises part of the historic centre of the city and a residential area to the south of Wragby Road (A15). It is also bounded by the city boundary, River Witham and the High Street.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
Carholme	3	-1%	This ward comprises part of the historic centre of the city and a residential area to the north-west. It is also bounded by the city boundary, Fosdyke Canal and Abbey, Castle and Minster wards.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
Castle	3	-6%	This ward comprises Lincoln Castle and a large residential area. It is bounded by the city boundary and Carholme and Minster wards.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
Glebe	3	-1%	This ward comprises a residential area broadly to the north of Wragby Road (A15) and properties on the south side of Bunkers Hill. It is bounded by the city boundary and Abbey and Minster wards.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.

Minster	3	-2%	This ward comprises the area surrounding Lincoln Cathedral and the area broadly to the east of Riseholme Road (B1226). It is bounded by the city boundary and Abbey, Castle and Glebe wards.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
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Central Lincoln

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
Boultham	3	-7%	This ward comprises the residential areas surrounding Boultham Park Road, broadly to the south of the Fosdyke canal and west of the High Street and River Witham.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
Park	3	3%	This ward comprises the area broadly to the south and east of the River Witham.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.

South Lincoln

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
Birchwood	3	3%	This ward comprises the residential area broadly to the west of Birchwood Avenue and north of Doddington Road. It is bounded by the city boundary and Boutham and Hartsholme wards.	The Council commented that it was surprised that Blyton Road and Kelstern Road were transferred into Birchwood ward in our draft recommendations. However, the Council made no further comments. Our proposals were also opposed by the Lincoln Conservative Group who argued that the above-mentioned roads have nothing in common with the Birchwood area. The Group also proposed that the ward name should be changed to either Doddington Park or Birchwood West to better reflect the ward area. We do not consider that a sufficient case has been made to move away from our draft recommendations for Birchwood ward. We are satisfied that Birchwood ward provides for good electoral equality, reflects community identities and provides for effective and convenient local government. We are also content that the proposed ward names reflect communities in this area.
Hartsholme	3	7%	This ward comprises the residential area broadly to the west of the railway line and east of Birchwood Avenue. It is bounded by the city boundary and Boutham ward to the north.	Lincoln Conservative Group appeared to support our recommendations for Hartsholme ward which included both the Hartsholme and Swanpool areas. The Group commented that the Burghley Road area remains in the ward. However, the Group proposed that the ward name should be changed to Birchwood East to better reflect communities in this area. Given that the Group was opposed to our recommendations in Birchwood ward, they proposed that the Burghley Road area be transferred to Birchwood ward and that Blyton and Kelstern roads be transferred to Hartsholme ward. We do not consider that a sufficient case has been made to move away from our draft recommendations for this area. We are content that our proposed ward adequately reflects community identities and ensures good electoral equality.

Moorland	3	-5%	This ward comprises the residential area broadly to the east of the railway line. It is bounded by the City boundary and Boultham, Hartsholme, Park and Witham wards.	We received no submissions specifically relating to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.
Witham	3	4%	This ward comprises the residential area to the south of Newark Road. The River Witham passes through the centre of the ward. It is bounded by the City boundary to the south and Boultham ward to the north.	<p>Councillor Jones (Bracebridge division) largely supported our draft recommendations but expressed concern at our proposals for Bracebridge ward. He argued that the residential area south of Laurel Close shares no affinity with the Brant Road and Hykeham Road communities. To transfer this area into Park ward would result in 10% more electors per councillor than the average for Lincoln by 2020. We are not persuaded that we have received sufficient evidence to justify such an electoral variance in this area. Therefore we are not persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations.</p> <p>Councillor Jones also proposed a ward name change and that the ward be named Witham rather than Bracebridge. He explained that the area known as Bracebridge sits outside of the ward and that the name Witham would better reflect the area covered by the ward as the river is a significant geographical feature. We consider the proposed ward name would reflect communities and have adopted it as part of our final recommendations.</p>

Conclusions

30 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2013 and 2020 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2013	2020
Number of councillors	33	33
Number of electoral wards	11	11
Average number of electors per councillor	1,938	2,043
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

City of Lincoln Council should comprise 33 councillors serving 11 wards representing 11 three-member wards. The details and names are shown in Table A1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Lincoln. You can also view our final recommendations for Lincoln on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

3 What happens next?

31 We have now completed our review of City of Lincoln Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations - will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in May 2016.

Equalities

32 This report has been screened for impact on equalities; with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for City of Lincoln Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey	3	6,087	2,029	5%	6,386	2,129	4%
2	Birchwood	3	6,308	2,103	9%	6,313	2,104	3%
3	Boultham	3	4,684	1,561	-19%	5,712	1,904	-7%
4	Carholme	3	5,426	1,809	-7%	6,098	2,033	-1%
5	Castle	3	5,504	1,835	-5%	5,770	1,923	-6%
6	Glebe	3	5,980	1,993	3%	6,074	2,025	-1%
7	Hartsholme	3	6,551	2,184	13%	6,576	2,192	7%
8	Minster	3	5,549	1,850	-5%	5,993	1,998	-2%
9	Moorland	3	5,755	1,918	-1%	5,841	1,947	-5%
10	Park	3	5,893	1,964	1%	6,285	2,095	3%
11	Witham	3	6,205	2,068	7%	6,385	2,128	4%
Totals		33	63,942	-	-	67,433	-	-
Averages		-	-	1,938	-	-	2,043	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by City of Lincoln Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/east-midlands/lincolnshire/lincoln-fer>

Local Authority

- City of Lincoln Council

Councillors

- Councillor M. Jones (Lincolnshire County Council)
- Councillor R. Hills (Lincoln Conservative Group)

Residents

- One local resident

Appendix C

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council