

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 22 October 2013

BY: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Fifth General Review of Electoral Arrangements

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To make Members aware of the start of the above review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, who will make recommendations to Scottish Ministers, in 2015 or 2016, in sufficient time for implementation at the Local Government Elections in May 2017.
- 1.2 To propose that a Joint Officer/Member Working Group be established, as in 2004, to consider the detail of this review.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to note the Commission's update on their approach to the first stage of the review.
- 2.2 Council is asked to approve a Joint Officer/Member Working Group and to nominate Elected Member representation.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Commission have confirmed, with Scottish Ministers, that they do not intend to amend the legislation governing the conduct of their reviews. Therefore, Sections 12 to 28 and Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 apply.
- 3.2 This legislation includes the requirement that, within each ward of a council area, the number of electors per councillor is "as nearly as may be the same", often referred to as "electoral parity". Effectively this means the existing defined ward boundaries will need to be reviewed taking into account any movements in population.

- 3.3 The Commission consulted with councils in 2011 on their intended approach to the first stage of the review, which is to determine the appropriate number of councillors on each of Scotland's councils. Responses indicated general support for using the same previous formulaic approach to determining this number, which takes account of population density and distribution within a council area.
- 3.4 The Commission are currently awaiting the release of settlement data from the 2011 census to allow them to take a view on councillor numbers. They will write to all councils later this year with their initial thoughts on this.
- 3.5 However, the Commission suggests that councils may wish to begin taking a view as to whether it is content with the present number of councillors, so that any preliminary views may be passed on to the Commission as it begins its own considerations.
- 3.6 When the initial ward boundaries and councillor numbers were being developed in 2004, the Council established a cross-party working group that would consider any draft proposals made by the Commission and develop a suitable response on behalf of the Council. At that time, this approach proved helpful in bringing about an early and acceptable solution.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - none
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Previous Cabinet Report 14 September 2004
- 7.2 ELC response to 2011 consultation

7.3 Sections 12 to 28 and Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

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