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SUBJECT – THE 2013 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of the initial proposals for the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries to be used for the 2015 Parliamentary election.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree a response to the proposals to be sent by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

3. BACKGROUND

The Boundary Commission for England are currently conducting a review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries on the basis of new rules laid down by Parliament. These rules involve a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 502 and require every constituency must have an electorate that is no smaller than 72,801 and no larger than 80,473. The initial proposals were published on 13 September 2011 and the consultation period ends on 5 December 2011.

The North West region has been allocated 68 constituencies – a reduction of seven from the current arrangement. Minimal change has been proposed to the existing Blackburn constituency, which alters only to incorporate Fernhurst ward. The electorate for the new Blackburn constituency is 76,468 (Appendix 1). The remainder of the Borough wards that are currently located in the Rossendale and Darwen constituency will be included in the new Darwen and Haslingden CC constituency (Appendix 2). The electorate for this constituency is 79,436 and it will most likely be administered by Hyndburn Borough Council as they have the largest share of the electorate (27,315 from Hyndburn, 22,060 from Blackburn with Darwen, and 26,780 from Rossendale).

4. RATIONALE

The Boundary Commission for England is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England. The current review is being conducted under the rules introduced by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, which aims to create constituencies across England with equal numbers of electors. Following the current review, constituencies will be reviewed every 5 years in order that any changes to electorate numbers can be taken into account for each Parliamentary election.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from these changes as Parliamentary elections are funded wholly by Central Government.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Elections team will need to make changes to their Election Management System to create the new Darwen and Haslingden constituency and ensure that the correct polling districts are allocated. The team have a good working relationship with both Hyndburn and Rossendale Election teams and would continue to make polling station and staffing arrangements at Parliamentary elections for the Darwen wards as at present.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Need to ensure accessibility for all members of the community.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Boundary Commission have published their initial proposals on their website together with details about how and when views can be submitted. Hard copies of the proposals and detailed maps have been sent to various local 'places of deposit' where the public may view them. In Blackburn with Darwen the places of deposit are Blackburn and Darwen Town Hall receptions, and Blackburn and Darwen central libraries.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Graham Burgess
Date: 15 November 2011

Background Papers:

Initial Proposals for the North West Region; A Guide to the 2013 Review, both published by the Boundary Commission