



Report To: Council
Lead Officer: Legal and Democratic Services Manager

24 September 2015

Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review Council Size Submission

Purpose

1. This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider a recommendation by the Civic Affairs Committee on making a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council size as part of its whole Council electoral ward review.

Recommendations

2. That South Cambridgeshire District Council recommends a Council size of 45 as part of its submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review.
3. That the draft document attached at **Appendix A** to this report be used as a basis for an evidence-based submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and that the Chief Executive be given authority to make any necessary amendments prior to its submission to Council, in liaison with the Chairman of the Council and representatives of all political groups.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. To ensure South Cambridgeshire District Council's views on Council size are fed into the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review into its electoral arrangements.

Background

5. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is conducting a whole Council electoral review, due to formally commence in November 2015 and which will result in the publication of its final recommendations in approximately September 2016. These recommendations will form the basis of an Order which will be laid before Parliament leading to electoral changes to be implemented in whole Council elections in 2018. Prior to considering possible changes to ward boundaries, the Commission will make a decision on Council size and has invited a submission from the Council in advance of the formal commencement of the review. A draft evidence-based submission is set out at **Appendix A** which has been recommended by the Civic Affairs Committee. The Committee also recommends that the Council submits a recommended Council size of 45 in response to the invitation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of its review.

Considerations

6. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is proposing to take a decision on the appropriate Council size on 17 November 2015. To inform its consideration the Commission has requested that the Council submits its proposals and justification as soon as possible before 17 November.
7. The Commission aims to ensure that the Council has the right number of elected Members in place to take decisions, manage its business effectively and provide effective local representation. It will consider the Council's governance and decision-making arrangements, its arrangements for the discharge of scrutiny functions, how Members carry out their representational roles and future trends and developments in the nature of decision-making and the role of elected Members.
8. The Civic Affairs Committee has met both formally and informally to consider what evidence should be collated in order to support a submission by the Council, which included overseeing surveys to elected Members and all Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks designed to quantify existing commitments and experiences.
9. At an informal meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee a request was made to engage with representatives of Parish Councils through an informal workshop, in order to gain a better understanding of their relationship with District Councillors, how they worked together and whether there were more effective ways of working together. This workshop was held on 27 August 2015 and notes of the key points raised are attached as **Appendix B**.
10. The draft Council size submission is designed around the following four themes identified by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:
 - governance and decision-making;
 - scrutiny functions;
 - representational role of councillors;
 - the future.
11. Should any submission made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council size be accepted, this will be the number that the Commission models the District on at the later stages of the review in respect of electoral boundaries.
12. The Civic Affairs Committee met on 10 September 2015 to consider the issue of Council size and a draft of the submission document as an evidence base. It recommended to Council a Council size of 45, as well as using the submission document attached at **Appendix A** as an evidence base to support this proposition. The draft minutes from this meeting are attached at **Appendix C**.

Options

13. Other submissions can be made alongside or separately to the Council's submission.
14. Council could opt not to submit a preferred Council size. However, if no submission is made by the Council the Local Government Boundary Commission for England will decide upon a Council size based on the evidence supplied and in comparison with the size of South Cambridgeshire District Council's statistical neighbour authorities.

Implications

15. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

16. Any reduction in Council size would result in savings incurred by the cost of the basic allowance for elected Members and travel or subsistence expenses that may be paid for approved duties.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

17. The content of the draft submission has been the subject of ongoing consultation with the Chairman of the Council, political group leaders, the Civic Affairs Committee, other Members of the Council and representatives of Parish Councils.

Background Papers

No background papers were relied upon in the writing of this report.

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