

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 October 2015
Subject:	Establishment of Boundary Review Working Group
Report of:	Lin O'Brien, Democratic Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Sara Freckleton, Borough Solicitor
Lead Member:	Councillor R J E Vines, Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has now advised of its intention to commence a review of Borough Electoral Wards in August 2016. In order for the Council to be proactive in its response it is suggested that a Boundary Review Working Group be established.

Recommendation:

To approve the setting up of a Boundary Review Working Group in line with the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To allow the Council to formulate its expectations in terms of the review of the Council's electoral arrangements.

Resource Implications:

Officer resources will be required to support the Group in its work.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None.

Performance Management Follow-up:

If agreed, the Working Group will be established as identified within the Terms of Reference and meeting dates scheduled for the New Year.

Environmental Implications:

Not applicable.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In March 2013, the Council received a letter from the LGBCE concerning a review of the Borough Electoral Wards being included in the Commission's 2014/15 Work Programme. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee in April and a response was sent to the Commission suggesting that the Council would prefer to be included in the 2015/16 Work Programme which would give the new Council the opportunity to play a major part in the review; allow the position in relation to electoral imbalances to be clearer; assess the impact of Individual Electoral Registration (IER); and allow for more certainty on the impact of current and future development. Any review commencing in 2014/15 would not be completed in time for implementation in 2015 and would therefore not take effect until 2019.
- 1.2** In response the Commission initially stated that, although the Council's comments were considered it had determined that a review of the Council's electoral arrangements would take place in 2014/15. Subsequently the Commission indicated that, in reviewing its Work Programme and given that the next available election at which the electoral review could be implemented was 2019, it was reasonable to postpone the start of the review until after the General Election in May 2015.
- 1.3** The Council has now been advised that its review is scheduled to commence in August 2016 with completion towards the end of 2017.

2.0 THE WAY FORWARD

- 2.1** At the meeting of Exec/CLT on 21 August 2015, Members received a note prepared by the Deputy Chief Executive containing feedback from a presentation that she and Councillor Dean had attended, given by the Chairman of the Boundary Commission and the Chief Executive of Wealden District Council at the LGA Conference. This note identified the need for the Council to be proactive and not wait until the review commenced to start work on the electoral arrangements required by the Council in order to deliver on future expectations. Members were advised that there would be a six month lead in to the review but were keen to establish a Working Group to examine what was required. Members were also informed that the Commission would base its work around the electorate contained within the revised Electoral Register to be published on 1 December 2015, updated monthly, and five year projections of Ward electorates.
- 2.2** Bearing in mind this timescale, and the fact that the Commission is likely to want to meet with the Council in March/April 2016, it is suggested that a Working Group be established as set out in Appendix 1 to begin meeting in the New Year.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1** None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** None required at this stage.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1** No applicable.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None at this stage.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Not applicable.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Boundary Review Working Group.