

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Council
Date:	21 st July 2022
Subject:	Update on Electoral Review of Slough Borough Council's Warding Arrangements
Chief Officer:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Nick Pontone, Clerk to the Electoral Cycle & Parliamentary Boundary Review Working Group
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	No
Appendices:	A – Summary LGBCE draft recommendations B – Draft response to LGBCE C – Map of revised SBC proposal for Slough Central and Upton Lea (preferred option) D – Revised ward profiles E – Alternative Upton Lea and Slough Central Ward Boundary proposal (second preference)

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report updates the Council on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) electoral review of Slough and sets out the recommendations of the Electoral Cycle & Parliamentary Boundary Review Working Group.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to consider the recommendations of the Electoral Cycle & Parliamentary Boundary Review Working Group to:

- (a) Approve the draft Council response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's second phase of consultation as set out in Appendices B to E.
- (b) Agree that the scope of the Working Group be extended to include the forthcoming polling district and place review.

Reason:

It is important to respond to the LGBCE consultation to try to ensure the warding arrangements reflect Slough's communities and identities and to meet the LGBCE review criteria. Extending the role of the Working Group will enable the Council to take forward the polling district and polling place review that will follow the boundary review.

Commissioner Review

“Commissioners have been fully involved in the reasoning behind the proposed modifications to the LGBCE’s Draft proposals promoted by the Council and fully support their observations.”

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Electoral Cycle & Parliamentary Boundary Review Working Group which proposes that the Council respond to the second phase of consultation to the LGBCE electoral review of Slough in order to try to secure warding arrangements which reflect Slough’s communities and identities whilst also meeting the LGBCE review criteria.
- 2.2 The report also seeks approval to extend the scope of the Working Group to include the forthcoming polling district and polling places review that will follow the boundary review.

Options considered

Option 1 – Do not respond to the LGBCE consultation. Not recommended. Not responding to the consultation would mean the Council’s views would not be taken into account by the LGBCE in finalising the warding arrangements for Slough.

Option 2 – Respond to the consultation. Recommended. A response would assist the LGBCE in setting out the Council’s position, including where it supports the LGBCEs draft recommendations which were at variance to those proposed by the Council on 11th April 2022, as well as proposing an alternative for the Slough Central and Upton Lea boundary to further refine the draft recommendations.

Background

- 2.3 The Council agreed on 18th January 2022 to move to whole Council elections from 2023 and to request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to conduct an electoral review for the purpose of designing a pattern of wards consistent with the move to whole Council elections.
- 2.4 The LGBCE launched their electoral review of Slough on 1st February 2022 with an initial 10-week consultation which closed on 11th April 2022. The Council agreed a response at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 11th April 2022.
- 2.5 The LGBCE published their draft recommendations for Slough’s ward boundaries on 5th July 2022. A second consultation on the LGBCE proposals is being carried out with a closing date of 12th September 2022 (which is before the next ordinary meeting of Council).
- 2.6 The LGBCEs final recommendations will be published on 29th November 2022 and the new warding arrangements will come into effect for the May 2023 borough elections, subject to Parliamentary approval.
- 2.7 The draft recommendations from LGBCE published on 5th July accept the Council’s proposal for 21 wards each with two councillors. A summary is set out in Appendix

A. The majority of ward boundaries are in line with the proposals agreed by the Council on 11th April 2022 and submitted to LGBCE.

- 2.8 The Council's Working Group has drafted response to the second phase of the consultation which is set out in Appendices B to E. The draft response accepts all of the LGBCE proposals, with the exception of the boundary between the proposed Slough Central and Upton Lea wards where the Working Group agreed an alternative proposal as set out in the response. The Council is asked to consider and approve the response for submission to LGBCE.
- 2.9 Once the new boundaries are confirmed the Council will be required to carry out a review of polling districts in each of the new wards and in each polling district a suitable location for a polling place will need to be identified.
- 2.10 The Council established the Electoral Cycle & Parliamentary Boundary Review Working Group on 24th September 2020. Its remit was to consider and make any recommendation to Council on the review of Slough's electoral cycle and the consultation on the review of Parliamentary boundaries.
- 2.11 As part of the changes arising from the change to the electoral cycle agreed by Council in January 2022, the Working Group has continued its work on the ward boundary review as set out elsewhere in this report. It is proposed that the remit of the Working Group now be extended to include the forthcoming review of polling districts and places to provide Member input and support to this review and make recommendations to Council.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposed response to LGBCE or the remit of the Working Group.

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 sets out the requirements for a review of electoral arrangements carried out by the LGBCE.

The review procedure is prescribed at Section 58 of the Act which requires the LGBCE to inform interested parties to a review and take their representations into consideration.

Section 58: Review procedure

(1) As soon as reasonably practicable after deciding to conduct a review under section 56, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England must take such steps as it considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of—

- (a) the fact that the review is to take place, and*
- (b) any particular matters to which the review is to relate.*

(2) In conducting a review under section 56, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England must—

- (a) prepare and publish draft recommendations,*
- (b) take such steps as it considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the recommendations are informed of them and of the period within which representations with respect to them may be made, and*
- (c) take into consideration any representations made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England within that period.*

(3) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England may at any time before publishing draft recommendations under subsection (2)(a) consult such persons as it considers appropriate.

(4) As soon as practicable after conducting a review under section 56, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England must—

- (a) publish a report stating its recommendations, and*
- (b) take such steps as it considers sufficient to secure that persons who may be interested in the recommendations are informed of them*

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The principal risk was that new warding arrangements agreed by LGBCE would not fully reflect Slough's community interests and identities. This risk has already been significantly addressed by the fact the Council's submission on 11th April 2022 has been substantially reflected in the LGBCEs draft recommendations. Responding to the second phase of consultation seeks to continue this proactive approach and achieve warding arrangements for Slough which are well aligned to local communities.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from the report, however, they will be an important consideration in the polling district and place review which will follow the boundary review.

4. Background Papers

None.