

Report to Council

Subject: Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Review of Electoral Arrangements – Draft Recommendations and
Council response

Date: 19 December 2012

Author: Stephen Bray – Corporate Director

1. Purpose of the Report

- To consider the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) with regard to the future warding pattern for the Borough
- To secure agreement for the Council's response to those recommendations.

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.

The Council developed a response to that consultation and, after detailed consideration through the LGBCE Steering Group, submitted a proposal based on a future Council of 41 members, within the variance of +/- 1 from the 40 member council model acceptable by the Commission. This proposal was considered and agreed by Council on 12 September 2012.

The LGBCE has now considered this and other responses received during that stage of consultation and published its draft recommendations on 13 November 2012. It is now consulting on those recommendations for an eight week period, closing on 7 January 2013.

This report summarises those recommendations and sets out a draft response to them for members' consideration.

3. Summary of the LGBCE recommendations

The LGBCE's draft recommendations substantially reflect the warding pattern suggested by the Council in its response to the summer consultation. Those recommendations are for a future Council of 41 members representing 19 wards.

The LGBCE has produced a summary of its recommendations, which also sets out where they have agreed with the Council's submission and where they have made largely minor changes. Copies of the summary have been made available to all members and maps of proposed wards have been displayed in and around the members' room.

A copy of the LGBCE's summary paper is attached at **Appendix A**. Full papers, including a map of the revised ward boundaries and the Commission's full report, are available on the LGBCE website at

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/695/la=150>

The draft recommendations have been considered by the LGBCE Steering Group and drawn to the wider attention of political groups.

The Steering Group welcomed the LGBCE's broad acceptance of the Council's submission and, after consideration, supported most of the minor changes to the Council's suggested ward boundaries that the LGBCE has proposed. However, in four proposed wards, the Steering Group is minded to suggest an alternative boundary to that proposed by the LGBCE.

Those alternatives, including the suggested amended boundaries, are set out in a draft response to the LGBCE's consultation, attached at **Appendix B**. The Steering Group asked for a response to the consultation to be sent on behalf of

the whole Council and is supportive of the attached draft forming that response, together with maps showing the Council's suggested amendments.

4. Resource Implications

There have and continue to be resource implications in supporting the review process, but it has so far proved possible to accommodate these from within existing staffing resources.

Preparation work for the introduction of new warding arrangements may also put a strain on resources in the Elections and Members Services team, and the work involved is likely to be coincident with the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration but it is again hoped that this work will be contained from within agreed budgets.

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 response to the latest stage of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on the future warding pattern of the Borough as set out in Appendix B.