

Council report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Chief Executive

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To: Council

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South Oxfordshire District Council – New Warding Arrangements

Recommendation

That Council agrees the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England attached as Appendix A to this report

Purpose of Report

1. This report invites Council to agree a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) for England on warding arrangements as it reduces in size from 48 to 36 members.

Background

2. In March of this year the LGBCE commenced an electoral review at our request. In June it announced that it was minded to recommend (ultimately, parliament takes the decision) a council size of 36. This was the number that Council agreed to propose at its meeting in February.
3. The next stage of the review is to develop warding proposals. At this time the LGBCE has published nothing so we have a blank canvass on which to make proposals. However, the number of councillors we put forward must add up to 36 (or conceivably 35 or 37 if there are particular reasons justifying such a variation) and best comply with the three criteria that govern electoral reviews, all of which carry equal weight. These are:
 - to deliver electoral equality for voters
 - to provide boundaries that reflect natural communities
 - to provide effective and convenient local government
4. In November the LGBCE will publish its draft warding proposals and council will have an opportunity to decide its formal response to these at a meeting next

January. The benefit of making a submission now though is that it will hopefully influence the LGBCE to publish draft proposals that accord with our wishes.

5. Appendix A sets out the submission that I am inviting Council to agree for onward submission to the LGBCE. I have not attached the accompanying maps because of the difficulties that may arise in trying to open them, but they are all available via our website. .
6. The LGBCE will want to know the level of support for particular proposals and whether counter views were based on party politics or local factors. The debate at Council will, therefore, be structured to enable this to happen.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from this report

Legal Implications

8. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

7. Council is invited to agree that I send the submission attached at Appendix A to the LGBCE.

Background papers

There are no background papers. The LGBCE's website provides comprehensive details of the review to date – <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/oxfordshire/south-oxfordshire-fer>