

Babergh District Council – Response to Stage 1 Warding Pattern Consultation

Supporting Statement

In February 2017 the Council agreed that a council size of 31 councillors would be adequate for the effective operation of the Council and for representing the residents of Babergh district. At the meeting of the full Council on 7 August 2017 two warding patterns were agreed and are submitted to the LGBCE as the Council's consultation response.

The Council's proposed warding pattern was developed through a series of workshops and drop-in sessions that were open to all councillors and further refined by a cross-party task and finish group.

In developing these proposals consideration has been given to achieving electoral equality, having clearly identifiable boundaries and reflecting community interests and identities. Significant attention has been given maintaining established community identities and creating a warding pattern that provides room for growth in electorates without significantly exceeding the electoral equality thresholds. Particular care has been taken when grouping rural parishes to ensure that links between communities that share resources, such as schools, shops and religious buildings, remain and to observe historical linkages. Council wishes to see single-member wards wherever possible.

In order to achieve better electoral equality the proposed schemes have resulted in a pattern of 30 and 32 councillors. The Council requests that the LGBCE considers this to be a reasonable variation from its original council size submission and is satisfied that 30 councillors is a sufficient number to properly perform the functions of the Council. The

At this stage the Council's proposal has not suggested a pattern of district wards within the warded parishes, just a total number of councillors has been given. The Council would ask the LGBCE to develop a scheme of single-member wards within these parishes wherever possible or equal multi-member wards. Furthermore the LGBCE is asked to follow the existing parish wards where reasonable and to give significant weight to the responses of the affected Town or Parish Councils.