

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

21 SEPTEMBER 2015

1. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BIRMINGHAM

Report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Authority note the internal consultation process undertaken to inform and shape the consultation response to the Birmingham electoral review.
- 1.2 THAT Authority note the content of our consultation response to be sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission in respect of the proposals contained within their consultation.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to Members to inform them of the Local Government Boundary Commission's ongoing electoral review of Birmingham, the detail of which is set out in their letter attached as Appendix 1. Members are asked to note our response to this consultation, which has been developed following an internal consultation process with key stakeholders.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government Commission has started an electoral review of Birmingham City Council. The purpose of the consultation is to invite submissions on the electoral review recommendation to reduce the number of councillors in Birmingham from the current 120 to 100. Final recommendations are to be published in May 2016 and it is intended that this change will take place from June 2018.
- 3.2 Birmingham City Council is split up into 10 districts which cover the same area as the parliamentary constituencies. These are subdivided in 40 wards. Each ward is represented by 3 councillors.
- 3.3 The next stage of the review is to re-draw ward boundaries to accommodate 100 city councillors and we are being asked to put

forward suggestions for new wards, ward boundaries, and ward names across the whole city.

3.4 In shaping these changes the Service has consulted with key internal stakeholders and considered the potential impact of the proposals upon:

- the delivery of prevention based activity;
- data, intelligence systems and processes such as integrated risk management, command and control mobilising and the Gazetteer; and
- Operational Command structures and boundaries to enable for the best fit in supporting our Service Delivery Model.

3.5 The number of councillors appointed to West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority (WMFRA) and how many are provided by each of the 7 councils that make up the West Midlands is set out in the Local Government Act 1985. As the proposals for change are designed to enable a reduction of the number of councillors in Birmingham City Council, the potential impact of this change upon the overall number of Birmingham City councillors appointed to WMFRA is being monitored. Officers will keep Members informed of any developments.

3.6 The deadline for receipt of consultation responses is 28 September 2015. Our proposed response is attached as Appendix 2.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out as the matters referred to do not represent a change in the policies or functions of the Authority.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications to be considered in producing this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the content of this report

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Act 1985, schedule 10, number of members of joint authorities.

The contact name for this report is Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Phil Hales, telephone number 0121 380 6004.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

APPENDIX 1

Please see letter from the Local Boundary Commission for England dated 21 July 2015.

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

WEST MIDLANDS
FIRE
27 JUL 2015
RECEIVED
HEADQUARTERS

21 July 2015

Dear Sir or Madam,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BIRMINGHAM

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has started an electoral review of Birmingham City Council. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the review and ask for your views on new ward boundaries for the council.

The Commission invites submissions for new ward boundaries from today until 28 September 2015.

What is an electoral review?

The electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Birmingham City Council. Electoral arrangements are:

- The total number of councillors to be elected to the council (which we call 'council size') – The Commission has announced today that 100 councillors should be elected to Birmingham City Council in the future (from 2018).

The other electoral arrangements of the council are:

- The total number of wards.
- The number of councillors representing each ward.
- Ward boundaries.
- Names of wards.

The next stage of the review is to re-draw ward boundaries to accommodate 100 city councillors. We are asking local people and groups to put forward their suggestions for new wards, ward boundaries and ward names across the whole city.

Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 14th Floor Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0330 500 1525; reviews@lgbce.org.uk; www.lgbce.org.uk

When?

Today - 21 July 2015 - is the start of a ten week information gathering phase of the review during which the Commission is inviting proposals for new warding arrangements. The consultation will close on 28 September 2015.

After considering all representations made during this consultation, the Commission intends to publish draft recommendations – for new wards, ward boundaries and ward names - in December 2015. There will then be a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations.

Final recommendations are expected to be published in May 2016. The new electoral arrangements will come into effect at the local elections in 2018.

How to get involved?

We welcome views from individuals and organisations across Birmingham on where they think new ward patterns should be drawn to accommodate 100 councillors.

In drawing up a pattern of wards, the Commission must balance three criteria, which are set out in law, namely:

- **To deliver electoral equality** where each councillor represents roughly the same number of voters as others across the city – so if you are proposing a ward to accommodate one councillor, it should contain roughly 8000 voters, a two-member ward should include around 16000 and so on. We would never expect to achieve perfect electoral equality but the further away your proposal is from the target, the more evidence we would expect to see for your proposal under the other two criteria below. Electorate data to help you take this into consideration is available on our website.
- **That the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities** – we would be interested in hearing evidence of community ties (local group activities, issues that affect a local area, shared facilities and amenities etc.)
- **That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government** – so that the ward could be represented effectively (it is easy to travel from one part of the ward to the other, has recognisable boundaries, its name is clear and makes sense to local people etc.)

We are asking local people and organisations for their views as to the best pattern of wards for Birmingham which meet the criteria set out above.

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APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE

To be supplied upon completion of internal consultation process.