

Appendix B - Proposed Product Initiation Document

DRAFT PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENTATION (PID)

Completed By:	Laura Bateman	Project Name	Electoral Review
Programme Name:	N/A	Member Interests:	Corporate Policy Committee Electoral Review Sub Committee All Members
Directorates:	Corporate - Governance & Compliance	Services:	Democratic Services
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO):	Brian Reed	Project Manager:	Laura Bateman

VERSION: 0.1

Purpose & Vision:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Its main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

The Commission has informed the Council that it will undertake a review of the Council's electoral arrangements. This could result in the number of our councillors or ward boundaries changing.

What is an electoral review?

An electoral review will examine and propose the following new electoral arrangements for the Council:

- How many councillors the Council should have.
- How many Council wards there should be, where their boundaries should be, and what the wards should be called.

- How many councillors should represent each ward.

Why are Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements being reviewed?

The Commission decided to conduct the review because the Council now meets both of its intervention criteria:

- a) One ward has an electors-per-councillor ratio that is more than 30% different from the average for the authority
- b) More than 30% (17) of all (52) wards have a ratio that is more than 10% different from the average for the authority

The purpose of an electoral review is to ensure that:

- The Council's wards are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- New wards leave each councillor representing roughly the same number of voters as other councillors elsewhere in the authority.
- New wards, as far as possible, reflect community interests and identities, and boundaries are identifiable. Transport links will be considered, as well as community groups and facilities, natural or physical boundaries, parishes and shared interests.
- New wards promote effective and convenient local government. The number of councillors will take into account the geographic size of, and the links between, parts of wards.

To ensure the Council is best placed to respond to the Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements an officer project board has been appointed to deal with all aspects of the review, with key board members being drawn from that which successfully coordinated the Community Governance Review of Town and Parish Council Governance.

On 11th July 2023, the Corporate Policy Committee, which is responsible for the Council's response to the review, approved the appointment of a Sub-Committee which will make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of the Local Government Boundary Commission's forthcoming review of the Council's electoral arrangements.

In responding to the review, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective, to be "open", by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough.

SCOPE:

Key stages in the process

To include all elements set out in the Product Breakdown Structure.

In scope:

The Commission's Programme Manager has set out a timetable for the review, which identifies its different stages. This timetable is set out in the Key Milestones below, and outlines the key dates and activities for both the Council (shown in bold) and the Commission during the review process. It will be of key importance in terms of the Council's understanding of what will be required of it. There are 4 parts to the review:

1 - Preliminary Period – this includes:

- Meetings between the Commission, councillors, officers and group leaders. Where it considers it appropriate to do so, the Commission may meet with parish and town councils
- Collating the required Electoral Forecasts and other data and documents in line with the guidance in the Commission's Information Request Pack, which sets out exactly what information it requires from the Council. (Legislation states that the Commission's recommendations should not be based only on how many electors there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of its final recommendations)
- Community Engagement – The Boundary Commission are responsible for the Consultations and the Communications that go with it and have their own communications plan. The Council will provide the Commission with a Stakeholder database ahead of the Consultations to enable them to reach as many people as possible. When communications do start, the Council can use the Boundaries publications and materials to support the promotion of the consultations.

2 - Council Size Submission - The Commission will decide how many councillors should be elected to the Council in the future. This decision will be based on information received from the Council, and any other representations made. The Commission's view on Council size will be informed by:

- The governance arrangements of the Council
- The Council's scrutiny functions
- The representational role of Councillors
- Future trends and plans for the Council
- Its geography, community characteristics, demographic pressures and any other relevant constraints, challenges, issues or changes

The Commission anticipates that submissions will be 15-20 pages in the form of set templates/guidance provided. Best practice examples from authorities which the Commission identifies as comparable to Cheshire East have been shared.

3 - Warding Patterns Proposal – The Boundary Commission (not the Council) will run a consultation on warding patterns, following which, draft recommendations will be made upon the Council’s electoral arrangements. Further consultation on the draft recommendations will follow. The Commission’s review process might take 12-18 months to conclude, when its final recommendations will be published. The Commission have shared guidance on how to propose a pattern of wards and best practice examples, helping the Council to make the strongest possible case to the Commission.

4 – Order - Once finalised, the Commission’s recommendations must be approved by Parliament. The legal document which brings into force the Commission’s recommendations is a draft order, which will be laid before Parliament.

Once Parliamentary approval has been granted, the new electoral arrangements would be expected to come into force at the next scheduled local elections. In the Council’s case, this would be in May 2027

Appointment from Corporate Policy Committee of a Sub-Committee - This would ensure that the Council is best placed to respond to the Commission’s review of the Council’s electoral arrangements. The Corporate Policy Committee is responsible for the Council’s response to the review, and a Sub-Committee of the Committee would be best placed to undertake the detailed work on the review before making recommendations to the Committee. The Electoral Review Sub-Committee would make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review in order for the Committee to determine the Council’s response to the review.

Out of Scope:

It is not anticipated that the Council will undertake any consultation work on the review. The review is being led by the Commission, not the Council, and the Commission has a clearly identified programme of consultation as part of its Electoral Review timetable, which is assumed to include relevant stakeholders.

Anything not specifically required and essential to deliver the points raised above, to be determined as part of the scheduling of works (Product Flow Diagram and Project Plan).

BUSINESS CASE:

There will be no impact on the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The proposal will be funded from within existing Democratic Services budgets, aided by internal officer resource contributions from various other departments, and it is not anticipated that any external spend will be required in order for the Council to respond to the review.

Key milestones (inc Member Decisions)

(An end-to-end project plan is being developed)

Due date:**Delivery leads****Preliminary Period**

Preliminary Meeting

Complete

LGBCE / Brian Reed

Officer, Group Leader and Full Council Briefing

July - September 2023

LGBCE / Laura Bateman / Leanne Moore

Sub-Committee approved

11/07/2023

Brian Reed

Information Request Pack data collated (Electorate, Housing Development, Polling District, Parish, Legal Changes and Notices and Community Engagement)

Early Oct 2023

Nick Billington (with support from others)

Approval of agreed (TBC) Information Request Pack items – Sub-Committee

Oct 2023

Electoral Review Sub Committee

Approval of agreed (TBC) Information Request Pack items - Corporate Policy Committee

Early Nov 2023

Corporate Policy Committee

Submission of Commission's Information Request Pack

11/12/2023

Nick Billington

Parish/Town Council & Local Groups Briefing

January 2024

LGBCE

Council Size		
First meeting with Sub-Committee	16/08/2023	Brian Reed / Katie Small
Develop DRAFT council size proposal	Early Oct 2023	Nick Billington (with support from others)
Approval of DRAFT council size proposal – Sub-Committee	Oct 2023	Electoral Review Sub Committee
Approval of DRAFT Council size proposal – Corporate Policy Committee	Early Nov 2023	Corporate Policy Committee
Submission of Council Size DRAFT proposals to LGBCE	13/11/2023	Brian Reed / Nick Billington
Finalise Council Size proposal	November 2023	Nick Billington (with support from others)
Approval of Council Size proposal – Sub-Committee	November 2023	Electoral Review Sub Committee
Approval of Council Size proposal – Corporate Policy Committee	30/11/2023	Corporate Policy Committee
Submission of Council Size proposals	11/12/2023	Brian Reed/Nick Billington
Warding Patterns		
Consultation on Warding Patterns	23/01/2024 – 01/04/2024	LGBCE
Develop Warding Patterns proposal	23/01/2024 – 01/04/2024	Nick Billington (with support from others)
Approval of Warding Patterns proposal – Sub-Committee	Early March 2024	Electoral Review Sub Committee

Approval of Warding Patterns proposal – Corporate Policy Committee	21/03/2024	Corporate Policy Committee
Submission of Warding Patterns proposals to LGBCE	01/04/2024	Brian Reed/Nick Billington
Consultation on Draft Recommendations	30/07/2024 – 07/10/2024	LGBCE
Review Draft Recommendations, develop response	30/07/2024 – 07/10/2024	Nick Billington (with support from others)
Draft recommendations response approved – Sub-Committee	September 2024	Electoral Review Sub Committee
Draft recommendations response approved – Corporate Policy Committee	September 2024	Corporate Policy Committee
Draft recommendations response submitted to LGBCE	07/10/2024	Brian Reed/Nick Billington
Final Recommendations Published	January 2025	LGBCE
Order		
Order made	Spring 2025	LGBCE
Implementation	2027	Board members
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA):		
<p>In developing its recommendations upon Council size and warding, the Sub-Committee will be mindful of equality, diversity and inclusion considerations. Undoubtedly, the Commission will be equally mindful of these matters when making its final recommendations on the Council’s electoral arrangements.</p>		
COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:		
<p>Communications objectives / outcomes:</p> <p>The communications plan is the responsibility of the Commission throughout the review and consultation process.</p>		

There is no communication plan required from the Council on this however the Council is expected to and will support the Commission in publicising the review and encouraging participation.

The Council will also provide the Boundary Commission with a Stakeholder Database by 11th December to enable them to reach as many people as possible

Objectives:

The objectives of communications activity are to:

- Inform stakeholders, local groups and members of the public that a review is taking place.
- Encourage local participation in the review, especially during phases of public consultation.
- Make it as easy as possible for groups and individuals to engage with the review and provide high quality submissions.

Audiences:

The Commission's communications are aimed at three broad audiences:

- The council – elected members, staff, local political parties (including MPs).
- Local organisations – parishes (if any), residents' groups and other local organisations with an emphasis on groups that will enable us to meet our responsibilities under the Equalities Act.
- Members of the public.

Channels

The Commission aims to channel review participants primarily to its online presence. In particular, its website (www.lgbce.org.uk) is designed to illustrate recommendations and support feedback. However, given the breadth of potential audiences who might take part in the review, the Commission uses a selection of channels:

- Corporate website
- Press statements
- Social media
- Briefings and guidance documentation
- Reports and hard copy mapping
- Posters
- Direct correspondence

The Commission accepts incoming representations to consultations through website, email and post.

Additional Council Communications may want to be made when certain decisions have been made.

LGBCE COMMUNICATIONS:

Date	Stakeholder	Who	What
11/12/2023	LGBCE	Phil Christian/Laura Bateman	Provide Stakeholder Database to LGBCE
23/01/2024 – 01/04/2024	The Council Local organisations Members of the public	LGBCE	Consultation on Warding Patterns
30/07/2024 – 07/10/2024	The Council Local organisations Members of the public	LGBCE	Consultation on Draft Recommendations
January 2025	The Council Local organisations Members of the public	LGBCE	Final Recommendations Published

GOVERNANCE:

Reporting frequency	Reporting at meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Project Board • Weekly meet – PM and SRO
Key support groups (Steering groups etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Project Board • Electoral Review Sub-Committee • Corporate Policy Committee

RISKS: (scored after mitigating actions in place)

Risk	Mitigating actions	Impact (1-4)	Likelihood (1-4)
Input of latest housing development data into the electoral forecasting model takes more time than expected and therefore limits the time available for officers to contribute to the council size submission and to the information required as part of the Commission's Information Request Pack.	Limit the input and modelling of the recent housing development data to those housing data records that have already been subjected to a thorough quality assurance process by housing monitoring officers, to save time on data cleaning and preparation and to ensure greater accuracy for the electorate forecasts.	2	1
Officer capacity for completing the electoral forecasting work is constrained, due to unforeseen circumstances, such as other urgent project commitments.	Detailed forecasting methodology report and the forecasting model itself shared with key members of the project team, so that the forecasting approach can be readily understood and any remaining stages of the forecasting work completed by those with relevant expertise.	4	1

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

<i>Project Board</i>	<i>Role</i>
Brian Reed	SRO
Sarah Bullock	Senior User – Director of Policy and Change
Katie Small	Senior Supplier - Democratic Services
Paul Mountford	Senior Supplier – Democratic Services
Laura Bateman	Senior Project Officer & Project Manager
Nick Billington	Senior Supplier – Strategic Planning
Peter Jones	Senior Supplier – Legal Services
Phil Christian	Senior Supplier - Research & Consultation
Diane Barnard	Senior Supplier & User – Electoral Services

Leanne Austin	Senior Supplier & User – Electoral Services
Sandra Hobbs	Senior Supplier & User – Electoral Services
Tim Oliver	Senior Supplier – Communications
Gill Webb	Senior Supplier & User - ICT
<i>Project Working Group(s) - To be involved as required</i>	
<i>Not required at this time</i>	

Approved by Sponsor

NameDavid Brown..... Date

Approved by SRO

NameBrian Reed..... Date