MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Council Chamber - Town Hall
20 February 2020 (7.30 am - 8.48 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Conservative Group	Michael White (Chairman), Roger Ramsey, Damian White, Viddy Persaud, Jason Frost+ and Dilip Patel+
Residents' Group	Ray Morgon and Barry Mugglestone
Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group	Linda Hawthorn
Independent Residents Group	David Durant
Labour Group	Keith Darvill
North Havering Residents Group	Darren Wise

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The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Joshua Chapman and Councillor Robert Benham who were substituted by Councillors Jason Frost+ and Dilip Patel+ respectively.
Also in attendance were Councillors John Tyler and Christopher Wilkins.

2 **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW, PART 2 (WARDING PATTERNS)**

Consideration was given to the report of Andrew Beesely, Head of Democratic Services detailing the impact of the Boundary Commission Review and the need for members of the Governance Committee to determine and recommend their preferred option to Full Council.

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review of the London Borough of Havering's local government electoral arrangements. The outcome of the review will be implemented in readiness for the 2022 Council elections.

The review forms two parts. The first part determines the Council size. In September 2019, Full Council recommended to the Commission that it retain its existing cohort size of 54. The Commission subsequently informed the Council that it was minded to agree to the proposal.

The second part (Part 2) is concerned with determining the warding arrangements in terms of the number of wards and the number of representatives of each ward which make up the Council, based on statutory criteria.

An officer working group has prepared a number of options for the Governance Committee to consider.

The Chief Executive, Andrew Blake-Herbert, together with the Head of Democratic Services gave a presentation to the Committee

The Electoral Review undertaken by the LGBCE will take into account the number of Councillors in the Borough and the warding arrangements. The warding arrangements will deal with the number of wards, the ward boundaries, the number of councillors elected to each ward and the names of each ward.

Submissions for Part 2 of the process dealing with the warding patterns must be made by 09/03/2020. Officers have attended training with the LGBCE and the early indication has been that there is a tolerance of + or – 2 Councillors to the number of 54 for the purposes of the Part 2 process.

Four options for Part 2 have been made available on the Council's website and members of the public can feed into this and make recommendations to the Boundary Commission supporting any of these options or indeed suggesting their own. When the LGBCE determine the warding patterns they take into account the following criteria:

- Electoral equity for voters
- Community identities and interests and
- Effective and convenient Local Government.

Other options may be put forward by members of the public and community groups etc. These will all be considered by the LGBCE and it was noted that the deadline for public submissions was 02/03/2020.

The Governance Committee was asked to recommend its preferred option to Full Council on 4th March, 2020.

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Officers have used current and predicted data/GSI mapping technology to formulate the options. Data and maps are available on the London Borough of Havering website. Consideration has been given to past and present warding patterns; polling districts; approved developments; population forecasts; key local infrastructure; natural boundaries, such as railways, rivers and roads; public health data; Ordinance Survey maps; and on the ground sense checks.

An overview of all the options was presented to the Committee.

Option 1 used the Polling Districts as a starting point and is the model of status quo to maintain the current status of:

- 54 Councillors across 18, 3 Member wards.
- All wards within +/- 10% variance
- Ward names remain as is
- Electorate predicted to be affected by 2025 is 36,391, (17.42%).

This option will have the least impact.

Option 2 again used Polling District statistics and also allowed for the creation of two new wards as follows:

- 54 Councillors across 20 wards
- New wards in the Romford and Beam Park areas
- Mix of 2 and 3 Member wards
- All wards except one within the +/- 10% variance
- Electorate predicted to be affected by 2025 is 35,209 (16.86%)

Option 3 utilised information from the last Boundary Commission Review in 1999:

- 52 Councillors over 20 wards
- A mix of 2 and 3 Member wards
- New wards in the Romford and Beam Park areas
- New names for a number of wards
- Electoral equality (+/- 10% variance) achieved in 12 of the 20 wards demonstrating less compliance with the criteria.
- Electorate predicted to be affected by 2025 is 102,509 (41.1%)

This represents a significant change, reducing the Member cohort to 52.

Option 4 considered the natural boundaries such as railway lines, rivers and A roads. Consideration was given to how public health colleagues divide the Borough.

- Blank canvass approach with Borough loosely divided into 3 districts, north, central and south
- 56 Members over 21 wards
- Mix of 2 and 3 Member wards

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- All 21 wards achieve the +/- 10% variance.

There then followed discussion regarding each of the options.

Councillor John Tyler put forward an amendment to Option 1, referred to as Option 1A. This was moved by Councillor Tyler and seconded by Councillor Linda Hawthorn.
Discussion followed in which it was considered that this option may result in some issues for a number of wards, notably Mawney Ward would take in Collier Row and Petits Ward would span two polling districts. In addition there would be concerns for Heaton Ward and Romford Town Ward, with a large proportion of Upminster Ward becoming Hacton Ward which would perhaps not be appropriate. Councillor Tyler stressed that Option 1A would satisfy the 3 criteria stipulated and would be non-political, retaining 18 3 Member wards and keeping existing, established communities intact.

Councillor Keith Darvill indicated that he preferred the amendments to Option 1 presented in Option 1A as it enables clarity regarding representation both on a central government basis for local MP's and the Local Government representation within Wards.

Councillor David Durant expressed concern whether the LGBCE would be satisfied with Option 1 given the arbitrary way in which wards would be divided. It would result in less effective representation with Members campaigning to a whole new electorate.

Councillor Roger Ramsey agreed with Councillor Darvill and stated concern over the fact that Petits Ward and Heaton are far apart geographically and this may result in community division.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Damian White stated that Options 1 and 1A were not advisable as Polling Districts do not represent wards and therefore they do not represent the communities of the Borough.

The Governance Committee thanked Councillor Tyler for the considerable work he had put in to propose Option 1A.

Discussion then turned to Option 2 which was identified by Councillor Keith Darvill as his preferred option given that the smaller variance would be an ideal result. Creation of 2 Member wards in areas of population expansion in urban living areas would be distinct from other areas of the Borough. However, it was noted that 2 Member wards may present a problem with lower numbers representing ward areas. The LGBCE had made it clear in officer briefings that 1, 2 and 3 Member wards would be acceptable. Before 2002 there were 2 Member wards in Havering and currently these are worked successfully in Waltham Forest and Redbridge.

The Governance Committee agreed that they did not favour Option 3 and so this would not be taken forward.

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Discussion then turned to Option 4. Councillor Damian White, the Leader of the Council indicated that he did not find any Option an immediate fit however, with certain amendments; Option 4 would be his favoured option, Option 4A was then proposed by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Jason Frost.

The Committee were then asked to vote on their preferred Option.

Votes placed for **Option 1A** were two in favour (Councillors Durant and Hawthorn) and 7 against (Councillors M White, D White, Frost, Persaud, Patel, Darvill and Ramsey)

Option 2 was not seconded.

Option 3 was ruled out and not voted on.

Option 4 votes placed 3 in favour (Councillors Morgon, Darvill and Mugglestone) and 6 against (Councillors M White, D White, Frost, Patel, Persaud and Ramsey)

Option 4A Votes placed in favour 6 (Councillors M White, D White, Frost, Patel, Persaud and Ramsey) and against 2 (Councillors Durrant and Hawthorn)

Accordingly the preferred Option of the Governance Committee was Option 4A.

Governance Committee therefore:

- agreed to recommend to Full Council the preferred option for Part 2 of the LGBCE Review as Option 4A.

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Chairman