

Worcester

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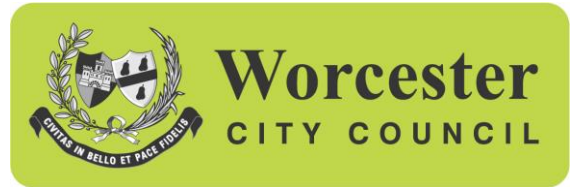
Organisation Name: Worcester City Council (District or county officer)

Comment text:

Please find attached letter and response by Worcester City Council, in response to the Commission's consultation on further draft proposals.

Attached Documents:

- Further Draft recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements - Submission of Worcester City Council June 2023 (2)_0.pdf
- Let Boundary Commission- Council Response to Commission's further draft proposals_0.pdf



This matter is being dealt with by Sian Stroud

Local Government Boundary Commission
for England

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By email only

Our ref: SS

Date: 16 June 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

**WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW
COUNCIL RESPONSE TO LGBCE'S FURTHER DRAFT PROPOSALS ON WARDING
ARRANGEMENTS**

The Council's Policy and Resources Committee met on 23 May 2023 to consider a response to be made by the Council to LGBCE's published proposals for warding arrangements in Worcester City.

The Committee agreed that only a submission which was supported by all four Political Group leaders, should be made on behalf of the Council. An agreed Response has now been developed on this basis and accordingly I am authorised to submit it to you on the Council's behalf.

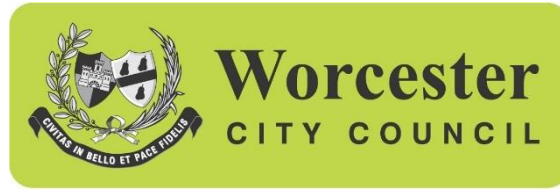
Because of Worcester's committee system of governance and our current status of no overall political control, we have confined the Response to only those matters where full political consensus could be achieved. We have made it clear where achieving full consensus was not possible.

We therefore respectfully invite the Commission to give the Council's further Response due weight in its consultation process. The Council's previous Responses still carry weight and should also be referred to alongside this further document.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Sian Stroud
Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Worcester City Council

Enc: Worcester City Council Response dated June 2023



Worcester City Council

Response to LGBCE

**Further Draft Recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements for
Worcester City Council**

June 2023

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1. Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE, The Commission) identified Worcester City Council as a local authority that requires a review of its electoral arrangements. The last review was completed in 2002. There is an evident level of electoral imbalance in two areas of the city which breach the acceptable 'levels of equality' endorsed by the LGBCE. This electoral inequality scenario becomes more acute when taking into account the electorate population forecast growth up to 2028 (the Commission's target date).

The review commenced in late 2021 and as part of the first stage of the review, the Council made a submission to the Commission in February 2022, as to the number of councillors that Worcester City Council should have. The Council submitted that the number of councillors should preferably remain at 35, although it would accept up to 39 Councillors if required. Simultaneously the Council resolved that it should change its electoral cycle from elections by thirds, to whole-Council elections.

One consequence of this decision to move to whole-council elections is that, for the purposes of the Commission's review, the number of councillors representing each ward in the city may be any number from 1 to 4, with 3 councillors typically being the highest number representing each ward.

The Commission has advised that it is minded to recommend that the Council size should be 35 councillors and so the review has moved to the second stage; to determine revised warding arrangements for the district, based upon 35 councillors.

At its July meeting, the Council agreed a draft submission on the warding pattern, supported by the leaders of its four Political Groups, ([Draft Warding submission Worcester City Council July 2022.pdf](#)) and resolved:

"That the Council agrees the Warding Arrangements Submission set out in Appendix 1, Paragraph 4 - Summary of the Council's Proposals as its collective response to the initial consultation being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to submit this document to the Commission, on behalf of the Council."

The submission was sent to the Commission in July 2022.

In early November 2022 the Commission produced proposals in the document "New electoral arrangements for Worcester City Council, Draft Recommendations, November 2022" ([Report - Worcester draft recommendations - cover.pdf](#)).

The Council submitted a response to those proposals, which was supported by all four Political Group Leaders.

The Commission produced a further document, "New electoral arrangements for Worcester City Council - Further Draft Recommendations - May 2023"

Following consultation with Leaders of the Council's four Political Groups this document has been produced to set out the Council's response to these further draft recommendations, giving due consideration to the three main criteria set by the Commission in determining warding arrangements:

1. Delivering electoral equality for local voters
2. Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities
3. Promoting effective and convenient local government

The Council considers that this response meets the criteria as set by the Commission.

The attached response is supported by all four of the Political Group Leaders.

It is understood that Political Groups and individual Councillors may also submit their own comments to the Commission.

2. Methodology

Officers presented the Commission's proposals at a meeting of the Political Group Leaders, and followed this with further discussion with Group Leaders individually and their nominated Group Members.

Officers worked to the objective of achieving a consensus response as far as possible, whilst noting where Groups held differing views and a consensus could not be achieved.

3. Overall Approach

The Council operates a Committee System and there is currently no overall political control. The Policy and Resources Committee agreed at their meeting in May that only a response that all four Political Group Leaders supported would be submitted to the Commission.

This is the duly agreed submission document.

Individual Political Groups may choose to make their own responses to supplement the Council's response and explain their individual perspectives.

4. The Council's response

Officers summarise the Further Draft Recommendations into the following 10 points and the Council's submission is as follows

Rainbow Hill and Warndon & Gorse Hill

4.1 Windermere Drive is part of a single community.

- 4.2 The Council agrees with this assertion.
- 4.3 **Avon Road and Teme Road should be within Warndon and Gorse Hill and not in Nunnery.**
- 4.4 The Council agrees with this assertion.
- 4.5 **A 3 Councillor Warndon & Gorse Hill Ward based on existing Gorse Hill and Warndon wards, moving Derwent Close, Fairmount Road, Fairmount Close and 67–103 Brickfields Road into Rainbow Hill ward. This places all of Brickfields Road in Rainbow Hill.**
- 4.6 The Council agrees with the first part of this proposal, a 3 Councillor Warndon & Gorse Hill Ward, but has consensus on an alternative proposal, detailed below. This proposal will balance electoral representation between Warndon & Gorse Hill and Rainbow Hill more equitably and closer to the electoral equality target. The proposals will also better reflect local community identity, particularly in the Rose Avenue locality.
- 4.7 The Council proposes to
- 4.7.1 move Portfields Road, Maple Avenue, Birch Avenue, Rose Avenue and Holly Mount fully into Rainbow Hill. This area has a distinct local community identity.
- 4.7.2 keep a small number of properties on Tolladine Road (approx. 20 electors) in Warndon & Gorse Hill so that both sides of the road are in the same ward.
- 4.7.3 keep Fairfield Rd, Fairmount Rd and Fairmount Close in Warndon & Gorse Hill. This supports local community identity including the fact that the community resources of Fairfield Centre and Fairfield School are nearby on Carnforth Drive in Warndon & Gorse Hill. The proposal would also leave the whole of Brickfields Road in Rainbow Hill.
- 4.7.4 move all of Tunnel Hill, Troutbeck Drive and Eskdale Close into Rainbow Hill to reflect the Tunnel Hill locality.
- 4.8 The net effect of these proposals with respect to the target for electoral equality would be approximately Warndon & Gorse Hill +2.5% and Rainbow Hill +3%. The Council asserts that provides for more effective representation for the residents within both wards.
- 4.9 **Rainbow Hill will be a two Councillor Ward**
- 4.10 The Council agrees with this assertion.
- 4.11 **Renaming Warndon & Gorse Hill ward, Warndon & Hollymount or Warndon & Elbury Park. The Commission also welcomed**

comments on whether either of these better reflects the identity of the communities living here.

- 4.12 The Council does not have a strong consensus view on the proposed change of name but would support a change to Warndon & Elbury Park. The Council agrees that Holly Mount is not a distinct area of the city and that Elbury Park is a recognised location within this area of the city.

Battenhall, Fort Royal, Cathedral and Nunnery

- 4.13 **Proposal that City Centre Ward is named Cathedral Ward**

- 4.14 The Council agrees with the choice of Cathedral for the name of this ward.

- 4.15 **Cromwell Crescent area East of the railway line – should this area be moved from Battenhall into Nunnery and (to achieve balance) move Woolhope Road area into Battenhall (from proposed city centre)?**

- 4.16 The Council does not support this proposal. The Council submits that the catchment area for Red Hill C of E Primary School in Midhurst Close extends in to Battenhall but not into Nunnery. Whilst the railway line forms a natural barrier it is traversed by a bridge and a tunnel. The London Road is a major arterial road and provides a natural boundary. There is therefore no need to move Woolhope Road area into Battenhall, and the Council submits that the community in this area sits naturally with Cathedral ward to the North.

- 4.17 **Cranbourne Close and Lilburne to move into Nunnery from proposed Fort Royal, noting that they are currently in Nunnery.**

- 4.18 The Council does not have a consensus view on this proposal.

- 4.19 **Wych Elm Close to move into Nunnery from existing Fort Royal**

- 4.20 The Council does not support this proposal. The political groups agree that with regard to community identity Wych Elm Close is more closely linked to Fort Royal than it is to Nunnery.

The South West

- 4.21 **Proposal to create three two Councillor wards to the South West to replace the two existing three councillor wards of Berdwardine and St John.**

- 4.22 The Council does not have a consensus view on this proposal.

5. Summary of the Council's Response

- 5.1 The Council's response agrees with the proposals for Rainbow Hill for Warndon & Gorse Hill, and would support a change of name to Warndon & Elbury Park. The Council supports the choice of "Cathedral" instead of the previous proposal of "City Centre". The Council does not support moving the Cromwell Crescent area into Nunnery as this would go against the principle of reflecting community identity. The Council makes no further response on all other proposals.