

	<p>Constitution and General Purposes Committee</p> <p>24 July 2018</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Electoral Review of the London Borough of Barnet Stage 1 – Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>John Hooton – Chief Executive</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Electoral Review of the London Borough of Barnet. Stage 1 – Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Emily Bowler, Democratic Engagement Project Manager 020 8359 4463 / emily.bowler@barnet.gov.uk</p>

Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review that examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Barnet. Stage 1 of the review (Council Size) covers the total number of councillors to be elected to the council. Stage 2 proposes the names, numbers and boundaries of wards as well as the number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward. This report outlines the recommendation to the Commission for Stage 1 of the review (Council Size).

The council considers that a figure between 63 to 66 to be the optimum number of Councillors required to ensure effective oversight for the authority. Based upon the current electorate this number also offers an electoral ratio that enables councillors to offer fair representation to their Ward constituents.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee considers and comments upon the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission that proposes the future council size (the number of councillors) in Appendix A before it is presented to Full Council for acceptance on 31 July 2018.**
- 2. That the Committee acknowledges that there may be initial feedback from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to be considered and which may subsequently affect the final submission on Council Size.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a statutory review of the London Borough of Barnet's electoral arrangements. This will be the first review of the ward boundaries in the borough since 1999.
- 1.2 The compulsory review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for the whole local authority, and will finally take decisions upon:
 - The total numbers of councillors to be elected to the council (Council Size)
 - The names, numbers and boundaries of wards
 - The number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward.
- 1.3 The timescales for the electoral review have been set by the LGBCE. Their deadline to review the draft Stage 1 submission outlining Council Size has been set as 13 July 2018, with the final Submission on the 10 August 2018.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The size and scope of this statutory Electoral Review is such that it will affect
 - the number of councillors elected to form the council
 - the boundaries, names and number of all wards, and
 - the electoral representation of all electors and residents by elected members.and as such will be presented to Full Council.
- 2.2 However, as the Constitution and General Purposes Committee terms of reference is 'To have responsibility for overseeing the Council's governance arrangements including "Electoral Services including: elections and electoral registration performance; and polling places and polling district boundaries", it is brought to this committee for comments and consideration ahead of Full Council.

- 2.3 Before arriving at a proposal on council size, the information and context provided in the attached submission relating to: Population; Electorate; Governance and Decision-making arrangements; and financial implications were researched and reviewed. The information was considered in relation to the Commissions criteria for council size. The proposed council size must:
- Give confidence that the council can make effective decisions across its entire range of responsibilities.
 - Allow the council to maintain its good work on scrutiny in relation to its own decision making and fulfil its responsibilities to outside bodies.
 - Ensure that the councillors have an effective representational role in the local community and are able to engage with local people and communities.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the report included in Appendix A is the draft submission on Council Size and as part of the review process, the LGBCE will make initial comments on our consideration before the final submission on 10 August 2018.
- 2.5 Reasons and evidence for the recommended number of councillors are as detailed in the submission set out in Appendix A. To ensure that Barnet residents have the correct representation into the future, the Council are required to make a submission to the Boundary Commission in accordance with their Review timescales.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The council must engage with the Local Government Boundary Commission by law and we must submit a submission and supporting evidence, therefore no alternative options have been considered.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The deadline for council to submit their final submission for Stage 1 of the electoral review is 10 August. The Council will be informed of the LGBCE decision on Council Size following their board meeting 18 September.
- 4.2 Stage 2 of the Electoral Review determines the ward patterns will be carried out in two phases of public consultation between September 2018 and April 2019. The council will form a proposal on new warding patterns by the close of the first consultation phase on 2 December.

4.3 LGBCE will publish their final recommendations on 11 June 2019 and the outcome of the complete Electoral Review will be implemented in time to take effect at the May 2022 scheduled elections (i.e. these elections will elect Councillors to the new wards for the first time).

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The 2015-2020 Corporate Plan of has the following principles:

- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
- where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- where responsibility is shared, fairly
- where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer

5.1.2 Periodically reviewing ward boundaries ensures that Barnet has the correct number of elected Members and ward sizes. This ensures that councillors can discharge their various roles and responsibilities including monitoring delivery of the Corporate Plan principles and priorities via key performance indicators reported to committees.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 There are no resource implications arising from the council's stage 1 submission other than officers time from Electoral Services, Governance, GIS and Re

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 None

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) requires that the LGBCE review 'from time to time' every principal local authority in England and make recommendations about electoral arrangements (but not their external boundaries).

5.4.2 The Stage One review has been undertaken in accordance with the advice and guidance provided by the LGBCE.

5.4.3 General Purposes Committee terms of reference includes to: "Electoral Services including: elections and electoral registration performance; and polling places and polling district boundaries and to make recommendations thereon to the Council." Due to the significance of the Boundary Review to all Members, decisions on this matter will be referred to Full Council which can "Make decisions on matters normally reserved to committees (except for planning and

licensing matters) where an urgent decision is required or where the matter is so significant that it requires all Members to determine.”

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 If ward boundaries are not periodically reviewed to ensure that Barnet has an appropriate number of councillors then there is a risk of there being an inequity in councillors case work across the borough. Moving ward boundaries and/or creating or removing wards enables ward boundaries to have a broadly consistent number of residents and electors in each ward.

5.5.2 If the council do not complete the review within the LGBCE timescales, the council would fail to comply with the requirements of this statutory review and there is a risk of reputational damage.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- Foster good relations between people from different groups

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 None

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 Senior Officers and the two political groups have been consulted on the Stage 1 – Council Size Submission, and comments and amendments made have been taken into account in the drafting of the report.

5.8.2 The Stage One review, if agreed with the LGBCE, will trigger a comprehensive Stage Two part of the review which will involve detailed options of how the revised council size might be distributed across wards to enable the revised council size to be implemented.

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 The population growth forecasts used for this Electoral Review are taken from the London Borough of Barnet’s Borough Preferred Option (BPO) projection¹, which are based upon the Greater London Authority (GLA) Intelligence Unit’s

¹ <https://files.datapress.com/barnet/dataset/borough-preferred-option-projection-reports/2017-05-15T15:31:48.70/Borough%20Preferred%20Option%20FAQ.pdf>

annually updated Housing Led projection. The Barnet BPO projection incorporates the latest 5-year housing trajectory data, produced by the borough's planning and development service (Re).

5.9.2 The GLA Intelligence Unit's annually updated population projections² are accepted and utilised by all London Local Authorities. The projections are similar to the ONS projections, but also take account of development information provided by the London boroughs as well as other intelligence about the authorities.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None

² <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/9c43750a-1350-4207-9b47-f089ae2626b4/gla-population-and-household-projections>

