

COUNCIL

6 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT OF MANAGEMENT AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT MANAGER

A.1 Electoral Review

(Report prepared by Karen Neath)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval to a submission document to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) including a proposed Council size and forecast electorate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At Council on 10 September 2013 Council agreed the following:-
 - (a) An electoral review for the Council was necessary; and
 - (b) The LGBCE be approached with the intention of submitting a formal request for an electoral review to be carried out.
- On 9 February 2016 the LGBCE formally wrote to the Council to advise that it had a place on the review programme.
- The timetable for the review is as follows:-

Item	Action	Date
Stage 1 – Council size and electoral forecast	To submit submission to LGBCE	27 September 2016
Stage 2 – Ward Boundaries	Public consultation on new electoral ward boundaries	October 2016 to January 2017
	Draft recommendations published and a public consultation on them	March 2017 to May 2017
	Publication of final recommendations	July 2017
	Parliamentary Scrutiny	October 2017
Implementation of new ward boundaries	Local elections	May 2019

- A Portfolio Working Party, chaired by Councillor Paul Honeywood, has been established to look at the review. The Working Party has broad representation from across the Council.
- At this Council meeting Members are being asked to consider the submission on Council size (appendix A) including a forecast electorate. This submission has been prepared by the Working Party.
- The guidance from the LGBCE advises that the submission on Council size should take four broad areas into consideration:-

- Governance and Decision Making
- Scrutiny
- Representational Role (of Members)
- Future

- Each of the above areas has been considered and addressed in the submission document attached at Appendix A and in reaching a proposal on Council size.
- The Council's submission on Council size will be considered by the LGBCE alongside any other submissions received. The attached submission proposes a Council size of 48. The LGBCE will consider all submissions received on Council size and make a final decision. The LGBCE decision on Council size will be final.
- The forecast electorate in 2022 has been undertaken following the guidance of the LGBCE and is forecast to be 116,000. This includes an assessment of the number of new electors arising from additional housing build. The data for house build is the same as that used in the Council's emerging Local Plan although the Local Plan has a timescale to 2033 and beyond whilst the electoral forecast is to 2022.
- Once the revised Council size and forecast electorate are agreed these will inform the second stage of the review. One of the elements considered in looking at ward boundaries is electoral equality and the figures of Council size and both current and forecast electorate will be used to judge where electoral equality is significantly different in any ward from the average.
- It is important to say that when the stage of looking at ward boundaries is reached the use of electoral equality is a guide to how boundaries should change. Another very important factor is the local community in geographical, social and demographic terms and all Members of the community – individuals, residents associations, Town and Parish Councils etc. will be able to provide submissions on where they believe ward boundaries should lie.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the submission attached at Appendix A be agreed and submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

It is important that the number of members of the Council is appropriate to allow it to undertake effective governance, decision making, and scrutiny as well as ensuring that there is an appropriate level of electoral representation for residents across the District.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

The LCGBE will not take financial considerations into account as a reason for changing Council size. However, clearly, if the number of members were to reduce, then there would be a reduction in costs such as members' allowances, members printing etc. The total budget for member support costs for 2016/17 is £503,150.

Risk

There is a risk that if the numbers of members is reduced too far then the governance of the authority is not effective and the electorate does not have proper representation. The attached submission considers the relevant issues and proposes a Council size which the working party believes satisfies the LGBCE criteria.

LEGAL

The LGBCE was established by and operates under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS**Wards Affected**

All.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

There are no background papers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission