

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council **DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Catherine Meek  
Deputy Borough Secretary  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875011  
**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR DECISION**

#### **ELECTORAL REVIEW – LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND and POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

To advise the Council of the decision of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) with regard to the most appropriate council size for Slough Borough Council and next steps in the Electoral Review process.

The report also advises the Council of the need to undertake a Polling District and Polling Place Review under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

##### **2 Recommendation**

The Council is requested to

- (a) Note the Council size of 42 elected members as recommended by the LGBCE
- (b) Note the Polling District and Place Review currently underway
- (c) Endorse the establishment of a cross party working group comprising the Leader and a nominee of each Group with relevant officers to consider and make recommendations to the Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September on a warding pattern for the Borough and consider the outcome of the review of Polling District and Places.

##### **3 Other Implications**

###### **(a) Financial**

There are no financial or risk management implications as the report is administrative in nature.

###### **(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with this report.

## 4 **Supporting Information**

### **ELECTORAL REVIEW**

- 4.1 At its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February the Council was advised that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had advised the Chief Executive that it intended to commence an electoral review of Slough.
- 4.2 The review which is based on statutory criteria is to provide for good, or improved, levels of electoral representation across the Borough. This means ensuring that, as nearly as possible, each Councillor within a specific local authority represents the same number of electors as his or her colleagues. The LGBCE has identified Slough as having a high number of wards with electorates more than 10% from the mean size.
- 4.3 This aim is balanced with the need to reflect community identity and provide for convenient and effective local government.
- 4.4 The Commission also considers the appropriate number of Councillors for each ward.

### **What can be done as part of an electoral review**

- 4.5 The LGBCE can make the following recommendations for electoral arrangements
- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council (council size)
  - The number and boundaries of wards
  - The number of councillors to be elected for each ward
  - The name of any ward.

### **What can not be done as part of an electoral review**

- 4.6 The LGBCE cannot make recommendations for changes to the external boundaries between local authorities, how often local authorities hold elections, or change Parliamentary Constituencies.

### **The Review Procedure**

- 4.7 The LGBCE's approach to electoral reviews is one of consultation, openness and transparency. It aims to build as much of its recommendations as possible on locally generated proposals and to conduct as much consultation as is practicable in any review. The review is publicised as widely as possible.
- 4.8 Timescales for reviews vary widely. Before the detailed review starts the LGBCE wishes to agree the total number of councillors to be elected and invites views from the Council. .

### **Council Size**

- 4.9 The Council size (number of Members) is the starting point in any electoral review as it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards. The Council agreed to establish a working group comprising the Group Leaders supported by key officers to consider the review criteria and make recommendations to the Council in April 2011 on proposals for Council size.

- 4.10 At its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April the Council agreed the Council's Submission to the LGBCE recommending a Council size of 42 elected members.
- 4.11 The Council has been advised that the Commission has considered the Council's submission and has recommended a Council size of 42 members. In reaching this decision the Commission 'noted that the representational pressures created by Slough's increasingly complex communities are significant and were satisfied that any reduction in Council size would be detrimental to the council's ability to meet the expectations of the diverse communities it represents. Given this and to reflect the fact that the Council elects by thirds, 42 Councillors is considered the most appropriate size for the Council'.

#### Next Steps

- 4.12 The next stage of the Review commenced formally on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011 with an invitation to all interested parties to submit proposals for new wards based on a Council size of 42 members. The consultation will run until 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

- 4.13 The timetable is as follows:

<b>Timetable</b>			
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date start</b>	<b>Date finished</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Information gathering for warding arrangements	4 July 2011	4 October 2011	13 weeks
LGBCE analysis and deliberation	5 October	20 December	11 weeks
Draft recommendations published	20 December		8 weeks
Draft recommendations consultation	20 December 2011	13 February 2012	
LGBCE analysis and deliberation	14 February 2012	8 May 2012	13 weeks
Final recommendations published	8 May 2012		

- 4.14 It is proposed that a cross party working group be established comprising the Leader and a nominee of each Group with relevant officers to consider and make recommendations to the Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September on a warding pattern for the Borough.

#### **POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

- 4.15 Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on all local authorities to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every four years. The last review was in 2007 and the authority therefore needs to conduct and complete the review by December 2011. Polling districts and polling places for local government elections are not automatically part of the review however given that in practice polling districts and polling places for local government elections are based on UK parliamentary polling arrangements it is recommended that a review of local government polling arrangements is conducted simultaneously.

- 4.16 The Review Process is set out in Circular EC 19/2010 and the Review is commenced formally by the publication of a notice stating that the local authority intends to commence a review and inviting representations. There is no requirement to change polling districts or places but any 'no change' decision must be fully justified.
- 4.17 A notice publicising the commencement of the Review was published on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 with representations invited up to the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011. A copy of the Notice has also be sent to interested parties such as Members, Disability groups and other stakeholders. It is envisaged that any representations and recommendations will be considered by the cross party working group established in (c) above for report to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011.
- 4.18 The working group will be responsible for assessing the current arrangements and proposals for change and making recommendations to the Council on existing and proposed arrangements.

## 5 Background Papers

Local Government Boundary Commission for England– Electoral Reviews – Guidance

Agenda and Minutes – Council 19<sup>th</sup> April 2011

LGBCE Letter to Chief Executive – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Circular EC19/2010 – Review of Polling Districts, polling places and polling stations