

# Shadow Council



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) Draft Recommendations for new Electoral Arrangements for West Suffolk Council</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>COU/SA/18/008</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Shadow Council</b>	17 July 2018
<b>Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Members:</b>	Not applicable – electoral matters are not an executive function.	
<b>Lead officers:</b>	<p>Fiona Osman Electoral Services Manager <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757105 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:fiona.osman@westsuffolk.gov.uk">fiona.osman@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Ben Smith Programme Manager: Single Council Implementation <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757101 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ben.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk">ben.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	The purpose of this report is to consider the draft warding proposals for West Suffolk Council. This includes an assessment of where the LGBCE option differs to the options that were submitted by the West Suffolk Councils.	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is recommended to the Shadow Authority that:</b>  <p>(1) The Head of Paid Service be authorised to prepare and submit the Shadow Authority's observations and any new local evidence in respect of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations for electoral arrangements for West Suffolk Council before the deadline on 27 August 2018; taking account the views of the Future Governance Steering Group and any additional representations received from Councillors; and</p> <p>(2) All interested parties, including individual Councillors, are encouraged to make their own direct consultation responses to the LGBCE.</p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The West Suffolk Shadow Authority is being consulted on the proposed ward boundaries that have been published by the LGBCE.</li> <li>• The West Suffolk councils consulted extensively when producing their own options for the LGBCE to consider.</li> <li>• Members are encouraged to submit their own responses to the consultation directly to the LGBCE.</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Shadow Authority could decide not to respond to the consultation on the draft warding pattern. The Shadow Authority is recommended not to follow this option as it would lead to the LGBCE producing a warding pattern that did not consider the Council's own views on community identity and effective local government.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>		
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
The LGBCE produces a warding pattern that does not take into account the wishes of the Shadow Authority and its communities	Medium	Subject to approval, the Shadow Authority will respond to the draft recommendations	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		West Suffolk Council – Electoral Review (St Edmundsbury Council on 24 April and Forest Heath Council on 25 April) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- St Edmundsbury:  <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s27385/COU.SE.18.010%20West%20Suffolk%20Council%20-%20Electoral%20Review.pdf">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s27385/COU.SE.18.010%20West%20Suffolk%20Council%20-%20Electoral%20Review.pdf</a> </li> <li>- Forest Heath:  <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s27439/COU.FH.18.012%20West%20Suffolk%20Council%20-%20Electoral%20Review.pdf">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s27439/COU.FH.18.012%20West%20Suffolk%20Council%20-%20Electoral%20Review.pdf</a> </li> </ul>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix 1</b> – New electoral arrangements for West Suffolk Council – draft recommendations <b>Appendix 2</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – rural wards <b>Appendix 3</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – Brandon wards <b>Appendix 4</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – Bury St Edmunds wards <b>Appendix 5</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – Haverhill wards <b>Appendix 6</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – Mildenhall wards <b>Appendix 7</b> – LGBCE draft recommendations – Newmarket wards	

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 West Suffolk Council will be created as a new district-level Council on 1 April 2019, replacing the district-level councils for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury (the councils). A new set of wards need to be created for the West Suffolk Council before the first elections are held in May 2019.
- 1.2 Recognising that different viewpoints existed, the Future Governance Steering Group developed a number of options for the West Suffolk wards which took into account a community survey that was undertaken in January and February 2018, and a consultation on ward options during March 2018. Following consideration by the councils, the revised ward options were submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to be included as part of the electoral review of the West Suffolk district to be conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).
- 1.3 The LGBCE have now issued their draft recommendations and the consultation will be open until **27 August 2018**. The draft recommendations report, interactive maps and details of how to respond to the LGBCE consultation can be viewed here: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/west-suffolk>.
- 1.4 The LGBCE recommendations show that careful consideration has been given to the options put forward by the West Suffolk Councils as well as the submissions made by local groups, residents and individual Members.

## **2. Draft Recommendations**

### **2.1 Number of councillors**

The LGBCE has based their draft recommendations on a council size of 64 Members (eight fewer than the current arrangements for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils). This is in line with the proposed council size which was considered and agreed at Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury council meetings in October 2017 and should therefore be welcomed by the Shadow Authority.

### **2.2 Rural wards (pages 20-36 of Appendix 1)**

The LGBCE report has divided the rural wards into five areas and they have proposed to adopt the West Suffolk councils 'Option A' for all rural wards, with the exception of the area covering the Rushbrooke with Rougham parish. The LGBCE is proposing to include an area of Rushbrooke with Rougham parish, from Lady Miriam Way in the west to Sow Lane in the east and north of the A14, within the ward of Moreton Hall.

The LGBCE has proposed a single Member ward for Manor and a two-member ward for Icení but had also considered an alternative warding pattern of a combined Icení and Manor ward with three-Members. They have asked for submissions regarding this area.

*See Appendix 2 – Comparison of rural wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options*

2.3 Brandon wards (page 12 of Appendix 1)

The LGBCE has proposed to adopt the West Suffolk Councils 'Option C' with minor amendments to the three wards. Officers are seeking clarity on a discrepancy in the Brandon wards as the LGBCE draft recommendations report refers to Coronation Place being included in a proposed 'Brandon Central ward' whereas the interactive map shows that it is in the proposed 'Brandon West ward'.

*See Appendix 3 – Comparison of Brandon wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options*

2.4 Bury St Edmunds wards (page 14 of Appendix 1)

The LGBCE considered that the West Suffolk Councils 'Option F1' provided the most suitable warding pattern for Bury St Edmunds and they have based their draft recommendations on this option.

They have made a number of changes to this Option and these are detailed in Appendix 4. The main change proposed is with the councils' proposed wards for 'Moreton Hall East' and 'St Nicholas' in the "F1" scheme. The LGBCE felt that the Moreton Hall area could form a single ward represented by three Members, as this, in their view, would follow strong and identifiable boundaries, as well as still providing good levels of electoral equality. The remaining electors from the West Suffolk councils' proposed 'St Nicholas ward' could then be represented by a single Member. Please note that they have named this 'Eastgate ward' as it follows the existing boundary for the Eastgate ward of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The draft recommendation for the Moreton Hall ward also includes part of the North ward of Rushbrooke with Rougham parish (up to Sow Lane) in the Moreton Hall ward.

The LGBCE has noted that a variety of ward names had been put forward and they would welcome comments on the ward names proposed in the draft recommendations.

*See Appendix 4 – Comparison of Bury St Edmunds wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options*

2.5 Haverhill wards (page 18 of Appendix 1)

The LGBCE concluded that the West Suffolk councils' 'Option H' provided the best reflection of the statutory criteria. Some minor amendments have been made to the Haverhill North, South and West wards and these are detailed in Appendix 5.

*See Appendix 5 – Comparison of Haverhill wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options*

2.6 Mildenhall wards (page 10 of Appendix 1)

The LGBCE considered that the West Suffolk Councils' 'Option I' provided for stronger and more identifiable boundaries. There are some proposed amendments to the West Suffolk Councils' option in the Great Heath and Queensway wards. These are detailed in Appendix 6 and the LGBCE has indicated that they would welcome submissions regarding these amendments.

*See Appendix 6 – Comparison of Mildenhall wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options. See also Para 3.4 below regarding West Row.*

## 2.7 Newmarket wards (page 8 of Appendix 1)

The LGBCE has based their draft recommendations on the West Suffolk Councils' 'Option L' as it provides for strong and identifiable boundaries and keeps the town centre area in one ward. They have made an amendment to one boundary between Newmarket East and Newmarket North wards as detailed in Appendix 7.

As a number of different ward names for Newmarket wards were suggested in the Councils' options, the LGBCE has requested submissions regarding proposed ward names.

*See Appendix 7 – Comparison of Newmarket wards: LGBCE draft recommendations and West Suffolk options*

## **3. Consequential changes to parish warding arrangements**

- 3.1 The LGBCE is required to create parish wards where a district ward or county division boundary runs through a parish area. The LGBCE draft recommendations confirm that changes to parish warding arrangements will be required for the Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall, Newmarket and Rushbrooke with Rougham parishes. Details of the proposed electoral arrangements for those parishes are included in the LGBCE Draft Recommendations report (starting on page 37) and maps showing the proposed parish wards are available on their website:

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/west-suffolk>

- 3.2 The proposed district wards in the Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Haverhill parishes are not wholly coterminous with the county division boundaries, and therefore the LGBCE have had to create additional parish wards for those areas. This is a transitional issue for a new long-term scheme and we anticipate that an electoral review of county division boundaries will take place before the next Suffolk County Council elections in 2021. As part of this process the LGBCE will use the new West Suffolk Council ward boundaries as the building blocks for the Suffolk County Council division boundaries in the same way that they have used the parish boundaries as building blocks for the producing the wards for the West Suffolk Council. As a result we would expect that the town council wards would revert to following the district-ward boundaries because the new County division boundaries would follow the same boundary line. However this won't take effect until the next election in 2023.

- 3.3 All of the relevant parish councils have been contacted and asked to provide feedback on these arrangements so that they can be considered by the Future Governance Steering Group and included in the Shadow Authority's response to the consultation.
- 3.4 The Order to create a new parish for West Row in April 2019 is due to be published in the autumn 2018 after the new arrangements have been discussed and finalised with the affected areas. The proposed warding arrangements for the new Council include West Row in The Rows district ward i.e. separate to wards for Mildenhall itself. This is consistent with the creation of a new rural parish. However, the LGBCE have included West Row in the parish warding arrangements for Mildenhall parish. This is a transitional arrangement until such time as the new West Row parish is created and district councils are able to address this through their own Community Governance Review powers.

#### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1 Members are strongly encouraged to respond directly to the LGBCE consultation before the deadline on 27 August 2018.
- 4.2 The main work of the local authorities on the review took place in the earlier stage, culminating in the submission of several unweighted local options which reflected the various, and often conflicting, local views on how a warding scheme should be constructed. Therefore, the main emphasis now is on encouraging local stakeholders to make their own direct responses to the LGBCE before August, and no new local consultation by the Shadow Council itself is proposed.
- 4.3 As a consultee, the Shadow Council, like any other stakeholder, can make its own observations on the recommendations, but its submission will carry no greater weight than that of any individual person or individual. Furthermore, it is worth recognising that there is already a very strong fit between the LGBCE recommendations and some of the options the West Suffolk councils put forward themselves, subject to the variations mentioned previously.
- 4.4 With these factors in mind, the Shadow Council may wish to focus its attention before the end of August on the practical detail of the recommendations, and whether any minor adaptations might improve how they may operate in practice. It may also want to continue to adopt a corporate position of putting forward ideas and options, and recognising all views received, rather than seeking to formally favour one approach over another. Just as with the earlier stage of the process, it is unlikely that there will be complete consensus between members and local communities on some issues, and the LGBCE will have the difficult task of reaching a balanced decision, just as the councils have to with a Community Governance Review.

- 4.5 In terms of preparing a submission, it is recommended that the Chief Executive is again authorised to prepare and submit the Shadow Authority's response by the deadline, particularly if the general approach outlined above is supported by Shadow Authority. As with the earlier stages of the process, it is suggested that a collective Councillor viewpoint is coordinated and considered by the Future Governance Steering Group, alongside the views of individual councillors. The Group is meeting on **27 July 2018**. If Members wish any comments to be provided in advance to the Future Governance Steering Group at this meeting these should be emailed to either Fiona Osman or Ben Smith by **9.00am on Friday 20 July 2018**. ***However, individual Councillors are still encouraged to make a direct submission to the LGBCE.***