EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE BRISTOL (ELECTORAL CHANGES) ORDER 2015

2015 No. 0000

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Purpose of the instrument

2.1. The Order provides for new district wards and numbers of district councillors for the district of Bristol at the district elections in 2016 and thereafter.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1. None.

4. Legislative context

4.1. The Commission has power under section 59 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) to make an order giving effect to recommendations contained in a report, prepared under section 58(4) of the 2009 Act, after conducting an electoral review under section 56(1) of that Act. This instrument is being made to give effect to the Commission's recommendations for new electoral arrangements set out in its report prepared following an electoral review of the district of Bristol.

5. Territorial extent and application

5.1. This instrument applies to England.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1. As the instrument is subject to the negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

- What is being done and why

7.1. The purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements including the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions for a specific local authority. The Commission began

the electoral review of Bristol on 15th July 2014. The Commission decided to conduct the review following a request by the Mayor of Bristol, George Ferguson CBE, in May 2013 in order to improve electoral equality prior to the Council's first whole council elections in 2016 and to consider council size. Furthermore, based on the December 2012 electorate figures, the number of electors per councillor in 29% of wards varied from the average by over 10% and one ward, Cabot, had 30% more electors per councillor than the average for the district

7.2. An electoral review aims to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is as close to equal as possible, but the recommendations must also have regard to community identities and interests and the need for effective and convenient local government. To achieve these aims, the Commission tries to ensure that the number of electors per councillor in every division or ward is as close as possible to the average for the authority, but is happy to show flexibility in moving away from the average based on the evidence provided during the consultation stages of the review. Following a three-stage review process the Commission published its 'Final recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Bristol City Council'[1] on 12th May 2015.

7.3. The Order provides for changes to the electoral arrangements for the district of Bristol at the district elections in 2016 as recommended by the Commission. The existing wards of the district will be replaced by thirty four new ones. Three wards will each return one councillor, twenty six wards will each return two councillors and five wards will each return three councillors. The Commission considered that the evidence received justified no wards having variances predicted to vary by more than 10% from the authority average by 2020.

7.4. The Order does not amend or revoke any legislation.

8. Consultation outcome

8.1. The Order gives effect to recommendations that were consulted on during the review of electoral arrangements from July 2014 until February 2015. There was an initial ten week consultation, during which the Commission asked for proposals on ward boundaries for the district. Having considered the submissions received, the Commission published its 'Draft recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Bristol Council'[2] on 9th December 2014. Following a further ten week consultation on the draft recommendations, the Commission considered the further evidence received and published its final recommendations.

8.2. During the course of the review, the Commission received 851 representations. The consultations involved Bristol City Council, community organisations, local MPs and other interested parties. The Commission considered that a council size of 70 would ensure effective and convenient local government for the district. The Commission

[1] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/24939/Bristol-final-recs-report-Final-2.pdf
[2] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/24114/Bristol-draft-recs-FINAL-print.pdf

based its draft recommendations on submissions from Bristol City Council Labour Group, Bristol City Council Conservative Group, Bristol City Council Liberal Democrat Group and Bristol City Council Green Group as well as other localised evidence received. The Commission made some modifications in specific areas to better reflect the statutory criteria.

8.3. In response to the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Commission modified its recommendations in Ashley, Brislington, Easton, Henleaze, Redland, and Westbury-on-Trym. The Commission sought to address evidence received during consultation and achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

8.4. The Commission also received submissions opposing its proposed boundaries in several other areas. In each of these cases, the Commission did not consider that satisfactory evidence had been received for it to alter its draft recommendations. The Commission therefore confirmed the remainder of its draft recommendations for the district as final.

8.5. A detailed analysis of the outcome of the consultation is set out in the report 'Final recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Bristol City Council' which is available at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-west/bristol/bristol.

9. Guidance

9.1. The Commission does not intend to issue any guidance alongside this instrument. This is not considered necessary as the Order is self-explanatory and gives effect to recommendations following consultation with interested parties as to the changes to electoral arrangements.

9.2. Once the Order has been made, the Commission will publish a press release and distribute to local media advising that new electoral arrangements will be implemented at the next local elections. The press release will also direct interested parties to the Commission's website where the final recommendations will be available in detail.

10. Impact

10.1. No impact assessment has been prepared because no impact on the private sector or the voluntary sector is foreseen.

10.2. The impact on the public sector will be limited to the area for which the Order makes provision. The one-off cost of producing the map referred to by the instrument is to be funded by the Commission. The one-off cost of amending the electoral register to reflect the new district wards and parish wards is to be funded by Bristol City Council.

11. Regulating small business

11.1. The Order does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1. The Commission will have no role in monitoring Bristol City Council's implementation of the Bristol (Electoral Changes) Order 2015. The Commission is not required to undertake such monitoring; that is a matter for the relevant officers of Bristol City Council.

12.2. The Order will be reviewed insofar as the Commission continually monitors local authorities in England to identify any that meet its criteria for electoral reviews.

13. Contact

13.1. Marcus Bowell at the Commission (Tel: 0330 500 1250 or email: marcus.bowell@lgbce.org.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.