



Council

Local Government Boundary Review: Response to Draft Recommendations

Date: 26 February 2020

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Chief Executive, Director of Law

Outline and recommendations

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 response to the LGBC ward proposal.

It is recommended that the draft response in Appendix A be approved for submission to the LGBC.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

In September 2019, the Council submitted a proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) as part of their public consultation on warding arrangements for Lewisham.

In December 2019, the LGBC published their draft recommendations for the electoral review of Lewisham Council. Between 17 December and 2 March, the LGBC are accepting comments and submissions from the public on these recommendations.

Appendix A is the Council's draft submission to the LGBC on their draft recommendations for the electoral review of Lewisham.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) is currently undertaking a review of the number of councillors and wards within the London Borough of Lewisham. This report presents the Council's submission, which has been developed by the councillor working group in response to the LGBC's draft recommendations (issued as part of the public consultation in the second stage of the review).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Full Council approve the draft response in Appendix A for submission to the LGBC.

3. Policy context

- 3.1. The Council's recently adopted Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's priorities, namely:

- Open Lewisham
- Tackling the housing crisis
- Giving children and young people the best start in life
- Building an inclusive local economy
- Delivering and defending: Health, Social Care and Support
- Making Lewisham greener
- 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 decision making processes and policies and will impact how the Council delivers its corporate priorities and services.

- 3.3. In particular, the ward boundaries need to appropriately reflect Lewisham's 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 and is currently 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. The purpose of Stage 1 was to determine the total number of councillors that the Council will require to undertake its responsibilities across three core areas:

- Decision making
- Scrutiny and partnerships
- Representational role of councillors as community leaders

- 4.3. Stage 1 concluded in June 2019 and the LGBC recommended that Lewisham retain 54 Councillors.

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- 4.4. Stage 2 determines the number and names of wards and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward. As a first step, the LGBC invited interested parties to submit their own proposals, which they considered in detail. They then made their own recommendations and invited a response from the Council.
- 4.5. Following consideration of all the feedback received during this second stage, the LGBC will submit its definitive proposals to Parliament for enactment. Lewisham will begin using the new arrangements for the elections to be held in May 2022.

5. Finalising a response to the LGBC proposals

- 5.1. Following the publication of the LGBC draft recommendations on 17 December, a working group of nine councillors was appointed to oversee the development of a response to the proposals.
- 5.2. Officers compared the recommendations with the Council's original submission and evaluated them against the LGBC's three key criteria:
 - Each new ward leaves each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.
 - New wards – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries should be identifiable.
 - New wards promote effective and convenient local government
- 5.3. The draft response in Appendix A proposes some changes to the LGBC's proposal which are aimed at better meeting the community identity and effective governance needs of the borough. The response was approved by the working group and approval is now required from Full Council for submission.

6. Next steps

- 6.1. The next steps are as follows:
 - The Council submits its response to the LGBC's draft recommendations by 2 March 2020
 - Final recommendations are published by the LGBC in June 2020
 - Final recommendations are submitted to Parliament for enactment
 - New warding arrangements in place for the local election in May 2022

7. Financial implications

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

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. The report appropriately reflects the legal issues associated with, and the process for, a ward boundary review.
- 8.2. The Council's Constitution requires that the decision made after consideration of this report must be reported to the full Council for information.
- 8.3. Any amendments approved by Parliament will be effective from the local elections in 2022.

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- 8.4. 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.
- 8.5. 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
- 8.6. The proposals in the draft appearing at Appendix A are designed to promote effective governance for all members.

9. Background papers

- [Lewisham Council's stage one submission, April 3 2019](#)
- [Lewisham Council's stage two submission, September 11 2019](#)
- [Local Government Boundary Commission draft recommendations](#)

10. Report author and contact

- 10.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Salena Mulhere (SGM Inter-Agency, Service Development & Integration) by email (salena.mulhere@lewisham.gov.uk) or telephone (020 8314 3380).

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