

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

Date: 3 November 2022

Title: Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Electoral Review of North Tyneside Council (Warding Arrangements)

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

**Cabinet Member(s): Mrs N Redfearn,
Elected Mayor**

Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

**Responsible Officer: Jon Ritchie
Director of Resources**

Tel: (0191) 643 5724

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking an electoral review of North Tyneside Council. As part of this electoral review the Authority must provide certain information to LGBCE, including a proposed future pattern of Council wards for LGBCE's consideration. This report therefore sets out a potential warding arrangement which has been developed on the Authority's behalf by a cross-party Elected Member Boundary Review Group, supported by officers, for Council's consideration. The report further proposes that this warding arrangement is submitted to LGBCE on behalf of the Authority, and that it represents the Authority's official response to this stage of the electoral review process, in time for the LGBCE's deadline for receipt of such information (7th November 2022).

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) Agrees that the proposed warding arrangement submission attached as **Appendix A** to this report is provided to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as North Tyneside Council's official response to the Commission's request for warding information, in time for the Commission's stated deadline of 7th November 2022; and that the Chief Executive be given authority to submit the proposed warding arrangement to the Commission on behalf of the Authority.
- (2) Notes that proposals on warding patterns may also be provided to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by any member of the public, external body, group or organisation which wishes to make a representation regarding potential future warding arrangements within North Tyneside, and that the

Commission will consider all such submissions in making recommendations on future warding arrangements for North Tyneside.

- (3) Notes that the formal determination of any future warding arrangements / warding patterns for North Tyneside will be made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by 27th June 2023 (following a period of further public consultation between 7th February and 17th April 2023), and confirmed by Parliamentary Order in due course.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 30th September 2022.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework:

This report does not align directly to any of the priorities in the Council Plan, but is required to ensure compliance with information requested by the LGBCE under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which requires the Authority to provide information requested of it by the LGBCE.

1.5 Information:

Background

- 1.5.1 In 2021 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England notified North Tyneside Council of its intention to conduct an electoral review. An electoral review is an examination of a local authority's electoral arrangements. This involves an assessment of:
- (a) The total number of councillors elected to the local authority;
 - (b) The number and boundaries of wards for the purposes of the election of councillors;
 - (c) The number of councillors for any ward of a local authority; and
 - (d) The name of any ward or division.
- 1.5.2 The electoral arrangements of all principal local authorities in England are periodically reviewed by the LGBCE. The most common reasons for undertaking an electoral review are where significant change in population, localised increases from major housing developments or the movement of people into, out of, or within the local authority area have altered the levels of electoral equality (meaning that elected members are not representing broadly the same number of electors throughout each of the wards in the borough). North Tyneside Council was last reviewed in 2003.
- 1.5.3 The LGBCE briefed officers and members of the Authority in early 2022 about the purpose, methodology and timeframes of the electoral review. This included a briefing offered to all then elected members of the Authority, hosted by LGBCE which took place on 3rd February 2022. As explained by the LGBCE, an electoral review has the following key stages:
- (a) **Preliminary stage** – LGBCE gather initial information about the local authority, including electoral forecast data, and meet with councillors, officers and group leaders
 - (b) **Councillor numbers stage** – LGBCE decide how many councillors should be elected to the Council in future, based on evidence. The LGBCE base this decision on four

- factors (the governance arrangements of the council; the council's scrutiny functions; the representational role of councillors; and future trends and plans for the council)
- (c) **Warding arrangements stage** – LGBCE ask the Council and public for views on where the boundaries between wards should lie, and the names of wards
 - (d) **Draft recommendations** – LGBCE publish draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements, for consultation with the Authority and the public
 - (e) **Final recommendations** – LGBCE produce final recommendations on future electoral arrangements, which will be put before Parliament in a draft order to be made law. The draft order, if made, gives effect to the final recommendations and is laid before Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days.

Council Size / 'Councillor Numbers' Stage

- 1.5.4 The Authority was required to provide information to LGBCE for the 'councillor numbers' stage in July 2022. Having considered the Authority's evidence set out in a written submission, the LGBCE announced on 30th August 2022 that North Tyneside Council will stay with a council size of 60 elected members, across 20 wards (i.e. three councillors per ward). There is therefore no change to North Tyneside Council's councillor numbers.

'Warding Arrangements' Stage

- 1.5.5 The electoral review is now at the 'warding arrangements' stage of the process. During this phase local authorities which are the subject of an electoral review must provide information to LGBCE on a proposed future warding pattern and also future ward names. In preparing a proposal on warding arrangements, local authorities are required as far as possible to develop a warding pattern which fulfils the following criteria (all of which have equal weight):

- (a) **Delivering electoral equality for local electors:** this means that as far as possible each ward in North Tyneside should have an equal number of electors in it, so that there is equality of representation across the borough. North Tyneside's electorate is forecast to be 165,332 by 2028 which is the year used by LGBCE for assessing electorate numbers. As North Tyneside will have 60 councillors across 20 wards (three councillors per ward), this means that as far as possible any warding pattern proposed should aim to have circa 8,268 electors in each ward. The LGBCE recognise that it is unlikely that any local authority will be able to have exactly this number in every ward and a tolerance will therefore be applied when the proposed electorate in a ward deviates from this figure. However, electoral equality should be the starting point when developing a proposal on warding arrangements.
- (b) **Interests and identities of local communities:** as far as possible any proposed warding pattern should avoid splitting local ties and should have boundaries which are easily identifiable. The LGBCE say that there should be evidence to support the proposed boundaries, ideally a combination of factual information (such as the existence of communication links, facilities and organisations) along with an explanation of how local people use these facilities. Issues such as transport, shared interests / particular community characteristics, existence of community groups, facilities and identifiable boundaries (such as roads and rail lines) might provide evidence of the interests and identities of local communities.
- (c) **Effective and convenient local government:** this means ensuring that the wards can be represented effectively by their elected representatives and that the new electoral arrangements allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively. The geographic size of wards should be considered (not too big or small), and internal

access (allowing people to move within the ward, without having to venture outside of it, by road, footpaths, footways). This is also the criterion under which any changes to ward names can be proposed, and LGBCE state that they prefer ward names which are 'distinct, short and easily identifiable'.

- 1.5.6 The deadline for provision of this information to LGBCE by North Tyneside Council (and any individuals or other organisations which may wish to make proposals) is 7th November 2022.

Development of a proposed new Warding Arrangement for North Tyneside

- 1.5.7 A cross-party working group of elected members, supported by officers, was convened in order to examine and apply the criteria set out above to North Tyneside and to prepare a proposed new warding arrangement.
- 1.5.8 Having worked on potential warding patterns over a period of several weeks, and considering various alternatives, a proposed new warding arrangement for North Tyneside is set out in **Appendix A** to this report. It is considered that this warding arrangement strikes an appropriate balance between the criteria used by LGBCE, and is supported by all evidence available. Accordingly this warding pattern is considered to be the optimal warding arrangement, within the confines of the LGBCE's warding criteria, for the borough.
- 1.5.9 It is therefore proposed that the warding arrangements set out in the proposal at **Appendix A** become the formal submission from North Tyneside Council to LGBCE at the warding arrangements phase of the electoral review.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

Option 1

Council agrees that the warding arrangements set out in **Appendix A** are submitted to LGBCE as the formal response of North Tyneside Council to LGBCE's request for information at the warding patterns stage of the electoral review.

Option 2

Council does not agree that the warding arrangements set out in **Appendix A** are submitted to LGBCE as the formal response of North Tyneside Council to LGBCE's request for information at the warding patterns stage of the electoral review, and instead submits an alternative proposed warding arrangement.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

- (a) The warding arrangements set out in **Appendix A** have been prepared and refined over a period of several weeks by a cross-party working group of elected members, supported by officers, and are considered to represent the most appropriate warding pattern for the borough having regard to LGBCE's criteria set out at 1.5.5 above and available evidence.

(b) Any alternative warding pattern would not have the benefit of the same extensive consideration, discussion and evaluation of evidence, and accordingly would not be well placed to represent the official submission to LGBCE on behalf of the Authority. However, should individuals or groups wish to present an alternative warding arrangement to LGBCE for consideration, then the LGBCE would be pleased to receive these submissions direct from the respective authors and will give such submissions equal weight when considering and determining future warding patterns for the borough.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix A: North Tyneside Council Electoral Review (2022/23) –Proposed Future Warding Arrangements for North Tyneside

1.9 Contact officers:

Allison Mitchell, Senior Manager: Governance (telephone (0191) 643 5724)

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Electoral Reviews Technical Guidance (November 2021, updated April 2022) - [Microsoft Word - technical-guidance-2021](#)
- (2) Local Government Boundary Commission for England – News Release on Councillor Numbers, 30th August 2022 - [News Release: Have your say on a new political map for North Tyneside Council | LGBCE Site](#)
- (3) Section 56 and Schedule 2 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 - [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no direct financial implications to the proposals set out in this report. North Tyneside Council currently has twenty wards, with three councillors representing each ward. This will not change once the LGBCE's electoral review is concluded. Only the positioning of the boundaries between wards may change, which in itself will have no financial impact.

In future, once the LGBCE's electoral review has concluded and a new warding pattern has been made law for North Tyneside, there is likely to be a requirement for further consequential work around electoral administration arrangements including a review of polling districts and administration thereof. This may bring about additional costs which cannot be quantified with certainty at this stage in the process. However, this will be necessary in order to comply with the law (a Parliamentary Order which will be made once the electoral review process is concluded).

2.2 Legal

Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 the LGBCE is required to periodically review the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England. Section 56(9) of this Act provides that a principal council must, if requested by the LGBCE to do so, provide the LGBCE by such date as it may specify, with any information that it may reasonably require in connection with its functions under this section. The LGBCE has requested North Tyneside Council to prepare information on a proposed new warding pattern, based on the criteria set out earlier in this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Both the LGBCE and North Tyneside Council have publicised the electoral review on the respective websites of each organisation, and on their respective social media pages. In addition, 50 posters publicising the electoral review have been displayed in the Authority's public buildings. A Community Briefing, organised by the Authority, was delivered by the LGBCE (supported by officers of the Authority) on 12th October 2022.

2.4 Human rights

There are no specific human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

An electoral review is aimed at ensuring fairness in the electoral arrangements of local authorities in England, and particularly with regard to the principle of electoral equality (i.e. that all councillors represent broadly a similar number of electors in each ward). The Authority has had specific regard to this aim when preparing the warding arrangements described in this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risks associated with this report. The Authority is required to provide proposals on warding patterns, with associated supporting evidence, for consideration by LGBCE as part of the electoral review. The decision maker on the matter of future wards will ultimately be the LGBCE, based on the evidence which they gather and consultation which they undertake as part of their work.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Director(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Assistant Chief Executive X