

Appendix L

PREDICTED WARD ELECTORATES: DEFICIENCIES IN THE 2024 FORECASTS*

In May 2019 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published their final recommendations for new ward boundaries in the London Borough of Harrow. These resulted in an Order** setting out the number of councillors and boundaries for the wards to be used for the 2022 council election. Legislation requires that LGBCE recommendations should not only be based on how many electors there are at the commencement of a review, but also how many electors there are likely to be five years after the publication of its final recommendations.

Once the LGBCE commenced their review, Harrow Council was responsible for submitting electorate forecasts for 2024, broken down to polling district level. The Commission considered the forecasts supplied as “the best available” at the time.

When the LGBCE consider the electoral size of a ward, attention is paid to the number of electors per councillor ratio. If the ratio is within 10% of the figure for the borough as a whole, they consider a ward or proposed ward to have “good electoral equality”. The 2024 forecasts for their re-warding plan predicted that all 22 wards would have “good electoral equality” by that date. Nevertheless in 2026 the three wards of Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone South all had electorates well below the 2024 expectation, the 2026 values being -2,046, -2,489 and -1,347, respectively (see Table xx). These led to variances from the borough average electors per councillor ratio of -18.0, -16.7 and -21.6%, respectively. Compared to the rest of Harrow, these data show “poor electoral equality” in arising from significant inadequacies in the predicted growth of the electorate. Errors in those predictions for the three wards could potentially occur from any or all of the following contributory predictions:

- The *actual* number of new homes built in the wards.
- The *speed of occupation* by residents of completed, new properties.
- The “*type*” of occupation, e.g. by 1, or 2, or 3, etc, residents of voting age or over in the new properties.
- The proportion of new residents *meeting the qualification* to be local government electors.
- The *efficiency of registration* by occupiers (who are responsible for submitting their own applications to be placed on the Register of Electors) in the new homes.
- The level of *efficiency of Harrow Council* in identifying unregistered residents and encouraging their participation in electoral processes.

The Covid-19 pandemic might have had a delaying effect on aspects related to the first two bullet points. By 2026 it might be hoped the effects of the pandemic would have worked through to no longer be a factor impacting electorates. Revisiting the last two bullet points and a registration campaign before the next planned council elections in 2030 should be considered by Harrow Council.

The LGBCE would normally conduct an interim review to tackle a poor electoral equality in a local authority if:

- One ward has an elector to councillor ratio >30% from the borough average, or
- 30% of wards have an elector to councillor ratio >10% from the borough average.

If Pinner South ward (+10.7%) is added to the list of wards with a variance of >10%, then 18% of Harrow’s wards can now be considered to have “poor electoral equality”.

* This Appendix is best read in conjunction with Tables 6 to 8.

** The London Borough of Harrow (Electoral Changes) Order 2020 (S.I. 2020/72).