

COUNCIL MEETING – 13TH OCTOBER 2011

Extract from the Minutes of the Constitution Committee Meeting on 22nd September 2011

23 BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND: A REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The Committee considered proposals by the Boundary Commission for England to review Parliamentary Constituency boundaries.

The Boundary Commission had published its initial proposals on 13th September 2011. This would be followed by a 12 week consultation period, ending on 5th December 2011. The Commission was required to submit its recommendations to Government by 1st October 2013.

Local authority wards were seen as the basic building blocks for designing constituencies. However, the legislation governing the review defined these as those which were in force as at 6th May 2010. The review would therefore be based on the former Borough Ward boundaries, rather than those introduced by the most recent boundary review.

The consultation on the review would be based on a combination of written representations, and oral representations at public hearings. The Commission would then publish a notice in each region indicating whether or not revisions had been made to its initial proposals for that region. Any revisions to the initial proposals would then be subject to further consultation, following which the Commission would make final decisions upon any further modifications before making a report to Government. This would then be followed by legislation.

The Council's response to the review would normally be agreed by Council. However, the tight timescale within which the Council's response had to be submitted would not make this possible unless a special meeting of Council were convened. It was therefore suggested that Council delegate full powers to the Constitution Committee to agree the Council's final response.

It was proposed that a sub-committee be appointed to manage the process.

Councillor Lesley Smetham attended the meeting and, at the invitation of the Chairman, spoke on this matter.

It was suggested that a briefing be arranged for all Members of the Council, at which they would have an opportunity to comment on the review. Any comments could then be reported to the review sub-committee.

RESOLVED

That

- (1) a sub-committee of 6 Members (4 Con: 1 Lab: 1 Ind) be appointed with full delegated powers to undertake the review;
- (2) Council at its meeting on 13th October 2011 be asked to consider whether it should determine the final response to the review or delegate to the Constitution Committee the power to do so;
- (3) the Council's formal response to the review be submitted in writing; and
- (4) a briefing on the Boundary Commission's review be arranged for all Members of the Council and any feedback from the briefing be reported to the review sub-committee.