

14th October 2021

NHDC Electoral Consultation

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has started an Electoral Review of North Herts District Council. I am writing to give you advanced warning of an upcoming public consultation as part of that review.

The first stage of the review is for the Council to produce a submission to the LGBCE on Council Size (ie the number of Councillors we think we need).

Prior to the submission there needs to be a decision on whether to retain the current electoral cycle of elections by thirds or to move to whole council elections, as this will impact on the number of Councillors the Authority recommends within the submission to the LGBCE.

At the Full Council meeting on Thursday evening last week, Members resolved to run a public consultation on the way that District Councillors are elected. The consultation will open on 4 October 2021 and close on 8 November.

The consultation asks one specific question:

Do you think we should:

elect one third of our District Councillors every year ('by thirds')

- elect all of our District Councillors every four years ('whole council'/'all out')

The consultation will be on Survey Monkey or alternatively a paper copy may be completed and returned to the Council Offices or to this email address.

1. If we continue to elect District Councillors by thirds:

All the current wards will be changed. They will be replaced by new wards, which the LGBCE will develop over the coming year (there will be consultations on the proposals, hosted by the LGBCE). Every new ward will have three District Councillors. It is likely that most, if not all, existing ward boundaries will be changed. The elections in 2022 and 2023 will continue as normal. In May 2024 the elections would be to the new ward boundaries. All seats would be up for election, with the candidate in each ward securing the highest number of votes elected for 4 years; second highest for 3 years; and third highest for 2 years. In 2025 the scheduled County Council elections will take place, and elections to this council will take place by thirds from May 2026.

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2. If we change and elect District Councillors once every four years:

If the Council chooses to move to whole council elections, all existing wards will be changed. They will be replaced by new wards, which the LGBCE will develop over the coming year (there will be consultations on the proposals, hosted by the LGBCE). New wards would be for a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 Member wards. Many ward boundaries may be changed. The elections in 2022 and 2023 will continue as normal. In May 2024 the elections would be to the new ward boundaries. All seats would be up for election, with the winning candidates elected for 4 years and scheduled elections to this council every four years.

In advance of the consultation opening Members were very keen for the Parishes to be notified, to enable maximum consideration of the question, prior to submitting a response if you choose to.

As background information, please find below the link to the Council agenda with the report and appendices as considered by Full Council on Thursday – Item No. 12 refers.

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=2614&Ver=4>

Once the survey is live you will be contacted with the link.