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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR  
SCOTLAND 5<sup>TH</sup> REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS –  
DECISION OF SCOTTISH MINISTERS**

**Report by Chief Executive**

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**29 September 2016**

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**1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report advises Members of Scottish Ministers' decision on the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's recommendations for the Scottish Borders Council area.**
- 1.2 At its meeting held on 29 June 2016, Members considered the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's final recommendations to Scottish Ministers for the Scottish Borders Council area and agreed that representation be made to the Minister for Parliamentary Business on the following basis –
- (a) *This Council reaffirms its view that any link between councillor numbers and deprivation must be evidenced;*
  - (b) *The Boundary Commission's inflexibility on the number of voters in wards was causing division between established communities;*
  - (c) *The Council reaffirms its previous representations to the Local Government Minister on this issue in April 2014, May 2015 and February 2016; and*
  - (d) *That no change should be made to councillor numbers in the Borders or nationally until a clear, comprehensive and evidence-based review had been conducted.*
- 1.3 On 14 September 2016, Joe Fitzpatrick, MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, advised of his decision not to implement the recommendations made by the Commission for the Scottish Borders Council area. The electoral arrangements currently in effect for Scottish Borders will therefore continue to apply. Members should note that the other smaller amendments previously agreed by Council will also not be implemented

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 I recommend that the Council notes Scottish Ministers' decision that there be no changes to the current arrangements for the number and boundaries of Wards in the Scottish Borders Council area.**

### **3 SCOTTISH MINISTERS' DECISION ON BOUNDARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 At its meeting held on 29 June 2016, Members considered the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's final recommendations to Scottish Ministers for the Scottish Borders Council area. Despite previous submissions by the Council, the Commission had recommended that, from May 2017, Scottish Borders Council should comprise 32 Councillors in 10 Wards, comprising 2 Wards each returning 4 Members, and 8 Wards each returning 3 Members. The Hawick and Jedburgh Wards were the most affected by these proposed changes. Members unanimously agreed the following Motion –

*"That Scottish Borders Council agrees that representation be made to the Minister for Parliamentary Business on the following basis:-*

- (a) This Council reaffirms its view that any link between councillor numbers and deprivation must be evidenced;*
- (b) The Boundary Commission's inflexibility on the number of voters in wards was causing division between established communities;*
- (c) The Council reaffirms its previous representations to the Local Government Minister on this issue in April 2014, May 2015 and February 2016; and*
- (d) That no change should be made to councillor numbers in the Borders or nationally until a clear, comprehensive and evidence-based review had been conducted."*

3.2 On 14 September 2016, the Leader received a letter from Joe Fitzpatrick, MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, advising of his decision not to implement the recommendations made by the Commission for the Scottish Borders Council area. The electoral arrangements currently in effect for Scottish Borders will therefore continue to apply. Members should note that the other smaller amendments previously agreed by Council and detailed below will also not be implemented –

- (a) to support the Commission's proposal to move Charlesfield (approximately 80 electorate) from the Jedburgh & District Ward into the Selkirkshire Ward, with no change proposed for the houses lying within the settlement boundary of St Boswells;*
- bi) to move all of the property at New Horndean Farm into the Mid Berwickshire Ward – currently the Farm was split between Mid and East Berwickshire Wards; and*
- (c) to move the properties at Stichill Home Farm and Stichill Stables from the Mid Berwickshire Ward to the Kelso & District Ward.*

### **4 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

#### **4.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There are no risks associated with the recommendation contained in this report.

#### 4.3 **Equalities**

The recommendation in the report does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or religion and belief.

#### 4.4 **Acting Sustainably**

There are no economic, social or environmental effects of doing or not doing what is proposed.

#### 4.5 **Carbon Management**

There should be no impact on the Council's carbon emissions.

#### 4.6 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable.

#### 4.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation.

### 5 **CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Chief Officer HR have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the report.

#### **Approved by**

**Tracey Logan**  
**Chief Executive**

**Signature .....**

#### **Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** Letter to Leader from Joe Fitzpatrick MSP – 14/9/16

**Previous Minute Reference:** Scottish Borders Council, 29 June 2016

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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