

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL****COUNCIL MEETING – 23 JANUARY 2013****REPORT OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE**

The Boundary Committee met on the afternoon of Wednesday 27 November 2012. On that occasion, the Boundary Committee considered the matters set out below.

**1. Terms of Reference**

It was decided to note the Committees Terms of Reference.

**2. Boundary Commission Provisional Timetable**

It was decided to note the Boundary Commission provisional timetable.

**3. Council Size**

The chairman introduced this item which was to consider the Council's response to the Boundary Commission's request for a draft submission on council size by 14 December 2012 and final submission by 11 January 2013.

The chairman also referred to the copy of the Local Government Boundary Commission's guidance "Council size: Helping you make the strongest possible case to the Commission" which had been circulated to the Committee.

Members of the committee discussed the issues contained in the Guidance and concluded that a substantial variation from the existing Council size was not desirable.

During further discussions the chairman proposed a figure of 50 which was debated against the existing number of 55.

Following further discussions the committee agreed that although some members had been assuming no change from the existing figure of 55, a reduction to 50 was acceptable.

It was decided that:-

1. The Council's submission to the Boundary Commission be for Council size of 50 members.
2. The officers in consultation with the members of the Boundary Committee prepare, for approval by Council, a submission to the Boundary Commission for a Council size of 50 members.

A report "Electoral Review of South Ribble Borough Council Proposals in Relation to Council Size", prepared in consultation with the members of this committee, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and members are asked to approve it for submission to the Boundary Commission.

**4. Future Meetings**

It was decided that, as it had been agreed that the recommended Council's submission to the Boundary Commission be for Council size of 50 members, the meeting provisionally scheduled for 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 4 December 2012 be cancelled

I hereby commend the report of the Boundary Committee to the Council.

**COUNCILLOR MRS MARGARET SMITH**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE**

# Electoral Review of South Ribble Borough Council Proposals in Relation to Council Size

Appendix 1

## Introduction

Each year, The Local Government Boundary Commission for England audits the levels of electoral imbalances arising in each English local authority area in order to establish whether there is a need for an electoral review. Imbalances can arise from changing demographics and new developments, and movement of electors between local authority areas, as well as within individual areas.

There are two elements the Commission takes into account when assessing the need for an electoral review. Both relate to the level of electoral representation within a local authority area. Electoral inequality exists when voters are either over-represented or under-represented by their local councillor(s) in relation to average levels of representation for the authority as a whole.

Under the criteria adopted by the Commission, if either of the following conditions are found to exist, then consideration is given to the need for a review:

- Any local authority with a division or ward that has an electoral variance in excess of 30%. This means a division or ward having at least 30% more (or less) electors in it than the average for the authority as a whole; and/or
- Any local authority where more than 30% of the divisions or wards have an electoral variance in excess of 10% from the average for that authority.

On the basis of the latest data available, our authority appears to meet the selection criteria, with 9 of our 27 wards (33%) having an electoral variance in excess of 10%.

The Commission has therefore provisionally identified a start date for a review of early in 2013 but prior to this there will be a six week preliminary period when the Commission will meet with the Council to agree the precise nature of the review. At present it is expected that these meetings will take place in October.

The Boundary Commission for England has identified that the Council's electoral variance has triggered the Commission's selection criteria as more than 33% of the borough's wards have an electoral variance of 10%. Consequently the Commission is undertaking an electoral review of the Council.

This ultimately will involve a review of all the Council's wards, however the first stage of the review is for the Council to come to a decision on the number of Councillors it believes are necessary to run the Council efficiently and effectively.

This submission is the result of the deliberations of a cross party Boundary Committee into Council Size

## 1. Council Size

1. The Boundary Commission suggests the following key criteria for determining the size of the council:

- The decision-making process
- Quasi-judicial processes

- The scrutiny process
- The representative role of the elected member.

2. In this submission we address each of these key criteria to justify our proposal for a reduction in the number of elected councillors for South Ribble Borough Council from the current 55 to 50.

Attached are appendices showing Membership of Cabinet (Appendix A) and the Council's Committees (Appendix B) and Representatives on Outside Bodies (Appendix C)

## **2. The Decision Making Process**

The Council moved to a Leader and Cabinet model from a Committee system, in anticipation of the introduction of the 2000 Act prior to 2000.

Following consultation in 2010 it reconsidered its executive arrangements and moved to a Leader and Cabinet Executive model. This was adopted in November 2010 for implementation following the Council's elections in May 2011.

The Council operates within a policy framework agreeing a corporate plan and budget annually and the Cabinet, working with the management team, is empowered to deliver them.

The Cabinet, which currently comprises a Leader and five councillors, has scheduled meetings approximately every two months.

During 2011/12 it met on six occasions to consider 45, reports an average of 7.5 per meeting.

Cabinet reports the content of its meeting to each subsequent Council meeting and makes recommendations on matters not considered Executive decisions.

The decision making process appears to work effectively and efficiently and the impact of a change in councillor numbers from 55 to 50 is sustainable.

## **3. Quasi-judicial processes**

The Council has a Planning Committee, currently comprising 15 councillors. The Committee meets approximately every three weeks to consider major applications and applications that the Director of Housing and Planning does not determine using delegated powers. In 2011/12, the Planning Committee considered 81 planning applications. It met 17 times, and on average considered just fewer than five applications per meeting.

We do not expect to see any significant reduction in its workload over the next few years, and in the event of an upturn in the economy, we may well see an increase. Looking forward to the period up to 2019 and beyond, with the anticipated end to the period of austerity and with central Lancashire considered to be an area of development (an Enterprise Zone and City Deal bidding in process), activity in this area could substantially increase. However it is believed that this additional workload can be accommodated within the existing Committee.

The Council's Licensing Acts Committees, Licensing and General Licensing, are made up of 11 Councillors and met on 12 occasions in 2012. Dealing with Council's licensing policies and taxi matters.

Its Licensing Panel, met on seven occasions dealing with a number of premises licences.

Again it is not anticipated that this level of activity will substantially change up to 2019.

The quasi-judicial process appears to work effectively and efficiently and has received positive reviews and feedback from the external auditors. The impact of a change in council numbers from 55 to 50 is sustainable.

#### **4. Scrutiny Process**

The council has an active Scrutiny Committee, consisting of 13 councillors that considers policy development issues, monitors performance and reviews decisions made by the executive. It meets every five to six weeks on average.

During 2012 the committee met 11 times and considered 27 reports.

The council also has a Governance Committee, consisting of 6 councillors, which meets four or five times per year. The committee audits the council's financial processes and monitors and make recommendations on the council's wider governance arrangements.

During 2012 the committee met 6 times and considered 32 reports.

The scrutiny process appears to work effectively and efficiently and has received positive comments from external auditors. The impact of a change in councillor numbers from 55 to 50 is sustainable.

#### **5. Governance arrangements generally**

All of the above illustrates that from a political and managerial viewpoint the Council currently has an efficient and effective governance regime which has been the subject of positive external audit comments.

The main thrust of this regime comes through the effective interaction of Executive Cabinet with a robust scrutiny challenge coming from the Scrutiny and Governance Committees coupled with the regularity work of the Planning and Licensing Committees.

The Council believes that, given that three members of the Council do not sit on any committee, a reduction from 55 to 50 is sustainable.

#### **6. Representative role of councillors**

South Ribble Borough is a relatively medium size borough council with a mix of urban and rural areas. Some wards cover quite large rural areas and the borough is partly parished. The average electorate currently per councillor is 1,571.

Historically, the council has nominated councillors to sit on a variety of outside bodies. The expectation is that the council will continue to nominate to outside bodies. However these nominations are reviewed annually and the more recent trend is for them to reduce in numbers.

The Council is aware of the Localism agenda and has been addressing it through its "My Neighbourhoods".

The Council operated Area Committees until September 2011 but as a response to the localism agenda now operates a form of area forums known as My Neighbourhood Forums.

Neighbourhood Forums meet formally four times a year in the areas they represent. In addition they meet informally to deal with local issues.

Members of the public can get more closely involved in helping to shape decisions that affect their area by coming along to the local forum and speaking to councillors and other partners.

Forums are an hour long, from 7pm to 8pm, and are very informal. The Councillors representing the area attend as do police, fire, and other organisations. Decisions are not made at the forums, but feedback from residents is used to identify local priorities and direct resources.

Each forum has a Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced directly from consultation with residents. Forums have 'Core funding' to support the delivery of these plans, and local councillors decide how to spend this. They also have an influencing role in the allocation of larger sums of money, such as fees paid by developers to support local improvements.

There are five My Neighbourhood Areas:

Penwortham

Western Parishes

Eastern

Central

Leyland

The introduction of the Neighbourhood Areas has directly increased the Councillor's community leadership role.

The representative process appears to work effectively and efficiently and the impact of a change in councillor numbers from 55 to 50 is sustainable.

The average electorate per councillor would increase from 1,571 to 1,728 based on the current electorate.

## **7. Justification for a new council comprising 50 councillors**

When the Council was informed that an electoral review of the council was required it had no preconceived view of the number of Councillors that were required for the authority.

Since then we have looked more closely at the Council's governance arrangements in order to determine a proposal that, as far as possible, enables the Council to continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner.

As can be seen from the above, each area of its governance arrangements has been examined in detail and the conclusion is that a substantial variation from the current figure cannot be justified either for an increase or a reduction.

In particular a substantial reduction along with the consequential democratic deficit would put in jeopardy the good community leadership work currently being undertaken in the My Neighbourhood Areas.

However, looking at the total number of seats on main bodies that make up the Council's governance arrangements: Cabinet (6) Planning Committee (15) Licencing Committees ,(11) Scrutiny Committee (13) and Governance Committee (6) equals 51 the Council has concluded that a Councillor size of 50 would enable it to continue with the same executive

arrangements, provide enough councillors to fulfil its regulatory and scrutiny roles and maintain its effective representative role within the My Neighbourhood areas.

As indicated above the Council moved to a Leader and Cabinet model from a Committee system, in anticipation of the introduction of the 2000 Act prior to 2000. Following consultation in 2010 it reconsidered its executive arrangements and moved to a Leader and Cabinet Executive model which was adopted in November 2010 for implementation following the Council's elections in May 2011.

However it is mindful that a future Council may wish to reconsider its governance arrangements and a reduction below 50, it is believed, would make a return to a committee system difficult.

MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET 2012/13

**CABINET (6)**

Councillors Hamman, Hughes, Mullineaux, S M Robinson, Mrs M R Smith and P Smith

***Responsibilities***

Leader of the Council – Councillor Mrs M R Smith  
Deputy Leader and Neighbourhoods and Street Scene – Councillor Mullineaux  
Finance and Resources – Councillor S M Robinson  
Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities – Councillor P Smith  
Shared Services and Corporate Support – Councillor Hamman  
Strategic Planning and Housing – Councillor Hughes

Chairman:

Councillor Mrs M R Smith

Vice-chairman:

Councillor Mullineaux

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2012/13 NOMINATIONS**

**1. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (13)**

**(a) Conservative (8)**

Councillors W Bennett, Coulton, M Gardner, McNulty, Nelson, Otter, Miss Walker and Mrs Woollard

**(b) Labour (5)**

Councillors S Bennett, Forrest, Mrs Jones, Martin and Titherington

Chairman:	Councillor Titherington
Vice-chairman:	Councillor Nelson

**2. PLANNING COMMITTEE (15)**

**(a) Conservative (9)**

Councillors Mrs D Gardner, Mrs M Green, Hesketh, Marsh, Mrs Moon, Mrs Noblet, Stettner, Walton and Yates

**(b) Labour (6)**

Councillors Crook, Evans, Foster, Ms Prynne, M Tomlinson, and Watts

Chairman:	Councillor Hesketh
Vice-chairman:	Councillor Yates

**3. LICENSING ACT COMMITTEE (11)**

**(a) Conservative (6)**

Councillors Mrs Ball, Mrs Beattie, Mrs Hothersall, Rainsbury, Mrs M Robinson and Suthers

**(b) Labour (4)**

Councillors Bell, Bradley, Kelly, and C Tomlinson

**(c) Liberal Democrat (1)**

Councillor Pimblett

Chairman:	Councillor Rainsbury
Vice-chairman:	Councillor Mrs M Robinson



**4. GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE (10)**

**(a) Conservative (6)**

Councillors Mrs Ball, Mrs Beattie, Mrs Hothersall, Rainsbury, Mrs M Robinson and Suthers

**(b) Labour (4)**

Councillor Bell, Bradley, Kelly, and C Tomlinson

Chairman: Councillor Rainsbury  
Vice-chairman: Councillor Mrs M Robinson

**5. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (6)**

**(a) Conservative (4)**

Councillors W Bennett, Michael Green, Mrs Mort and O'Hare

**(b) Labour (2)**

Councillor Foster and Patten

Chairman: Councillor O'Hare  
Vice-chairman: Councillor Foster

**6. APPEALS COMMITTEE (6)**

**(a) Conservative (4)**

Councillors Clark, Mrs Noblet, Stettner and Walton

**(b) Labour (2)**

Councillor Titherington and Heyworth

**7. STANDARDS COMMITTEE (7)**

*From the commencement date of the new regulations:*

**(a) Conservative (4)**

Councillors Michael Green, Mrs Mort, Otter and Miss Walker

**(b) Labour (3)**

Councillors Harrison, Heyworth and Mrs Jones

Chairman: To be appointed by the Standards Committee at its first meeting  
Vice-chairman: To be appointed by the Standards Committee at its first meeting

## REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES – APPOINTMENTS FOR 2012/13

	<b>Outside Body</b>	<b>Representative(s)</b>
1.	Local Government Association – General Assembly	Leader
2.	Local Government Association – Rural Commission	Councillor J Hesketh Director of Planning and Housing
3.	Local Government Association – Urban Commission	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing Director of Planning and Housing
4	Council for the Protection of Rural England (Lancashire Branch)	Councillor P G R Stettner
5	Runshaw College Community Liaison Committee	Councillors P Hamman, Mrs C Moon, M P France, M McNulty, Mrs S Jones and W Evans The Chief Executive (or his representative)
6	Springfields Fuels Limited Site Stakeholder Group	Councillor M Gardner
7	North Western Local Authorities' Employers' Organisation	Leader Substitute: Deputy Leader
8	Chorley, South Ribble and Districts Citizens' Advice Bureaux – Management Committee	Councillor J W M Otter
9	Orvia Previously Business Venture Group	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing
10	Trustees of Alice Rowlinson's Charity	Councillors Michael A Green and C Tomlinson, Mr C Marsden and Mrs Titherington
11	Trustees of Shutlingfield Charity, Walton-le-Dale	Councillors J D Marsh, P Mullineaux, W Bennett and B Yates
12	Children's Trust	Councillor Mrs Noblet
13	Preston's Guild Committee	Leader
14	Chorley & South Ribble Health & Wellbeing Partnership	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities.
15	Balshaws Church of England Controlled High Educational Foundation	Councillor P Hamman
16	Higher Walton Community Centre Management Committee	Councillor B Yates
17	New Progress Housing Association Board of Management	Councillor B Yates
18	Leyland and District Nursing Association Management Committee	Councillors Mrs D A Gardner, Michael A Green, F Heyworth and M McNulty Mrs S Kelly, Mrs B J Wilson, Mr G Woods and a vacancy (in process of being wound up)
19	Ribble Estuary Strategy Advisory Group	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing Substitute: Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Street Scene

20	Lancashire Waste Partnership	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Street Scene
21	North West Housing Forum	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing
22	Penwortham Community Centre Joint Management Committee	Councillors Mrs Hothersall and S M Robinson
23	Lancashire Health Scrutiny Committee	Chair of Scrutiny
24	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust – Governing Council	Councillor Rainsbury
25	South Ribble Leisure Trust	Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities
26	Local Authority Elected Member Older People’s Champions’ Network: North West of England (Older People’s Champion)	Councillor McNulty
27	Chorley & South Ribble Disability Forum	Councillor Nelson
28	Ribble Forum	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing
29	Leyland Board	Leader, Cabinet Members for Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities and Strategic Planning and Housing, and Councillor Michael Green
30	Local Strategic (South Ribble ) Partnership	Leader
31	Safer South Ribble & Chorley Partnership	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Street Scene
32	Joint Planning Advisory Committee	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing (substitute: Leader) Chairman of the Planning Committee (substitute: Councillor Stettner) Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee Chairman (substitute: Councillor Stettner)
33	Financial and Assurance Shared Services Joint Committee	Cabinet Member for Shared Services and Corporate Support. Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and Cllr Clark Substitutes: Deputy Leader Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities