

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Electoral Matters Committee 3 June 2024

Local Government Boundary Commission for England Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Warding Patterns

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor May, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships 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. RESOLUTION

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) A working group be set up to consider ward patterning for the Bromsgrove Electoral Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England which will report back to this Committee.**

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:

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- 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.

- 2.3 At its meeting on 12 March 2024 the LGBCE decided to retain a Council size of 31 Elected Members.
- 2.4 The review now moves on to the next stage when it will consider warding patterns, submissions can be made from 23 July 2024 until 30 September 2024.
- 2.5 The LGBCE will publish draft recommendations regarding warding patterns in December 2024. A consultation on the draft recommendations will run from January 2025 to March 2025 and final recommendations will be made in June 2025.
- 2.6 The legal order will be made in Autumn 2025 and be implemented at the 2027 elections.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None at this stage other than officer time, the cost of the review is borne by the LGBCE.

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.

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- 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

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 This part of the review is asking for submissions on ward patterning and the LGBCE has three main criteria - set out in law - which it must follow when it produces a new pattern of wards.

They are:

- The new pattern of wards should mean that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters as elected members elsewhere in the authority.
- Ward patterns should – as far as possible – reflect community interests and identities and boundaries should be identifiable.
- The electoral arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government and reflect the electoral cycle of the council.

LGBCE decisions on new wards will be based on the above criteria.

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- 6.4 Good practice and case studies suggest an effective way to create a submission is to set up a working group to consider the ward patterns across the electoral area focusing on where there is electoral inequality.
- 6.5 It is recommended that a working group made up of members of this Committee and relevant officers plus others the Group may want to invite is set up to review the ward patterning and formally report back findings to the Committee.
- 6.6 The first meeting of the Working Group would agree the parameters and timetable of the Group whilst making sure the final report for this Committee is within the submission timetable.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The LGBCE makes the decision on ward patterning and to not make a submission would severely restrict the Council's ability to influence the decision, although as mentioned in para 2.5 there is an opportunity to comment on draft recommendations of the LGBCE.
- 7.2 There will be a General Election later in the year and this may have a bearing on the review process but will be up to the LGBCE to make any timetable changes.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers:

LGBCE – Electoral Review of Bromsgrove timetable