
Local Government Boundary Review - Stage 2 - Supporting Information

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 22 November 2016, the Council approved its Governance proposal a requirement of Stage 1 of the review of the Council's boundaries. The Council agreed to a future number of Councillors of 42 + or - 1 with effect from the 2019/20 District Council elections.
- 1.2 The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) met in January and approved the Council's governance proposal without amendment.
- 1.3 The Local Government Boundary Commission launched its public consultation on Stage 2 (warding patterns) on Tuesday 24 January. This was expected to run until 3 April. However the Commission experienced some issues in outsourcing this work (website) with the result that the electorate figures provided for each ward were transposed incorrectly.
- 1.4 As a result of the above issue the LGBC agreed to extend the consultation period from 3 to 10 April.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 Stage 2 of the review requires the Council to make a proposal to the Commission in relation to warding patterns. This part of the review is driven by the agreed 42 + or - 1 number of Councillors.
- 2.2 As prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council submitted electorate forecasts up to 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.8% to 2022.
- 2.3 The projections were based on the LGBC guidance and started with the electorate as of September 2016. The number for the new electorate was then estimated by using outstanding planning permissions and likely future development. This data is fully consistent with the information that has been supplied to the Planning Inspectorate who is undertaking an examination in public of our Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSADPD). This document allocates future development sites within the district to cover the period up to 2026.
- 2.4 The methodology treats three types of area differently:
 - where housing change has been (more or less) directly related to electoral change
 - where there is not a direct relationship, but some past or future development
 - where there is not a relationship and no past or future development

- 2.5 An adjustment factor was applied to all parishes to allow for the difference between past electoral change period (5 years) and forecast (6 years). Where a parish was divided between polling districts, the split was based on current electorate split or the electorate split forecast by our initial forecast. We also had to ensure that our prediction (4.8%) was close to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) forecast for the district (3.2%).
- 2.6 When considering the makeup of proposed future wards the area was initially divided into four areas, Newbury, Thatcham, Holybrook/Tilehurst, and the surrounding more rural areas.
- 2.7 Outside of the three main areas, it was evident that there would be a requirement to significantly alter the existing wards due to the increased number of estimated electors per Councillor. Wherever possible however, existing Community links have been retained. It was also agreed that Parish Councils would be used as the building blocks, and no further sub-division of Parishes would be proposed.

	2016	2022
Electorate of West Berkshire	118,823	124,492
Number of Councillors	52	42 + or - 1
Average number of electors per Councillor	2208	2900

- 2.8 The result of the various data sources is that the number of 42 + or -1 will result in an average of 2900 electors per Member. This compares to the current figure of 2208 based on 52 Members. The guidance suggests that proposals for each ward should not, wherever possible, have a variance greater than + or - 10% in order to achieve good levels of electoral fairness for West Berkshire.
- 2.9 The Steering Group was also aware of the three statutory criteria which the Boundary Commission would apply to this Stage of the Review, namely:
 - (i) To deliver electoral equality where each Councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as each other across the District;
 - (ii) That the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities;
 - (iii) That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.
- 2.10 Attached to this report are individual plans for each new ward together with details of Polling Station codes, Polling Stations, current wards and future number of electors. Where there are significant changes to the current wards a new name for the ward has been suggested. Members may wish to review the proposed names and make an appropriate recommendation to Council in each case.

3. Hungerford, Mortimer and Tilehurst Central

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that based on the methodology deployed in paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 it has not been possible to achieve electoral equality (+ or -10%) for Hungerford, Mortimer and Tilehurst Central wards with Hungerford being - 345, Mortimer + 389 and Tilehurst Central ward - 315.
- 3.2 The possibility of having two single member wards at Greeham was also considered and it is suggested that the LGBC be asked to look at this issue when reviewing all submissions made. The Steering Group considered that the area could now be regarded as having two distinct communities, namely, Racecourse area and the proposed Sandford development area.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The process of looking at the warding patterns based on a future number of Councillors of 42 + or - 1 has been undertaken and considered by the Steering Group. The Steering Group acknowledged the methodology set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.9 as a means of identifying new wards and with the exception of Hungerford, Mortimer and Tilehurst Wards has been able to keep within the + or - 10% threshold and therefore achieve electoral equality across the remaining wards.
- 4.2 Where there are significant changes to the current wards new ward names have been suggested.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 The Boundary Review Steering Group met on 23 February 2017 to discuss Stage 2 of the Boundary Review in relation to proposed new warding patterns. The recommendations of the Steering Group are set out in Appendix "B".

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No: X

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval X
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected:

This review looks at all wards as part of the review of the Council's boundaries.

Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim:

X MEC – Become an even more effective Council

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

X MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council

Officer details:

Name: Andy Day
Job Title: Head of Strategic Support
Tel No: 01635 519459
E-mail Address: andy.day@westberks.gov.uk
