

DECISION-MAKER:	COUNCIL
SUBJECT:	PROPOSED WARDING PATTERNS SUBMISSION TO BOUNDARY COMMISSION – SOUTHAMPTON ELECTORAL REVIEW
DATE OF DECISION:	24 TH JANUARY 2022
REPORT OF:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Not applicable

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) informed the council in February 2021 of its intention to carry out an Electoral Review of Southampton City Council focusing on the council's size (number of elected councillors required to run the council and the number of wards) and its ward boundaries. This report sets out the council's preferred future pattern of wards to be submitted as part of public consultation on phase two of its Electoral Review. The proposed warding patterns within this submission adhere to the statutory criteria governing electoral reviews as set out by the LGBCE:

- There should be equality of electorate across all wards (meaning councillors in each ward should represent approximately the same number of voters)
- Ward patterns should, as far as possible, reflect community interests and identities and boundaries should be identifiable
- Electoral arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government

The recommendations in this report also reflect the outcome of phase one of Southampton's Electoral Review (conducted May – October 2021) following which the LGBCE recommended that the council should increase its council size from 48 councillors to 51 with an additional ward (increase of 16 to 17 wards). As the authority elects by thirds, the LGBCE also agreed a continuation of a pattern of three councillors per ward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:		
	(i)	That an additional ward be incorporated into the centre of the city catering for existing and forecast electorate and housing development growth as detailed in appendix A and B, taking the city's total number of wards from 16 to 17.
	(ii)	That other modifications to ward boundaries across the city, which adhere to the statutory criteria as defined in the summary section of this report, and outlined in detail in Appendix A&B are approved as the council's consultation response.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS		
1.		To comply with the statutory requirement to carry out an electoral review, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has a legal requirement to review all local authorities from time to time. An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements and Southampton was last reviewed 20 years ago.
2.		The warding arrangements proposed in this report adhere to the statutory criteria governing electoral reviews as set out by the LGBCE.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED		
3		Proposals to changes in ward boundaries put forward in this report have been achieved following the co-operation of the cross-party Task and Finish Group comprising Labour and Conservative members, and where possible reflects the views of local community groups. Some areas of the city remain subject to further consideration and further revisions to appendices may need to be published before consideration at Full Council, after discussion with both political groups.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)		
4		<p>Southampton City Council's Electoral Review will run from May 2021 until May 2023. The LGBCE conducts an electoral review of a council for two reasons: At the request of the local authority; or if the local authority meets the Commission's intervention criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) If one ward has an electorate of +/-30% from the average electorate for the authority • b) If 30% of all wards have an electorate of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority. <p>Southampton meets the Commission's criteria for electoral inequality with 3 of 16 (18.5%) wards with variance outside 10%. One ward (Bargate) has a variance outside 30%. The largest variances are Bargate ward (32%) and Swaythling ward (-15%). The review is not, however, limited to those outlier wards but is city wide.</p>
5		Phase one of the review (May – October 2021) included the council developing detailed recommendations (supported by evidence) on proposed council size (i.e the number of elected councillors) together with the assembly of five-year forecast electorate data.

6	Under stage 2 of the Electoral Review the council is required to provide recommendations on its proposed pattern of wards to the LGBCE. These recommendations have been led by a cross party Task and Finish Group consisting of Conservative and Labour councillors. The recommendation for Southampton's proposed ward boundaries is provided in Appendix A&B.
7	The LGBCE will consider the council's recommendations for proposed ward boundaries, and any other submissions made, before publishing their recommendations (followed by a period of public consultation which will take place between 10th May and 18th July 2022).

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

8	The resource implications of Phase 2 of the review (recommendations around warding arrangements) includes the cost of purchasing specialist ward boundary mapping software and associated licences (approx £6,000) which has been funded from the Elections budget.
9	Following the LGBCE's recommendation to increase the council's size by an additional ward and 3x additional councillors, the cost of this will include payment of members' basic annual allowance, as well as any additional expenses incurred (these are minor and rarely claimed or incurred). The basic allowance rate (£13,344) including National Insurance contributions is approx. £15,185 per councillor per annum. This would mean an additional annual cost of £45,555 pa plus expenses, increased by the living wage each year.

Property/Other

10	There are no property considerations as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review.
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

11	Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Sec 56) provides that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England must from time to time conduct a review of electoral arrangements of each principal council in England.
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Other Legal Implications:

12	None
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RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13	None
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POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

14	None
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KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	As detailed in the appendices. Not all wards are to be revised.
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	

Appendices	
1.	Proposed warding patterns for the city effective from 2023 (A&B)
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None.
2.	
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	
2.	