

TITLE	: PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW – RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND		
TO / ON	: COUNCIL		9 APRIL 2003
REPORT FROM	: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL		
STATUS	: FOR PUBLICATION		

1.0 TYPE OF DECISION

1.1 What type of decision is to be taken:-

EXECUTIVE DECISION		COUNCIL DECISION	
Key		Non Key	YES

1.2 If a key decision, has it been included in the Forward Plan

Inclusion in Forward Plan	N/A	Date of Plan	
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2.0 SUMMARY

The Boundary Committee for England has published draft recommendations for the future electoral arrangements for Bury, which are based on the Council's submitted proposals with only minor changes, and has asked for views/comments on the draft recommendations by 22 April 2003 prior to a final decision being taken.

3.0 OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONS (with reasons)

The Council is requested to decide whether or not to support the draft recommendations of the Boundary Committee for England (BCE).

4.0 THIS REPORT HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Aims	Any changes to ward boundaries to achieve electoral equality would assist in developing a stronger community spirit.
Policy Framework	N/A
Statement by Monitoring Officer	The Electoral Commission established under the Political Parties, Election and Referendums Act 2000 is under a duty to conduct electoral reviews at periodic intervals. The review for Bury commenced in May 2002.
Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government	<p>There will be some expenditure in relation to the preparation of the submission to the BCE. Any expenditure incurred will be contained within existing budget.</p> <p>If the draft recommendations are confirmed, there will be extra costs in relation to the three additional Councillors from May 2004.</p>
Human Resource IT/Land and Property Implications	N/A
Wards/Area Boards affected	All Wards
Scrutiny Panel's Interest	N/A
Consultations	Leaders of the three political parties on the Council.
Call-in	

Briefings

Executive Members/ Chair		Chief Executive	
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5.0 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Periodic Electoral Review for Bury commenced in May 2002 (Stage 1). The Council considered a report at its meeting on 26 June 2002, which set out the statutory provisions, review timetable and general guidelines on Council's size for Metropolitan Districts. At that meeting, the Council proposed that the number of wards within the Borough be increased from 16 to 17, with the Council consisting of 51 Councillors. Following a consultation process, the Council considered a further report on 12 September 2002 and approved the submission of a proposal based on 17 Wards which contained details of proposed Ward Boundaries.
- 5.2 The Boundary Committee has been considering the proposals received (Stage 2) and has now published a draft recommendations report and invited representations on that report.

6.0 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

- 6.1 The Draft Recommendations Report sets out details of the current electoral arrangements, the various submissions received expressing views on the future electoral arrangements, an analysis of electorate forecasts, council size and electoral arrangements and draft recommendations on a ward by ward basis illustrated on large scale maps.
- 6.2 All Members of the Council have been sent a copy of the Draft Recommendations Report entitled 'Future Electoral Arrangements for Bury' and the Leaders of the 3 political groups on the Council have received a copy of the relevant maps showing the existing and proposed Ward Boundaries.
- 6.3 The Boundary Committee has published the availability of the Report in the local press on 21 February and asked for any representations to be sent to them by 22 April 2003.
- 6.4 Copies of the Report have been made available in all local libraries and at Bury Town Hall.

7.0 FINDINGS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Boundary Committee has found that the current electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Bury:
- In 5 of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough, and 3 wards vary by more than 20% from the average;
 - by 2006 this situation is expected to improve slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in five wards and by more than 20% in one ward.

8.0 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Boundary Committee's main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements are that:
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council should have 51 councillors, three more than at present.
 - There should be 17 wards, one more than at present.
 - The boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.
- 8.2 The purpose of the proposals is to ensure that, in future, each councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.
- In all of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average.
 - This improved level of electoral equality was expected to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average for the borough in 2006.
- 8.3 The Draft Recommendations are based on the Council's proposals but depart from them in the following areas:-
- (a) The boundary between the proposed East and Redvales Wards be modified so that all of St Gabriel's RC High School can be united within Redvales ward.
 - (b) The boundary between the proposed Radcliffe East and Radcliffe North wards be amended so that the area around and to the west of Starling Road be included in Radcliffe East Ward.
- Having examined the Draft Recommendations in detail, it has become apparent that there are other minor changes not referred to in the body of the Report but included on the large scale maps:-
- (c) The boundary between East Ward and Moorside Ward has been modified by the Boundary Committee so that 5 properties on Woodgate Hill Road have been moved to Moorside Ward. The Boundary Committee has been contacted and indicated that this apparent change is in fact a drafting error and not a deliberate alteration to the boundary. The Boundary Committee will amend this error in the final recommendations unless there are any further representations regarding this boundary.
 - (d) A series of other minor boundary changes, not involving any electors, which tidy up the boundaries to follow more appropriate geographical features.
- 8.4 Copies of maps showing all these changes have been circulated to the Leaders of the 3 political groups on the Council.
- 8.5 The following table shows how the Draft Recommendations would affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

	2001 Electorate		2006 Electorate	
	Current Arrangements	Draft Recommendations	Current Arrangements	Draft Recommendations
Number of councillors	48	51	48	51
Number of wards	16	17	16	17
Average number of electors per councillor	2,915	2,744	2,931	2,759
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0	1	0

9.0 CONSULTATIONS BY THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

- 9.1 The Boundary Committee is consulting on their Draft Recommendations for 8 weeks from 25 February to 22 April 2003.
- 9.2 After considering local views, the Committee will decide whether to modify their proposals. The Boundary Committee will then submit their final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which is responsible for implementing changes to local authority electoral arrangements. The Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject the Committee's final recommendations.

10.0 MEMBERS' COMMENTS

- 10.1 Members have been asked if they have any views on the Draft Recommendations and comments were requested to be received by the Chief Executive by 21 March 2003.
- 10.2 Comments received were as follows:-
- (a) From Councillor T P Chamberlain – pointing out an apparent drafting error in Paragraph 73 on pages 25-26 in relation to the proposed changes on Starling Road where it should refer to the properties to the **west** of Starling Road and not to the east.

The Boundary Committee has been contacted and has confirmed that it is a drafting error and the reference should indeed refer to properties on the western side of Starling Road. The Boundary Committee will amend this error in the final recommendations unless further submissions are received about this boundary.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Council is requested to consider whether or not to support the Boundary Committee's Draft Recommendations and, in particular the changes to the Council's proposals set out in Paragraph 8.3(a) and (b).

Background documents:

Electoral Guidance and Procedural Advice – Periodic Electoral Review April 2002
 Future Electoral Arrangements for Bury – Draft Recommendations

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