



COUNCIL: 26 FEBRUARY 2020

Report of: Chief Operating Officer

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SUBJECT: WEST LANCASHIRE ELECTORAL REVIEW

Wards affected: All Borough Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To enable the Council to comply with its obligations in facilitating the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) Electoral Review of West Lancashire (the Review).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the outline timetable for the Review as set by the LGBCE (Appendix 1 of this report) be noted.

2.2 That an Electoral Review Working Group of Council be established with the following Terms of Reference:

2.2.1 To develop proposals for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

2.2.2 To make recommendations to Council.

2.3 That the Working Group comprise of 3 Labour Members, 2 Conservative Members and 1 Our West Lancashire Member.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 West Lancashire Borough last underwent a boundary review in 1999/2000 as part of the Local Government Commission for England's programme of Periodic Electoral Reviews (PERs). The Local Government Commission for England has been superseded by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission). The 1999/2000 review resulted in a reduction in Wards and Councillors from 26 to 25 and 55 to 54 respectively.

- 3.2 An electoral review considers:
- the total number of councillors elected to the local authority;
 - the number and boundaries of wards for the purposes of the election of councillors and;
 - the name of any ward.
- 3.3 On 14 June 2019 the Commission wrote to the Chief Executive advising that a review of West Lancashire would be undertaken as part of their new programme of periodic reviews of authorities who have not been reviewed for 12 or more years. The Commission's approach coincides with the activation of the Council's decision (October 2018) to request a review following determination of the SORP proposals in July 2019.
- 3.4 On 9 January 2020 the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Commission met with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Operating Officer and officers. This marked the start of the 'Preliminary Period' of the Review.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION – PRELIMINARY PERIOD OF REVIEW

- 4.1 There are various stages in the Commission's Electoral Review process. More details on each of the stages can be found on the Commission website at www.lgbce.org.uk/how-reviews-work.
- 4.2 The Council is currently at the beginning of the process in the Preliminary Period. During which time the LGBCE meets with the Council and interested parties to explain the review process and to allow the authority to prepare the information needed by the LGBCE for the review.
- 4.3 At the end of the Preliminary Period the Council is required to make a 'Submission of Council Size' proposal to the Commission for their consideration. Council Size is the starting point in any electoral review since it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards of the authority. The Council must consider how many councillors are required, having regard to the political management arrangements, regulatory and scrutiny functions and the representational role of councillors in their ward work and representing the Council on external bodies.
- 4.4 The Council may also wish to consider its Electoral Cycle and whether to retain Election by Thirds or move to a cycle of All Out Elections once every four years. Should the Council wish to formally consider a change in electoral cycle, a public consultation would be required.
- 4.5 During this Preliminary Period no consideration is given to the number of wards or the boundaries of wards. These are only considered once the Commission have determined the size of the Council going forward.

5.0 ELECTORAL REVIEW WORKING GROUP

- 5.1 The Council must present its 'Submission of Council Size' proposal to the Commission by Thursday 15 October 2020.
- 5.2 Given the relatively short period for this stage of the review it is suggested that a working group be established to work with officers in developing detailed

proposals for consideration by Council. The final proposals for submission to the Commission will be subject to approval by the full Council.

5.3 It is proposed that the membership of the working group be six Members, consisting of three members from the Labour Group, two members from the Conservative Group and one Member from the Our West Lancashire Group.

5.4 Due to the tight deadlines at each stage of the review, Members appointed to the working group would need to be reasonably flexible as meetings would need to be arranged at relatively short notice.

5.5 The remit of the working group will be to:

- Work to the Technical Guidance of the Local Government Boundary Commission of England;
- Collect and consider evidence to determine the proposal to be made to Council relating to council size and revised warding patterns;
- To make recommendations to Council within the required timescales.

6.0 FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 As stated in the timetable at Appendix 1, the Review is due to be completed in the final quarter of 2021. After publication of its Final Recommendations, the Commission will lay an order before Parliament for final approval.

6.2 If the expected timescales are met, revised electoral boundaries will come into force for the elections in May 2022.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder, however the aim of the Review is about ensuring as much as possible that there is electoral equality across all areas of the Borough.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The budget figures for 2020-21 contained elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting include provision to meet the costs of the financial/resource implications arising from this report.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 Establishing the Electoral Review Working Group will provide a forum for Members and officers to work together to produce proposals within the timescales required by the Commission whilst allowing for consideration by Council.

10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal Equality Impact Assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

Appendices

1. The Commission's Review Timetable
2. EIA

West Lancashire Borough Council: Electoral Review Timetable

These timetables outline the key dates and activities for both the Council (shown in bold) and the Commission during the review process.

Preliminary Period

| Briefings | Involvement | | Key Dates |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Council | LGBCE | |
| Initial Meeting | Council Leader Chief Executive | Chair Chief Executive | 9 January 2020 |
| Officer Briefing | Council Officers involved in review | Review Manager Review Officer | 26 February 2020 |
| Group Leader Briefing | Council Group Leaders | Lead Commissioner Review Manager Review Officer | |
| Full Council Briefing | All Councillors | Lead Commissioner Review Manager Review Officer | |

Council Size

| Activity | Involvement | | Key Dates |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| | Council | LGBCE | |
| Develop council size proposal | Council Political Groups | Officers will be available to answer any technical queries on making a submission. | March to October 2020 |
| Submission of council size proposals | Council Political Groups | Officers will acknowledge receipt of submissions. | 15 October 2020 |
| Commission Meeting: Council Size | Not required | Commission | 17 November 2020 |

Warding Patterns

| Activity | Involvement | | Key Dates |
|--|--|---|---|
| | Council | LGBCE | |
| Consultation on warding patterns | Council Political Groups General Public | Run consultation, collate & analyse responses. | 8 December 2020 – 15 February 2021 |
| Commission Meeting: Draft Recommendations | Not required | Commission | 18 May 2021 |
| Consultation on Draft Recommendations | Council Political Groups General Public | Publish draft recommendations. Run consultation, collate & analyse responses. | 1 June 2021 – 9 August 2021 |
| Commission Meeting: Final Recommendations | Not required | Commission | 19 October 2021 |
| Final Recommendations publication | Not required | Commission | 2 November 2021 |

Order

| Activity | Involvement | | Key Dates |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Council | LGBCE | |
| Order laid | Not required | Commission | 2022 |
| Order made | Not required | Commission | 2022 |
| Implementation | Council | Not required | 2022/2023 |

APPENDIX 2

Equality Impact Assessment Form



| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Directorate: Transformation & Resources | | Service: Legal and Democratic Services | |
| Completed by: Thomas Lynan | | Date: 17/01/2020 | |
| Subject Title: Electoral Review of West Lancashire | | | |
| 1. DESCRIPTION | | | |
| Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised: | No | | |
| Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback: | Yes | | |
| Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed: | No | | |
| Is a budget being set or funding allocated: | No | | |
| Is a programme or project being planned: | Yes | | |
| Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors: | Yes | | |
| Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations): | Yes | | |
| Details of the matter under consideration: | Electoral Review of West Lancashire | | |
| <i>If you answered Yes to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i> <i>If you answered No to all the above please complete Section 2</i> | | | |
| 2. RELEVANCE | | | |
| Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): | | | |
| If Yes , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered Yes go to Section 3</i> | | | |
| If you answered No to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: | | | |
| 3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION | | | |
| Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)? | There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and or other stakeholders. | | |
| If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)? | All groups are affected. | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out? | |
| Age | No |
| Gender | No |
| Disability | No |
| Race and Culture | No |
| Sexual Orientation | No |
| Religion or Belief | No |
| Gender Reassignment | No |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | No |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | No |
| 4. DATA ANALYSIS | |
| In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why? | Members of the public, employees, elected members and or other stakeholders currently use the service because it is a universal service integral to the function of the Council. |
| What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders? | Changes to electoral arrangements. |
| What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals? | All relevant stakeholders will get the opportunity to express their views through consultation. |
| What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics? | All relevant stakeholders will get the opportunity to express their views through consultation. |
| If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify: | All relevant stakeholders will get the opportunity to express their views through consultation. |
| 5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS | |
| In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)? | No changes are proposed at this stage. |
| 6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT | |
| If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.). | As there are no changes at this stage, there is no impact to consider. |
| What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above? | No actions |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i> |
| 7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING | |
| When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it? | This assessment will be reviewed before any further report on this issue is released. |