



Classification	Item No.
Open	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council
<b>Meeting date:</b>	28 July 2021
<b>Title of report:</b>	Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of Bury Council – Stage Three
<b>Report by:</b>	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth  Councillor Tahir Rafiq Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Council Decision</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	<b>All Wards</b>

### **Executive Summary:**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has identified Bury as requiring a review of Council Size (number of councillors) and warding arrangements as it is almost twenty years since the last review was carried out.

The review is carried out in stages, initially looking at Council Size (Stage One), and then asking for suggestions on the potential distribution of Wards (Stage Two), and finally consultation on a proposed redrafting of ward boundaries, including consideration of any ward name changes (Stage Three).

The Council established a Member Working Group chaired by the Leader of the Council and consisting of the leaders of all political groups in the Borough.

In December 2020, the LGBCE approved the Council's Stage One - Size Submission proposal (approved by Council on 25 November 2020) of remaining at 51 councillors.

In March 2021, the Council submitted a proposal on the future warding patterns, however, this was not supported by all local political groups who provided the LGBCE with their own submissions. A number of submissions were also made by individual members of the public.

The LGBCE considered all the submissions and produced their own recommendations on ward boundaries based on some of the proposals received. These recommendations also asked for opinion on the change of name of three wards in the Borough. The Stage Three consultation commenced on 1 June 2021 and will conclude on 9 August 2021. The Council, organisations and individuals are invited to make comments on these proposals, with documents available on the Council and the LGBCE's websites, and, as part of a trial since the commencement of Covid restrictions, at public buildings, including the Town Hall, four libraries and with each of the four political groups in the Borough.

Council is asked to agree the response to Stage Three of the review, details shown below.

After considering all submissions received about future warding patterns, the LGBCE will make publish their final recommendations on 2 November 2021, with the Order Laid and Order Made for these to be implemented in the Winter of 2021. This will then lead to 'all out' elections in May 2022.

## **Recommendation(s)**

That Council approves submission of the response to Stage Three of the LGBCE review.

## **Key considerations**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2019, the Council was contacted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to review the Council's size and ward boundaries. Progress was delayed by the global pandemic.
- 1.2 At the Council meeting of 25 November 2020, approval was given for the Council Size Submission. This recommended that the number of councillors in Bury should remain at the current level of 51, and a case was made for this.
- 1.3 At their Board meeting of 14 December 2020, the LGBCE agreed with the Council's Size Submission.
- 1.4 At the Council meeting of 17 March 2021, approval was given by the majority of the Council to a revised warding pattern. The opposition political groups did not support the revised proposals and made their own submissions.

- 1.5 The LGBCE launched their Stage Three consultation on 1 June 2021, running until 9 August 2021. This consultation proposed new warding patterns, based on their desk-top review of the Borough and submissions received from the Council, opposition groups and individuals. While the LGBCE did not recommend the name changes for any wards, it did ask for comments on three proposed name changes received as part of the Stage Two consultation.

## 2. **Stage Three– Response to LGBCE Warding Patterns**

- 2.1 Group Leaders have discussed the proposals and no significant issues were raised, with the LGBCE's proposals being widely supported by all groups, although some minor amendments may be submitted directly to the LGBCE by group leaders:

### Ramsbottom and North Manor

Agree with the LGBCE proposals that Shuttleworth remains in Ramsbottom due to this area's affinity with Ramsbottom and its community identity.

Agree with minor alterations to the boundary to the south of the ward.

Agree that Hawkshaw has affinity with North Manor, therefore remains unchanged in this ward and does not move Tottington.

### Tottington and Elton

Agree to extend the Elton ward boundary to the south to include properties in Scholes Street and Melrose Avenue.

Agree to include all properties in Kingsbury Close in Elton ward.

Agree to retain all other boundaries for these wards.

### East and Moorside

Agree to retain existing Moorside boundaries with exception of using the line of the M66 to the east of the ward.

Agree to slight amendment to East / Redvales boundary to follow the railway line to join the northern boundary at Peel Way via the A58.

### Redvales and Unsworth

Agree that the existing Redvales / Unsworth boundary be extended west across the River Roch to include electors from Blackford Bridge and Barlow Fold in Unsworth.

Agree that the River Irwell forms the western boundary of the Unsworth ward, with the north boundary moving around Dumers Land Trading Park, across A56 and back to the River Roch.

However, the Conservative Group has stated that it believes the area surrounding Unsworth Cricket Club should be moved into Unsworth Ward and not remain in Besses Ward.

It was felt appropriate to retain the original name of Unsworth for the ward. The proposal from the Conservative Group to change this to Unsworth and Hollins was recognised as no longer being appropriate as this proposal had been based on a different ward size.

#### Church, Radcliffe East, and Radcliffe North

Majority agreed that Church ward should include properties to western side of Lowercroft Road at Starling Road and to include Tudor Grange development. However, the Conservative Group are not happy with the Lowercroft proposals and believe this should remain in Radcliffe North Ward.

Overall consensus that the outcome of the proposed ward name change of Church to Seddons Farm be determined by responses received from the public as part of this consultation.

Agree that Radcliffe North includes the area around Bury & Bolton Road, Starling Road and Grindsbrook Road.

Majority agree that Radcliffe North retains its existing boundary of Milton Road to the south. However, as noted above, the Conservative Group believe that Lowercroft should remain in Radcliffe North.

Majority agreed that the ward retains the name Radcliffe North as proposed boundaries now include part of the north of Radcliffe town centre. However, the Conservative Group believes this ward should be renamed to Radcliffe North and Ainsworth.

#### Besses, Pilkington Park, and Radcliffe West

Majority agree to retain existing ward boundaries with minor geographical amendments due to reflection of local communities.

However, the Conservative Group believes that the areas surrounding Unsworth Cricket Club should move from Besses Ward to Unsworth Ward.

#### Holyrood, Sedgley and St Mary's

Agree that the St Mary's / Sedgley boundary be slightly amended to move down Rectory Lane and up the railway line via Heywood Road, including Park Avenue and Deyne Avenue in St Mary's Ward, ensuring better community identities and interests.

### **3 Stage Four – Consultation on Draft Recommendations.**

- 3.1 On completion of the Stage Three consultation on future warding patterns and after consideration of all submissions received, the LGBCE will make their final recommendations on what future warding patterns in the Borough will look like. These proposals will be published on 2 November 2021.
- 3.2 The Order will be Made and Laid by the LGBCE in the winter of 2021.
- 3.3 Subject to approval of the Order, the proposals will result in 'all out' local elections in May 2022.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 Council is asked to approve submission of the response to Stage Three of the LGBCE review.

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### **Community impact / Contribution to the Bury 2030 Strategy**

The completion of the review will ensure more effective councillor representation for the electorate of the Borough.

The new Council size and distribution will support the Bury 2030 Strategy by empowering local communities and individuals, and giving clearer responsibility and accountability to Councillors.

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### **Equality Impact and considerations:**

- 24. *Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:*

*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -*

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

25. *The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.*

The first stage of the review will consider the size of the Council. By ensuring a more equitable distribution of electors across councillors, there will be greater opportunity to fulfil the Council's Equality Duty. For example, areas which might have increased in population through immigration in recent years, could have been under-represented under the current distribution, whereas the review allows a more balanced distribution.

Consultation on the second and third stages of the review, will also be undertaken with all individuals and local and community groups, providing an opportunity for all to have an input in the future format of the Council.

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### **Assessment of Risk:**

The following risks apply to the decision:

<b>Risk / opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Opportunity to provide greater elector representation.	Undertaking the review after a period of almost twenty years justifies the review.
Confusion amongst the electorate if their wards are redrawn.	Communications with the electorate, particularly at election periods, will minimise this.
Risk in that by remaining at the same number of councillors, they will struggle to meet the increased expectations of them locally and regionally.	Current austerity regime and pressure on local authority budgets does not justify increase in the number of councillors in the Borough.

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### **Consultation:**

A working group, chaired by the Leader of the Council and consisting of all Opposition Group Leaders, has been involved in the development of the Council's submissions and consulted throughout on the proposals.

The LGBCE will undertake extensive consultation as part of Stage Two and Stage Three of the review.

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**Legal Implications:**

As set out in the report.

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**Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications to this report.

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**Report Author and Contact Details:**

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**Background papers:**

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, Bury Electoral Review, Member Briefing

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, Council Size Submission, Bury Council (enclosed)

Report to Cabinet (11 November 2020) and Council (25 November 2020) Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of Bury Council.

Report to Council (17 March 2021) Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of Bury Council – Stage 2

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

Term	Meaning
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England

