

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Policy and Governance	Council	18 September 2018

## **ELECTORAL REVIEW – WARD ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSAL**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To consider the proposal of the Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee on its preferred warding arrangements for the borough in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) electoral review consultation on ward patterns.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. To approve the appended proposal (appendix 1) as the Council's response to the LGBCE's consultation in to new warding arrangements for the borough, prior to its submission to the LGBCE.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT**

3. The proposal from the Electoral Review of Chorley Council puts forward its preferred ward patterning arrangements, including ward names, for the 14 new wards for Council approval.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

4. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious Council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

### **BACKGROUND**

5. Chorley Council was informed in June 2017 that the LGBCE would be conducting an electoral review intervention as part of its 2018/19 work programme. The aim of the review is to improve electoral equality across the borough. The electoral review is split in to two stages:-
  - Stage one – Decision on the Council Size
  - Stage two – New ward patterning arrangements
6. At the Council meeting on 10 April 2018, and in response to stage one of the review; members agreed, by majority decision, to propose a reduction in Council size from 47 to 42

members and to continue to elect its membership by thirds. As a consequence of holding elections by thirds, the LGBCE stipulates that each new ward consist of three members, to allow voter equality. .

7. On 26 June 2018, that LGBCE announced that it was minded to approve the Council's proposal for a reduction in its membership to 42. Therefore if the proposal is adopted the number of wards will automatically be reduced by 30% (from 20 to 14 wards). This decision brought stage one of the review to a close. At the same time, the LGBCE launched stage two of the review; a public consultation into ward arrangements.
8. Although it should be reiterated that the public consultation is that of the LGBCE and not the Council; the authority has actively encouraged interested groups and individuals to respond to the consultation by placing articles on its web site, through press releases, via social media, and in the Council's e-zines (intheknow and intheboro). Leaflets have also been circulated to those outlets which distribute the Council's 'What's happening' magazine.
9. The LGBCE's consultation expired on 3 September 2018. However, due to the Council's cycle of meetings and the fact that the consultation was being carried out over the peak holiday period, the LGBCE agreed to grant the Council an extension of the 20 September to submit its proposal on ward arrangements. This is to allow all members the opportunity to debate the proposal at the Council meeting on 18 September 2018.

## **FORMULATION OF THE NEW WARD PATTERN PROPOSAL**

10. At its meeting on 9 July, the Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee considered a draft proposal on new ward arrangements, developed by the Council's Electoral Services Manager. It was decided to use existing polling districts to formulate the proposal, as they took into consideration current County Council divisions and Parliamentary constituencies. This proposal provided consistency to the majority of voters by allowing them to attend the same polling station for the different types of elections. After identifying the existing polling districts, the next consideration was based on ensuring that the elector figures did not have a +/- 10% variance across each ward.
11. Following debate, members acknowledged that a number of the areas grouped together in the proposal were not considered to share a common identity, historically or practically and as such the proposal was rejected. At this point, the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Alistair Bradley, invited its members (using their knowledge and experience of their ward and local communities), to submit alternative suggestions in advance of the next meeting.
12. On the 15 August 2018, the Committee considered a revised proposal which incorporated members' suggestions that had been submitted. During debate, the Committee considered the different communities that make up the borough of Chorley. This included shared community identity, transport and highway links, while at the same time ensuring the total electorate forecast for that area would be within the +/- 10% variance as required by the LGBCE. In conclusion the Committee agreed, by majority decision, to refer the proposal to the next Council meeting for consideration subject to some further minor amendments.
13. The final revised proposal is now appended to this report (appendix 1) for members' consideration.
14. As previously mentioned in this report, stage two of the electoral review seeks proposals for ward patterning arrangements on the 14 new wards. This also includes the preferred ward names which have been suggested below:

- Adlington & Anderton
- Brindle & Hoghton
- Buckshaw & Whittle
- Chorley East
- Chorley North
- Chorley North East
- Chorley North West
- Chorley South East
- Chorley South West
- Clayton North
- Coppull
- Eccleston, Heskin & Charnock
- Euxton
- Lostock & Mawdesley

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

15. Subject to approval at the Council meeting on 18 September, the proposal will be submitted to the LGBCE by the 20 September, as Chorley Council's official submission on preferred ward patterning.
16. After an analysis of the Council's proposal and any other responses received during the consultation, the LGBCE will begin to formulate its draft recommendations which will be published on 6 November. On the same day the draft recommendations are published, the LGBCE will launch a further consultation on its draft recommendations. This will expire on 14 January 2019.
17. On the close of the consultation the LGBCE will consider any responses it has received in respect of the draft recommendations. The LGBCE will announce its final recommendations on 12 March 2019 and lay an order before parliament on Chorley's electoral changes.
18. Once the final recommendations by the LGBCE have been published, work will continue as Chorley Council is required to undertake a polling place review (including a public consultation); the purpose of which is to ensure all properties are included in the correct polling districts as well as the allocation of polling stations. Due to the reduction in wards (regardless of arrangement), it will be inevitable that a minority of voters will be expected to attend a different polling station. However, officers will do their utmost to limit this as much as possible.
19. While the polling place review is underway, the annual canvass of electors for 2019 will also commence. On completion of the canvas the register of electors will be published on 1 December under the new warding arrangements.
20. The electoral review process will reach its conclusion at the whole of Council elections on 7 May 2020, which will be held on the new electoral arrangements.

## **2019 ELECTIONS DEFERRAL REQUEST**

21. Members may recall that Chorley Council is seeking a deferral of its 2019 local elections with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government due to the whole of Council elections in 2020 as mentioned above.
22. The Council's initial request earlier this year, was rejected by the then Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP. However, in June the Council wrote to the new Secretary of State, The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP and asked that the decision be reconsidered, as the reasons put forward by the Council to justify the deferral, are the same reasons used to introduce changes to the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 (Amendment) Regulation 2018, which allows for the suspension of by-elections to the European

Parliament. Those reasons were attributed to the predicted low turnout, cost and problems associated with defending the decision to hold such an election to the taxpayer.

23. At the time of writing this report, and following numerous requests for a response, the Council is yet to receive a reply.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

24. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

## RISK

A risk register has been completed	Yes	No
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## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

25. No Comment.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

26. No Comments.

REBECCA HUDDLESTON  
DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Electoral Review	5 October 2017	<a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s79211/Electoral%20Review.pdf">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s79211/Electoral%20Review.pdf</a>	Executive Cabinet agenda
Electoral Review Update	23 January 2018	<a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s82429/Report.pdf">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s82429/Report.pdf</a>	Council agenda
The Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee	27 February 2018	<a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s83882/Electoral%20Review%20Committee.pdf">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s83882/Electoral%20Review%20Committee.pdf</a>	Council agenda
Electoral Review of Chorley Council – Draft Council Size submission	10 April 2018	<a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s85271/Electoral%20Review%20of%20Chorley%20Council%20-%20Draft%20Council%20Size%20Submission.pdf">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s85271/Electoral%20Review%20of%20Chorley%20Council%20-%20Draft%20Council%20Size%20Submission.pdf</a>	Council agenda

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Draft Minutes	15 August 2018	<a href="https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=906&amp;MId=6896&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=906&amp;MId=6896&amp;Ver=4</a>	Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Phil Davies Cathryn Filbin	5131 5123	22/08/18	***