

## **Electoral review of Newcastle-under-Lyme warding arrangements**

**Submitted by:** Chief Executive

**Portfolio:** Policy, People and Partnerships

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the report**

To update the Council on the progress of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review of warding arrangements in the Borough.

### **Recommendation**

That the Council notes the contents of the report.

## **1. Background**

1.1 At its meeting on 7 September 2016 the Council agreed a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on its view about the future size of the Council. This submission forms the first stage of the electoral review process which the Council had requested the Commission to undertake.

## **2. Consultation on warding arrangements**

2.1 The Chief Executive of the Boundary Commission wrote to the Chief Executive of the Council on 27 September 2016 advising that the consultation process inviting proposals for a new pattern of electoral wards for the Borough had commenced. A copy of this letter is contained in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.2 The Commission has specifically requested that the consultation is brought to the attention of all elected Members. A copy of the letter has been circulated to all Members of the Council. Further it has requested that the Council take a number of other actions to publicise the consultation. The following have already been undertaken:-

- (i) Posters have been displayed in a number of the Council's buildings including the Guildhall, Kidsgrove and Madeley Customer Service Centres.
- (ii) Posters have been distributed to all parish councils.
- (iii) A press release was produced by the Council to support key messages from the Boundary Commission and this was distributed to our local and regional media outlets on 30 September. This release has also been placed in the "news" section of the Council's website.
- (iv) The revolving banner on the home page of the Council's website has been used for the duration of the consultation to guide interested parties to the consultation process.

- (v) The consultation is included in the “Have Your Say” section on the Council’s website which can be accessed via a quick link on the home page.
- (vi) An article on the consultation is included in the November edition of The Reporter.
- (vii) The Council’s corporate social media accounts – Twitter and Facebook - have been used on several occasions to highlight the work of the Boundary Commission in relation to their review and the consultation process.

2.3 Information about the review has been placed on the Commission’s own website and this also provides a portal for feedback. This can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/west-midlands/staffs/newcastle-under-lyme>

### **3. Review timetable**

3.1 The consultation on the warding pattern is open until 5 December 2016 and once the Commission has considered all the proposals received it has indicated an intention publish draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements in February 2017. These recommendations are then subject to consultation in the period between February 2017 and April 2017. The Commission intends to publish its final recommendation in June 2017 in the expectation that the new electoral arrangements for the Borough come into effect at the Borough Council elections to be held in May 2018.

### **4. Community Governance Reviews**

4.1 In preparing for the review the Commission has sought certain background information from the Council. Information about Community Governance Reviews has formed part of this request.

4.2 As part of this process, the Commission has reminded the Council of the provisions in the Guidance relating to Community Governance Reviews and specifically that principal councils should avoid finalising community governance reviews in situations where the Commission itself is conducting a review of a wider area.

4.3 At its meeting on 24 February 2016 the Council considered a report setting out the outcome of a Community Governance Review of Keele Parish Council. The Council is therefore advised that whilst it is the intention to align the Keele Parish Council boundary to the current Keele Ward boundary the Order giving effect to this as a result of the Community Governance Review has not been made in view of the electoral review of the whole Borough area being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

4.4 In compliance with the guidance for Community Governance Reviews the Chief Executive has written to the Clerks of all Town and Parish Councils in the Borough to advise that it would be inappropriate for the Borough Council to undertake any

Community Governance Reviews until the Local Boundary Commission review of warding in the Borough has been completed.