

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2024



<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - DRAFT WARDING ARRANGEMENTS</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Allison Thomas Chief Executive	
<b>Background Papers</b>	<a href="#">LGBCE technical guidance</a>  <a href="#">Council Report – Council Size Submission – 30 January 2024</a>	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no immediate financial implications as the decision being sought is the approval of a proposal for consideration by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) within its review. The decision as to the warding pattern is ultimately that of the Local Government Boundary Commission.  <b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	The LGBCE has functions under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It may at any time conduct a review of the area of the Council and recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements. The Council is required to co-operate with the Commission and must provide any information that it may reasonably require in connection with its functions (Section 56). The Council has provided information to the LGBCE as part of the first stage of the review process.  As part of the review, the Council and others may make submissions proposing electoral arrangements as part of the LGBCE process.  Legal advice has been provided by the Legal Services Team throughout the process.  <b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	There are no implications at this stage.  <b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present Members with the final submission, developed by officers and the Electoral Review Working Party, regarding Phase Two (Warding Patterns) to the Local Government Boundary Commission in respect of the forthcoming Electoral Review.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT COUNCIL:</b>  <b>1. APPROVES AND AGREES THE SUBMISSION OF THE “DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW</b>	

	<p><b>ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL”, ATTACHED AS APPENDIX A AS THE COUNCIL’S SUBMISSION TO THE LGBCE’S CONSULTATION ON WARDING ARRANGEMENTS.</b></p> <p><b>2. DELEGATES TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE SUBMISSION OF THE “DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL” TO THE LGBCE.</b></p> <p><b>3. NOTES THAT PROPOSALS ON WARDING PATTERNS MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED TO THE LGBCE BY ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, EXTERNAL BODY, GROUP OR ORGANISATION WISHING TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CLOSE OF THE CONSULTATION ON 27 MAY 2024.</b></p>
--	--

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

11. In 2022, the LGBCE informed the Chief Executive of the Council of its intention to carry out an Electoral Review of the Council. The last electoral review of North West Leicestershire was undertaken in 2013.
- 1.2 The review process began in mid-2023. Any changes that are made regarding council size and ward boundaries will come into effect for the local government elections in May 2027.
- 1.3 In the first phase of the review, the size of the Council was considered. On 30 January 2024, the Council made a formal submission which supported the size of the Council remaining at 38 councillors, with a preference for single-member wards. On 12 March 2024 the LGBCE made a determination that the Council should remain at the same size, at 38 Councillors, and noted the preference for single-member wards where possible, taking the statutory criteria into account as set out at 2.1 below.
- 1.4 On 19 March 2024, the public consultation on future warding arrangements commenced. This gives the Council, individuals and community organisations the opportunity to provide the LGBCE with views on the positioning of ward boundaries, based on the identity and interests of local communities alongside the other statutory criteria.
- 1.5 It is recognised that the shape and size of existing wards will need to change to reflect the change in population and housing developments (and demolitions) since the last review 10 years ago.

## **2.0 APPROACH**

- 2.1 In considering the warding pattern for an authority, the LGBCE has regard to the statutory criteria set down in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. These are:
  - the need to secure equality of representation (taking future growth into account);
  - the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - the need to secure effective and convenient local government.

- 2.2 Officers developed the initial warding proposals and these were considered by the cross-party Electoral Review Working Party at four meetings between 22 February 2024 and 10 April. Comments and suggestions by Members were taken into account in revised proposals. On 17 April 2024, an all-Member Briefing was held on the draft proposals for the warding arrangements developed by the Working Party. Comments were received on the proposals during and following the briefing. It was agreed that a meeting of the Working Party would be held on 22 April 2024 to consider the comments and any changes which had been made to wards to ensure that they better reflected the local interests and identities of communities, alongside the other statutory criteria. The minutes of the meeting of the Working Party at which the draft proposals were agreed for consideration by Council are attached at appendix A
- 2.3 In drafting the proposals, officers have:
- Reviewed where existing wards can remain unchanged and remain within the electoral equality criteria, on the basis that if change to boundaries is not necessary then it makes sense to retain them (leading to more effective and convenient local government, and on the basis the previous boundaries would have been drawn to reflect local community interests originally).
  - Grouped smaller parishes together to create new or amended wards.
  - Agreed that, as far as possible, rural parishes will not be merged with parts of more urban towns simply to balance the electorates, recognising the different identities, interests and concerns between rural and urban populations (noting that rural/urban is relative).
  - Identified areas of the District where a new split of parishes will be required to ensure electoral equality (for example, Castle Donington will have three Councillors). New wards are based, where possible, on existing wards in these areas taking the three statutory criteria into account and other identifiable features and landmarks.
- 2.4 Consideration was also given to the forecasted ratio of one councillor to 2,358 electors. This equates to a maximum 10% variance of 2,593 electors and a minimum 10% variance of 2,123 electors.
- 2.5 There is a balance to be made in each of these steps, and ‘fixing’ any ward arrangements has a knock-on effect across the District. It is important to recognise that almost every ward will be changed through this process, even where the current ward has good electoral equality.
- 2.6 During the process it became apparent that splitting the communities in the south-west corner of the district (part of Appleby, Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe, Ashby Woulds and part of Blackfordby), could not be done in such a way, to create three single member wards, without artificially splitting the communities to create electoral equality required. Considerable thought and careful discussion were given to this area by the working party and a number of proposals put forward. Following comments made at the all-member briefing and further consideration by the working party, it was agreed that a proposal for a one three-member ward to cover the whole area would be the best solution, to avoid the splitting of communities.
- 2.7 The final version of the Council’s submission can be found at appendix B.

### 3.0 IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The LGBCE technical guidance says the following in relation to participation in the review process:

“5. Making your views known to us

“Throughout the conduct of the review, we are keen to encourage councils, their partners and the public at large to tell us what they would like to see in the electoral arrangements for their local authorities. We do this when we invite proposals and when we arrange consultations on our draft recommendations and occasionally, on alterations to draft recommendations”.

The Council is encouraged by the LGBCE to provide a consultation submission on warding arrangements and this will form the basis of the proposals considered by the LGBCE, along with any other representations it receives during the consultation period. The Council’s submission provides a good representation of communities in the council area from across the political spectrum. If the Council does not submit proposals on the warding arrangements, the LGBCE will take any other representations into account in formulating the draft electoral arrangements.

### 4.0 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SUBMISSION IS MADE?

4.1 The LGBCE will consider all the representations and submissions received before the closing date of 27 May 2024 and will formulate draft recommendations on the warding proposals. These are expected to be published in August 2024.

4.2 A further 12-week period of consultation on the LGBCE’s proposals is due to commence in September 2024. Meetings of the Electoral Review Working Party will meet to prepare a response to the proposals, which will then be considered by Council. The LGBCE will then finalise and publish the new wards early 2025, with the order then being laid before Parliament in Spring 2025.

4.3 New wards are scheduled to come into effect at the 2027 District and Parish elections.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	The (LGBCE is a parliamentary body established by statute to conduct boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas in England.
Safeguarding:	There are none at this stage.
Equalities/Diversity:	There are none at this stage.
Customer Impact:	The Commission will work to achieve electoral equality and will consider representations made to it by other public authorities, community groups, residents associations, electors, political and other stakeholders during later stages. There will be an impact to those communities where wards will need

	to change so that electoral equality can be achieved.
Economic and Social Impact:	There are none at this stage.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	There are none at this stage
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The LGBCE is responsible for running any consultations during the review.
Risks:	If the Council does not submit proposals on the warding arrangements, the LGBCE will take any other representations into account in formulating the draft electoral arrangements.
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Commercial Services <a href="mailto:elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>