

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Antoinette Jackson, Chief Executive
TO: Civic Affairs Committee
WARDS: All Wards

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REVIEW PROGRAMME 2018-19

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Further to a report and discussion at the Committee's meeting in February, the Chief Executive has written to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and received a reply confirming that the LGBCE has identified Cambridge City Council as potentially requiring an Electoral Review and asking for the Council's views on whether electoral imbalances identified are likely to be counterbalanced in the next three years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Chief Executive respond to the LGBCE's letter explaining that the imbalances are unlikely to be counterbalanced within three years and confirming that the City Council would like to be included in the Commission's future work programme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 15th February 2017 Civic Affairs Committee considered a [report on City Council ward boundaries](#). This noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)'s triggers for a review of the council's ward boundaries had been reached, and requested "that the Chief Executive write to the Commission to seek clarification of the likely timing of a review".
- 3.2 The Chief Executive wrote to the LGBCE on 29 March. The LGBCE replied on 13th June.

Their letter (which has been shared with Group leaders) confirms that:

“The Commission has now undertaken its analysis across the country of the levels of electoral imbalance arising in each local authority area to establish whether there is a need for an electoral review.

In developing its work programme for 2018-19, the Commission has identified your Council as potentially requiring an Electoral Review.”

3.2 The letter goes on to reiterate the criteria for reviews and the position in Cambridge, as reported to Civic Affairs Committee in February. That is:

“Electoral imbalances arise if voters are either over- or under-represented by their councillor(s) when compared with average levels of representation across the authority. Under the criteria adopted by the Commission, either of the following conditions are considered to warrant a review if the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:

- *Any local authority with an electoral division or ward that has an electoral variance of 30% or over. This means a division or ward having over 30% more or fewer electors per councillor than is average for the council as a whole*
- *Any local authority where more than 30% of divisions or wards have an electoral variance of over 10% from the average for that authority.*

Based on the electoral data given to the Commission by your council:

- *4 (28.6%) of the electoral wards have a variance of greater than 10%*
- *One ward has a variance of over 30%”*

The Commission has asked the council for its views on “*whether the electoral imbalances identified are likely to continue, or whether they would be countered through changes in the number and distribution of electors as a result of development (etc.) within the next three years*”.

- 3.3 Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Group produces population forecasts each year based on Office of National Statistics data and taking account of local knowledge (provided by the city council's planning service) of anticipated / planned growth in the city.
- 3.4 The latest projections by ward are attached at Appendix A¹. They indicate that the existing electoral imbalances (particularly that relating to Trumpington) are unlikely to be countered within the next three years². Indeed, the imbalances are likely to increase over time with the planned growth in the fringe sites around the city (e.g. in Castle ward), the effect this has on the total and therefore average ward population.
- 3.5 The LGBCE letter asks for the city council to respond on this issue by 4th July 2017. It explains that:

"in the light of the responses that we receive, the Commission will decide whether or not an electoral review is to be undertaken for Cambridge, and notify you in due course. If the Commission decides that a review is justified, we will indicate the likely start date and timetable for the review.

Prior to the start of an electoral review there is a six-month preliminary period during which the Commission's staff meet with council officers and members to agree the precise nature of the proposed review and to give assistance to the council in the preparations which it would need to make prior to the review's commencement."

It is recommended that the Chief Executive respond to the LGBCE's letter explaining that the imbalances are unlikely to be counterbalanced within three years and confirming that the City Council would like to be included in the Commission's future work programme.

The Chief Executive would welcome the committee's views on this matter, and any other points it may wish to convey to the LGBCE.

¹ While these are figures for "total population" rather than electorate (and we have used the population aged 15 and above rather than including children), and are based on 2013 data, they are the best indication we have available of likely population (and therefore) electorate for future years.

² the estimates used are for 2021, the nearest data available to the Commission's stipulated three years.

- 3.6 One issue that was raised previously was around coterminosity of city and county electoral boundaries. As mentioned in the report to Civic Affairs Committee in February, “the fact that city boundaries are not co-terminous is not a factor for LGBCE. Many county areas [in England] have boundaries that are not co-terminous at district and county level.”
- 3.7 The LGBCE’s letter of 13 June reiterates that “the levels of coterminosity between the district ward and county division boundaries isn’t something that can be guaranteed if a review is undertaken.”

IMPLICATIONS

(a) **Financial & Staffing Implications**

As mentioned in the February committee report, the Council may need to identify additional resources to support the preparatory work. This will be influenced by the timing of the review and may require a budget bid.

(b) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

There are no equality or poverty implications arising from the recommendations in this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been prepared.

(c) **Environmental Implications**

n/a

(e) **Procurement**

n/a

(f) **Consultation and communication**

This report and the LGBCE letter have been shared with Group Leaders.

If the boundary review goes ahead, the LGBCE will carry out consultation.

(g) **Community Safety**

n/a

BACKGROUND PAPERS: The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report:

[February CAC report on City Council ward boundaries.](#)

See also <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/policy-and-publications/guidance>

To inspect these documents contact Gary Clift on extension 457011

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Population forecasts for 2021, based on 2013 data

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Antoinette Jackson on extension 457001.

Report file:

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Population forecasts for 2021, based on 2013 data

WARD	Total Population (Age 15+)	Variance from average ward population (no)	Variance from average ward population (%)
Abbey	8,520	-494	-5.5
Arbury	9,280	+266	+3.0
Castle	14,080	+5,066	+56.2
Cherry Hinton	7,600	-1,414	-15.7
Coleridge	8,870	-144	-1.6
East Chesterton	8,030	-984	-10.9
King`s Hedges	7,740	-1,274	-14.1
Market	7,390	-1,624	-18.0
Newnham	7,280	-1,734	-19.2
Petersfield	8,150	-864	-9.6
Queen Edith`s	8,520	-494	-5.5
Romsey	8,340	-674	-7.5
Trumpington	14,500	+5,486	+60.9
West Chesterton	8,020	-994	-11.0
Total Pop'n	126,200		
Ward Average	9,014		