**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**

**THE WYRE (ELECTORAL CHANGES) ORDER 2014**

**2014 No.**

**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 borough wards and numbers of borough councillors for Wyre Borough Council at the borough elections in 2015 and thereafter. The Order also provides for new parish wards and numbers of parish councillors at the parish elections in 2015 and thereafter wherever this is necessary because a parish is to be split between new borough wards.

## 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 Wyre Borough Council.

## 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 Wyre in September 2012. The Commission decided to conduct the review as Wyre triggered the FER criteria of more than 30% of wards with a variance of more than 10% or one ward with a variance of 30%. Based on the December 2011 electorate figures, the number of electors per councillor in 31% of wards varied from the average by over 10%. Most notably Catterall ward had 30% more electors per councillor than the average.

7.2. An electoral review aims to ensure that the number of electors represented by each county or borough 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 for new electoral arrangements for Wyre Borough Council'[1] on 19 November 2013.

7.3. The Order provides for changes to the electoral arrangements for Wyre Borough Council at the borough elections in 2015 as recommended by the Commission. The existing wards of the borough will be replaced by 24 new ones. Four wards will each return one councillor, 14 wards will each return two councillors and six wards will each return three councillors.

7.4. Under section 56 of the 2009 Act, whenever the Commission recommends changes to the electoral arrangements for a borough 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 borough. Among other things, under Schedule 2 to that Act recommendations must ensure that no parish ward is split between new borough 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, in addition to making changes to the electoral arrangements for the borough the Order also, where necessary, makes provision with respect to the establishment of new parish wards and sets the number of parish councillors for each of those parish wards.

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

[1] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__documents/lgbce/reviews/wyre-preliminary-subs/final-recs/wyre-final-recommendations-report-final-post-editor-2013-11-01.pdf

## 8. Consultation outcome

8.1. The Order gives effect to recommendations that were consulted on during the review of electoral arrangements from October 2012 until September 2013. There was an initial six-week consultation, during which the Commission asked for proposals on the most appropriate number of councillors for the borough. This was followed by a 12-week consultation on the most appropriate ward boundaries for the borough. Having considered the submissions received, the Commission published its 'Draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Wyre'[2] on 18 June 2013. Following a further eight-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 32 representations. The consultations involved Wyre Borough Council, local organisations and other interested parties. The Commission initially consulted on a council size of 50, a reduction of five and a figure suggested by Wyre Borough Council, which it considered would ensure effective and convenient local government for the borough. During its consultation on council size a submission was received from the Labour Group on Wyre Borough Council with a proposal for 44 members which was fully considered before the Commission moved to consult on warding patterns based on 50 members.

8.3. The Commission also received 12 submissions in response to its consultation on warding patterns including a borough-wide scheme from the Council as well as a warding pattern from Thornton Action Group that focussed on the areas of Thornton and Norcross. The Commission were of the view that both these submissions provided good electoral equality and used clear boundaries. The Commission based their draft recommendations on these submissions.

8.4. The Commission received 13 submissions in response to its consultation on draft recommendations. The Council largely opposed the draft recommendations and in particular the principle of single member wards. Other submissions mostly concerned the Thornton-Cleveleys and Norcross areas where there was again disagreement with the draft recommendations.

8.5. The Commission considered the representations but did not consider that sufficient evidence was received to modify the boundaries proposed in the draft recommendations. While alternative warding patterns were promoted, the Commission did not consider that persuasive evidence had been received explaining why these alternatives would better reflect the statutory criteria. The Commission did decide to change five ward names as part of its final recommendations. The final recommendations include the ward names of Cleveleys Park, Marsh Mill, Pheasant's Wood, Stanah and Victoria & Norcross.

[2] http://www.lgbce.org.uk/__documents/lgbce/draft-final-reports/2012-draftfinal-reports/Wyre-draftrecs-final-2012-09-10-2.pdf

8.6. A detailed analysis of the outcome of the consultation is set out in the report 'Final recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Wyre' which is available at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/lancashire/wyre-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.

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 Borough wards and parish wards is to be funded by Wyre.

## 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 Wyre Borough Council's implementation of the Wyre (Electoral Changes) Order 2014. The Commission is not required to undertake such monitoring; that is a matter for the relevant officers of Wyre.

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: 0207 664 8530 or email: marcus.bowell@lgbce.org.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.