

# Crawley Borough Council

## Report to Governance Committee

28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### Electoral Review 2017/2018

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – LDS/132

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider the Council's draft Submission on Council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Committee:

1. Endorses the draft Submission on Council size, and
2. Recommends to Full Council the approval of the document at Appendix A for final submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and in doing so agrees that the Council size be proposed at 39 Councillors from May 2019.

#### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council's views on Council size are submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in accordance with the Review timetable by proposing the number of Councillors that the Council believes will be right for the authority from May 2019 to ensure appropriate levels of governance, scrutiny and community leadership.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is conducting an Electoral Review of Crawley during 2018. 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. Developments in the Borough, particularly in Three Bridges Ward, since that time has led to electoral inequality between wards that the Review by the LGBCE will address.

- 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, these are:
- 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 On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 representatives of the Commission made a presentation to Councillors outlining the timetable for the Review as set out in 4.6.
- 4.6 There are four stages to the Review:

#### **Stage one - Council Size – response required by w/c 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

The Commission invites the Council to make a proposal for the number of Councillors based on the Council's Governance and Scrutiny arrangements together with the representational role of Councillors in the Borough. During this stage the Council provides an electorate forecast broken down by polling district for 2023. This forecast is then used as the basis for proposing patterns of wards in the subsequent stages.

#### **Stage two - Initial Consultation – response required by 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the LGBCE will announce the number of Councillors that it is minded to approve and invite proposals for a pattern of ward boundaries. The deadline for responses is 9<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **Stage three - Draft Recommendations – response required by 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

The Commission's draft recommendations will be published on 5<sup>th</sup> June and comments must be received 13<sup>th</sup> August.

#### **Stage four - Final Recommendations**

The Final Recommendations will be published sometime in October and will come into force for the elections in May 2019.

## **5. Council Size Submission and Electorate Forecast**

- 5.1 At its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 the Committee established an Electoral Review Working Panel to undertake the detailed work relating to the Review and to make recommendations to the Committee prior to any proposals being submitted to the LGBCE.

- 5.2 Following the work of the Panel the submission document included at Appendix A has been prepared based on the criteria that the LGBCE is required to have regard to, including:
- Governance and decision making information which includes looking at how Councillors work, how their responsibilities are structured, demand and commitment pressures on their time;
  - Scrutiny functions and the role of Councillors in this and in the work of outside bodies;
  - The representational role of Councillors including their role in engaging with constituents and dealing with casework.
- 5.3 The LGBCE requires that the future size of the population and resulting projected electorate is calculated for 5 years from the formal start of the Review, to 2023. The Forward Planning team have produced a forecast document (Crawley 2023 Electorate Forecast) and this is included at Appendix B.

## **6. Implications**

- 6.1 The Electoral Review is a statutory process which is governed by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The LGBCE is an independent body established by parliament under the same Act. The LGBCE is responsible for undertaking this Review following statutory considerations. The Submission follows the guidance provided by the Commission. The LGBCE's final recommendations will be laid in Parliament in November 2018.

## **7. Background Papers**

[LGBCE - Electoral Reviews technical guidance](#)

[LGBCE - Have your say on Council size](#)

[LGBCE - A practioner's guide on how to prepare an electorate forecast](#)

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