



## Constitution and General Purposes Committee

12 October 2020

<b>Title</b>	<b>Report on implementing the final recommendations from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)</b>
<b>Report of</b>	John Hooton, Chief Executive, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A – Map of new ward boundaries for Barnet Council
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### Summary

In January 2020, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published their final recommendations for the future electoral arrangements for Barnet Council on the LGBCE website - [www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet).

The LGBCE have proposed that Barnet should have 63 councillors (the same as at present) and an increase in the number of wards, from 21 to 24 wards, with 15 three-councillor wards and 9 two-councillor wards.

The draft Order (the legal document which brings into force the recommendations) was laid before Parliament on 6 July 2020, and subject to Parliamentary scrutiny for 40 sitting days. As no objections were raised in either House within Parliament, the Order became legislation on 16 September 2020. The new electoral arrangements for Barnet Council will come into effect at the local elections in May 2022.

This report summarises the next steps for implementing the final recommendations from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

## Officers Recommendation

That the Committee notes that, following Parliamentary approval of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) recommendations, council officers in consultation with Barnet's Returning Officer, will complete a programme of work to implement the new electoral arrangements in the London Borough of Barnet. This will include completing the new set of polling districts and polling places to facilitate the administration of statutory elections within the new ward boundaries. There will be engagement with elected members throughout the process.

### 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has completed a statutory review of the London Borough of Barnet's electoral arrangements. This was the first review of the ward boundaries in the borough since 1999.
- 1.2 This compulsory review examined and proposed new electoral arrangements for the whole local authority, and decided upon:
  - The total numbers of councillors to be elected to the council (Council Size)
  - The names, boundaries and number of council wards
  - The number of councillors to be elected to represent each ward.
- 1.3 The statutory criteria that the LGBCE must apply when making its proposals and decisions are to promote:
  - Electoral equality (a consistent number of electors per councillor)
  - Community identity (strong ward boundaries that reflect communities) and
  - Effective and convenient local government (coherent wards with good internal transport links).
- 1.4 The outcome of the review will be implemented in time to take effect at the Local Government elections scheduled in May 2022 (i.e. these elections will elect councillors to the new 24 wards for the first time).
- 1.5 The Commission considered all the submissions it received in the previous stages of the review before drawing up these final recommendations.
- 1.6 The LGBCE's final recommendations mean that:
  - Barnet will continue to have 63 councillors (as at present)
  - There will be an increase in the number of wards from 21 to 24
  - Councillors will represent 15 three-councillor wards and 9 two-councillor wards across the borough.
  - The boundaries of all wards will change, none will stay wholly the same.

1.7 Figure 1 below shows the new map of the electoral arrangements which will come into effect from the date of the local elections in May 2022. (A more detailed map included as Appendix 1.)



1.8 The table below lists the current and new warding arrangements which will come into effect from May 2022.

<b>Existing Ward Arrangements</b>		
No.	Ward Name	Number of Councillors
1	Brunswick Park	3
2	Burnt Oak	3
3	Childs Hill	3
4	Colindale	3
5	Coppetts	3
6	East Barnet	3
7	East Finchley	3
8	Edgware	3
9	Finchley Church End	3
10	Garden Suburb	3
11	Golders Green	3
12	Hale	3
13	Hendon	3
14	High Barnet	3
15	Mill Hill	3
16	Oakleigh	3
17	Totteridge	3
18	Underhill	3
19	West Finchley	3
20	West Hendon	3
21	Woodhouse	3
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>63</b>

<b>Recommended Ward Arrangements</b>		
No.	Ward Name	Number of Councillors
1	Barnet Vale	3
2	Brunswick Park	3
3	Burnt Oak	3
4	Childs Hill	3
5	Colindale North	2
6	Colindale South	3
7	Cricklewood	2
8	East Barnet	3
9	East Finchley	3
10	Edgware	3
11	Edgwarebury	2
12	Finchley Church End	3
13	Friern Barnet	3
14	Garden Suburb	2
15	Golders Green	2
16	Hendon	3
17	High Barnet	2
18	Mill Hill	3
19	Totteridge & Woodside	3
20	Underhill	2
21	West Finchley	3
22	West Hendon	3
23	Whetstone	2
24	Woodhouse	2
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>63</b>

1.9 This report outlines the programme of work that is planned to implement the new electoral arrangements in the London Borough of Barnet.

## 2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The size and scope of the statutory Electoral Review has affected:

- 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.

2.2 Following the implications outlined in 2.1 above and to allow for the conduct of legally compliant elections in future, electors within the new wards will need to be assigned to new polling districts (wholly contained within the new wards). Each of the new polling districts will need to be served by polling places (and polling stations) that meet, so far as is practicable, the requirements for in-person voting, as laid out by the Electoral Commission. This is likely to require many completely new venues that can be used as polling places across the borough.

- 2.3 The Constitution and General Purposes Committee terms of reference include: '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'.
- 2.4 In addition to the electoral arrangements in Barnet, the new ward boundaries will also affect the council's governance arrangements as well as how it manages both operational service delivery and data insight.

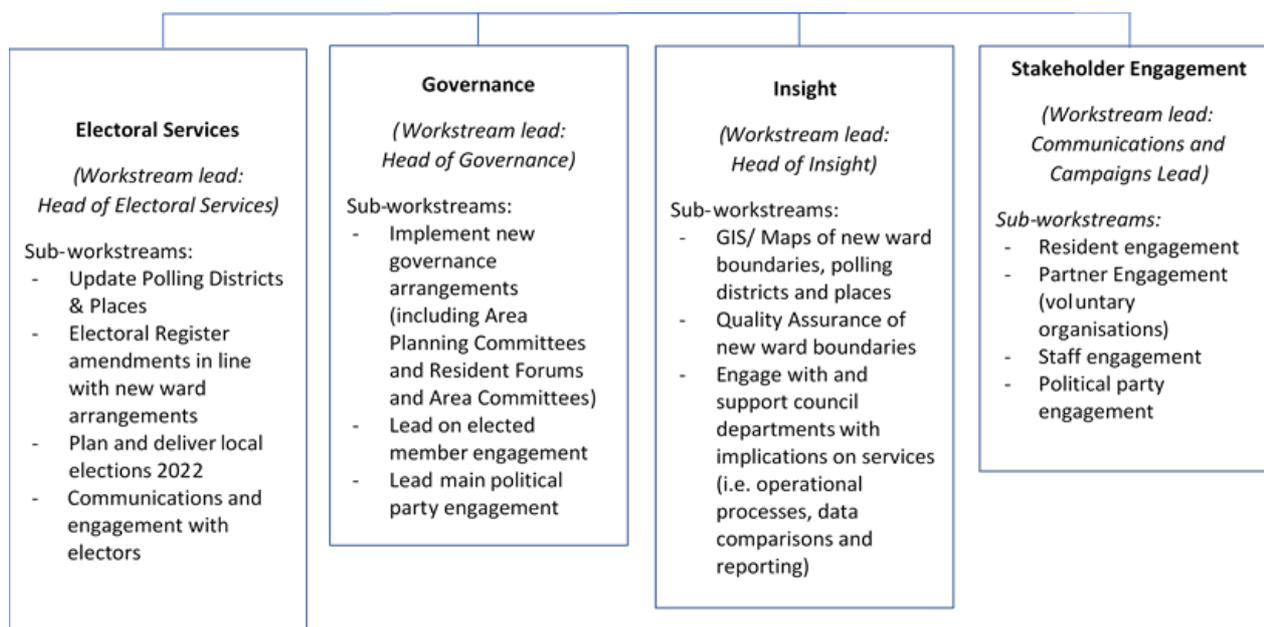
### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 Following adoption of the LGBCE proposals by Parliament, there is no legislative alternative to implementing the new electoral arrangements in time for the local government elections in May 2022. From this point, it will also be so necessary to compile and maintain the Register of Electors into new polling districts and for new polling places to be designated to facilitate voting.
- 3.2 Failure to fully implement appropriate and statutorily compliant arrangements will lead to eligible electors being disadvantaged, or in some cases, disenfranchised altogether when voting at elections.

### **4 POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 A draft Order (the legal document which brings into force the recommendations) was laid before Parliament and subject to Parliamentary scrutiny for 40 sitting days. As no objections were raised in either House within Parliament, the Order became legislation on 16 September 2020. The new electoral arrangements for Barnet Council will come into effect at the local elections on 5 May 2022.
- 4.2 Following Parliamentary approval of the LGBCE recommendations, working with officers across the council, the Head of Assurance and Business Development will lead a programme of activities to implement the new electoral arrangements in time for the local elections in May 2022.
- 4.3 The main objectives of the work will be:
- To implement in full the LGBCE's Local Boundary Review final recommendations, as legislated by Parliament, for future electoral arrangements (May 2022 onwards) in Barnet council.
  - To implement effective processes and activities with regards to new ward boundaries and governance arrangements, in compliance with all relevant electoral and local government legislation.
  - To identify and designate relevant new polling districts and polling places to effectively serve registered electors within the new wards of the borough.
  - To engage with, and support council departments (including statutory partner organisations and contracted suppliers) to implement any changes in operational processes, reporting and KPIs in their service areas resulting from the Local Boundary Review, including sharing timely and relevant information and tools i.e. maps and new ward data.
  - Undertake comprehensive, timely and relevant resident and stakeholder engagement for information sharing and raise awareness of the forthcoming changes to the ward boundaries which will come into effect in May 2022.

4.4 To implement the new ward arrangements, the work will be split into four core Workstreams, as illustrated below:



4.5 A member working group will be created and consulted regularly throughout the progress of the work. The CGP Committee in January 2022 will make the final decision on the new polling district and polling places arrangements.

4.6 The Head of Assurance and Business Development will prepare regular update reports for the CGP committee to be kept informed of progress.

4.7 The table below outlines key milestones and the timeline for update to the committee on progress and key decision points.

Key Activity	Date	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parliamentary approval of London Borough of Barnet (Electoral Changes) Order 2020 (after 40 sitting days)</li> </ul>	16 September 2020	The Order became legislation for the new electoral arrangements in Barnet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>	12 October 2020	Present implementation plan for new electoral arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>	Oct 2021	Presenting 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of new polling district and polling places – for CGP Committee discussion and feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>	Jan 2022	Final polling district and polling places report - for CGP committee <b>final approval and decision.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of Register</li> </ul>	1 March 2022	Publication of register in time for Local Election 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government Elections Polling Day</li> </ul>	<b>5 May 2022</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Council</li> </ul>	May 2022	Following the local elections, new councillors will be allocated to committees

- 4.8 It is worth noting that Local Government Boundary Review is not related to, or affected by, the Parliamentary Boundary Review. However, it is useful to know that in March 2020 the Government announced that it would not implement the net reduction in the number of seats in the House of Commons to 600 and instead it would introduce a Bill to amend the Rules of Redistribution. The Parliamentary Constituencies Bill 2019-21 was introduced on 19 May 2020. It had its Second Reading in the House of Commons on 2 June 2020. If the Bill is passed, the key changes will be as follows:
- The number of MPs will be fixed at 650 and the 2018 Review will not be implemented.
  - The next review, due to start in 2021, will have to be completed by the Boundary Commissions by 1 July 2023. It will be based on the number of registered electorates as of 1 March 2020.
  - The next review after the 2023 Review will have to be completed by 1 October 2031; with subsequent reviews required to report by the 1 October every eight years thereafter.
  - Recommendations of the Boundary Commissions will be no longer require Parliamentary approval and government ministers will have no power to alter recommendations.
  - The public consultation phase will be amended to allow for public hearings later in the consultation process.
  - The Boundary Commissions will be given more flexibility to use local government and ward boundaries that have yet to come into force.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1.1 The councils Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, has three outcomes for the borough, that focus on place, people and communities.
- 5.1.2 This LGBCE review of Barnet's electoral arrangements (i.e. council size and ward boundaries) is designed to ensure that the London Borough of Barnet continues to have an optimal number of elected Members and that wards offer electoral equality to the borough's electors.

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

- 5.2.1 The LGBCE's final recommendations that Barnet retains a council size of 63 councillors will have no new cost implications arising with regards Elected Member resources or servicing from the Electoral Review.
- 5.2.2 It will be necessary for Barnet's Electoral Services to review and amend the polling district and polling place arrangements that will be required from May 2022.
- 5.2.3 Should it be assessed that additional polling places are required, there will be additional costs incurred during the conduct of local elections (i.e. additional polling venue hire costs and additional polling station staff costs). The costs for elections other than local elections are recovered from the relevant governing body (e.g. Parliamentary elections are paid for by the Cabinet Office and London Mayoral/GLA

elections are paid for by the GLA).

- 5.2.4 All implications costs of the project are expected to be covered from within existing budgets.

### **5.3 Social Value**

- 5.3.1 Maintaining electoral arrangements that promote electoral equality, strong community identity and effective and convenient local government, ensures that eligible residents can participate in statutory elections and referendums. In turn this ensures that they are properly represented in the democratic processes of the borough and in the decision-making of the Council.

### **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 Constitution and General Purposes Committee terms of reference includes oversight of "Electoral Services including: elections and electoral registration performance; and polling places and polling district boundaries and to make recommendations thereon to the Council."

- 5.4.3 The ERO has a duty under Section 9(1) of RPA1983 to maintain:
- a) a register of parliamentary electors for each constituency or part of a constituency in the area for which he acts; and
  - b) a register of local government electors for the local government areas or parts of local government areas included in the area for which he acts

- 5.4.4 The ERO has a duty under Section 9A of RPA1983 (as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (ERA2013)) to take all necessary steps to comply with his duty to maintain the electoral register, and to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, persons who are entitled to be registered in the register (and no others) are registered in it.

- 5.4.5 Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 deals with the review of polling districts and places. Schedule 1A of the act deals with consultation and representations from the Returning Officer, electors and such persons who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises for example for disabled persons.

### **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 to contain a broadly consistent number of electors (and residents) in each ward.

- 5.5.2 Poorly defined ward boundaries or polling district boundaries could result in eligible electors being disadvantaged when voting at elections or in extreme cases, being disenfranchised altogether.

## **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.
- 5.6.3 The LGBCE considered the equality implications throughout the boundary review and the all annual reviews of polling districts and places. Officer do not consider that there is any negative impact on equalities.

## **5.7 Corporate Parenting**

- 5.7.1 Not applicable

## **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.8.1 The LGBCE ran the public consultation on the electoral review of Barnet ([www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet)) which was widely publicised by the Commission and Barnet Council.
- 5.8.2 There will be a member working group to discuss and review of polling districts and polling places, and elected members will be updated throughout the process.

## **5.9 Insight**

- 5.9.1 The data included in LGBCE report is publicly available via the LGBCE website ([www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/barnet)).

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 [LGBCE New electoral arrangements for Barnet Council Final Recommendations](#)