



Classification	Item No.
Open	

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council
<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 November 2021
<b>Title of report:</b>	Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of Bury Council – Final Report
<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) 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 has been 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 concluded on 9 August 2021. The Council, along with a number of organisations and individuals, submitted comments on these proposals, with the Council's response being approved at the Council meeting on 28 July 2021.

On the 2 November 2021, the LGBCE published its final report and recommendations for the future warding pattern for the Borough. These recommendations are subject to Parliamentary approval, which is due to be given in the Winter 2021, however, it is not expected that there will be any further changes made.

Council is asked to note the LGBCE's final recommendations, and that a polling district and polling station review, including full risk assessment, will be carried out prior to 'all out' elections in May 2022.

## **Recommendation(s)**

That Council notes the final recommendations of the LGBCE review and commencement of an internal polling district and polling station 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.
- 1.6 At the meeting of 28 July 2021, approval was given for the Council's response to the Stage 3 proposals.

## **2. LGBCE Final Recommendations**

- 2.1 On the 2 November 2021, the LGBCE published details of their final recommendations for the future warding pattern of the Borough.
- 2.2 The LGBCE report detailed the comments that they had received from the Council, organisations and individuals, how these had been considered and their final decision.
- 2.3 The LGBCE recommended no further changes to their Stage 3 proposals (as detailed in the report to Council of 28 July 2021). However, they confirmed the changes to the names of three wards:

East renamed as Bury East

Church renamed as Bury West

Radcliffe North renamed as Radcliffe North and Ainsworth

## **3 Final Recommendations and Next Steps**

- 3.1 The Order for the new warding pattern will be Made and Laid by the LGBCE in the winter of 2021.
- 3.2 Subject to approval of the Order, the proposals will result in 'all out' local elections in May 2022. It is not expected that there will be any changes to the proposals at this stage.
- 3.3 In order to implement the recommendations in time for 'all out' elections in May 2022, the Council will need to carry out a Polling District review, to fit these into the new Wards, and complete a Polling Station Review, including a full risk assessment, to ensure that these are in appropriate locations for the new wards and ensure accessibility for all electors. Elected Members will be asked for their views in connection with the Polling Station review.

## 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Council is asked to note the Final Recommendations of the LGBCE review and that a Polling District and Polling Station Review will be carried out internally for use at the May 2022 local elections.

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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, was also 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 has undertaken extensive consultation as part of Stage Two and Stage Three of the review.

Consultation with elected members will be carried out in connection with the Council's Polling Station 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

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, New Electoral Arrangements for Bury Council, Final Recommendations, November 2021 (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

Report to Council (28 July 2021) Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of Bury Council – Stage 3.

**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