

<b>COUNCIL</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Ward Boundary Review</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	
<b>Contributors</b>	<b>Acting Chief Executive, Director of Law</b>	
<b>Class</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Date: 11 September 2019</b>

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) is undertaking a review of the number of councillors and wards for the London Borough of Lewisham. This report presents the Council's proposals for the warding arrangements for approval to submit to the LGBC.
- 1.2. A working group which was established by full Council has agreed a draft submission for consideration. Members are now asked to agree that draft submission as set out in Appendix A.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the draft submission appearing at Appendix A be approved for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

## **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1. The Council's recently adopted Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's priorities, namely:-
  1. **Open Lewisham**
  2. **Tackling the housing crisis**
  3. **Giving children and young people the best start in life**
  4. **Building an inclusive local economy**
  5. **Delivering and defending: Health, Social Care and Support**
  6. **Making Lewisham greener**
  7. **Building safer communities**
- 3.2. Although not directly linked to any specific area of Council business, the outcome of this review will have implications in all policy areas. The number of councillors and the ward boundaries have significant influence over the Council's decision making processes and policies and will impact how we deliver our corporate priorities and services.
- 3.3. In particular, the ward boundaries need to appropriately reflect our diverse and unique communities and localities and ensure that all residents are fairly represented in decision making processes.

## 4. Background

4.1. The LGBC periodically undertakes reviews of local authorities. The LGBC is reviewing the arrangements for all London authorities that have not had a review since 2000. Lewisham's last review was in 1999 when the number of councillors was fixed at 54.

4.2. The review is a two stage process:

**Stage 1** determines the total number of Councillors the Council will require to undertake its responsibilities in three cores areas:

- i) decision making;
- ii) scrutiny and partnerships;
- iii) and the representational role of Councillors as community leaders.

Stage 1 concluded in June 2019 and the Commission recommended that Lewisham retain 54 Councillors.

4.3. **Stage 2** determines the number and names of wards and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward. The LGBC invite any interested parties to submit their own proposals. This will be followed by a consultation period. Having considered the responses, the LGBC will then make their own proposals which will be subject to further consultation. This stage was announced in late June and initially was scheduled to close on 2 September 2019. However the period for this stage was extended by LGBC to 16 September 2019.

4.4. Finally, the LGBC will submit its definitive proposals, having considered all feedback received during this second stage, to Parliament for enactment. Lewisham will begin using the new arrangements for the elections to be held in May 2022.

## 5. Finalising a Council Submission

5.1. Following the submission made at stage 1 as agreed by Council on 3 April 2019, Council agreed to appoint eight councillors to work with officers to oversee the development of a further Council submission to the LGBC.

5.2. A number of drop in sessions with key officers were held to enable all councillors to have an input into the development of the proposals at Stage 2. In addition, all councillors were invited to make written submissions if they wished to do so.

5.3. Officers evaluated members' suggestions against the LGBC's three key criteria which are:

1. Each new ward leaves each councillor representing roughly the **same number of voters** as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.

2. New wards – as far as possible – **reflect community interests and identities**, and boundaries should be identifiable.
  3. New wards **promote effective and convenient local government**. We have considered the number of councillors for, the geographic size of, and the links between parts of the ward.
- 5.4. Suggestions made by members have been considered against these criteria. The extension to the LGBC consultation period from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of September gave the Council the opportunity to refine its initial proposals and on 28 August 2019 the Working Group approved the proposal appearing at Appendix A for submission to Council. It proposes 18 wards with three members for each ward and the ward names.
- 5.5. The appended submission is based on the analysis of electoral data and knowledge of established communities in the borough. The submission meets the LGBC's criteria and presents a realistic warding pattern based on officer assessment of current and future borough size.
- 5.6. Members should be aware that the LGBC will accept submissions from all sources. The LGBC has published its review and on their behalf we have published it widely, including on social media, and have written to other interested stakeholders to invite them to make a submission directly to the LGBC should they wish to do so.
- 5.7. On Friday 16 August 2019 the Council hosted a meeting held by the Commission at the Civic Suite at which a wide range of stakeholders attended and made representations to the LGBC. The purpose of this meeting was not to seek views on any proposal which the Council may have but to inform stakeholders of the process by which the Commission will make its final recommendations and to encourage others to make their own submission should they be minded to do so.

## 6. Next steps

- The Council submits its warding pattern submission to LGBC by 16 September 2019.
- The LGBC then publishes draft recommendations on ward patterns by 3 December 2019.
- Consultation by LGBC on draft recommendations from 3 December 2019 to 10 February 2020.
- Final recommendations are published in March 2020.
- Final recommendations are approved by Parliament in May 2020

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1. The report appropriately reflects the legal issues associated with, and the process for, a ward boundary review.
- 7.2. Any amendments approved by Parliament will be effective from the local elections in 2022.
- 7.3. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.4. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.5. The proposals in the draft appearing at Appendix A are designed to promote effective governance for all members of the local community, including those with protected characteristics.

## **8 Financial implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9 Appendices**

Appendix A: Draft London Borough of Lewisham Boundary review: Proposals for New Ward Boundaries submission

Background documents – Initial submission to LGBC – Kevin Flaherty  
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