

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

1 DECEMBER 2020

Title:

Boundary Commission Electoral Review
2020 - 2022

Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Ward, Leader, Cllr Paul Follows, Deputy Leader

Head of Service: Tom Horwood, Chief Executive

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has notified the Council that it will conduct an electoral review of the Borough during 2020-2022. The review process has now commenced. It would be preferable for the Council to put forward a single agreed submission and so this report seeks approval to appoint an Informal Working Party to prepare a recommendation to the Executive on the preferred size of the Council which is the first stage of the Commission's review. The submission must be made by the end of February 2021 and therefore will need to be debated by Full Council no later than its February 2021 meeting.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive

- i. Approve the setting up of an Informal Working Group of councillors, composed as described in paragraph 4.3.
- ii. Ask the Informal Working Group to bring forward recommendations (on the LGBCE 'Size Submission' document relating to the size of the Council from 2023) for consideration at the Executive's February 2021 meeting at the latest so that the Executive can, in turn, make recommendations for the Full Council to debate at its February 2021 meeting.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 This recommendation is to facilitate a cross-party approach to the Boundary Review submission and to ensure the deadline of the end of February 2021 is met.

4. Background

- 4.1 The LGBCE has a statutory duty to review every English local authority 'from time to time'. As Waverley has not had an electoral review since 1998 the Commission has advised the Council that a review will commence in 2020 and take effect at the May

2023 elections. The aim of the review is to seek to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections and will therefore propose new electoral arrangements for:

- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council: council size.
- The names, number and boundaries of wards.
- The number of councillors to be elected from each ward.

4.2 The process for the review was presented at the All-Councillor Briefing on 12 November and the slides from that evening are set out at Annexe 1 for reference.

4.3 The first stage of the process is to submit the ‘Size Submission’ document which is set out at Annexe 2 to this report. It is considered preferable that one submission is made reflecting the agreed position of the Council. However, in the situation where consensus cannot be achieved alternative submissions can be made. To achieve a consensus it is suggested that a cross-party Informal Working Group be set up with two representatives from the three larger political Groups and one each from the two smaller political Groups, nominated by Group Leaders, together with one Independent Councillor. It is anticipated that the Working Group will need to meet up to five times on a regular basis as the final submission will need approval by Council on 23 February 2021.

Stage One Timetable

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|---|-------------------------------|
| Group Leaders Briefing | 10 November 2020 |
| All Councillors Briefing | 12 November 2020 |
| Develop council size proposal | December 2020 – February 2021 |
| Working Group reports to Executive meeting | 9 February 2021 |
| Council debates size proposal | 23 February 2021 |
| Submission of Council Size Proposal to Commission | 9 March 2021 |

Stage Two Timetable

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|--|------------------------------|
| Consultation on Warding Patterns | 27 April – 5 July 2021 |
| Draft Recommendations considered by Commission | 21 September 2021 |
| Consultation on draft recommendations | 5 October – 13 December 2021 |
| Final recommendations considered by Commission | 15 February 2022 |
| Order laid | Spring 2022 |
| Order made | Summer 2022 |
| Implementation | May 2023 |

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

5.1 The review’s core principles of establishing, as far as possible, a structure for fair and accountable local democracy reflects the Council’s vision, particularly open, democratic and participative governance.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 **Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

The Commission has confirmed that most of the work for the review is undertaken by the Commission. However, there will inevitably be an overhead of staff time in preparing data and supporting the process. Expectation is that this will be met from current approved resource. Members of the Value for Money Overview & Scrutiny Committee have asked to be updated on the Council resources applied to the review.

6.2 Risk management

Appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken as necessary.

6.3 Legal

The Boundary Review will be conducted by the Commission in accordance with statute. Any changes to the district would be made by Parliamentary Order to take effect at the next Borough Council elections in May 2023. The Council has a duty to support the Commission's work and to provide input to that work.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

An equality impact assessment will be carried out to ensure the consultation process meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

Until the outcome of the review is known it is hard to analyse the effects of the outcome on carbon emission levels.

7. Consultation and engagement

7.1 Consultation is a major part of the Boundary Review process. At the start of the review, briefing sessions have been held for all Borough Councillors and a similar event is planned for the Town and Parish Councils.

8. Other options considered

8.1 The review is being conducted by the LGBCE with input from the council. A cross-party councillor working group is a common approach used to develop a council size submission.

9. Governance journey

9.1 The Informal Working Group will report to the Executive whose recommendations on the Size Submission will be considered by Council. It is the responsibility of the LGBCE to conduct the boundary review. The LGBCE welcomes a submission from the Council and will receive any submissions if submitted in time before it takes its decision on council size.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Slides from the All Councillor Briefing – 12 November 2020

Annexe 2 – LGBCE Size Submission Template Document

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 20 November 2020
Head of Finance: 20 November 2020
Chief Executive: 19 November 2020
Portfolio Holder: 19 November 2020