EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE SHEFFIELD (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 wards and numbers of councillors for Sheffield at 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 Sheffield.

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 Sheffield in March 2014. The Commission decided to conduct the review as, based on the December 2012 electorate figures, Central ward had 43% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority.

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 four-stage review process the Commission published its 'Final recommendations – New electoral arrangements for Sheffield City Council'[1] on 23 March 2015.

7.3. The Order provides for changes to the electoral arrangements for Sheffield at elections in 2016 as recommended by the Commission. The existing wards of the authority will be replaced by 28 new ones. Each will 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. Under section 56 of the 2009 Act, whenever the Commission recommends changes to the electoral arrangements for a council it must also recommend whether, in consequence of those changes, any changes should be made to the electoral arrangements for any parish council that is within that authority. Among other things, under Schedule 2 to that Act recommendations must ensure that no parish ward is split between new wards and under section 56 of that Act recommendations must be made regarding the number of parish councillors for each parish ward.

7.5. Consequently, no new parish wards have been created, nor have amendments been made to existing parish warding arrangements. This order therefore makes no provision in this regard.

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

[1] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/24813/Sheffield-Final-Recommendations-Final.pdf

8. Consultation outcome

8.1. The Order gives effect to recommendations that were consulted on during the review of electoral arrangements from March 2014 until January 2015. There was an initial six-week consultation, during which the Commission asked for proposals on the most appropriate number of councillors for the council. This was followed by a 10-week consultation on the most appropriate ward boundaries. Having considered the submissions received, the Commission published its 'Draft recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Sheffield'[2] on 21 October 2014. Following a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations, the Commission published its final recommendations on 23 March 2015.

8.2. During the course of the review, the Commission received approximately 62 representations. The consultations involved Sheffield Council, parish and town councils, and other interested parties. The Commission considered that a council size of 84 would ensure effective and convenient local government for the authority. The Commission based its draft recommendations largely on the submission from the Council. The Commission made modifications in specific areas to better reflect the statutory criteria.

8.3. In response to the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Commission modified boundaries in the centre of Sheffield, most notably the boundaries of Broomhill & Sharrow Vale, City, Park & Arbourthorne and Walkley wards.

8.4. The Commission also made some more minor amendments to boundaries of some other wards, as well as amending some ward names.

8.5. The Commission did not receive submissions regarding the wards on the edges of the urban area, and therefore confirmed the remainder of its draft recommendations as final.

8.6. A detailed analysis of the outcome of the consultation is set out in the report 'Final recommendations - New electoral arrangements for Sheffield' which is available at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/yorkshire-and-the-humber/south-yorkshire/sheffield-fer

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.

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[2] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/23690/Sheffield-draft-recommendations-report-edited-FINAL.pdf

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 Sheffield 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 Sheffield City Council's implementation of the Sheffield (Electoral Changes) Order 2015. The Commission is not required to undertake such monitoring; that is a matter for the relevant officers of the 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.