



COUNCIL: 15 DECEMBER 2021

Report of: Chief Operating Officer

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran

Contact for further information: Mr Tom Lynan (Extn.5013)
(E-mail: tom.lynan@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: WEST LANCASHIRE ELECTORAL REVIEW – LGBCE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Council of the current phase of the Electoral Review of West Lancashire and that an Officer Submission to the consultation will be made.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Report and the Officer Submission to the consultation, attached at Appendix 2 be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 On 25 May 2021 the LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) began a public consultation, inviting Ward Boundary Proposals from stakeholders across West Lancashire. This consultation ran until 2 August 2021.

3.2 Submissions to the consultation were received from Officers, the Conservative Group, the Labour Group, three individual Councillors, six Parish Councils and 18 local residents.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 On 2 November 2021 the LGBCE published its Draft Recommendations for West Lancashire. A public consultation on the Draft Recommendations will run until 10 January 2022.

4.2 A map of the proposed Wards is attached as Appendix 1.

- 4.3 The Draft Recommendations reduce the number of Wards from 25 to 15, reduce the number of Councillors from 54 to 45, and create uniform three member wards. Councillors should note that this represents significant change to the current arrangements as detailed below.
- 4.4 **AUGHTON & HOLBORN** – Comprises all of the existing Aughton Park Ward with a small part of Knowsley Ward around Holborn Hill, and the more densely populated part of Aughton & Downholland. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Aughton Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.5 **BICKERSTAFFE & WESTHEAD** – Comprises all of the existing Bickerstaffe Ward and takes in the rural areas from the southern part of Aughton Parish, West Gillibrands from Skelmersdale South Ward, and Westhead and Edge Hill Campus plus surrounding fields from Derby Ward. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Aughton Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.6 **BURSCOUGH BRIDGE & RUFFORD** – Comprises the northern parts of Burscough Parish (including the Parish Ward currently in Scarisbrick Ward), Lathom Parish from Newburgh Ward, all of Rufford Ward and also the Mere Brow area from Tarleton Ward. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Burscough Parish and Tarleton Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.7 **BURSCOUGH TOWN** – Comprises all of the southern parts of Burscough Parish. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Burscough Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.8 **OLD SKELMERSDALE** – Comprises the majority of the current Skelmersdale South Ward (excluding West Gillibrands) and takes in the areas of the current Skelmersdale North Ward south of Half Mile Island and West of Glenburn Road.
- 4.9 **ORMSKIRK EAST** – Comprises of the remainder of Derby Ward and the western parts of Knowsley Ward.
- 4.10 **ORMSKIRK WEST** – Comprises all of Scott Ward and the northern parts of Knowsley ward.
- 4.11 **RIBBLE ESTUARY** – Comprises all of North Meols Ward with the northern parts of Hesketh-with-Becconsall Ward. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Hesketh-with-Becconsall Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.12 **RURAL NORTH EAST** – Comprises all of Parbold Ward with the inclusion of Newburgh Parish and Wrightington Parish.
- 4.13 **RURAL WEST** – Comprises all of Halsall Ward with Scarisbrick Parish, Great Altcar Parish and Downholland Parish.

- 4.14 **SKELMERSDALE CENTRAL** – Comprises all of Birch Green Ward with the majority of Tanhouse Ward.
- 4.15 **SKELMERSDALE NORTH** – Comprises all of Ashurst Ward and the northern parts of the existing Skelmersdale North Ward.
- 4.16 **SKELMERSDALE SOUTH** – Comprises all of Digmaor and Moorside Wards, with the inclusion of the western part of Tanhouse Ward, and Yewdale & East Gillibrands from the existing Skelmersdale North Ward.
- 4.17 **TARLETON** – Comprises Tarleton Ward (except Mere Brow) and the southern part of Hesketh-with-Becconsall Ward. The Draft Recommendations make changes to the electoral arrangements of Hesketh-with-Becconsall Parish and Tarleton Parish to facilitate this new Ward.
- 4.18 **UP HOLLAND** – Comprises all of Up Holland Parish.

5.0 OFFICER SUBMISSION TO THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Officers are concerned by the proposed name of Skelmersdale Central as a new Ward covering the existing Wards of Birch Green and Tanhouse. This is due to the fact that there is County Division of the same name but has different boundaries (covering not only Birch Green and Tanhouse, but also Digmaor and half of the existing Skelmersdale North), therefore causing confusion to electors.
- 5.2 Officers will therefore submit a comment to the consultation as per Appendix 1.
- 5.3 It is not proposed that officers will submit any further comment regarding the Draft Recommendations.

6.0 PARISH COUNCILS

- 6.1 It should be noted that the proposals for the Borough Wards have consequential effects for the Parishes of Aughton, Burscough, Hesketh-with-Becconsall and Tarleton. Each of these Parishes is proposed to be re-warded, or in the case of Hesketh-with-Becconsall warded for the first time.
- 6.2 Parish Councils have the opportunity to respond to the consultation and they have received notification of the Draft Recommendations and consultation period.
- 6.3 Changes to Parish electoral arrangements would come into force at the next scheduled elections for that Parish (Aughton 2023, Burscough 2026, Hesketh-with-Becconsall 2024, Tarleton 2023).
- 6.4 The gap between the Borough changes and Parish changes to Burscough and Hesketh-with-Becconsall Parishes coming into force would create an additional administrative burden in terms of running elections, as the existing polling districts would need to be retained alongside new polling districts should any Parish by-elections take place before new boundaries are enacted.

6.5 The legal authority to make changes to Parish arrangements (internal boundaries only) as proposed in Aughton and Scarisbrick comes from legislation (Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, and Schedule 2).

7.0 FUTURE TIMESCALES

7.1 The consultation on the Draft Recommendations ends on 10 January 2022.

7.2 All political groups, individual members, members of the public and other stakeholders may submit a response to the consultation if they so wish.

7.3 The LGBCE is due to publish its final recommendations on 29 March 2022. Unless very significant changes are made and accepted between the draft recommendations and the final recommendations, there will be no further periods of consultation on this review.

7.4 An Electoral Changes Order will then be laid before Parliament in the Autumn of 2022 for a 40 day period of scrutiny, after which it will become law and be in force at the next scheduled elections in 2023 when all out elections will take place before reverting to elections by thirds from 2024.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report. The full financial implications of the outcome of the Electoral Review will be considered on publication of the Commission's Final Recommendations in March 2022.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

10.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

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 in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

1. WLBC Officer Response to the Consultation
2. West Lancashire Borough Council - Draft Recommendations on the new electoral arrangements – Summary Report
3. Equality Impact Assessment