

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Council**

**7 July 2014**

<p><b>Cherwell Boundary Review Warding Arrangements Submission</b></p>
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### **Report of Chief Executive**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To agree Cherwell District Council's warding arrangements submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To agree the warding arrangements for Bicester, Kidlington and the rural areas proposed by the Boundary Working group, as set out in Appendix 1 (to follow).
- 1.2 To consider the warding arrangement proposals for Banbury proposed by the Boundary Working Group, as set out in Appendix 1 (to follow) and to agree a preferred warding pattern for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 1.3 To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make any necessary amendments to the warding arrangements submission prior to submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in light of the resolutions of Council.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 In May 2012 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ("LGBCE" or "the Commission") announced that it would be conducting an electoral review of Cherwell. The review was triggered by the Commission's belief, and Cherwell District Council's ("CDC") subsequent confirmation, that more than 30% of wards within CDC had an electoral variance in excess of 10% from the average for the Council.
- 2.2 The first stage of the review was to determine a preferred council size. This is the number of Councillors required to deliver effective and convenient local

government. In October 2013 Cherwell District Council submitted its proposal for a Council of 48 councillors retaining elections by thirds.

- 2.3 The LGBCE subsequently carried out a public consultation on council size during which no substantial arguments were submitted in objection to the proposal for 48 members. The Commission therefore adopted a council size for 48 for Cherwell District Council for the purpose of next stage of the review – consultation on warding arrangements.
- 2.4 The consultation on warding arrangements stage of the electoral review of Cherwell commenced on 29 April 2014 and runs until 7 July 2014. All interested parties may propose a new pattern of warding arrangements for Cherwell District Council to the Commission during this period.
- 2.5 This report and appendices set out Cherwell District Council's submission to the consultation on warding arrangements.

### **3.0 Report Details**

#### **Electoral Pattern**

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council currently elects by thirds. Where a council elects by thirds, Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 provides that the Commission should have regard to the desirability of recommending that each ward returns three councillors, subject to its other statutory criteria of achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identity and providing for effective and convenient local government.

#### **Creating a Warding Pattern - Principles**

- 3.2 Warding pattern submissions must adhere to the following criteria:
  - Delivering electoral equality for local voters – this means ensuring each local Councillor represents roughly the same number of people
  - Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable
  - Promoting effective and convenient local government – this means ensuring that the new wards can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the pattern of wards reflects the electoral cycle of the council.

#### **Electoral Arrangements of Town and Parish Councils**

- 3.3 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, changes to external parish boundaries are the responsibility of local authorities.
- 3.4 The Commission can however recommend changes to the electoral arrangements within parish and town councils i.e. the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of parish councillors for each parish ward. However, this is only in circumstances where the parished area is already or is to be divided between wards.

- 3.5 The Commission cannot, as part of this review, consider changes to the external boundaries of a parish, the number of parish/town councillors or to creating a new parish.

### **Cherwell District Council Warding Arrangements Submission**

- 3.6 The draft warding arrangements submission to the LGBCE is attached at Appendix 1 (to follow). The proposal was developed by the Boundary Review Working Group, an all-party councillor working group, supported by officers from the Democratic and Elections team. The proposed submission has unanimous support, with regard to the proposed warding pattern for the rural areas, Bicester and Kidlington with the only difference being the warding pattern for Banbury, which is primarily the division between the town centre area and Grimsbury and which area Hightown is included within. .

- 3.7 The projected electorate for the whole district in 2020 (the date for which we are asked to make projections) is 123,835. This takes account of anticipated growth figures based on recent years growth and census data, approved planning applications and build rates. It does not take account of areas designated for development in the emerging Local Plan or where discussions on developments are underway but have not yet been through the planning process.

- 3.8 Given the Commission's preference for local authorities electing councillors by thirds to have three member wards, the Boundary Review Working Group applied the following formulae to its deliberations:

- Agreed number of councillors of 48 divided by 3 (desired number of members per ward) is 16.
- Projected electorate of 123,835 divided by agreed number of councillors is 2580 giving a 1:2580 councillor:elector ratio
- Therefore, each ward of 3 members should cover 7740 electors (with a tolerance of 10%)

- 3.9 Therefore the Council's Boundary Review Working Group has agreed that CDC submit a warding arrangement proposing 16 wards each comprising 3 members who will represent 7740 electors within a plus or minus 10% tolerance (6966 to 8514 electors)

- 5 Banbury wards
- 4 Bicester wards
- 2 Kidlington wards
- 5 rural wards

- 3.10 Appendix 1 (to follow) sets out full details of the proposed wards, including boundaries, electorate, names and the rationale for each proposal. It also includes the proposed warding patterns and allocation of councillors for Banbury Town Council, Bicester Town Council and Kidlington Parish council.

### **Local Government Boundary Commission for England Council Warding Arrangements Consultation**

- 3.11 Once the Commission has considered all warding arrangements proposals received, it will take a provisional decision on warding arrangements.

- 3.12 The Commission is intending to publish its draft recommendations on the number of councillors, the number and boundaries of wards, and the names of wards in September 2014.
- 3.13 There will be a twelve-week period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Commission considers all representations received and formulates its final recommendations.
- 3.14 The Commission expects to publish its final recommendations in February 2015.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 It is believed the recommendations in this report will enable the Council to agree the warding arrangements submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Boundary Review Working Group	Support the draft warding arrangements submission subject to the points highlighted in the appendix and resolution of Council
The Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer	No further comments

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To agree the recommendations as set out.

Option 2: To amend the recommendations.

Option 3: To request that officers undertake further work on the submission. This option is not recommended as it would mean the deadline to submit is not met.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications at this time, although the retention of elections by thirds with three member wards would mean the council funding elections across the whole district every year. This will be addressed as part of the budget setting and medium term financial strategy processes.

Comments checked by:

Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager, 01295 221731,  
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### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 The above proposal is consistent with submissions as required by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and conforms to legislation in force.

Comments checked by:

James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
01295 221589, james.doble@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

### **Risk Implications**

- 7.3 If the Council does not make a submission the Local Government Boundary Commission for England has the ability to set their own.

Comments checked by:

James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
01295 221589, james.doble@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

## **8.0 Decision Information**

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

N/A

### **Lead Councillor**

N/A

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Proposed Warding Arrangements Submission
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
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