

REPORT FROM: CORPORATE DIRECTOR

TO: COUNCIL

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ELECTORAL REVIEW - SUBMISSION ON NEW WARDING PATTERN

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To report the recommendations of the Governance Working Group on a new warding pattern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Council determines the warding pattern it wishes to send to the Commission as its Stage 2 submission.
- (2) That the Corporate Director, in consultation with Group Leaders, be authorised to finalise the submission and submit it to the Commission.
- (3) That a report be submitted to the Council meeting in September on the Commission's draft recommendations.

REASON

To take forward the electoral review.

Introduction

1. Members will know that at the meeting on 5th December the Council resolved to make a Stage One submission to the Boundary Commission on the basis of a new council size of 33 councillors.
2. The Commission received five other submissions proposing different council sizes. On 27th January it announced that it was minded to recommend a council size of 33. Accordingly it has begun Stage Two of the process, namely a public consultation inviting comments to help it produce a new warding pattern based on 33 councillors. The consultation runs to 6th May.
3. The all party Governance Working Group has met on two occasions and has made the

recommendations set out below. Attached as Appendix 1 is a Discussion Note submitted to the Working Group. This is supported by the table at Appendix 2 which is the 2025 forecast for all current polling districts and wards.

4. The Discussion Note sets out the legal criteria for a new warding pattern and the numbers to achieve wards within the +/- 10% electoral equality range. It gives examples of combinations of existing wards and polling districts and initial proposals for 11 x 3 member wards which was part of the rationale for the submission for 33 councillors.

Governance Working Group considerations and recommendations

5. The Working Group expressed the desirability of achieving as far as possible cross party consensus on the new warding pattern so that the submission would be as persuasive as possible.
6. It also sought clarification on the phrase “minded to recommend” used by the Commission in announcing its decision on Council size. The Working Group was advised that the Commission had been persuaded by the Council’s submission for 33 councillors in 11x 3 member wards but in carrying out a consultation it has to retain an open mind on the possibility of a compelling argument for departing from that in some respect.
7. The figure was however a firm one and at most the Commission would only depart from it by one or two. The Commission also had a legal duty to start by considering 3 member wards in view of the fact that the Council had decided to retain elections by thirds and a very strong argument would be needed to justify one member wards.
8. The Working Group is recommending the following broad pattern of new wards. This will need further work particularly on the splitting of polling districts and also to tidy up minor anomalies and make sensible minor adjustments to ward and polling district boundaries.

9. Ward 1- West Craven West (3 members)

This comprises most of the existing Craven and Coates wards. It comprises polling districts CV1, CV2, CQ, CR less 295 electors who would transfer to CS, and CW less 287 electors who would also transfer to CS. The electorate would be 6586 which is +5.2%. Brogden and Bracewell parish meeting would be wholly contained within the ward but Barnoldswick parish would be split between this ward and West Craven East.

10. Ward 2 – West Craven East (3 members)

This comprises all of the present Earby ward (polling districts EA, EB, EC, ED and EE), plus the enlarged CS polling district described above. The electorate would be 6953 which is +11.1%. Earby, Salterforth and Kelbrook and Sough parishes would lie wholly within the ward but as mentioned above it would also contain part of Barnoldswick parish.

11. Ward 3 – Boulsworth and Foulridge (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Foulridge (FD1 and FD2), most of existing Boulsworth (BG, BH, BJ, BK) and HO from existing Horsfield. The electorate would be 6146 which is -1.7%. Foulridge, Trawden Forest and Laneshaw Bridge parishes would be wholly contained within the ward. It would also contain part of Colne parish.

12. Ward 4 – Vivary Bridge (3 members)

This comprises all of the existing Vivary Bridge ward (VA and VB) and HQ from existing Horsfield. The electorate would be 5714 which is – 8.7%. It would contain part of Colne parish.

13. Ward 5 – Waterside (3 members)

This comprises all of the existing Waterside ward (WD, WE and WF), BI from existing Boulsworth and HP from existing Horsfield. The electorate would be 6184 which is – 1.2%. It would contain part of Colne parish.

14. Ward 6 – Barrowford and Pendleside (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Barrowford (BA, BB, BC), all of existing Higherford and Blacko (BD and BE), and the Pendleside villages from existing Higham and Pendleside (HJ, HK and HL). The electorate would be 6191 which is – 1.1%. It would wholly contain the parishes of Barrowford, Blacko, Roughlee, Barley and Newchurch.

15. Ward 7 – Fence and Higham (1 member)

This comprises existing Higham (HI) and existing Old Laund Booth (OL). The electorate would be 1956 which is – 6.2%. It would wholly contain the parishes of Higham and Old Laund Booth.

16. Ward 8 – Reedley (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Reedley (RA1, RA2, RB and RC) and BQ from existing Brierfield. The electorate would be 6019 which is – 3.8%. It would wholly contain the parish of Reedley and part of the parish of Brierfield.

17. Ward 9- Brierfield (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Brierfield less BQ (BR, BS, BT) and all of existing Clover Hill less 212 electors from the existing CC polling district (CA, CB and part CC). The electorate would be 5948 which is – 4.9%%. It would contain parts of Brierfield and Nelson parishes.

18. Ward 10 – Walverden and Whitefield (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Walverden (WA), all of existing Whitefield (WH and WI) plus 212 electors from the existing CC polling district of Clover Hill. The electorate would be 5754 which is – 8.5%. It would contain part of Nelson parish.

19. Ward 11 – Southfield (3 members)

This comprises all of existing Southfield (SA and SB), MB polling district and 666 electors from the existing MA polling district of Marsden. The electorate would be 5754 which is – 5.2%. It would contain part of Nelson parish.

20. **Ward 12 – Bradley (3 members)**

This comprises existing Bradley (BL, BM, BN, BO) and 752 electors from the existing MA polling district of Marsden. The electorate would be 5456 which is – 12.8%. It would contain part of Nelson parish

Comments

21. It will be apparent that with the recommendation for a one member ward for Fence and Higham the pattern amounts to 34 councillors. As such it is a departure from the Council's Stage One submission of a council size of 33 in 11x3 member wards. It is not a multiple of three and it is not an odd number which is preferable to minimise the use of the casting vote.
22. In terms of electoral equality two wards (West Craven East and Bradley) are outside +/- 10%. This will necessitate further review of the proposed splitting of polling districts.
23. Of the other ten wards, five are within +/- 5% and all within +/- 10%.
24. The Commission wishes to receive suggested names for the new wards and the names above are recommended by the Governance Working Group.
25. If the new Council wishes to have area committees the above recommendations would produce the following:

West Craven – the same area as at present with 2 wards and 6 councillors.

Colne and District – the same area as at present with 3 wards and 9 councillors.

Nelson and Brierfield and Reedley – combining the two present areas with 5 wards and 15 councillors.

Barrowford and Western Parishes - the same area as at present with 2 wards but just 4 councillors

26. Maps will be on display at the meeting.

Next steps and future timetable

27. The submission needs to be finalised and sent to the Commission by 6th May.
28. The Commission will consider it alongside any other submissions from political groups, individual councillors other bodies and individual members of the public. The Commissioners will tour the Borough to see the area for themselves as part of developing their draft recommendations.
29. The Commission will issue its draft recommendations and begin a further public consultation on them from 30th July to 7th October. The Council will want to determine its representations on these at its meeting in September.
30. The final recommendations will be published on 3rd December.
31. Following the making of the necessary legal Order all out elections will be held in May 2020.
32. The Council is required to undertake a review of polling districts and polling stations every 5

years and this will need to be done at the end of this year when the new wards will be known.

33. The Council will also need to undertake a community governance review focussing on any changes to parish and town councils and their wards arising from the new ward pattern. This will need to be done in time for the next all out town and parish elections in 2023.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	The Council's policy is contained in the minute of the Council on December 5th proposing a council size of 33 in 11x 3 member wards.
Financial	There are no financial considerations arising directly as a result of this report. A reduction to 33 or 34 councillors will lead to a corresponding reduction in allowances (c£50,000) and potentially other small efficiencies from May 2020.
Legal:	The submission has been prepared in accordance with the advice and guidance provided by LGBCE.
Risk Management:	None arising directly from the report.
Health and Safety:	None arising directly from the report.
Sustainability:	None arising directly from the report.
Community Safety:	None arising directly from the report.
Equality and Diversity:	None arising directly from the report.

APPENDICES

1. Discussion Note for the Governance Working Group
2. Table of 2025 forecasted electorates for wards and polling districts