



## General Purposes Report

<b>Meeting or Decision Maker:</b>	General Purposes Committee
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) Review of Electoral Wards within the Westminster City Council boundary
<b>Key Decision:</b>	None.
<b>Report of:</b>	Julia Corkey, Director of Policy, Performance and Communications

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates progress with respect to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) review of electoral wards within the Westminster City Council boundary.
- 1.2 This review is taking place because of the number of wards in Westminster which breached the acceptable threshold for the variation in the number of electors from the ward average in December 2018.
- 1.3 In phase 1 of the review, the LGBC consulted with the Council on the most appropriate number of councillors to be elected to the council in the future. Two submissions were received and the Commission “is minded” to recommend that 54 councillors should serve Westminster in the future. This is 6 fewer than the current number of Councillors.
- 1.4 The review is now in the second phase. This phase considers warding arrangements, and requires the redrawing of some or all of Westminster’s wards to produce an equitable number of electors. The number of electors used, are those forecast for 2024.
- 1.5 Interested parties are required to submit proposals for ward names and boundaries directly to the LGBC. This phase, open to the public, runs from the 26<sup>th</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.
- 1.6 Full details around the operating context in Westminster, and the proposed number of Councillors can be found in the submission made in phase 1 on the LGBC web-site.

1.7 This paper provides details on elector numbers, which are the basis for future warding decisions, and clarity around the subsequent steps in the review process.

## 2. Recommendations

- The committee notes the data in the report
- The committee is invited to comment on warding proposals and make recommendations, for any submission to the LGBC.

## 3. Reasons for Decision

No decisions are required on the contents of this paper

## 4. Background, including Policy Context

### i. Background to electorate inequality

- Westminster's current ward arrangements no longer provide for equitable voting across the City. Differential population growth rates, occupation of property spaces and migration patterns of non-eligible adults have all contributed to variances in the number of electors in each ward.
- The electorate figures for December 2018 with deviations from the Westminster mean are shown below.

*Table 1 - Westminster elector variations in December 2018*

Ward	Electoral Roll - Dec 2018	Dec 2018 ward variations from the ward average
Abbey Road	6,457	-5%
Bayswater	6,609	-3%
Bryanston and Dorset Square	6,722	-1%
Church Street	7,395	9%
Churchill	6,522	-4%
Harrow Road	8,038	18%
Hyde Park	6,941	2%
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	4,407	-35%
Lancaster Gate	7,126	5%
Little Venice	6,827	0%
Maida Vale	6,924	2%
Marylebone High Street	5,833	-14%
Queen's Park	8,370	23%
Regent's Park	6,947	2%
St James's	7,220	6%
Tachbrook	5,801	-15%
Vincent Square	7,363	8%
Warwick	6,391	-6%

West End	6,087	-11%
Westbourne	8,290	22%

- Thresholds for a Boundary Commission review are breached
  - When any ward has an electoral variance of over 30% from the electoral average
  - OR
  - Where **more than 30% of wards** have a variance of over 10% from the average
- The disproportionate representation in Westminster is caused by both a breach of the 30% tolerance (in Knightsbridge and Belgravia) and by 7 wards (35%) having a variance of over 10% from the mean.

Too few electors (each vote has too much weight)	Too many electors (each ward has too little weight)
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	Harrow Road
Tachbrook	Queen's Park
Marylebone High Street	Westbourne
West End	

## ii. Forecasting future elector numbers

- In Phase 1 of the LGBC review, Westminster forecast the number of electors in 2024 that would be present in each of the existing polling districts and wards.
- The methodology used the 2024 forecast made by the Office for National Statistics forecast (as contained in the LGBC model) as the Borough total.
- The number of electors at a local level was estimated by applying local property occupation and elector rates, to planned developments in the City. Only those developments in Westminster's 5-15 year resident planning pipeline which both have planning consent and are estimated to be completed by 2024 were included.
- The figures were submitted to the LGBC in Phase 1 (which ended on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019) and accepted as the base for ward boundary considerations.
- Following this initial submission Westminster developed a tool with granular mapping capabilities at the postcode level.
- During this phase, a small number of electors were moved across ward boundaries to reflect the improvement in mapping accuracy. Westminster submitted a further set of figures to the LGBC in April.
- These figures are shown in the table below. They have not been updated on the LGBC public website, which is "frozen" as Phase 2 starts.

Table 2 – Elector forecasts submitted in Phase 1, and used in Phase 2 modelling

Ward	WCC data submitted in Phase 1	Refined Westminster Data (post GIS modelling) used in Phase 2
Abbey Road	6,887	<b>6,881</b>
Bayswater	7,108	<b>6,976</b>
Bryanston and Dorset Square	7,040	<b>6,990</b>
Church Street	8,429	<b>8,406</b>
Churchill	7,939	<b>7,915</b>
Harrow Road	8,324	<b>8,315</b>
Hyde Park	8,712	<b>8,737</b>
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	4,542	<b>4,517</b>
Lancaster Gate	7,675	<b>7,756</b>
Little Venice	8,052	<b>8,007</b>
Maida Vale	7,260	<b>7,317</b>
Marylebone High Street	6,332	<b>6,303</b>
Queen's Park	8,655	<b>8,673</b>
Regent's Park	7,193	<b>7,208</b>
St James's	9,006	<b>9,013</b>
Tachbrook	6,147	<b>6,126</b>
Vincent Square	8,020	<b>7,998</b>
Warwick	6,767	<b>6,781</b>
West End	6,772	<b>6,957</b>
Westbourne	8,911	<b>8,895</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,771</b>	<b>149,771</b>

- The refined figures have been used in a boundary tool provided to the two represented Political Parties with Councillors in Westminster.
- No change has been made to the City total number of electors.

## 5. Next Steps

- Interested parties will need to submit proposals or comments to the LGBC by the 3<sup>rd</sup> June. All proposals and comments will be read and taken into consideration by the LGBC. They will also be published on their website.
- Based on the information that the LGBC receive they will then produce draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements.
- The LGBC will then open a new stage (phase 3) of consultations to see what members of the public think of the plans for their area.
- Phase 3 is due to run from the 30<sup>th</sup> July to the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

6. **Legal Implications** - this a noting paper and there are no legal implications arising from it.
7. **Background Papers** – The Phase 1 Number of Councillors report. Presented to the General Purposes Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.