

CITY COUNCIL - 22 January 2018

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed Nottingham City Council response to the Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Review of Electoral Equality in Nottingham City.
- 1.2 Council are asked to consider counter proposals for a Warding Pattern in the City of Nottingham, for submission to the LGBCE, and provide formal endorsement.
- 1.3 More details of the counter proposal are set out below under **Sections 6 and 7**.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council accepts the Draft Recommendations of the LGBCE in respect of the following wards in the city: **Aspley, Basford, Berridge, Bestwood, Bilborough, Bulwell, Bulwell Forest, Dales, Leen Valley, Lenton & Wollaton East, Mapperley, Radford, St Anns, Sherwood and Wollaton West** wards.
- 2.2 That the Council accepts the recommendations to amendments to the LGBCE's recommendations in relation to the proposed **Park, City, New Meadows, Embankment, Arboretum, Hyson Green, Clifton North and Clifton South** wards.
- 2.3 That Council delegates authority to the Leader of the Council to make any necessary amendments to the report following on from the Full Council debate.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Nottingham is a diverse city where we have worked hard to deliver community cohesion. People from diverse background live and work together in a way we are proud of. The LGBCE's proposals go against this work and look to segregate wards based on race, demography, income and housing tenure. This is particularly the case in Clifton and where there are single member wards.
- 3.2 Nottingham City Council believes that wards should reflect a range of different communities and they are made stronger by their diversity. Segregating wards into small areas based on a particular issue (such as race or income) is not in the best interests of community cohesion
- 3.3 Based on the original responses, it is difficult to argue in favour of the wholesale change proposed by the LGBCE. Proposals including so much change are unduly disruptive and therefore costly at a time when local authorities are under increasing financial pressure. If the LGCBE's proposals were adopted, we would have change our successful area working to fit into single member wards. Partners such as the Police and health colleagues would also have to make costly changes. This would undermine the model of area working that was highlighted and praised in our recent peer review.

- 3.4 Nottingham City Council believes that multi-member wards provide the best representation for areas and individuals. Having more than one councillor means that elected members can better reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. It also ensures that on occasions when one councillor is unavailable, for example due to ill health, an area remains represented. Under the Local Government Act, a Councillor can be off sick but still a councillor for 6 months, and longer in some circumstances. Adopting the LGBCE's recommendations could result in some areas being unrepresented at certain times.
- 3.5 The revised pattern of wards proposed by the City Council meets the statutory criteria for the review set by the LGBCE, whilst also addressing their concerns in respect of the electoral equality in a small number of wards in Nottingham.
- 3.6 The City Council response to the draft recommendations ensures that existing local communities and links within the city are maintained as much as possible, whilst still meeting the LGBCE's other statutory criteria.

4 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A number of different options for alternative warding patterns for Nottingham City were considered, based on the preferred council size of 55 Councillors and taking into account the views of the LGBCE as set out in their draft recommendations.
- 4.2 Options were developed with the aim of minimising unnecessarily disruptive change and any potential negative impacts on local residents and the provision of public services by the City Council and our partners. This includes any disruption or negative impact arising from the LGBCE's proposals for single member wards in the city.
- 4.3 Options were developed whilst also addressing the statutory criteria set out by the LGBCE for the review.
- 4.4 The counter proposals presented are considered the most appropriate option to achieve the aims stated above.

5 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 5.1 In July 2016, the LGBCE wrote to the Chief Executive to advise that Nottingham would be subject to an electoral review. In November 2016, representatives of the LGBCE met with the Chief Executive and Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council to confirm the process and timetable for the review.
- 5.2 At December 2016, there were 204,355 registered electors in Nottingham City, an average of 3,715 electors for each of the 55 City Councillors. Nottingham is being reviewed on the basis that:
- 30% of the council's wards have an electoral imbalance of greater than +/-10% from the average ratio of electors to councillors for the city (Arboretum, Bilborough, Bridge, Clifton North, Dunkirk & Lenton and Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey wards);

- Two wards (Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey and Dunkirk & Lenton) have an electoral imbalance of greater than -30% from the average ratio for the city.

5.3 All Councillors were briefed by the LGBCE at a session on 16 January 2017. Following this, and in line with the LGBCE's timetable for the review, the City Council submitted its view on a preferred Council size in May 2017, recommending the current council size of 55 Councillors is maintained. The LGBCE accepted this recommendation.

5.4 The LGBCE then announced a consultation on the pattern of wards in the city, and the City Council was invited to submit its own proposals for a preferred warding pattern in Nottingham. A submission on behalf of the authority was discussed and approved at Full Council on 11 September 2017. It was submitted to the LGBCE the following day.

5.5 Based on the submissions received, the LGBCE published its Draft Recommendations for warding in Nottingham on 31 October 2017. The counter proposals in this paper and the attached submission (**Appendix 1**) set out the City Council's formal response.

6 CONSIDERATIONS INFORMING THE NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

6.1 In arriving at a revised warding pattern, Nottingham City Council has considered the LGBCE's statutory criteria for the review:

- delivering electoral equality for local voters;
- maintaining the interests and identities of local communities, and;
- providing for effective and convenient local government for the city,

6.2 Our counter proposals specifically focus on the LGBCE's draft recommendations where the City Council feels it can offer a better alternative proposal in terms of meeting the LGBCE's statutory criteria, than that put forward by the commission itself.

6.3 The proposals that are of most concern to the authority include the commission's proposals for five new single member wards (**Arboretum, City, Embankment, New Meadows and The Park**), which in our view have the most potential for disruptive change and a negative impact on the city in regard to two of the three statutory criteria set by the LGBCE:

- maintaining the interests and identities of local communities.
- providing for effective and convenient local government for the city

6.4 The authority is also submitting a counter proposal to the LGBCE's proposed **Clifton North** and **Clifton South** wards.

6.5 The authority is not proposing to respond to the LGBCE's draft recommendations in respect of the following wards: **Bestwood, Bulwell, Bulwell Forest** and **Wollaton West**, which are identical to the City Council proposals submitted on 12 September 2017.

6.6 In addition, the following wards see boundary changes that either incorporate or differ marginally from the City Council's original warding proposals submitted on 12 September 2017: **Aspley, Basford, Berridge, Bilborough, Dales, Leen Valley, Lenton & Wollaton East, Mapperley, St Anns and Sherwood.**

6.7 The City Council recommends that the LGBCE's proposals in respect of the above wards (see paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6) are accepted for the purposes of the review.

7 NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL COUNTER PROPOSALS FOR WARDING IN NOTTINGHAM

7.1 Nottingham City Council's counter proposals respond to the LGBCE's proposed single member wards of: **Arboretum, City, Embankment, New Meadows** and **The Park**. Our response also covers the LGBCE's proposed **Clifton North** and **Clifton South** wards.

7.2 The overall number of wards in the city is maintained at 20, an increase of one on our original warding proposal. The City Council is proposing a warding pattern of 15 wards represented by three-members, and 5 wards represented by two-members.

7.3 For the LGBCE's proposed single member **The Park** and **City Centre** wards, we submit the counter proposal of a merged two member **Castle** ward that includes both wards.

7.4 In response to the LGBCE's proposal for a single member **Arboretum** and two member **Hyson Green** wards, we submit a counter proposal for a three member **Hyson Green & Arboretum** ward.

7.5 The LGBCE draft recommendations propose breaking up the existing **Bridge** ward into three single member wards. Their proposed **City Centre** ward is covered under **paragraph 7.3**. The remainder of the current **Bridge** ward, which covers the whole of the Meadows area is divided into two new single member wards: **Embankment** and **New Meadows**. As an alternative, the City Council proposes a two member **Meadows** ward that retains a unified Meadows identity.

7.6 In light of the other changes suggested in relation to the neighbouring areas of Arboretum, Hyson Green and the Park, the City Council accepts the LGBCE's proposal to create a two member **Radford** ward.

7.7 The City Council proposes a two member **Clifton West** ward and a three member **Clifton East** ward in response to the LGBCE's proposed three member **Clifton North** Ward and two member **Clifton South** wards.

7.8 More details of the counter proposals are set out in the accompanying draft submission to the LGBCE (please see **Appendix 1**).

7.9 Where names are suggested for wards in the city, these are provisional titles put forward for the purposes of the review, and may be subject to further consultation in future.

8 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY)

8.1 None - there is no financial element in the proposal.

9 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

- 9.1 There are no legal issues arising from the contents of this report.
- 9.2 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) must abide by certain rules, set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, when drawing up their proposals for new ward boundaries. The proposed Response to the draft recommendations of the LGBCE, including counterproposals, appended to this report addresses these criteria and the issues raised by the Commission that prompted their review.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 10.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No X

An EIA is not required because there is no proposed change to Nottingham City Council policies or provision of services as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

11 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- 11.1 None

12 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 12.1 LGBCE Draft Recommendations for Nottingham City.
- 12.2 Nottingham City Council Submission to the LGBCE on Council Size.
- 12.3 Nottingham City Council Submission to the LGBCE on Warding Proposals for the City of Nottingham.

**COUNCILLOR JON COLLINS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**