

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Leader of the Council	Report Number: <big>BC/17/10</big>
To: Babergh Council	Date of meeting: 7 August 2017

BOUNDARY REVIEW – RESPONSE TO STAGE ONE CONSULTATION ON WARDING PATTERNS

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree the Council’s response to the stage one consultation on warding patterns, which is part of the further electoral review of the Babergh district being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

2. Recommendations
2.1 That the two proposals attached as appendices to this report be submitted as Babergh District Council’s formal response to the consultation.
2.2 That the Chief Executive be authorised to submit the consultation response on behalf of the Council, and to include any relevant information arising from the Council’s debate which provides further context and rationale behind the proposals.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The LGBCE is responsible for conducting the review and for ensuring compliance with all relevant legal provisions.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council’s Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 5c. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
That the LGBCE determine a warding pattern for Babergh that does not provide equal democratic	2 - Unlikely	3 – Bad	The Council is responding to the consultation and all councillors have had the opportunity to

representation and fails to take into account community identity.			contribute to the consultation response.
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6. Consultations

6.1 For the purposes of this stage of the further electoral review the Council is a consultee and is not responsible for conducting the consultation. The Council is supporting the LGBCE with its consultation activities through our communications channels and assisting with parish liaison events.

7. Equality Analysis

7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

8.1 This report supports the ongoing joint working arrangements of the two Councils.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

9.1 This report supports the Enabled and Efficient Organisation programme.

10. Key Information

10.1 The LGBCE is currently undertaking a further electoral review of the Babergh district. This review was triggered by a request from Babergh District Council and is running concurrently with a review of the Mid Suffolk district. In February 2017 the Council agreed that a council size of 31 councillors would be adequate for the effective operation of the Council and for representing the residents of Babergh district. The LGBCE was minded to accept this council size and on 13 June 2017 commenced stage one of the consultation on warding patterns.

10.2 The consultation will close on 14 August 2017 and the LGBCE, with support from the Council, has undertaken specific activities to engage local communities in the consultation including a briefing event for parish councils. The LGBCE is wholly responsible for conducting the consultation and in that regard the District Council is only a consultee and has a choice about whether or not to respond. However, there is a strong expectation that the District Council will show leadership in this exercise and submit a reasoned and sound response.

10.3 It is recommended that the two proposals appended to this report are submitted as the Council’s response to the consultation. The proposals have been developed through a series of workshops and drop-in sessions that were open to all councillors and further refined by a cross-party task and finish group.

10.4 In developing these proposals consideration has been given to achieving electoral equality, having clearly identifiable boundaries and reflecting community interests and identities. The electoral equality figures have been calculated using the projected electorate for 2022 of 74,029. A council size of 31 therefore results in a ratio of 2,388 electors per councillor. The LGBCE recognises that absolute electoral equality is

highly improbable so also applies a ten percent threshold either side of the ratio which has resulted in a range of 2,146 to 2,627 electors. The LGBCE will consider warding patterns which are based on minor variations to the council size if it represents a better fit in terms of logical warding and maintaining community identities.

- 10.5 Proposal one suggests a warding pattern resulting in 30 councillors. This alters the electoral equality ratio to 2,468 with a range of 2,221 to 2,714 electors per councillor. This proposal represents good electoral equality with only three of the proposed wards being slightly outside of the plus or minus ten percent threshold. In most instances there is sufficient room within the electorates for additional growth without creating significant electoral inequality.
- 10.6 Proposal two suggests a warding pattern resulting in 32 councillors. This alters the electoral equality ratio to 2,313 with a range of 2,082 to 2,545 electors per councillor. In this case six wards (two being multi-member) are outside of the threshold. However, significant attention has been given to the logical grouping of parishes based on community identity and historic connections.
- 10.7 Both proposals at this stage give no regard as to how the multi-member wards that cover warded parishes might be sub-divided; specifically Great Cornard, Hadleigh and Sudbury.

11. Appendices

Title	Location
A Proposal 1 Map	Attached
B Proposal 1 Electorate Figures	Attached
C Proposal 2 Map	Attached
D Proposal 2 Electorate Figures	Attached

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