

Submission on Council Size on behalf of the Ealing Conservative Group.

We endorse much of the London Borough of Ealing's official submission (LBE Submission) to the Commission. However, we are concerned about a number of inaccuracies/errors in the submission and disagree on the total number of councillors.

Council Submission – Inaccuracies

We consider that the LBE submission contains material inaccuracies in respect of the 2024 electorate projection (Appendix, pp23-24). For example, this projection projects that Southall Broadway will have an 18+ population of 14,120 in 2024, but an electorate of 14,412. This is in itself impossible. Furthermore, 2011 census data (<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ward-profiles-and-atlas>) indicates a larger than average non-EU population in Southall Broadway, which makes it implausible that electorate would outstrip 18+ population to any extent. Similar considerations apply to wards such as Lady Margaret and Northolt West End, where LBE project an electorate very close to the 18+ population.

We strongly consider the LBE projection to be flawed and to be so at variance with the Commission projection as to be fundamentally inaccurate. We would ask that the Commission reviews all the LBE figures for accuracy.

We believe that the Commission projection should be used, and request clarification that this will be the projection used.

Conservative proposals and principles.

The Conservative Group agrees that the optimal ward size is three member. This is due to the increasing Council workload and the high likelihood that Councillors have full time careers. Therefore, we agree with the LBE submission that the number of councillors should be roughly the same as currently.

Whilst we accept that there is a possibility that some wards, due to insurmountable geographic reasons, may have to be two member wards, this should be the exception. As such, we think that the total number of councillors should be divisible by three, allowing the possibility of all wards being three members.

Therefore, we would recommend that 69 councillors is the optimal council size.

If the Commission were to take in to account the increased population, then perhaps 72 would be appropriate.

We do not believe that the River Brent is such a hard border that a ward could not straddle it – especially where there are crossing points.

Using 2024 forecasts the split is 50.8% and 49.2%, which gives East a slight majority, so 69 would split 35 to 34, with either one 3 member trans-Brent ward or 2 two member wards on the West side and one on the East side. Notwithstanding our views on three member wards, if the Brent is to be a hard border, we think this is an equitable split.

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