

# Crawley Borough Council

## Report to Governance Committee

14<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### Electoral Review 2017/18

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services LDS/123

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#### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is planning to conduct an electoral review to improve electoral equality in Crawley. The Committee is recommended to establish an informal working group known as the Electoral Review Panel to lead on the detailed work needed to take place during the period of the review.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the information relating to the electoral review
- 2.2 To establish an electoral review panel:
  - a) To undertake the detailed work necessary for the review.
  - b) Submit recommendations to the Governance Committee as necessary, prior to any proposals being submitted to the Boundary Commission for England.

#### 3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 To prepare for the 2017/18 Electoral Review

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has scheduled an electoral review for Crawley during 2017/18. The Commission monitors levels of electoral equality between wards within each local authority and conducts reviews where changes in population lead to a reduction in the levels of electoral equality. The aim of a review is to establish ward boundaries that mean each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of voters.
- 4.2 The electoral arrangements for Crawley were last reviewed in 2002. Development in the borough, particularly in Three Bridges Ward since that time has led to electoral inequality between wards
- 4.3 Reviews are conducted under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and cover

- The number of councillors to be elected to the council (council size)
  - The number, names and boundaries of wards
  - The number of councillors to be elected for each ward
- 4.4 In deciding the above Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act sets out the statutory criteria to which the Commission are required to have regard to
- The need to ensure equality of representation
  - The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - The need to secure effective and convenient local government

### **The Review Process**

- 4.5 The Commission have not yet indicated when the review will start, but it will take place during 2017/18 with an election under the new ward boundaries for all council seats in May 2019.
- 4.6 Before the formal start of the review there is a preliminary period of information gathering which includes the council developing five year electoral forecasts.
- 4.6 The Commission will then consider representations on the appropriate number of councillors for Crawley. The council will need to make a proposal to the commission on the number of councillors needed to manage the council based on political management arrangements, regulatory and scrutiny functions and the representational role of the councillors both in terms of their ward work and representing the council on outside bodies.
- 4.7 Once it has reached its initial conclusions on council size the Commission will publish the number that it is minded to accept and invite proposals for ward boundaries. The Commission will analyse these representations and publish draft recommendations for public consultation. Once it has considered the comments received on the draft recommendations the Commission will publish Final recommendations which are not open to public consultation. The final Recommendations are then laid before both Houses of Parliament. The Order will be confirmed after it has been before each house for 40 sitting days. A debate can take place if there are any objections to the Order.
- 4.8 The new electoral arrangements then come into force at a whole council election which is expected to be in May 2019.

### **The Electoral Cycle**

- 4.9 Crawley currently elects Councillors by thirds. One third of the council seats are elected each year over a three year cycle, with elections to West Sussex County Council in the fourth year.
- 4.10 Where a council elects by thirds the Commission now expects that warding proposals should be based on a uniform pattern of three member wards. This allows all electors to participate in each Borough election. The 2002 Electoral Review approved a pattern of wards for Crawley with a mix of two and three member. This enabled the ward boundaries to be broadly co-terminus with Crawley's neighbourhoods. However, this means that electors in wards with two members do not have a vote one year in the three year cycle which impacts on electoral equality.

- 4.11 Any decision to change the electoral cycle to whole council elections must be made before the Commission invites proposals on warding patterns.

### **Electoral Review Panel**

- 4.12 The Committee is recommended to establish an Electoral Review Panel to undertake the detailed work necessary for the review and recommend proposals to the Committee.

## **5. Implications**

*There are no implications at this stage, the legal implications are set out in the report.*

## **6. Background Papers**

[Electoral Reviews Technical Guidance - The Local Government Boundary Commission April 2014](#)

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