

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Conservative Group size submission Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review

This submission is made by Bradford Metropolitan District Council Conservative Group in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review of the Council size and the number of wards and ward boundaries in Bradford District.

The submission is informed in part, by Conservative Group Ward Members' discussions with residents and internal Group discussions regarding the council's responsibilities and governance arrangements.

Since 2003, we have seen significant levels of devolution of powers and resources from national government to West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), which has required the Council to collaborate with the transfer of some service provision to WYCA, whilst a number of other services, most notably Children's Services, have also been effectively externalised.

An increased sized Bradford MDC.

The Conservative Group considers there to no credible case to support an increase in Councillor numbers at this time.

A reduced size Bradford MDC.

A number of residents and also elected Conservative Members would prefer to see Bradford MDC reduced in size. The increasingly important role of the WYCA, the transfer of Children's Social Care to a trust and the scaling back of council services due to budget reductions, support this instinctive opinion. The fact that these reductions in responsibilities is not perceived to reduce the demands placed upon the time of councillors seems something of a perverse outcome, indicating over-lapping / duplication.

It is accepted however, that given the District's population growth of 79,000 (17%) between the 2001 and 2021 censuses and forecasts indicating that the population will continue to increase apace, coupled with the many challenges on the local government horizon, a reduction in the

number of elected-members doesn't appear to be the best way forward at this time.

A Council of 90 Elected Members.

The Conservative Group is of the view that a council size of 90 with three members per ward, will for the foreseeable future, best provide the requisite numbers to ensure that the members of all political allegiances and none, can best fulfil their responsibilities to the residents of Bradford District.

Cllr Rebecca Poulsen
Conservative Group Leader
15th May 2023