

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee was held on 19 October 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor Clark (Chair), Councillors Brunton, Hawthorne, McIntyre and P Purvis.

OFFICERS: S Harker, R Long and J Stuart.

****ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Williams.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2011 were taken as read and approved as a true record.

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW AND OTHER ELECTORAL SERVICES ISSUES

A report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services was presented to provide details of the consultation by the Boundary Commission for England on their proposals for changes to Parliamentary constituency boundaries for England and to draw attention to other on-going and future matters in relation to Electoral Services.

The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 required that the four Boundary Commissions conducted a review of the parliamentary constituencies in their areas. The Act required that the current 650 constituencies in the UK be reduced to 600. The Boundary Commission for England was conducting a review of the boundaries for all parliamentary constituencies in England on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament. The review aimed to reduce the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 502 based on the nine regions used for European Parliamentary elections. Only 77 of the current constituencies had no changes to their boundaries. The proposals were designed to ensure that each constituency contained a similar number of registered electors and, with two exceptions, proposed that each constituency would be based on an electorate of between 72,810 and 80,473.

All existing constituencies in the North East region would be affected by the changes. The region had been allocated 26 constituencies (3 less than at present). The changes which would impact on Middlesbrough were as follows:

- A new Redcar constituency would take on areas from Middlesbrough.
- A new Middlesbrough constituency would take on areas from Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, and also Stockton South.
- A new Middlesbrough South and Guisborough constituency would retain part of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, the remaining part being transferred to Redcar constituency.
- The existing Redcar constituency would be split between the new constituencies of Middlesbrough South and Guisborough and Redcar.

Details of the existing and proposed constituencies were included in the submitted report. Copies of the proposals including a large A0 map and an A3 booklet were available for inspection at the Town Hall Reception and the Central Library. Summary copies of the proposals for the whole of the UK together with associated documents and maps were available online from the Boundary Commission.

Members of the Committee were updated by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services on other electoral issues, details of which were given in the submitted report, as follows:

- Police and Crime Commissioner Elections – Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

- The Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011.
- Law Commission Review.
- Recall of MPs.
- Draft House of Lords Reform Bill.
- Individual Electoral Registration (IER).
- Data Matching.
- The Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors (CORE).
- Postal Vote Refresh.
- Electoral Administration.
- Referendum Questions.
- Localism Bill 2011.
- Performance Standards for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers.

Members of the Committee were informed that the Local Government Boundary Commission had announced its intention to carry out an Electoral Review of Middlesbrough Council. The Commission would consider the size of the Council, number of Councillors and number of Wards.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services was scheduled to meet with the Chief Executive of the Boundary Commission in November 2011 and in January 2012 there would be an informal meeting for Group Leaders with the Lead Member and Chair of the Commission. The Commission would be seeking a view on the number of Councillors and Wards the Council needed to operate effectively. A public consultation would follow and then a recommendation would be made to Government. Any changes to the structure would be implemented for the 2015 Local Elections.

ORDERED as follows that:

1. The information provided be received and noted.
2. The dates of the public hearings for the Parliamentary Boundary Review would be clarified.