



Local Government Boundary Committee for England - Electoral Review Notification

Corporate Priority:	All
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 To notify members that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposes to undertake an electoral review of Melton Borough Council to be implemented in 2027.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 2.1 **Note the Local Government Boundary Commission for England proposes to undertake an Electoral Review of Melton Borough Council**
- 2.2 **Note and endorse that the Council will advise the Commission of our preferred timescale for the Review process as drafted at appendix 1**
- 2.3 **Note the Chief Executive, through his delegation, will be the point of contact with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure the Council is provided with early notification of the forthcoming review and has the appropriate governance in place to prepare and submit the necessary information to the LGBCE.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has indicated that it intends to conduct an electoral review of Melton Borough Council.

- 4.2 The LGBCE is the independent body responsible for determining the electoral arrangements of local authorities across England.
- 4.3 The purpose of an electoral review is to consider the number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward.
- 4.4 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 sets out the duty placed on the Commission to undertake an electoral review of every principal local authority in England ‘from time to time’. The last electoral review of Melton Borough Council was undertaken in 2002. Accordingly, the Commission considers that a review of this authority should take place in time to be implemented at the election in 2027.
- 4.5 The Commission has written to a number of other authorities on a similar basis.
- 4.6 The LGBCE is inviting the Council’s view on when it would like this review to start.
- 4.7 A proposed timetable is required by 21 January 2022 to allow them to begin allocating time in their work programme.
- 4.8 The proposed timetable is attached for members to review. Members should note, this review will not impact the elections scheduled for 2023.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 The LGBCE is required by law to be impartial, with its decisions based on evidence and reason.
- 5.2 The representations of all those taking part in the review are treated equally and without bias.

The Electoral Review Process

- 5.3 The first decision the Commission will take is how many councillors the Council would have. They will invite the Council (and groups on the council) to make proposals for how many members the Council believes there should be in the future.
- 5.4 Once the Commission decides on the total number of councillors, the next step will be the ‘warding pattern’ part of the process which starts with a full public consultation where the Council as well as the wider electorate, including community groups, parish/town councils and members of the public will be asked for their views on where the ward boundaries should be.
- 5.5 The LGBCE will then publish its draft recommendations which they will consult on again.
- 5.6 The publication of their final recommendations marks the end of the review process.
- 5.7 The LGBCE will then lay an Order in Parliament and seek to do so no later than the Autumn preceding the May election.
- 5.8 The new electoral arrangements will be implemented at an ‘all out’ election on the ordinary day of elections in 2027.

Stages for Electoral Reviews

- 5.9 There are various stages of an electoral review as set out in the table below:

	Stage	Action	Duration
1	Preliminary Period	Informal dialogues with the Council. Focus on gathering preliminary information	Up to 6 months in

		including electorate forecasts and other electoral date. Commissioner-level involvement in briefing group leaders on the issue of council size. Meetings will also be held with officers, group leaders, all members and where applicable town/parish councils. At the end of this process, the Council and its political groups will submit their council size proposals for the Commission to consider	advance of the formal start of the review
2	Council Size Discussion	Commission analyses submissions from the council and /or political groups on council size and takes a 'minded to' decision on council size	5 weeks
Formal Start of Review			
3	Consultation on future warding / division arrangements	The Commission publishes its initial conclusions on council size. General invitation to submit warding/division proposals based on the Commissions conclusions on council size	12 weeks
4	Development of the draft recommendations	Analysis of all representations received. The Commission reaches conclusions on its draft recommendations	12 weeks
5	Consultation on draft recommendations	Publication of draft recommendations and public consultation on them	8 weeks
6	Further consultation (if required)	Further consultation only takes place where the Commission is minded to make significant changes to its draft recommendations and where it lacks sufficient evidence of local views in relation to those changes	Up to 5 weeks
	Development of final recommendations	Analysis of all representations received. The Commission reaches conclusions on its final recommendations	12 weeks

5.10 Time periods shown are the expected typical duration of stages. They are not standards or undertakings.

5.11 The progress of a review will be determined by the nature of the issues to be addressed and the availability of information to underpin sound decision-making, not by a determination to complete a review within any given period.

Preliminary Period

5.12 Each review will generally start with a preliminary period during which time the LGBCE will meet with the local authority and interested parties to explain the review process and enable them to prepare the information they will need for the review.

- 5.13 In this stage they will work with members and local authority officers and their key partners to gather information regarding the following:
- 5.13.1 details of current electoral arrangements and the current electoral register;
 - 5.13.2 identification of parishes and their boundaries;
 - 5.13.3 other indicators which identify and build up a map of communities;
 - 5.13.4 five-year electorate forecasts from the planned end of the review).
- 5.14 They will also need to gain a clear understanding of the extent and nature of communities and the linkages between them and explore the way in which councils and councillors aim to work effectively with their communities in order to understand council size proposals.
- 5.15 The preliminary period normally ends with the submission of proposals on council size by the council under review and/or the political party groupings represented on the council, as well as any other council size submissions received.

The Role of the Council

- 5.16 There are three main areas of work for the Council in the preliminary period:
- 5.16.1 Preparing electorate forecasts, mapping and details of your housing developments. We will expect you to prepare five-year electorate forecasts broken down to polling district level. This reflects the statutory duty to consider forecasts five years from the end of the review.
 - 5.16.2 Preparing and submitting a warding pattern during the first public consultation and responding to our draft recommendations
 - 5.16.3 Supporting us in publicising the review including by sharing details of interested parties and supporting meetings with community and residents' groups.

Proposed Timescales

- 5.17 The LGBCE will endeavour to conduct the review at a time that works for the Council and its members/officers.
- 5.18 Appendix 1 details the proposed timetable. It is envisaged the process will commence in December 2024 and be completed by Winter 2026 in readiness for the elections in May 2027.
- 5.19 Members are asked to review and endorse the proposed timetable and provide any additional views that they feel should be fed back to the LGBCE at this initial stage

6 Options Considered

- 6.1 None – the Council is required to submit a response by the 21 January 2021

7 Consultation

- 7.1 The Electoral review will impact on all Councillors and all communities within Melton. To maximise participation for Councillors, residents and all relevant stakeholder groups it will be important to ensure a thorough consultation exercise is undertaken.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

- 8.1 To notify the LGBCE of our preferred timetable
- 8.2 Await further notification from LGBCE
- 8.3 Further update to Members at the commencement of the process

9 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services

10 Legal and Governance Implications

10.1 The proposed electoral review is a statutory process instigated by the LGBCE and driven by their timetable and requirements. The Council has no choice but to support and provide a significant amount of information for the review to ensure that the outcomes are in the best interests of the people of Melton.

10.2 The governance arrangements the Council puts in place to enable it to respond to the review and discharge its responsibilities is a matter for the Council.

10.3 There will be some resource implications relating to officer time to prepare the necessary statistical and other information and develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy. A full project plan will be created which will identify the officer time necessary to assist in the Review

Legal Implications reviewed by: **Monitoring Officer**

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

13.1 There are no environmental or climate change implications arising from this report.

14 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	The LGBCE do not agree to the timetable proposed	Low	Marginal	Medium Risk

Risk No	Mitigation
1	There will be sufficient time to ensure there are sufficient resources available to accommodate the timetable.

15 Background Papers

Technical Guidance Nov 2021: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/how-reviews-work/technical-guidance>

16 Appendices

16.1 Appendix A – Proposed Timetable

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