

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

30 June 2020

Report of the Director of Chief Executive and Leader

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Summary

This report advises that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, will be undertaking a boundary review of electoral wards across the borough, commencing in September 2020.

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body responsible for determining the electoral arrangements of local authorities across England.
- 1.1.2 Each year, the Commission calculates the levels of electoral imbalance in each Local Authority area, to establish whether there is a need for an electoral review.
- 1.1.3 Electoral imbalances arise if voters are either over or under-represented by their councillor(s) when compared with average levels of representation across the authority area. Under the criteria adopted by the Commission, either of the following conditions are considered to warrant a review if the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period:
- 1) The first condition is where any Local Authority with an electoral division or ward that has an electoral variance of 30% or over. This means a division or a ward having 30% more or fewer electors per councillor than is average for the council as a whole.
 - 2) The second condition being any local authority where more than 30% of divisions or wards have an electoral variance of over 10% from the average for that authority.
- 1.1.4 For Members' interest, details of how reviews work can be found at: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/how-reviews-work>

1.2 Review of arrangements for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

- 1.2.1 A map is attached at **[Annex 1]** which shows the electoral variances by ward. Members will note that the ward Burham & Wouldham has an electoral variance of -32%, and a further 3 wards have variances of over 10% (Snodland West & Holborough Lakes – 11%, Wateringbury -12%, and Kingshill +18%)
- 1.2.2 The variance for Burham & Wouldham already meets the criteria for a Boundary review, and the growth rate at Kingshill will further increase the variance there.
- 1.2.3 The LGBCE have confirmed that there will be a boundary review commencing after the summer recess. Members are referred to the letter dated 10 June 2020 from Professor Colin Mellors attached at **[Annex 2]**.
- 1.2.4 A draft timetable for the review is attached at **[Annex 3]**. As Members will note this is a very collaborative programme commencing with a briefing for all group leaders, and a whole council briefing currently being scheduled for late Summer/early Autumn 2020. It is these briefings that will commence the process and set out how the reviews will be approached.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The criteria for triggering a Boundary review have been met, and as such the LGBCE are to commence a review.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 None at this stage.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 None at this stage, but Members should note that this will required diversion to staff resources in order to develop thoughts on proposed council size as set out in the letter at [Annex 2].

1.6 Policy Considerations

- 1.6.1 Community
- 1.6.2 Communications

Background papers:

Nil

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