

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

10 OCTOBER 2016

Commenced: 4.00pm

Terminated: 4.30pm

Present: Councillors Cooney (In the Chair), Fairfoull, J. Fitzpatrick, K. Quinn, Taylor, Ward and Warrington

Apologies: Councillor P. Buckley

### 13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

#### AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2016 be accepted as a correct record.

### 14. REVIEW OF 2016 ELECTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance, Resources and Pensions) which explained that the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) had begun conducting a review of boundaries of all the Parliamentary Constituencies in England. The rules, under which the review was being conducted, involved a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England (from 533 to 501), and required that every constituency, apart from two specified exceptions, must have an electorate that was no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507. In Greater Manchester the number of MPs would be reduced from 27 to 25.

It was explained that in determining constituency boundaries, the BCE must ensure that all constituencies should have a registered electorate within the statutory electorate range. Subject to this, the Boundary Commission may take into account the following to such extent as they think fit:

- Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- Local Government Boundaries (i.e. Counties, Districts And Wards) as they existed On 7 May 2015;
- The boundaries of existing constituencies;
- Any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.

Members were informed that the Boundary Commission had completed the first stage of the review process and had published initial proposals for England. It was explained that the proposals would see Tameside represented by four Members of Parliament representing the following constituencies:

- Ashton-under-Lyne;
- Failsworth and Droylsden;
- Marple and Hyde;
- Stockport North and Denton.

It was explained that the Boundary Commission were consulting on their initial proposals for 12 weeks, until 5 December 2016. They would be holding five public hearings in the North West, at which people could give their views direct to one of the Assistant Commissioners. Once the consultation had closed, the Commission would collate all the responses received, including records of the public hearings.

Once the initial consultation was complete the Boundary Commission were required to publish all the responses they received on their initial proposals. This publication would mark the start of a

four-week 'secondary consultation' period, likely to take place in spring 2017. The purpose of the secondary consultation was for people to see what others had said in response to the initial proposals, and to make comments on their views, for example by countering an argument, or by supporting and reinforcing what others had said.

Once the Boundary Commission had all the representations and comments from both the initial and secondary consultation periods, they would analyse those representations and decide whether changes should be made to the initial proposals. If they decided that the evidence presented to them persuaded them to change their initial proposals, then they must publish their revised proposals for the areas concerned, and consult on them for a further period of eight weeks, this was likely to be towards the end of 2017.

Finally, following the consultation on revised proposals, the Boundary Commission would consider all the evidence received at this stage, and throughout the review, before determining their final recommendations. The recommendations would be set out in a published report to the Government, who would present it, without amendment, to Parliament on behalf of the Boundary Commission, this must be done by September 2018.

**AGREED:**

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That further consideration be given to the proposals following the initial consultation phase.**

**15. ANNUAL CANVASS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance, Resources and Pensions), which explained provided Members with an update on the Annual Canvass of electors. It was explained that household canvassing had been taking place since August and would continue until the new register was published on 1 December 2015. Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) had been sent to all 100,000+ properties on 30 August and an initial reminder had been sent out on 30 September to 50,000 properties, since then a further 15,000 HEFs had been returned, an overall response rate of 65%. A final reminder is scheduled to go out on 4 November.

Members were informed that of the responses received 30,300 (47%) were from properties returning a paper copy; 16,800 (26%) were by telephone; 14,750 (23%) were online and 3,000 (4%) were by text.

It was stated that under IER once a HEF has been returned if there are new people on the form each new entry will be sent an Invitation to Register (ITR) so that they can register individually either by returning the ITR or using the nation registration website.

**AGREED:**

**That the update be noted.**

**16. ELECTORAL COMMISSION REPORT ON THE EU REFRENDUM**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance, Resources and Pensions) that informed Members of the content of the Electoral Commission report on 23 June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union.

It was explained that the Electoral Commission report went into detail about the background to and conduct of the EU Referendum and made a series of recommendation about the future arrangements for referendums and elections. The recommendations related to future referendum

legislation; provision of information for voters at future referendums; management and delivery of future referendums and other polls and the regulation of campaigners at future elections.

During consideration of this item reference was made to the Greater Manchester Mayoral Election in 2017. In particular reference was made to the possible content of directions and the distribution of information booklets and their funding.

**AGREED:**

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Working Group views be sought on the content of directions on the approach to be taken to the GM Mayoral Election;**
- (iii) That Members receive an update on the information to be provided to electors prior to the GM Mayoral Election.**

**17. ELECTORAL COMMISSION BULLETINS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance, Resources and Pensions) that provided Members with recent copies of the Electoral Commission news bulletin which set out current issues affecting the democratic framework for local government.

**AGREED:**

**That Tameside indicate its willingness to take part in the pilot.**

**CHAIR**