

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	11 December, 2017
REPORT TITLE	2018 Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies
REPORT NUMBER	CG/17/149
HEAD OF SERVICE	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Roderick MacBeath

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 This report invites Council to consider a formal response to final consultation by the Boundary Commission for Scotland on its revised proposals as part of the 2018 UK Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Council is recommended to consider submitting a formal response to consultation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies was announced in February 2016, in terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. This reduced the number of Scottish constituencies from 59 to 53. The electoral quota for a UK constituency is 74,769.2 (i.e. the average number of electors per constituency). Each mainland constituency must be within 5% either way of this figure, giving a range of 71,031 to 78,507.
- 3.2 The Boundary Commission for Scotland published its initial proposals for Aberdeen on 20 October, 2016. Both constituencies combined followed the City Council boundary; Aberdeen North comprised 75,791 electors and Aberdeen South, 74,444.
- 3.3 On 17 October, 2017 The Commission published its revised proposals, inviting responses by a deadline of 11 December, 2017 (the date of this Council meeting). Aberdeen North now included Balmedie, Belhelvie and Potterton, thereby increasing the number of electors to 77,677. Aberdeen South included Drumoak, giving a total of 77,106 electors. In addition, there was a minor boundary change proposed between the two constituencies along Westburn Road.

- 3.4 Once the review is completed, the Boundary Commission for Scotland will report to the Secretary of State for Scotland in September, 2018. The Secretary of State is responsible for laying the report before the UK Parliament. Once all four Boundary Commissions have reported, Ministers will be responsible for submitting a draft Order in Council giving effect to the recommendations of the reports. After completing the legislative process, the revised boundaries would be effective from the next General Election.
- 3.5 Reviews require reports every five years, so the next review would report in 2023.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposal. Any additional costs incurred during a General Election will be recouped from the Government.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposed boundary changes are a result of the requirements of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 Financial – there are no financial risks associated with the Boundary changes
- 6.2 Employee – given the increased size of the constituencies as proposed, there will be a need for additional staff to cover the new polling stations. This is unlikely to be an issue and staff in the Election Unit will be aware of the risk and always have back up staff at election times.
- 6.3 Customer / citizen – there will be no risks arising from any boundary changes. The Council will be responsible for designating polling places in Aberdeenshire which could result in changes at certain times, but this will be managed by the Elections Unit.
- 6.4 Environmental – there are no environmental risks arising from the report. The Council would require to make arrangements to transport ballot boxes from Aberdeenshire to the count but this would have no significant impact.
- 6.5 Technological – there are no technological risks arising from the report.
- 6.6 Legal – there will be no legal risks arising from the proposed changes given that the changes are required by legislation. Should any error be identified in the Commission's recommendations, the enacting Order can modify them.
- 6.7 Reputational – there will be no reputational risks arising from implementing any changes which legislation may require.

7. IMPACT SECTION

- 7.1 **Economy** – The proposals should have no impact on the economy of the City.
- 7.2 **People** – The proposals will have no impact on the people of the City, other than to the extent that those who were previously City residents but voted in the Gordon Constituency would now be in Aberdeen North. Conversely, residents in Aberdeenshire will be voting in Aberdeen constituencies should the changes be enacted.
- 7.3 **Place** – The proposals will only affect place to the extent that, should the constituency boundaries be enacted, they will not match the City boundaries, which may cause confusion to some, particularly those resident in Aberdeenshire. However, as noted above, electors in the current Gordon Constituency would now be voting in a City constituency.
- 7.4 **Technology** – there will be no impact on technology arising from the proposals.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no background papers used other than those issued for consultative purposes by the Boundary Commission for Scotland and on their website.

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 There are none.

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Roderick MacBeath
Senior Democratic Services Manager
rmacbeath@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(01224) 523054

HEAD OF SERVICE DETAILS

Fraser Bell
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
frbell@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(01224) 522084