

<b>Item No.</b> 10.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 1 November 2016	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Electoral Review of Southwark	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Councils and councillors are at the heart of the communities that they serve and as such must be sized and organised to best reflect and represent the different communities and areas within their borders. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s electoral review of Southwark has considered the size and make up of Southwark and has proposed changes to the ward pattern to better reflect the changes in population that have taken place in the last fifteen years.

At the start of the consultation period, the cabinet established a working group with members from the three party groups on the council. The working group made recommendations to the cabinet about council size, as well as the council’s approach to supporting group submissions to the Commission. I would like to thank all members who made this approach such a success.

The Commission has now published its final recommendations which are laid before Parliament for approval. They recommend retaining 63 councillors, and organises the borough into six two-member wards and 17 three-member wards. The 2018 election will be contested on these boundaries, and ahead of that the council needs to prepare for this change. This report updates cabinet on the changes to Southwark and the work that officers are now doing to prepare for this change.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s electoral review of Southwark.
2. To ask officers to review the impact of the boundaries on the council’s organisation and delivery of services and to make necessary preparations to implement these changes.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“the Commission”) was established by Parliament under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. One objective of the Commission is to provide electoral arrangements for English principal local authorities that are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters. To do this, the Commission conducts electoral reviews. These are reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors, names and number

of wards, ward boundaries, and the number of councillors to be elected to each new ward.

4. The Commission announced that Southwark Council was required to undergo a review of ward boundaries which will be implemented for the next full council elections in May 2018. This is because Southwark had a high level of electoral inequality due to population changes, with some councillors now representing many more people than others.
5. The Commission consulted on the number of members which Southwark needed to discharge its responsibilities. They then consulted on ward boundaries. The cabinet established a cross party working group to develop a council submission to the Commission on the optimal number of members for Southwark. This working group proposed retaining 63 councillors. This decision was endorsed by a meeting of the full council and submitted by the Leader of the Council to the Commission. The working group also considered submitting a council response to the consultation on ward patterns but agreed instead to recommend that party groups submit their own proposals, and that officers provided technical support for the groups. The Commission received submissions from all three groups plus from some individual members.
6. The Commission proposed retaining 63 councillors, and a series of boundaries which would have produced 17 three-member wards, five two-member wards and two single-member wards. The Commission further consulted on this proposal and in July 2016 published their final recommendation. These recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.
7. These recommendations were laid before Parliament on 14 September 2016 as the draft 'London Borough of Southwark (Electoral Changes) Order 2016'. The draft order is laid in Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days. Parliament can either accept or reject the recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next scheduled elections for Southwark in 2018.
8. The final recommendation is that Southwark should be made up of 63 councillors serving within 17 three-councillor wards and six two-councillor wards. Details of the new boundaries are set out in Appendix 2.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Policy implications**

9. The new boundaries will have an impact on various aspects of how the council organises itself and how it engages with the public. Officers will review a range of services and make necessary changes to prepare for the new boundaries. There are three main areas of work that will need to be undertaken. These relate to elections, the constitution and public engagement.
10. The 2018 election will be contested on the new boundaries. Any by-elections before this date will be contested on the existing boundaries. To prepare for the 2018 elections, the Returning Officer will undertake a polling district review to identify suitable polling stations for the 2018 election. This will mean that residents may have different polling stations and also be in a new ward. The council will need to review its publicity material ahead of the election to ensure that voters are

properly informed about the changes.

11. Community engagement will undertake a review of community council areas, makeup and names. The proper constitutional officer will bring proposals to the constitutional steering panel and to council assembly on any amendments which need to be made to the constitution to reflect these changes and consequential constitutional amendments.
12. The council will review its communications in relation to ward boundaries. It will review our website, MySouthwark and other boundary based resources. Officers will also review how we conduct statutory and non-statutory consultations and ensure that these reflect the new boundaries from May 2018. Once the order is approved by Parliament, officers can update the website and our online mapping tools which are available for the public to use.
13. Management teams in each department will need to review any other areas where a change in boundaries impact on their work. There may be consequential changes such as changing or relocating "Welcome to" signs on the edge of Community Council areas.
14. Members will continue to represent their wards until the election and will receive support and advice from officers to do this. Some members will be seeking re-election in 2018 in an area that they do not currently represent. While officers will continue to support members on issues in their current ward, they will not provide routine briefing to members on issues in wards which they do not currently represent.

### **Community impact statement**

15. Changing the pattern of councillors in the borough will have an impact on the representation of people in the borough. The Commission in their report state that "This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required."
16. The Council's working group which previously considered representation on the council considered the impact that changing the number of councillors would have on the diversity of people who stand for election and serve as members. Their conclusion was that retaining 63 members enabled there to be a suitably diverse cohort of members.
17. The Commission considered three statutory criteria in making a recommendation on boundary patterns. One of these is that the "pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities."
18. The council provided information of a large range of community groups to the Commission so that the Commission's consultation can consider views across the borough.

## Financial implications

19. Delivery of these changes will not require the use of additional resources but will be delivered through more effective use of existing resources.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

### Director of Law and Democracy

20. The report notes the final recommendations that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the electoral boundaries and composition of the council.
21. Part 3B paragraph 10 of the constitution provides that cabinet set the strategic direction for the council's democratic renewal initiatives.
22. The council will be required to draw up new polling districts.

### Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (FC16/019)

23. This report is requesting cabinet to note the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review of Southwark and to ask officers to review the impact of the boundaries on the council's organisation and delivery of services and to make necessary preparations to implement the changes.
24. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that the Commission's recommendation to retain the current 63 councillors but organised into six of two member wards and 17 of three member wards.
25. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that there are no financial implications arising from this report as staffing and any other costs connected with this recommendation will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Electoral Review of Southwark – September 2015, Decision by Leader of the Council	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Constitutional Team
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5470">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5470</a>		
Electoral Review of Southwark – July 2015, Report to Council Assembly	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Constitutional Team
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=5063&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&amp;MId=5063&amp;Ver=4</a> (Item 7.1)		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Electoral Review of Southwark, Final Recommendations
Appendix 2	Map of final ward boundary recommendations.

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Eleanor Kelly , Chief Executive	
<b>Report Author</b>	Chris Page, Head of External Affairs	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	3 October 2016	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS/ DIRECTORATES/ CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		3 October 2016