

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 25 January 2021
Report for: Information
Report of: Chief Executive

Report Title

Update on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review for Trafford Council

Summary

This Report provides an update on the review of the Council now underway by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). It explains the two stage process of the review, progress so far and timetable for the next steps. The report is for noting only as decision making on these matters is the responsibility of the Council's Chief Executive

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Report be noted

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Review is critical to the working of the Council as a whole and will shape its future operation. It is designed to ensure that the Council runs effectively and properly represents the communities within the Borough. It thus aligns with Objectives to secure successful and thriving places and pride in our area.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	None directly, but all of the other Districts within Greater Manchester have either completed a review recently or have one underway.
Financial	The costs of the review primarily relate to officer time and programme management and will be covered from existing resources
Legal Implications:	The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 established the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and it has a responsibility to undertake reviews of the electoral arrangements of local authorities: the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each. The Commission is responsible for putting any changes to electoral arrangements into effect by submitting a Statutory Instrument for consideration by Parliament.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Consideration of the distinctiveness and diversity of different communities is factored into the submission alongside ensuring fair and transparent representation of residents.
Sustainability Implications	The Review needs to ensure that the Council's wards and membership are fit for purpose for the future. The Review forecasts the borough's population up to 2026 and it considers whether the proposed ward boundaries will be suitable for Trafford beyond then.2026
Climate Change Implications	None as a consequence of this report.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Existing resources have been identified to support the delivery of the review across several services.
Risk Management Implications	The Council needs to ensure robust responses are made within the timetable set out by LGBCE
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None as a consequence of this report.
Health and Safety Implications	None as a consequence of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Boundary Review and to summarise the case we are presenting to the Boundary Commission regarding the future size of Trafford Council.

- 1.2 Trafford's boundaries have not been reviewed since 2003. The population of Trafford has increased approximately 11% since then. This is a timely opportunity to review the current wards for the borough.

2.0 Key Stages

- 2.1 The project timeline for the Boundary Review has been revised due to the demands of responding to the pandemic.
- 2.2 The first phase of the Review determines the future size of the Council in relation to the number of councillors and wards. Officers are currently compiling all of the necessary electorate, housing and council activity information for the Boundary Commission. This will be supported by a business case for what we consider the appropriate Council Size to be. The Boundary Commission will then assess this information and agree the future council size.
- 2.3 The second phase of the Review demarks the future ward boundaries. It should be noted that the Boundary Commission start this exercise with a 'blank map', as opposed to altering the existing ward configuration in Trafford. There will be an extensive consultation exercise on the future ward pattern.
- 2.4 The Boundary Commission will then publish a draft recommendation of the ward boundaries and names. This is subject to a further public consultation before the Commission makes its final recommendations.
- 2.5 An order is then laid and the new wards will be implemented for the 2023 Council elections.

3.0 Next Steps and Timescales

- 3.1 The deadline for the Council Size submission is 2 February 2021. This submission will be made by the Chief Executive and is currently running to schedule. Members are being updated on its development through a cross-party committee chaired by Cllr. Tom Ross.
- 3.2 The consultation on warding patterns is led by the Boundary Commission. This is scheduled to run between 15 June –24 August 2021. This will include inputs from Council, political groups and the general public.
- 3.3 The Boundary Commission's draft recommendations will be published on 30 November 2021. This is followed by a second public consultation which is scheduled from the 30 November to 8 February 2022.
- 3.4 The Boundary Commission will issue its final recommendations on 5 April 2022. This will then be enacted through a parliamentary order in the summer of 2022.
- 3.5 The new wards will be implemented for all-out elections in May 2023.

4.0 Initial Findings

4.1 The final submission will be made at the beginning of February, however at this point it is possible to set out the initial findings and broad conclusions on the first stage of the process.

4.2 From the work undertaken so far and the evidence gathered it is considered that there is a good basis for maintaining the current Council Size of 63 Councillors and 21 wards. This will establish the basic form of the Authority - the drawing of detailed ward boundaries is undertaken by the Boundary Commission during the next phase of the Review.

4.3 The Council’s case is based on four key points, namely:

- It was noted by the Boundary Commission that Trafford has a relatively low ratio of electors to members (when compared nationally and with CIPFA statistical neighbours). However, the electorate of Trafford is forecast to grow 3.2% between now and 2026. This will readjust the ratio of electors to members to close to the Boundary Commission’s average.
- We argue that a series of vital economic, transport and cultural assets for Greater Manchester and the North West are located in Trafford. These include Trafford Park, Trafford City, Old Trafford football and cricket stadia, the proximity of Manchester Airport and of the new the HS2 station. These all contribute significantly to the work of the Council but are not accounted for its electorate size.
- We do not envisage any significant cost savings from reducing the size of the Council as it would likely entail increased officer time to support members with their increased caseloads and/or increased allowances for members to compensate for the additional Council work they would have to undertake.
- There is a broad consensus among senior officers and Council members that the current electoral arrangements are appropriate for Trafford. Hence we will argue in favour of retaining three member wards and 21 wards across the borough.

4.4 These findings will be submitted in more detail to the LGBCE supported by relevant evidence, but it is hoped that these principles will underpin an appropriate and sustainable form of Council for the coming years.

5.0 Other Options

5.1 All Local Authorities are obliged to undergo a periodic Boundary Review. There is no alternative to undertaking the Review

6.0 Reason for the Recommendation

6.1 The Report is for information only – the submission of the Council’s proposal is the responsibility of the Chief Executive

Key Decision: No

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? N/A

Finance Officer ClearancePC...

Legal Officer Clearance ...JL.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'A' followed by a cursive name and a horizontal line ending in a small flourish.

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered.