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| Subject: | Electoral Review process |
| Reason for briefing note: | To provide an overview of the key stages of the electoral review and the processes involved. |
| Responsible officer(s): | Suzanne Martin, Electoral Services Manager |
| Senior leader sponsor: | Alison Alexander, Managing Director |
| Date: | 16 November 2017 |

SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently engaged in a review of the Royal Borough's warding arrangements which will conclude in June 2018. The process is governed by strict timelines that must be adhered to at each stage to ensure that sufficient time is allocated for members of the public and other interested parties or organisations to fully engage if they wish to do so.

The LGBCE will use the evidence provided to them during consultation to shape the Draft and Final Recommendations that they decide upon for RBWM's new warding arrangements which come into effect in May 2019.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At a meeting of Full Council in September 2016, it was decided that the Royal Borough could contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and request an electoral review. In November 2016, the LGBCE confirmed that it would accept the Royal Borough's onto its review programme. Consequently any electoral changes arising from the review would come into effect for May 2019. The next scheduled local elections in May 2019 will be conducted on the new ward boundaries.
- 1.1 The electoral review is concerned with only the configuration of the internal ward boundaries within the Royal Borough and only minimal changes to arrangements at parish level would be made if they arise as a direct consequence of alterations to wards at Borough level.
- 1.2 The electoral review is a local review which is entirely independent of the national parliamentary review overseen by the Boundary Commission.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1 The electoral review has been divided into two distinct stages of activity. Stage one commenced in February 2017 and concluded in July 2017. Stage two commenced in September 2017 and will conclude in June 2017.

Stage 1: Council size

- 2.2 Stage 1 of the review determines the future council size of the Royal Borough from 2019 onwards. LGBCE consults with only the Borough Council at Stage 1 and requires the local council to make a submission outlining the number of councillors it considers it will need

from 2019 onwards in order to deliver effective and convenient local government. The Borough Council needs to justify its case and explain how the number identified effectively delivers its core executive, regulatory and scrutiny functions.

2.3 An Electoral Review Working Group was established to examine the future delivery of the council's services from 2019 and to determine what the future council size should be. The Group of seven members (six Conservative and one Opposition) met three times between February and June 2017 and concluded that the future council size should be 43 members. The Stage 1 report was approved at the Full Council meeting in June 2017. Consequently, four items were submitted to the LGBCE at the end of July:

- Stage 1 report on future council size
- Electorate forecasts for 2023 by current polling district
- Electoral register as at 1 July 2017
- Stakeholder database for consultation.

Stage 2: Warding patterns

- 2.4 On 19 September 2017, the LGBCE wrote to the Managing Director to advise that it was minded to recommend a future council size of 43 members.
- 2.5 On 26 September 2017, the first phase of public consultation opened where the LGBCE would be inviting submissions on warding patterns which could accommodate the 43 members it was minded to recommend as the new council size. The closing date for submissions is 4 December 2017.
- 2.6 Consultation during Stage 2 of the review is open to the general public and the LGBCE are interested in gathering as many views as possible from organisations or individuals who have expressed a vested interest in the review.
- 2.7 In order to raise awareness about the review, the LGBCE have provided the council with copies of posters to display in the parish council offices and library/contact points. They have also issued press releases.
- 2.8 The Royal Borough has been advised to make a representation on a pattern for the whole Borough. In order to achieve this, the Electoral Review Working Group intends to meet three times from September to November 2017 to discuss and decide a pattern of wards. An integral part of the process is ensuring that local communities and identities are reflected in the new pattern of wards, whilst balancing this requirement with the delivery of electoral equality where each councillor will represent on average the same number of electors for each ward.
- 2.9 The agreed pattern of wards will form the basis of the council's Stage 2 report and will be presented to Full Council on 12 December 2017. Provided it is approved, it will be submitted to the LGBCE by 15 December 2017.

3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 From December 2017 until February 2018, the LGBCE will consider all of the representations they have received in order to create their own pattern of wards. The LGBCE will publish its Draft Recommendations of warding patterns for RBWM on 6 February 2018. This also marks the second phase of public consultation where the

LGBCE invites comments on its Draft Recommendations and alternative warding patterns to its proposed patterns up until 16 April 2018.

- 3.2 From the close of the second phase of consultation and early June 2018, the LGBCE will consider any counter proposals to its patterns that have been received and will make revisions where appropriate. The Final Recommendations for the Royal Borough will be published on 5 June 2017 and the LGBCE will commence the process to lay the Statutory Order before Parliament shortly thereafter.