

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Boundary Review Working Group

To: Council – 5th September 2013

Author: Rory Ringer, Democratic Services Team Leader

Subject: Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review – Council Warding Pattern Submission

Purpose:

To agree a proposed warding pattern submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The submission is attached to this report.

Recommendation(s):

That the Council approves the submission on proposed warding arrangements attached to this report for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

1. BACKGROUND

Members will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is conducting a review of the electoral arrangements for Breckland on the basis that one or more of its District Wards has an electoral imbalance of more than 30%. The revised electoral arrangements will be introduced at the next ordinary District Council elections in May 2015.

At its meeting on 25 October 2012, the Council appointed a working group to develop detailed proposals, Councillors Askew, Cowan, Jermy, Nairn, Robinson, and Wassell were appointed to the working group.

On 11 June 2013 the LGBCE adopted a council size of 50 members for Breckland and invited all interested parties to propose a new pattern of warding arrangements based on a council size of 50 councillors.

The Electoral Review Working Group has met on several occasions, workshops were also held to look at the specific warding arrangements for Attleborough, Dereham and Thetford, as detailed in the draft submission as attached at Appendix A to this report.

Following this stage of the review, the LGBCE will consider all submissions received and will publish draft recommendations during January 2014.

When proposing the new warding patterns, the following statutory criteria have been taken into account by the working group:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community identities and interests
- Providing for convenient and effective local government

The object of the review is to ensure a consistent level of representation across the area of the local authority. This means ensuring that, as far as possible, each councillor represents the same number of electors.

Matters that could not be taken into account during the electoral review are:

- Changes to boundaries between local authorities
- Changes to parish boundaries
- Creation of new parishes
- Changes to electoral arrangements of parish and town councils unless they are as a direct consequence of proposed changes made to district wards.

The deadline for submission of warding pattern proposals to the Commission is 23 September 2013.

The proposal is for a mixture of one, two and three member wards which equates to 50 Councillors across 31 wards with;

- 16 single member wards
- 11 two member wards
- 4 three member wards

The submission has been prepared in accordance with the technical guidance of the LGBCE.

2. OPTIONS

The Council may choose not to make a submission to the LGBCE however the LGBCE would then impose a warding structure without the involvement of the Council.

Other interested parties, such as the political parties, parish council or local residents may make their own submission to the LGBCE which would also be considered alongside the Council's submission.

3. EXPECTED BENEFITS

N/A

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 **Legal** – The duty to comply with the law rests with LGBCE

4.2 **Risks** – Risk has been considered as part of this report and no exceptional/high risks have been identified.

4.3 **Financial** – A change to the number of Councillors will have financial implications, particularly in relation to the Members Allowance payments.

4.4 **Timescales** - The review formally commenced in February 2013, and will typically take 12 months to complete, and any changes to the current arrangements will come into force at the next scheduled District Elections in May 2015.

Consultation on the draft recommendations will be between 21 January 2014 and 14 April 2014 with the final recommendations due for publication on 1 July 2014.

- 4.5 **Equality and Diversity** – N/A
- 4.6 **Stakeholders / Consultation** – This will be undertaken by LGBCE.
- 4.7 **Contracts** – N/A
- 4.8 **Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998** – There are no crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report.

5. WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

ALL

Background papers:- Detailed maps of the proposed warding arrangements are available for Inspection via a link on the Council's website. Copies are also available for Members to inspect in the St George's Room.

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Director/Officer who will be attending the Meeting

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Key Decision – Yes

Appendices attached to this report: Submission on Warding Patterns (September 2013)