

Boundary Review Group

Thursday 11 June 2015

Present: Councillor Sharpe (Chair)

Councillors Bell, Johnson, Khan, Mehta and Scudder

Also present: Head of Democracy and Governance
Electoral Services Manager
Democratic Services Manager

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
	None were received
2	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
	There were no disclosures of interest
3	REVIEW OF WARD BOUNDARIES
	<p>The Head of Democracy and Governance outlined the current situation. Work had started on the Boundary Review at the end of 2014. Council made a recommendation to the Boundary Commission that we retain the current number of Councillors at 36. There was now a consultation period open with the Boundary Commission where they had recommended retaining 36 councillors across 12 wards.</p> <p>In making recommendations regarding the size of wards, the Head of Democracy and Governance reminded the group that there were three criteria which the Boundary Commission would take into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Delivering electoral equality – this was their primary consideration2. Reflecting interests and identities of local communities e.g., housing estates, natural boundaries (roads and rivers)3. Effective and convenient local government – this case has already been made through the submission on the number of councillors. <p>The Boundary Review Group now needed to look at what ward patterns might work and have the evidence to support any recommendations.</p> <p>If councillors were unable to unanimously agree on a proposal then areas where there was some agreement could be forwarded to the Boundary Commission. If the Council did not make a submission then the Boundary Commission would decide how to divide the Borough.</p> <p>The Head of Democracy and Governance commented it had been discovered that</p>

the incorrect data had been put on the Boundary Commission website for public consultation as they had missed out the projected figures up to 2020 that the Council had supplied them.

The Elections Manager explained that the projected figures had been obtained from the Planning Policy department regarding developments which had been given planning consent.

He also explained that the 1 December 2014 actual elector figures used by the Boundary Commission were lower than those now on the electoral register at 1 June 2015 as there had been no autumn canvass due to Individual Electoral Registration earlier in the year. There had also been a drive by elections to register voters prior to the General Election in May 2015. The Elections Manager had pointed out the error in the projected figures to the Commission and also given them the actual electoral numbers as at 1 June 2015 and suggested if they were correcting the projected figures to 2020 they might want to also update the actual figures. However, the Boundary Commission may continue to work with 1 December 2014 figures.

The Elections Manager continued that any developments which would not take place for more than 5 years, i.e. beyond 2020, were not taken into consideration in the projected figures.

Following a question from Councillor Sharpe, the Elections Manager said that the figures councillors should use in order to make ward calculations were the total electorate at 1 December 2014 and the 2020 projection figure of 75,762 but undertook to advise members further upon receipt of confirmation from the Boundary Commission.

Councillor Mehta commented that it was important to link councillors' local knowledge with the figures presented by the Elections Manager. The Elections Manager responded that Councillors would be provided with a list of all electors in every street which would show the impact of moving a street to another ward. However, moving sections of streets would have to be looked at closely with the elections team.

The Group discussed an extension of the consultation deadline to take into account the incorrect numbers published on the website as some community groups had already been looking at the figures. They also requested that the Boundary Commission be asked to contact all those who had already made a submission to explain that the figures were incorrect. Also, that councillors who had been publicising the consultation to residents should try to make them aware of the error. The Head of Democracy and Governance would contact the Communications team regarding putting a message on the Council's website.

The Group requested that urgent contact be made with the Boundary Commission to ask them to take into account the figures which were correct at 1 June 2015.

Councillor Khan commented that the wards which would need to be looked at were: Tudor, Central, Vicarage and Oxhey. There was a possibility that Woodside and

	<p>Stanborough may also have to be considered. Councillor Mehta asked that the Group work towards a 0% variance to avoid having to repeat a Boundary Review too soon. The Elections Manager stated that for a further boundary review by the Boundary Commission to take place within the next five years, or anytime soon thereafter, there would need to be a variance which exceeded 10% in 25% of wards.</p> <p>The Group requested that the figures circulated at the meeting be provided electronically.</p> <p>Councillor Sharpe asked that each group bring back a proposal to the next meeting. It was decided in order to give time for this that the meeting on Monday 15 June be cancelled, therefore the next meeting would be Wednesday 17 June 6.30pm. The Head of Democracy and Governance asked that any suggestions from groups be forwarded to her 24 hours before the next meeting in order that they might be displayed on maps for discussion at the next meeting. A map would also be produced showing electoral equality without any community boundaries being taken into account to be shared at the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION – Elections Manager to contact Boundary Commission to request that everyone who has already made a submission as part of the consultation is contacted regarding the error in the figures on the website. Also to request that the Boundary Commission uses 1 June 2015 figures.</p> <p>ACTION – Elections Manager to provide figures circulated at the meeting electronically to the Group.</p> <p>ACTION – Head of Democracy and Governance to contact Communications team regarding putting notice on the website that the figures had been incorrect.</p> <p>ACTION – Group members to bring back proposals from each political group to be discussed at next meeting. Also, a copy sent to the Head of Democracy and Governance 24 hours prior to the meeting.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED That the meeting on 15 June be cancelled</p>
5	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	6.30pm Wednesday 17 June, Committee Room 1

Chair
Boundary Review Group

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.
and finished at 7.35 p.m.