



REPORT TO:	COUNCIL FORUM
FROM:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
ON:	THURSDAY, 18TH MAY 2017

REPORT	TITLE:	Electoral	Review	2016-17
		Warding proposal revisions.		

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To suggest revisions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft Warding arrangements for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, which are out to consultation until 19th June 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall the Local Government Boundary Commission have agreed with most of the suggestions made by the Council in its formal submission in January. However, whilst the Council supports the majority of the proposals, there are some areas where further changes are suggested as outlined below. It is recommended that Council:

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

1. Central

We support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations but would like the Commission to consider a name change to Blackburn Central.

2. Ewood/Blackburn South boundary.

The boundary commission have referred to the fact that the Heights Free School is situated off Heys Lane and should therefore be in Ewood ward as this is the residential area nearest to it. This fails to recognise that The Heights Free School provides alternative education for young people at risk of not reaching their potential and does not specifically serve local residents.

It would appear that the Heights Free School and Eden School have been considered as schools supporting the Ewood Ward – We would ask the Commission take into account that both schools are specialist schools that support the whole of the borough not just the Ewood Ward. Heys Lane is the natural Boundary between these wards, with significant future planning activity coming forward as we speak.

3. Ewood / Mill Hill and Moorgate / Livesey with Pleasington

Ewood/Livesey with Pleasington boundary: The draft recommendations place both sides of Gib Lane into Ewood (at present both sides are in Meadowhead). We would ask that the Commission take into account that a new housing development is being constructed immediately behind the properties on the west of Gib Lane and that some of its access will be from Gib Lane. It is therefore more logical for the West side of Gib Lane to be moved into Livesey with Pleasington. We will provide photographs of some of the existing new developments.

4. Darwen Rural

Notwithstanding the Commissions draft recommendations refer to Park Street, which should actually refer to Park Road – we support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft geographical recommendations. However we wish to suggest a change of name to the ‘Darwen Rural’ ward: Feedback from residents suggests that the ward would be better suited to a name making less reference to any local towns. People in Edgworth, Belmont and Chapeltown consider themselves most closely associated with Bolton, whilst people living in the southern part of the current Whitehall ward do not consider themselves to be rural. A more appropriate name would be ‘West Pennine’. This reflects the geographical situation of the ward, encompassing the largest part of the locally important landscape area the West Pennine Moors’.

5. Billinge and Beardwood / Shear Brow and Corporation Park

Shear Brow/Billinge and Beardwood. The BwD proposal recommended that a straight line was drawn along Revidge Road. This was to correct the current boundary which cuts in and out along the length of the highway. This was arrived at by using the Commissions statutory criteria of

- Delivering electoral equality for local voters,
- Interests and identities of local communities, and
- Effective and convenient local government.

The Boundary Commission proposal effectively argues for the current boundary line to be retained. We wish the Commission to consider the following two points: We cannot see the rationale for properties between (approx.) 401 Revidge Road and 539 Revidge Road to be placed into Beardwood and Billinge, whilst the other properties on the north side of Revidge Road are claimed to fit better with Shear Brow and Revidge. Secondly - the BwD proposal has better equality of electors than the Boundary Commission draft recommendation, which has Billinge and Beardwood at – 9%.

• Audley and Queens Park

Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations.

• Wensley Fold

Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations.

- **Bastwell and Daisyfield**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Roe Lee**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Blackburn South East**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Blackburn South and Lower Darwen**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Little Harwood and Whitebirk**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Darwen East**
Notwithstanding the fact that Ellison Fold is actually two properties not one, we support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations.
 - **Darwen West**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations
 - **Darwen South**
Support the Local Government Boundary Commission reviews draft recommendations.
6. Subject to agreeing the above recommendations, authorise the Chief Executive to formally submit the proposal on Council Warding arrangements from May 2018 to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for their inclusion as early as possible in the next round of consultation.

3. COUNCIL 2017 WARDING PROPOSAL

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council currently has 64 elected Members in 23 wards. Members will be aware that following the agreement at Council on 6th October 2016 the Boundary Commission formally confirmed the size of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to be 51 Councillors for 17 Wards by 2018 to ensure appropriate levels of Governance, Scrutiny and Community Leadership which also allows for the Authority to continue to elect its Members by thirds.

Using the Boundary Commissions guidance to develop a new Warding proposal for the Borough, several factors were taken into consideration, primarily the statutory criteria of;

- **Delivering electoral equality for local voters** – this means ensuring that each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area.
- **Interests and identities of local communities** – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, avoid splitting local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable.

- **Effective and convenient local government** – this means ensuring that the wards can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole, including both the council size decision and warding arrangements, allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively.

4. BACKGROUND

It should be noted that the Council cannot take its own decisions on size or warding arrangements and must submit its proposals to the LGBCE at every stage. The LGBCE will consider and determine the proposals based on its own assessment of relevant factors.

Timetable

Draft Council Size submission deadline	17 th October 2016	Done
Boundary Commission decision on Council size	15 th November 2016	Done
Consultation on warding	22 nd November 2016 – 30 th January 2017	Ongoing
Draft recommendations on warding arrangements	11 th April 2017	
Consultation on draft recommendations	11th April – 19th June 2017	
Final recommendations published	5 th September 2017	
Order Laid	October 2017	
Implementation*	Elections in 2018*	

Members have been provided with a copy of the full Review timetable. Whilst the Council has engaged with all parties to work on one submission, it should be noted that this does not exclude individuals or political groups from putting forward their own ideas. At every stage the LGBCE will consult widely seeking the views of a range of stakeholders.

Key messages for the public and individuals - How to have your say:

Please note the deadline for submissions on the draft recommendations is 19th June 2017.

An electoral review is a consultative process. You, and your community, can influence the outcome. The commission have an open mind about adopting proposals from groups or individuals that are supported by evidence and complement the statutory criteria.

The commission are only able to consider evidence that is made to them in writing as all decisions are taken by formal meetings of the whole commission. The best evidence includes the reasons why you agree with our proposals or why you disagree with them. If you do not think their proposals are right for our area, we would welcome alternative suggestions for boundaries that meet their criteria.

There are several ways in which you can keep up to date with the progress of the review and to have your say:

Online

You can keep track of the electoral review for your area through our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. The commission have set up a dedicated web page for each review where you will find details of its timetable, our reports, maps, proposals and guidance. You can comment on their proposals directly through their website or by emailing: reviews@lgbce.org.uk They also publish all the submissions they receive so you can see what kind of evidence they relied on to make our decisions.

Interactive consultation portal

The portal allows you to view and interact with our maps as well as comment on their proposals directly. By logging on to www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk you will be able to view their proposals down to street level, draw your own pattern of wards or annotate the maps to tell them about the nature of community interests and identities in your area.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Council are asked to note the direction of travel from both this Warding proposal and the background papers submitted to and agreed by Council Forum in October 2016 and January 2017, acknowledging that a detailed review will be undertaken over the next 12 months to redesign a political structure that will be fit for purpose and fit for future to best serve the people of Blackburn with Darwen.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Effectively supporting fewer yet larger Wards will subject to the detailed review outlined in "Policy implications" to deliver strong effective local government.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The LGBCE is required to comply with certain rules when conducting a Review. Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, section 56 requires the LGBCE to conduct a Review of principal local authorities from time to time and recommend whether a change should be made to the "electoral arrangements" meaning:

- the total number of Members to be elected to the Council ('Council size');
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas for the purposes of the election of Councillors;
- the number of councillors to be returned by any electoral area (ward) in that area
- the name of any electoral area.

In making recommendations, under Schedule 2 of the Act the LGBCE must have regard to:

- the need to secure equality of representation;
- the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- the need to secure effective and convenient local government.

2. Any resolutions regarding the scheme of elections must be in accordance with the Part 2 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3. The review of Members' allowances will need to be undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

A small team of Officers continues to be convened when required, to support the various stages and requirements of the Review and its consultations, ensuring compliance with the timetable outlined by the Local Government Boundary Commission England.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

As an integral element to the process, Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken at various stages of the Review and its consultations.

10. CONSULTATIONS

21st July 2016 the Commission consulted with all Members of the Council on the Review process. From 22nd November – 30th January 2017 the Commission carried out the first stages of a review. Currently they are in the process of a public consultation on new draft warding arrangements, from 11th April – 19th June 2017. A final decision by the Commission and recommendation to Government will be made on 5th September 2017, following which an Order will be Laid before Parliament in October 2017 for implementation in the all-out elections of May 2018.

Useful links:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/north-west/lancashire/blackburn-and-darwen>

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Date: 18th May 2017.

Background Papers: Report to Council Forum October 2016,
Report to Council 13th January 2017.