

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM:	3
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

18th DECEMBER 2012

<p style="text-align: center;">BOUNDARY COMMISSION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ELECTORAL REVIEW</p>

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board of the next stage in the review and to establish a process for determining ward patterns.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board considers the information provided.
- 3 The Board determines the methodology for establishing the proposed ward patterns and the consultation process.

BACKGROUND

- 4 Members are aware the Boundary Commission is undertaking an Electoral Review of a number of Councils, which includes Middlesbrough. Their first phase was to assess and propose an appropriate Council size. Following public consultation the Commission considered representations at its meeting of 13th November 2012. As there was no substantial argument received in opposition to the proposal for a Council size of 46 the Commission has therefore adopted this proposal for Middlesbrough.
- 5 The next stage in this process is to address warding patterns. In this regard the Commission has provided some guiding principles for Council to follow. However, the timetable to address this stage and propose a revised pattern for ward arrangements is relatively short, being 27th November to 18th February.

- 6 The commission will make its decision on the evidence and argument presented to them. Consequently, for a proposal to be credible it is essential the proposal is based on logical and factual evidence. The commission has identified three main criteria for its consideration in determining new patterns for wards. In summary these are :-
- That each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters across the authority
 - Ward patterns should aim to reflect community interests, identities, with identifiable boundaries.
 - The proposed arrangements should reflect convenient local government and the Council's electoral cycle.

PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING

- 7 Members have determined that the Overview and Scrutiny Board will be the appropriate political body for receiving information, considering the options for ward patterns and drafting proposals for Middlesbrough. In this regard Members are anxious that consideration is directed towards this swiftly and that the initial meeting will be to clarify and establish the methodology and timetable for this stage in the exercise.
- 8 The Board will need to ensure that this stage of the review is brought to the attention of the public and other interested parties. The Board is also advised to identify the information required to provide a foundation for its considerations
- 9 As referenced, the Commission aims to recommend ward patterns, which achieve good electoral equality, and reflects community identity in Middlesbrough. Consequently the commission will want to see strong evidence in support of such recommendations. Information the commission are expected to look for are in the areas of:-
- Economic/demographic data and mapping
 - Community village usage mapping
 - Local place surveys
 - Partner/stakeholder details.
- 10 Following this stage of the review the commission will embark on a twelve week period of consultation on the draft recommendations. Once the commissions consultation period on the draft recommendations has concluded the commission will consider all representations received and formulate its final recommendations. The commission anticipates they will publish their proposals in November 2013.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11 (a) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Electoral reviews, Technical Guidance July 2012.
- (b) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Guidance for patterns of wards.
- (c) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England letter for Middlesbrough November 2012

7th December 2012

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