

# Item no.

Report to: **District Council**

Date: **1 December 2005**

Report of: **Head of Democratic Services and Administration**

Subject: **Periodic Electoral Reviews**

Ward: **All**

## 1 **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to the response set out in the attached Appendix to enable the Council to contribute to the Electoral Commission's consultation process relating to Periodic Electoral Reviews (PER).

## 2 **Consultation**

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Management Team. There has also been discussions with other North East Authorities through the Association of North East Councils.

## 3 **Background**

- 3.1 The Boundary Committee for England (BCE), a statutory committee of the Electoral Commission, is responsible for reviewing the electoral arrangements of local authorities in England.
- 3.2 During the period 1996-2004 the BCE carried out a periodic electoral review of all 386 English local authorities. Building on the lessons learnt from that programme, the Electoral Commission is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the policies and processes used to guide PERs. It is examining how it interprets the laws, how its approach might be improved and what it might do to enhance the way it works with people interested in the outcome.

## 4 **Position Statement**

- 4.1 The Commission has published a consultation paper seeking views on these matters. Among the issues raised by the Commission are the balance between the statutory criteria for assessing electoral arrangements – namely community identity, electoral equality and effective and convenient local government; and the approach to be taken to determining the number of Councillors to be elected to a local authority.
- 4.2 The specific questions raised by the Electoral Commission are set out in Appendix 1, with suggested responses.

## 5 **Implications**

### 5.1 ***Policy, Financial, Legal***

There are none arising directly from this report.

### 5.2 ***Risk***

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

### 5.3 ***Communications***

There are none arising directly from this report.

## 6 **Corporate Implications**

6.1 The recommendation contained within this report accords with the Council's Corporate Objective, "Quality Services for our People".

6.2 There are no E-Government, Equality and Diversity or Procurement implications arising directly from this report.

## 7 **Recommendations**

7.1 The District Council is asked to approve the response to the Electoral Commission set out in Appendix 1 (attached).

### **Background Papers/Documents referred to in preparing this report**

Periodic Electoral Reviews - Consultation Paper published by the Electoral Commission, September 2005.