

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 18 May 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Ward Boundary Review

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to submit the attached submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) being the Council's response to the Commission in relation to its view as to the most appropriate Council size for Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Council endorse the attached submission and that it be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The LGBCE (the Commission) is undertaking an Electoral Review of the Council. This review has been triggered by the fact that the electorate in the Farnworth Ward in Widnes is 33% higher than the average electorate across each of the wards in the Borough. Significant divergence in the size of one ward from the average electorate in other wards of the Borough is one of the Commission's criteria that triggers a review.

3.2 The ward boundary review process is undertaken in four stages:

1) Preliminary Period – ends May 2018

The Commission invites the Council to submit its views on what it believes is the appropriate Council size for Halton. The Commission will come to its own view following that submission.

2) Consultation on Warding Patterns: 26th June 2018 – 3rd September 2018

The Commission will publish draft warding patterns for the Borough and invite responses for all interested parties.

3) Consultation on Draft Recommendations: 8th November 2018 – 14th January 2019

Having considered responses to the above consultation on warding patterns, the Commission will produce draft recommendations which will be subject to a further round of consultation.

4) Final Recommendations

The Commission will publish its final recommendations in March 2019. A Parliamentary Order will be made in Summer 2019 with the first (all out) elections taking place with the new warding arrangements in May 2020.

3.3 As part of the preliminary phase of the review, the Commission has asked the Council to submit its views on the Council size it believes is right for Halton. An all-party working group was established by the Leader, and chaired by the Leader, to develop a submission to the Commission. Attached to this report is a copy of that submission. The submission recommends that a Council of 54 Members would allow the Council to continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner and ensure that the eventual pattern of wards, reflect community identity across Halton. The submission contains the supporting evidence to back up this view.

3.4 The Council is requested to endorse the submission.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council has to have sufficient Elected Members to ensure:

- Its governance arrangements are effective;
- Its scrutiny arrangements are effective;
- That there are sufficient Members to carry out the representational role of Councillors within the Borough;

4.2 The Working Party have taken these issues into account in coming to their view.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, there will be a cost to the Council of implementing the eventual change to the pattern of wards. These costs will have to be met from existing Council resources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 There are no direct implications for the Council's priorities, however, it is clearly important that the policy issues identified in paragraph 4 are met to ensure the efficient and effective running of the Council.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no specific risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Local Government Commission Technical Guidance Report	LGBCE website	Ian Leivesley Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources