

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Electoral Matters Committee 7 December 2023

Local Government Boundary Commission for England preliminary stage Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Council Size Submission

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors May, Leader, and Hotham, Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Electoral Matters Committee RECOMMEND that:-

- 1) Council put forward the Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England including any amendments made.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) last reviewed Bromsgrove in 2012/13.
- 2.2 Each year, the LGBCE calculates the level of electoral inequality arising in each local authority area to establish whether there is a need for an electoral review.

Under the criteria adopted by the LGBCE, either of the following conditions are considered to warrant a review if the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:

Electoral Matters Committee 7 December 2023

- Any local authority with an electoral division or ward that has an electoral variance of 30% or over. This means a ward having 30% more or fewer electors per councillor than is average for the council as a whole.
- Any local authority where more than 30% of wards have an electoral variance of over 10% from the average for that authority.

Based on electoral data, in the Bromsgrove District Area:

- Eight of the 30 (27%) electoral wards have a variance of greater than 10%
- One of the electoral wards has a variance of over 30%

Accordingly, the LGBCE decided to commence a review of the Bromsgrove District Council area.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None at this stage other than officer time, the cost of the review is borne by the LGBCE. Any future changes in council size will have a direct impact on the member allowance budget in 2024. The current (2023/24) basic allowance is £4,732 per annum.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The LGBCE is a statutory body accountable to Parliament that conducts reviews of local authority electoral arrangements in England. Its statutory obligations are set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 4.2 One of the objectives of the LGBCE is to provide electoral arrangements for English principal local authorities that are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 As the review will affect the number of Councillors in the future it will have a bearing on all Strategic Purposes. The results of the review will not be implemented until 2027.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Electoral Matters Committee 7 December 2023

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 No direct impact at this stage.

Operational Implications

6.2 The LGBCE will seek to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections.

6.3 The electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for the whole local authority. These are:

- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council: council size.
- The names, number and boundaries of wards.
- The number of councillors to be elected from each ward.

This report only relates to the first bullet point of Council size, the others will be considered later on in the process and the Council will have the opportunity to feed into the process.

6.4 The LGBCE will come to a conclusion on council size after hearing the Council's views during the preliminary phase.

6.5 The draft Council Size Submission is included at Appendix 1 for which the contextual information is completed. Committee Members are invited to agree a Council size and make any amendments they see fit before recommending the Submission to Council.

6.6 In March 2024 the LGBCE will decide on the Council size and will then start a consultation regarding warding patterns.

6.7 The LGBCE will publish draft recommendations regarding warding patterns in October 2024. A consultation on the draft recommendations will run from October 2024 to January 2025 and final recommendations will be made in March 2025.

6.8 The legal order will be made in summer 2025 and be implemented at the 2027 elections.

6.9 Other Districts in Worcestershire have recently completed a review and Worcestershire County Council is currently undergoing one.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Electoral Matters Committee 7 December 2023

- 7.1 The LGBCE makes the decision on council size and any delay in agreeing the Council size document may result in the LGBCE not taking the Council's submission into account.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Draft Council Size Submission

Background papers:

LGBCE – Electoral Review of Bromsgrove

**Electoral Matters Committee 7 December
2023**

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder		
Lead Director / Head of Service		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		