

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

Date **27 June 2022**

Report of: **Head of Democratic Services**

Subject: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW - WARDING
ARRANGEMENTS**

SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is tasked to periodically review electoral arrangements for every council area in England. The last review in Fareham took place in 2000 and this review is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2024 local elections.

The second part of the electoral review is to consider the Warding Arrangements for the Borough, including a new pattern of wards and the naming of those wards. Fareham Borough Council is invited to submit its plan of warding arrangements as part of the Commission's initial consultation on warding arrangements which closes on 11 July 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee reviews the working draft of the Warding Arrangements Submission as set out in Appendix A to the report, and

- (a) considers suggesting additional wording to strengthen the narrative supporting the warding arrangements plan;
- (b) delegates authority to the Head of Democratic Services to make further alterations to the ward boundaries plan and corresponding narrative to ensure calculations remain within the target electorate figures; and
- (c) agrees to the draft plan being submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on 11 July 2022, subject to any further tweaks to ward boundaries being agreed by the Member Working Group.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) is the independent organisation responsible for conducting reviews of local authority electoral arrangements. This is carried out through an 'electoral review'. The Commission's view is that a 'good' review is one where the local authority actively engages with the process.
2. The final stage for the review is to set a new pattern of electoral wards for the Local Authority. The Commission is minded to recommend that 32 councillors should be elected to the council in future. The Commission's consultation is inviting proposals from the council, interested parties and members of the public on a pattern of electoral wards based on that number of councillors.

BACKGROUND

3. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 gives the Commission the power to review the electoral arrangements of all, or any, principal councils in England.
4. In drawing up a pattern of electoral wards, the Commission seeks to:
 - Deliver electoral equality for local voters – this means ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of people so that the value of your vote is the same regardless of where you live in the local authority area:
 - Reflect the interests and identities of local communities – this means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties and where boundaries are easily identifiable: and
 - Promote effective and convenient local government – this means ensuring that the new wards or electoral divisions can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively. In addition, the Commission must also ensure that the pattern of wards reflects the electoral cycle of the council.
5. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee is the appropriate forum to review and agree the Council's approach to drawing up new warding arrangements by virtue of its functions relating to elections, as set out in part 2, chapter 6 of the Council's Constitution.
6. Appendix A to this report contains the working draft of Fareham Borough Council's Warding Patterns Submission. The document provides a narrative on the proposed ward boundary plan by describing the three aspects, as described in paragraph 4 above.
7. Appendix B to this report is a pdf of the map of the entire Borough showing the proposed new ward boundaries. Work is ongoing to add individual ward maps to the Warding Patterns Submission document so that the narrative for each new ward sits alongside the map view of the proposed new ward.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

8. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee was first briefed on the Electoral Review in September 2021 and has received regular updates since then. The Committee is once again being asked to contribute by providing ideas and narrative to support the Council's submission on warding patterns.
9. A Member Working Group has also been established to provide focused and specific input outside of the scheduled committee meeting structure. Conversations between Officers and members of the working group have been ongoing since February covering the various aspects of warding arrangements and how to approach drawing up a plan.
10. The Member Working Group is served by Councillors Woodward, Mrs Bryant, Mrs Walker, Bird and Mrs Trott thus providing knowledge and experience of the areas of the Borough requiring specific attention – the western wards cluster, the Welborne development, Fareham Town Centre and the Portchester areas. The working group also provides a political balance with the inclusion of the opposition group leader.
11. It should be noted that the Warding Patterns document is very much a “work in progress” and that all Members have an opportunity to contribute to the narrative before it is submitted to the Commission by 11 July 2022.

WARDING PATTERN CONSIDERATIONS

12. The approach taken to drafting the new warding pattern is described in the Warding Patterns Submission document from paragraph 10, attached at Appendix A.
13. As well as taking into account the Boundary Commission's objectives, as set out in paragraph 4 above, Officers have identified the following local issues for consideration when drawing up new warding patterns:
14. Since the last boundary review completed in May 2000, a number of administrative issues have been identified such as individual properties being built on a piece of land next to an existing boundary line where the access road is in one ward but the new property is in another ward. This can result in next door neighbours in one street voting in different wards.
15. Across the Borough, 18 roads have been identified where the road is split by a ward boundary. These have been reviewed and corrected where possible.
16. The naming of wards is recognised by the Commission as being important to local people and appropriate naming of wards should reflect community identities. As part of the review the following ward name changes are being proposed: (the existing name is given for reference only as the existing ward boundaries may have changed significantly as part of the review process)

Existing Name	Proposed Name
Fareham East	Downend and Wallington
Fareham North	Uplands and Funtley
Fareham North West	Fareham Park
Fareham South	Fort Fareham
Fareham West	Avenue

Portchester East	Castle
Portchester West	Wicor
Sarisbury	Sarisbury and Whiteley
Titchfield	Meon
Warsash	Hook with Warsash

17. A new ward of Fareham Town is proposed which takes some of what is currently Fareham East.
18. The narrative accompanying the proposed new ward names appears under the relevant headings from paragraph 23 in Appendix A.
19. This report asks the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee to contribute to the narrative by suggesting additional wording to strengthen the reasoning based on local knowledge and historical references. Similarly it may be relevant to suggest removing or changing the text in the draft document where applicable to make a comprehensive case.
20. The Committee is therefore asked to consider the following questions and to contribute ideas and opinions for inclusion in the Warding Pattern Submission:
- (a) Identifiable boundaries – are there natural features such as rivers and woodland, as well as railway lines and major roads, which provide clearly identifiable boundaries.
 - (b) Facilities – are there local shopping centres or leisure facilities which are the focal point of a local community.
 - (c) Community groups – is there a local residents’ group or community centre that unites a group of people with shared interests.
21. The Committee is invited to suggest additional wording under each new ward heading from paragraph 23 in Appendix A. Officers will continue to refine the content of the submission before the 11 July deadline.

NEXT STEPS

22. After the Council’s Warding Arrangements Plan is submitted by 11 July 2022, the Commission will use local views, including the Council’s, to draw up proposals for new ward boundaries. The Commission’s proposals will be published in early September and a further consultation will run from 6 September 2022 to 15 November 2022.
23. Based on the information received during the draft recommendation’s consultation, the Commission will then produce a final recommendation for Fareham Borough Councils future electoral arrangements in January 2023. This recommendation will then be laid before Parliament to be put into law and will come into effect from the local elections to be held in May 2024.

RISK ASSESSMENT

24. The Council is required to engage in the Electoral Review process, as set out in legislation. The review provides the opportunity for Members to fully engage and contribute to the submission during the preparatory work phase.

CONCLUSION

25. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee is invited to consider the content of the working draft of the Council's Warding Arrangements submission as set out in Appendix A and make contributions to its content.
26. The Committee is specifically asked to consider the questions as set out in paragraph 20 above and to consider recommendations (a) (b) and (c):
- (a) considers suggesting additional wording to strengthen the narrative supporting the warding arrangements plan;
 - (b) delegates authority to the Head of Democratic Services to make further alterations to the ward boundaries plan and corresponding narrative to ensure calculations remain within the target electorate figures; and
 - (c) agrees to the draft plan being submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on 11 July 2022, subject to any further tweaks to ward boundaries being agreed by the Member Working Group.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Working Draft – FBC Warding Patterns Submission

Appendix B – Working Draft – Map of proposed new warding arrangements

Background Papers:

Presentation to Licensing & Regulatory Affairs Committee 28 September 2021

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review for Fareham – A Guide for Councillors

Reference Papers:

The Borough of Fareham (Electoral Changes) Order 2001

[LGBCE – How to propose a pattern of wards](#)

[LGBCE – Electoral Review for Fareham](#)

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Leigh Usher. (Ext 4553)