

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOUNDARY AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WORKING PARTY

Extraordinary Council	9 May 2024
By	Ingrid Brown, Head of Legal and Democracy and Monitoring Officer
Cabinet Portfolio Member	Cllr Yates, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Key Decision	no
Decision classification	unrestricted
Ward:	All

Purpose of the Report

This report details the recommendations from the Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party (BEAWP) regarding the Council making a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) second stage consultation on the Thanet Electoral Review.

Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to consider the following recommendations from the BEAWP:

1. That the working party do not make any recommendations on where the electoral boundaries should be;
2. That TDC should submit a consultation response to the LGBCE asking for two Member Wards with a flexibility for one Member Wards where applicable, but wards should not be bigger than this (no three or four member wards).

Council should also delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, agreement on the final wording of any submission to the LGBCE, based upon the recommendation from Council.

1. Summary of Reasons

- 1.1 The BEAWP at its meeting of 23 April 2024 made a set of formal recommendations to the Full Council, this report allows Full Council to consider those recommendations.

2. Background

- 2.1 The LGBCE is currently undertaking a boundary review for Thanet and has agreed that in future there will be 42 Councillors effective from the next district Council elections. They are now consulting with local groups, organisations and the public for

views on the structure of new wards. More details on the review and how individuals can respond to the warding consultation can be found on the LGBCE website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thanet>. The BEAWP have made recommendations regarding this for Full Council to consider as a formal Council response to the consultation.

3. Relevant Issues

3.1 The BEAWP at its meeting of 23 April 2024 made the following recommendations to Full Council:

3. That the working party do not make any recommendations on where the electoral boundaries should be;
4. That TDC should submit a consultation response to the LGBCE asking for two Member Wards with a flexibility for one Member Wards where applicable, but wards should not be bigger than this (no three or four member wards).

The working party gave the following as the reasons for the above proposals:

1. Three Member Wards would be too big under the new calculation model to be used;
2. Historically three Member Wards have not worked well;
3. Giving Broadstairs as an example: With the new population estimates, Broadstairs based on the current town border would have to be represented by 7.4 councillors to maintain electoral equality. This would mean that using exclusively two member wards would not work, but with seven councillors, three wards with two councillors each and one ward with one councillor would work. Thanet Villages could work in a similar way.

3.2 The LGBCE warding consultation closes on 27 May 2024, if Council wishes to submit this as its response then it is suggested that the agreement on the final wording, based on the recommendation from Full Council should be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The Full Council could agree with the recommendations from the BEAWP. Alternatively Full Council could submit an alternative response to the LGBCE, this could be an alternative number of Councillors per ward or comments based on the criteria below or through to a suggested warding plan.

- views on which communities should be part of the same ward.
- What facilities do people share, such as parks, leisure centres or schools and shopping areas?
- What issues do neighbouring communities face that they have in common, such as high numbers of visitors or heavy traffic?

- Have there been new housing or commercial developments that have changed the focus of communities?
- And are there roads, rivers, railways or other features that people believe form strong boundaries between neighbourhoods?

4.2 If Full Council was minded to submit an alternative consultation response then it is suggested that the agreement on the final wording, based on any recommendation from Full Council should be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

5. Consultation

5.1 There is no requirement to conduct statutory consultation on this decision

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Finance and Resources

6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of the recommendations.

6.2 Legal and Constitutional

6.2.1 As set out in this report the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is carrying out a review on behalf of the Government under Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Section 56 provides the following:

(1)The Local Government Boundary Commission for England must from time to time

(a)conduct a review of the area of each principal council, and

(b) recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements for that area.

And:

(4) In this Part “electoral arrangements”, in relation to the area of a principal council, means—

(a) the total number of members of the council (“councillors”),

(b) the number and boundaries of electoral areas for the purposes of the election of councillors,

(c) the number of councillors to be returned by any electoral area in that area, and

(d) the name of any electoral area.

As indicated in this report the work of the Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party (BEAWP) will support the work of the LGBCE by making recommendations based on local information and knowledge as detailed in this report.

6.3 Council Policies and Priorities

6.3.1 Councillors are a fundamental part of any Council and so ensuring that the Council properly reviews its number when necessary is of great importance.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- To work efficiently for you.

6.4 Risk

6.4.1 The only significant risk is if the Council doesn't engage with the process as determined by the LGBCE. If the Council chose not to engage then there would be a significant risk of a solution being imposed upon the Council. By engaging with the LGBCE at the numerous opportunities for input and consultation the Council can ensure its views are taken into account.

6.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity

6.5.1 There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising from the report.

7. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications

7.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken.

The aims of the Duty are:

- (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community impact

8.1 There are no Crime and Disorder Implications arising from the report.

Subject History

[Full Council report The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review of Thanet District Council - Council Size](#)

Annexes

None

Background Papers

None

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Report Sign Off

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