

Cheltenham Borough Council

Council - 9th January 2022

BOUNDARY REVIEW WARDING PATTERN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Accountable member:

Councillor Rowena Hay, Leader of the Council

Accountable officer:

Paul Jones, Executive Director, Finance, Assets and Regeneration

Accountable scrutiny committee:

n/a

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key/Significant Decision:

Yes

Executive summary:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its proposals for new electoral arrangements for Cheltenham on 1st November 2022. The LGBCE propose that Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) should have 40 members in the future (the same number as there are now) and that Cheltenham should have 20 wards (the same number as there are now). The proposals also include a refinement of ward boundaries.

A public consultation on the proposals commenced on 1st November 2022 and will conclude on 9th January 2023. Any group or individual is able to put forward suggestions on warding patterns for all or part of the borough although this report aims to put forward a set of proposals that the Council can agree upon. Once the LGBCE has considered all responses to the consultation, they will aim to publish final recommendations in March 2023.

Boundaries will be changed following the laying down of an Order in both houses of Parliament, subject to parliamentary scrutiny, and will take effect from the borough council elections in May 2024.

In preparing its submission proposing new ward arrangements for the Borough, the Council

must take account of:

- Equality of representation – i.e. each councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Create boundaries that are appropriate and reflect community ties and identities
- Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances

Recommendation:

Council approves the submission of Appendix 2 to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England summarised as follows:

- The whole of Furrow Close to be included within Prestbury Ward
- The whole of Pittville Campus to be included within Pittville Ward (Appendix A)
- Barlow Road, Village Mews, Wentworth Court and the properties between Welch Road and Dill Avenue to be retained within Springbank Ward (Appendix B)
- Fairview Street and when reaching the top of Fairview Street from 22-31 Glenfall Street and the north side of Glenfall Street from 21 to the east end of the street to remain in the proposed new All Saints Ward. The remainder of this area to be retained in Pittville Ward (Appendix C)
- Retain the whole of Clarence Road/Clarence Square within Pittville Ward (Appendix D)
- Area to the north of the A4019 to be retained in Swindon Village Ward (Appendix E)
- St. Peter's Ward to retain the current boundary with the exception of Malvern Road, to avoid isolated communities such as Pates Avenue (Appendix F)
- The current boundary for Wellesley Road to be retained within St. Paul's Ward and disregard new proposed boundary to be included in Pittville Ward (Appendix G)
- Move 58 and 67 Merestones Drive from Warden Hill to Park Ward (Appendix I)
- Change the name of 'Warden Hill' Ward to 'Warden Hill & Bournside' Ward
- Move the 'thin strip of land' on the railway from Warden Hill Ward to the Up Hatherley Ward (Appendix J)
- The proposed boundary between Benhall & The Reddings Ward and Springbank Ward is too far north in terms of community. Boundary to be drawn due west from the northern end of Telstar way to the borough boundary (Appendix K)
- Move the east side of Cheltenham Spa Station into St Mark's Ward from the proposed Warden Hill Ward (Appendix L)
- Retain Imperial Square and Montpellier Gardens within Lansdown Ward (Appendix M)
- Move area comprising Naunton Lane up to Churchill Road (including Badminton Close) from Leckhampton Ward to College Ward (Appendix N)

1. Implications

1.1. Financial implications

Members allowances based on 40 members is currently built into the base revenue budget. Any deviation away from that number could have an adverse or positive impact on the base budget.

Contact officer: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk

Legal implications

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 sets out the requirements for a review of electoral arrangements carried out by the LGBCE. The review procedure is prescribed at Section 58 of the Act which requires the LGBCE to inform interested

parties to a review and take their representations into consideration. The implementation procedure is prescribed at Section 59 of the Act including the publication of an Order implementing any recommendation.

Signed off by: One Legal – legalservices@onelgeal.org.uk.

1.2. HR implications

There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

Signed off by: Clare Jones, HR Business Partner, clare.jones@publicagroup.uk

1.3. Environmental and climate change implications

There are no direct environmental or climate change implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

Signed off by: Mike Redman, Director of Climate Change and Place Services
mike.redman@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4. Property/asset implications

There are no direct Property/Asset implications arising from this report

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director Finance and Assets
Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.5. Corporate policy framework implications

It is vital that the council contributes its voice to the electoral review process in order that the new pattern of wards delivers electoral equality – whereby each councillor represents a similar number of electors and reflects community ties and identities so by promoting effective local government.

Signed off by: Richard Gibson, Head of communities, wellbeing and partnerships
Richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

2. Promoting equality and reducing discrimination

n/a

3. Performance management – monitoring and review

n/a

4. Background

4.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) wrote to the Council in July 2021 setting out the electoral review timetable. The initial task for the Council was to develop thoughts on the proposed council size (i.e. the number of elected members) alongside assembling five-year forecast electorate data. The Council formally approved a submission at its meeting on 21st February 2022.

4.2. On 1st November 2022 the LGBCE confirmed it was minded to recommend that 40 borough councillors should be elected to the Council in the future across 20 wards. In addition, the Council received notification of the Commission's proposed warding patterns.

4.3. In preparing its submission proposing new ward arrangements for the Borough, the Council must take account of:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community identities and interests

5. Equality of representation

5.1. Based on a council size of 40 councillors and growth projections, the projected electorate in 2028 is 95,484 which means the average number of electors for each Councillor is 2,387.

6. Community identities and interests

6.1. Using maps and electoral data the cross-party member boundary review group met on two occasions to consider the proposed ward boundaries, bearing in mind the above criteria. It identified key communities within the borough, as well as any man-made or natural barriers such as major roads, railways and water courses that acted as boundaries between communities.

6.2. Using the group and officers' knowledge of communities within the borough, warding arrangements are proposed that the group feels best reflect the community identities and interests of the area, whilst ensuring the proposals would deliver electoral equality.

7. Next Steps and alternative options considered

7.1. If the proposal is agreed by Full Council it will be submitted to the Commission. However, if this is not agreed then it will be for individual members or political groups to make their own submissions.

7.2. It should be noted that even if the proposal is agreed by Full Council this does not prohibit any member or group from making their own submission.

8. Consultation and feedback

8.1. All members of the Council have been given the opportunity to feedback proposals. A cross-party member working group has met twice to discuss the proposals and alternative views. The proposals, captured within Appendix 2, will be sent to the LGBCE.

Report author:

Paul Jones, Executive Director Finance, Assets and Regeneration paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

1. Risk Assessment
2. Formal response to LGBCE

3. Members Proposals / Comments (supported by maps in Appendices A to N)

Background Papers / information

The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Full Council agenda and minutes 21st February 2022
- Boundary Commission ward proposals <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-west/gloucestershire/cheltenham>

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	LGBCE do not agree with the Council's proposal	ED Finance, Assets & Regen	2	2	4		Officers will work with the Commission to put forward a strong case based on the evidence provided within its submission.	ED Finance, Assets & Regen	
	Full Council does not agree the proposals put forward.	ED Finance, Assets & Regen	2	2	4		Individual members or political groups to make their own submissions.	ED Finance, Assets & Regen	