

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 6 February 2019

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise,  
Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Leader

**SUBJECT:** Ward Boundary Review

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to submit the attached report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The attached report is the Council's response to the Commission's draft warding arrangements for the Borough.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) the Council endorses the attached response and that it be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England; and**
- 2) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to make minor drafting amendments to the response prior to forwarding it to the Commission.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The LGBCE (the Commission) is undertaking an Electoral Review of the Council. This review had 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 – ended May 2018**

The Commission invited the Council to submit its views on what it believes is the appropriate Council size for Halton. The Commission concluded at the end of this stage that it was 'minded' to recommend a Council size of 54.

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

The Commission invited the Council and other interested parties to submit to it suggestions for patterns of wards based on a Council of 54.

3) Consultation on Draft Recommendations: 4 December 2018 – 11 February 2019

Having considered responses to the above consultation on warding patterns, the Commission produced a set of draft recommendations and invited the Council and other interested parties to submit responses to these recommendations, hence this response.

4) Final Recommendations

The Commission will publish its final recommendations 26 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 this phase (3) of the review the Commission has asked the Council for its views in relation to its draft recommendations. Attached to this report is that response. The response recommends the following:

- A boundary adjustment to the proposed Hough Green/Birchfield Wards.
- A boundary adjustment to the proposed Bridgewater/Grange Wards.
- That some ward names in the proposals be changed to best reflect those local areas affected by boundary changes.
- That there remains areas of concern with the Commission's proposals for the four parishes to the east of Runcorn, in particular with draft plans to create a Preston Brook and Vale Ward.

3.4 The Council is requested to endorse the response.

## **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; and
- that any new warding arrangements:
  - 1) Should leave each Councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other Councillors elsewhere in the authority.

- 2) Should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries should be identifiable. Consider transport links, community groups and facilities, natural or physical boundaries, parishes and shared interests.
- 3) Should promote effective and convenient local government. Consider the number of Councillors for the geographic size of and the links between parts of the ward.

4.2 These issues have been taken into account in coming to this set of proposals.

## **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**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Local Government Commission Technical Guidance Report	LGBCE website	Ian Leivesley Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources