

# Governance and Ethics Committee

3 September 2021

<b>Report title</b>	Council Response to the LGBCE Draft Warding Proposal	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities	
<b>Accountable director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Electoral Services	
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<b>Report to be considered by</b>	Council	15 September 2021

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## Recommendations for action:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is recommended to approve:

1. The Council's response to the draft recommendations published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's response to the LGBCE draft warding proposal for Wolverhampton.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The LGBCE launched a public consultation on their draft recommendations for Wolverhampton's warding pattern on 29 June.
- 2.2 At the Governance and Ethics Committee on 24 June, a decision was made to make a request to the LGBCE to delay implementation from May 2022 to May 2023 and for the fallow year to be in May 2024.
- 2.3 The reason for this was because between January – 1 March, there is insufficient time to carry out a polling district review with appropriate consultation, conduct site visits to assess new polling stations, book and staff new polling stations, administer the boundary changes in the Electoral Management System and prepare the poll cards to inform electors where their polling station is. There is also additional work to do to republish and redistribute the register to all organisations entitled to receive a free copy on publication. It also significantly delays much of the election preparations which would ordinarily be starting in December following the annual publication of the revised register, which leads to risk in the Returning Officer being able to meet the Electoral Commission Performance Standards for the conduct of the May 2021 poll.
- 2.4 In July 2021, The LGBCE agreed that the implementation will be made in 2023. They outlined that their decision is consistent with decisions on other reviews, where timelines are similar, in light of the delays in review stages which have occurred since reviews were first timetabled.
- 2.5 On that basis the all-out elections to give effect to the review will take place in 2023. They have confirmed that they do not have the power to move the fallow year from 2025 to 2024. However it is clear under the legislation that this can be moved by Parliament through secondary legislation, a number of Councils are in the same position and it is intended that we jointly make representations to the Secretary of State seeking their agreement to move the fallow year in the statutory instrument that gives effect to the LGBCE's recommendations, if agreed by the Secretary of State.

## **3.0 Council Response**

- 3.1 The Council broadly agree with the draft warding proposals made by the LGBCE.
- 3.2 The LGBCE said they would like to hear more evidence on the Council's recommendation that the Bilston Campus of Wolverhampton College be included in East Park. With regards to this point, the campus is known as the Wellington Road Campus, not Bilston campus, and has been known as that for over 20 years. Therefore, it does not make any difference which ward it is in as both wards have part of Wellington Road in it. The boundary is much neater as it is compared to what it was before.

- 3.3 The Council suggest that the LGBCE consult further and in depth on the suggestion made to change the name of the Bilston East Ward to Bilston South.

#### **4.0 Next steps**

- 4.1 The public consultation on the draft recommendations is open until 6 September.
- 4.2 The Council Response will be taken to Full Council on 15 September. The LGBCE have agreed to receive the Full Council response on this date, even though it is after the consultation deadline date.
- 4.3 The Conservative Group are also submitting a respond to the draft recommendations.
- 4.4 The governance timescales and key dates for the next part of the review are presented in the table below.

Activity	Date
Take council response to Full Council	15 September 2021
LGBCE publishes final recommendations	2 November 2021
Order laid in Parliament	Winter 2021
Order made	Winter 2021
Commence polling district review following ward boundary changes	January/February 2022
Implementation of ward boundaries in all out elections	4 May 2023

#### **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report. [GE/27082021/M]

#### **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report. [DP/31082021/A]

#### **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the report.

#### **8.0 All other Implications**

- 8.1 There are no other implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

#### **9.0 Schedule of Background Papers**

- 9.1 [Electoral Review: Update on Phase Two, Governance Committee, 20 November 2020](#)
- 9.2 [Council Submission to Local Government Boundary Review, Governance Committee, 12 March 2021](#)
- 9.3 [Council Submission to Local Government Boundary Review, Full Council, 31 March 2021](#)

- 9.4 [Local Government Boundary Commission for England - Update on implementation of Commission recommendations, Governance and Ethics Committee, 24 June 2021](#)
- 9.5 [Electoral Review: LGBCE Draft Recommendations, Governance and Ethics Committee, 9 July 2021](#)