

Report to Council

Subject: Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Review of Electoral Arrangements – Warding Arrangements
submission

Date: 12 September 2012

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1. Purpose of the Report

- To secure agreement for the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) with regard to the future warding pattern for the Borough.

2. Background

At its meeting held on 1 September 2011, Cabinet agreed to write to the LGBCE to request that an electoral review of Gedling Borough Council be carried out as soon as possible.

Confirmation was received from LGBCE on 13 October 2011 that the Council would be included in the LGBCE review programme, with a review start date of 13 March 2012.

The review began with an invitation from the LGBCE for views on the future size of the Council. The Council submitted a view that the Council of the future should consist of 40 members, as agreed at Council on 22 February 2012. The LGBCE agreed in June that this would be an appropriate size for the Council going forward and began a consultation on warding arrangements, based on a Council of 40 members.

This report seeks Council approval for a submission to the LGBCE for the future warding arrangements for the Borough.

3. Proposal

The LGBCE Steering Group has worked extensively on warding pattern options that meet with the LGBCE's criteria relating to electoral equity, community identity and effective and convenient local government. It has not proved possible to develop a 40 member solution meeting with those criteria fully, but the Steering Group has developed a proposal for a 41 member council which does meet with those criteria well.

Given that the LGBCE has indicated that a variance of +/- 1 from the 40 member council model is likely to be acceptable, as long as the rationale for the variance can be explained and justified by reference to the criteria, the Steering Group is recommending that Council supports a 41 member model.

The proposed warding arrangement model is attached for members' consideration at **Appendix A**.

The appendix documentation attached includes: -

- A tabular report listing the proposed wards, their working titles, projected electorate at March 2018 and each ward's electoral equity, based on a 41 member council serving the projected electorate at March 2018¹. The vast majority of proposed wards have an electoral variance of less than +/-5%. The table also includes commentary on community identity and effective and convenient local government in each of the proposed wards.
- Maps of each proposed ward individually and area maps showing the proposed warding pattern in Arnold, Carlton and the Borough's parished areas.
- A letter to the LGBCE, agreed by all group leaders, setting out the rationale for the proposal (including the reasoning behind a 41 member council).

The warding pattern has been discussed within individual political groups as well as through the Steering Group, and feedback from Groups has been reflected in final discussions at the Steering Group and in the report and associated documentation attached.

Members should also be aware that, due to changes made to the proposed consultation timetable compared to that understood at the beginning of the review, the proposal has already been sent to the LGBCE in draft form, in order for it to be received within the revised consultation timescale. However, as is

¹ The projected electorate has been calculated according to formulae and approaches agreed by the LGBCE. The LGBCE has commended the Council on its approach to these calculations.

made clear in the appended letter, that submission was a draft and is subject to agreement by Council at this meeting.

If agreed, the LGBCE will consider this proposal over the next two months, along with any other proposed warding patterns put to it as part of this first stage consultation. It will then publish its draft proposals, for public consultation between 13 November 2012 and 8 January 2013

4. Resource Implications

As previously reported to Cabinet, there are likely to be resource implications in supporting the review process, but it has so far proved possible to accommodate these from within existing staffing resources. In the longer term, should the review result in a smaller Council, it is possible that overall resource requirements may be reduced, though this is neither the key driver for the review nor a material consideration for the LGBCE.

5. Recommendation

Council is recommended to approve the Council's warding arrangement attached to this report, for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.