

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# **Electoral Matters Committee 22 November 2024**

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## **Local Government Boundary Commission for England Boundary Review for Bromsgrove – Warding Pattern Proposals**

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor May, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships and Enabling  |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes  |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Claire Felton  |
| Report Author  | Job Title: Electoral Services Manager, Darren Whitney<br>Contact email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01527 881650 |
| 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. |  |
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### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Electoral Matters Committee RECOMMEND that:-**

- 1) Council endorse the Council Warding Pattern submission including any amendments made.**
- 2) Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders to produce and submit the formal submission document to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) last reviewed Bromsgrove in 2012/13 and the order was made in 2014.
- 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

# **Electoral Matters Committee 22 November 2024**

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unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:

- 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.

## **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 22 November 2024**

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## **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.

6.4 The LGBCE is minded to recommend 31 councillors for the Council; this is in line with the council size submission approved by Council on 24 January 2023.

6.5 The Commission will recommend a ward proposal that, in its judgement, enables the council to take its decisions effectively, to discharge the business and responsibilities of the council successfully, and to provide for effective community leadership and representation.

6.6 The draft Council Ward Pattern proposal was drawn up by officers with input from individual members and reviewed and agreed by the member led BDC Ward Patterning Working Group. Once agreed by this Committee it will be sent to Council for endorsement.

6.7 As the consultation period closes before the next Council meeting the LGBCE have agreed to accept a late final submission as long as the agreed draft submission is submitted before the closing date.

6.8 Proposals can be made by any interested party, elected member, political group or political party to the LGBCE by 2 December 2024.

6.9 The LGBCE will publish draft recommendations regarding warding patterns in March 2025. A consultation on the draft recommendations will run from 6 May 2025 to 14 July 2025, which the Council may want to respond to, and final recommendations will be published in November 2025.

## **Electoral Matters Committee 22 November 2024**

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- 6.10 The legal order will be made in spring 2026 and be implemented at the 2027 local elections.
- 6.11 Other Districts and the County in Worcestershire have recently completed a review.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Council could decide not to make a submission although this would severely restrict the Council's ability to influence the decision of LGBCE.

### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1: Draft Council Warding Pattern Submission

Background papers:

LGBCE – Electoral Review of Bromsgrove

# **Electoral Matters Committee 22 November 2024**

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## **9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| <b>Department</b>  | <b>Name and Job Title</b>   | <b>Date</b>         |
|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| Portfolio Holder   |   |                     |
| Head of Service    | Claire Felton<br>Assistant Director Legal,<br>Democratic and Property<br>Services | 11 November<br>2024 |
| Financial Services | Pete Carpenter<br>Director of Resources/Deputy<br>Chief Executive                 | 4 November<br>2024  |
| Legal Services     |   |                     |