

AREA COMMITTEE BOUNDARIES

Report of the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Governance

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In April 2022, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its review of the council's electoral arrangements and made recommendations for new warding patterns to be used for the May 2023 Local Elections onwards.
- 1.2 A consequence of the borough's new warding arrangements was that the then boundaries of the council's seven area committees were no longer coterminous with the new ward boundaries.
- 1.3 In February 2023, the Working Party considered proposals for the realignment of area committee boundaries and agreed to recommend that for 2023/24 the new wards be as closely aligned as possible to the then existing area committee arrangements to produce a 'minimal change' scenario.
- 1.4 The recommendation was subject to an item being included within the Working Party's work programme to allow it to give further consideration to this matter, including scope for a possible radical realignment of area committee boundaries during the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The council has a long history of area governance stretching back to the creation of the metropolitan borough in 1974. However, the number and boundaries of the area committees has varied over time.
- 2.2 There are currently seven area committees which vary in size from between two wards (6 members) to four wards (12 members).
- 2.3 Prior to 2023, the configuration of area committees was last fundamentally reviewed in April 2009 where it was agreed to reduce the number of area committees from eight, to seven and to establish a new 'Town Centre Committee' with the remit of determining all strategic planning applications within the Town Centre.
- 2.4 This reduction in the number of area committees was achieved through the amalgamation of the former Four Heaton's Area Committee with the Reddish North and Reddish South wards of the former Tame Valley Area Committee to constitute a new Heaton's & Reddish Area Committee.

- 2.5 The remaining ward from Tame Valley Area Committee (Brinnington & Central) was then amalgamated with the former Victoria Area Committee to constitute a new Central Stockport Area Committee.
- 2.6 The Town Centre Committee was disestablished in May 2017 with its functions returned to the Central Stockport Area Committee and the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee leaving us with the arrangements that are currently in operation. No review of the other area committees took place at this time.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR AREA COMMITTEES

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 significantly altered the regulatory framework surrounding the establishment of area committees. Prior to this date, it was a requirement that area committees areas must not exceed two fifths of either the area or population of the authority.
- 3.2 These provisions have now been removed, and the sole requirements are that an area committee must be established to discharge functions in **part** of the authority and that the members that represent that part of the authority shall be members of the area committee.
- 3.3 In addition to the above statutory requirements, the following guidelines were adopted by the council as part of its 2009 review:-
- (a) must be of manageable size
 - (b) residents need to be able to relate the area of community
 - (c) it must be demonstrate a community of interest
 - (d) communities of interest should be prioritised over size; and
 - (e) no wards should be split between two Area Committees

4. EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 Following the recommendation of the Constitution Working Party, the Council Meeting gave approval to the following revised arrangements for area committees for the 2023/24 municipal year:-

<u>Existing Area Committee</u>	<u>New Wards</u>	<u>Electorate 2027 (projection)*</u>
Bramhall & Cheadle	Bramhall North	10,497
Hulme South	Bramhall South & Woodford	11,302
<i>9 members</i>	Cheadle Hulme South	12,360
		34,159
Central Stockport	Brinnington & Stockport Central	10,831
<i>12 members</i>	Davenport & Cale Green	11,694
	Edgeley	11,307
	Manor	10,553
		44,385

Cheadle <i>9 members</i>	Cheadle East & Cheadle Hulme North Cheadle West & Gatley Heald Green	12,187 11,937 11,659 35,783
Heatons & Reddish <i>12 members</i>	Heatons North Heatons South Reddish North Reddish South	11,540 11,403 12,017 11,689 46,649
Marple <i>6 members</i>	Marple North Marple South & High Lane	10,133 10,341 20,474
Stepping Hill <i>9 members</i>	Hazel Grove Norbury & Woodsmoor Offerton	10,922 10,678 11,628 33,228
Werneth <i>6 members</i>	Bredbury & Woodley Bredbury Green & Romiley	11,555 11,040 22,595

** data from the LGBCE*

4.2 Appendix 1 to the report provides a plan of the current area committee boundaries.

4.3 The proposed arrangements for 2023/24 were considered by all area committees, scrutiny committees and the cabinet prior to approval by the Council Meeting, and these comments are collated at appendix 2 to the report.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER LOCALITY BOUNDARIES

5.1 It is the ambition of the council and its partners to seek convergence of the boundaries used for the various place and locality-based service areas to embed neighbourhood working, including the Children's Services Geographical Footprints, adult social care, police localities and place neighbourhoods, where possible, with area committee boundaries.

5.2 Area committees are required to utilise the boundaries of the new wards (set by the LGBCE) as the foundational blocks for defining the new area committee areas. It is noted that while at present the boundaries of the other locality areas all use to some degree the existing (2004) ward boundaries as the basis for their localities, with the exception of the place neighbourhoods, there is significant degree of deviation from these and work is being undertaken to see whether any of the locality-based service areas can be more aligned to each other and with area committee boundaries.

5.3 In some areas, our boundaries are already aligned, for example the police and the Place Directorate.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Constitution Working Party is recommended to:-

(1) Determine whether it would wish to give further consideration to the boundaries of area committees.

(2) Should the Working Party be minded to review those arrangements, determine whether the guidelines adopted in 2009 remained appropriate or whether it would wish to supplement or amend these.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Vicki Bates

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