

COUNCIL

DATE	14 th December 2023
REPORT OF	Rob Walsh, Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Helen Isaacs, Assistant Chief Executive
SUBJECT	NELC Ward Boundary Review
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Council has two clear strategic priorities – stronger economy and stronger communities. Having clear Ward boundaries enables electors the opportunity to engage in local and national democracy, and provides a sense of belonging within their community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to establish a working group to prepare the draft submission on behalf of the Council in relation to the forthcoming Local Boundary Review which will be presented to Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. A Ward Boundary Review Working Group be established to prepare the necessary submissions in relation to Council Size and Ward Boundaries when required before consideration of Council.
2. The Terms of Reference, laid out at appendix 1 of this report, be agreed.
3. Members be appointed to the Ward Boundary Review Working Group in accordance with the recommended composition as laid out in the Terms of Reference at appendix 1 of the report.
4. That the time scales for the Review, laid out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at appendix 2, be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 sets out the duty placed on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake electoral reviews of every principal local authority in England from ‘time to time’. The last review for North East Lincolnshire Council was undertaken in 2000 and this current review needs to be completed in time for our May 2026 elections.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) will be carrying out a review of the council's size, wards and boundaries starting summer 2024 and this takes roughly 12 months to complete. The last review in North East Lincolnshire Council was undertaken in 2000.
- 1.2. In preparation for the review, officers are undertaking a Parish Council Community Governance Review and have completed an Electoral Review; where it was agreed to remain with elections by thirds.
- 1.3. The LGBCE will conduct the review in two stages, firstly the number of councillors (council size) and then the warding pattern, including the names of those wards. Consultation will take place at each stage of the review with the Council, the public and stakeholders. Draft recommendations for the proposed new Wards will be published by the LGBCE for a further round of consultation. The publication of the final recommendations will mark the end of the review process. Once laid, the LGBCE will lay an Order in Parliament and seek to do this on 28th October 2025. The new electoral arrangements will be implemented at an 'all out' election in May 2026 before returning to the usual cycle of elections by thirds. A polling district review will then need to be undertaken for the new Wards between November 2025 and February 2026.

Role of the Authority

- 1.4. Prior to the May 2024 elections, there will be a preliminary period of around six months during which the LGBCE will seek key information from the Council about the review, including details of current Wards, polling districts and electorate. It is proposed that a Ward Boundary Review Working Group be established to produce the information required.
- 1.5. There are three main areas of work for the Working Group:
 - To prepare electoral forecasts, mapping and details of housing development, including future housing developments covering the next five-year period; broken down by polling district level, to determine the council size (number of councillors)
 - Prepare and submit a warding pattern during the first public consultation and respond to draft recommendations.
 - Support the LGBCE in publicising the review, including by sharing details of interested parties and supporting with community and residents' groups/meetings.
- 1.6. The Terms of Reference and Elected Member composition for the Working Group is laid out at appendix 1 of the report.
- 1.7. The timetable for the review, which is set by the LGBCE, is laid out at appendix 2.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Failure to complete the submissions on time to the LGBCE would result in the Council having no say on the recommendations out forward by the LGBCE.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Do nothing – this would not be recommended as the LGBCE welcomes submissions to help them understand the views of the council and to gain an insight into the local area.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The review requests the local authority consult with a wide range of stakeholders including members, political parties, community groups and local residents on behalf of the LCBCE.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There will be minimal financial costs involved in undertaking the review.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications on children and young people arising from this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 8.1 The cross party working group will report direct to Council, which will approve the final submissions on behalf of the authority.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As outlined within section 5, there are minimal costs that would result from the consultation process.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The LGBCE is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010 pursuant to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. The LGBCE has a statutory duty to undertake electoral reviews.
- 10.2 A working group to oversee and ensure cross-party involvement in progressing the review is prudent.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no HR implications directly arising from the report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The proposals contained within this report will, if agreed, affect all Wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None.

14. CONTACT OFFICERS

Laura Cowie – Elections Manager – (01472) 324295

Helen Isaacs – Assistant Chief Executive (01472) 326127

**ROB WALSH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Ward Boundary Review Working Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with the review principles approved by Council, the Working Group will:

1. Oversee the provision of information required by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in carrying out its electoral review of North East Lincolnshire, including any consultation arrangements with electors or other stakeholders;
2. Update full Council on the progress of the electoral review;
3. Make recommendations to full Council on proposed submissions to the LGBCE relating to:
 - The total number of councillors for North East Lincolnshire;
 - The total number of wards and boundaries within North East Lincolnshire;
 - The number of councillors to be elected to each ward within North East Lincolnshire;
 - The name of any ward within North East Lincolnshire.
4. Provide such further advice and support as may be requested by the Council relating to, or arising from, the electoral review.

MEMBERSHIP

That the membership of the Working Group consist of seven members, appointed by Council on a proportional basis according to the political composition of the Council. Should this result in a minority political group not being represented on the Working Group then a member of that group be invited to attend and contribute to meetings of the Working Group on a non-voting basis.

North East Lincolnshire Council: Electoral Review Timetable

These timetables outline the key dates and activities for both the Council (shown in bold) and the Commission during the review process.

Preliminary Period

Attendees

<i>Briefings</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>LGBCE</i>	<i>Key Dates</i>
Preliminary Meeting	Council Leader Chief Executive	Chair Chief Executive	16 October 2023
Officer Briefing	Council Officers involved in review	Review Manager Review Officer	13 th November 2023
Group Leader Briefing	Council Group Leaders	Lead Commissioner Review Manager Review Officer	18 October 2023
Full Council Briefing	All Councillors	Lead Commissioner Review Manager Review Officer	13 th November 2023
Parish/Town Council & Local Groups Briefing	Not required	Review Manager Review Officer	TBC

Council Size

Involvement

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>LGBCE</i>	<i>Key Dates</i>
Develop council size proposal	Council Political Groups	Officers will be available to answer any technical queries on making a submission.	Now to 22 July 2024
Submission of council size proposals	Council Political Groups	Officers will acknowledge receipt of submissions.	22 July 2024
Commission Meeting: Council Size	Not required	Commission	17 September 2024

Warding Patterns

Involvement

Activity	Council	LGBCE	Key Dates
Consultation on warding patterns	Council Political Groups General Public	Run consultation, collate & analyse responses.	24 September 2024 to 2 December 2024
Commission Meeting: Draft Recommendations	Not required	Commission	18 March 2025
Consultation on Draft Recommendations	Council Political Groups General Public	Publish draft recommendations. Run consultation, collate & analyse responses.	13 May 2025 to 21 July 2025
Commission Meeting: Final Recommendations	Not required	Commission	14 October 2025
Final Recommendations Published	Not required	Commission publish final recommendations report and mapping	28 October 2025

Order

Involvement

Activity	Council	LGBCE	Key Dates
Order laid	Not required	Commission	Autumn 2025
Order made	Not required	Commission	Autumn/Winter 2025
Implementation	Council	Not required	May 2026