

REPORT TO COUNCIL

7 SEPTEMBER 2016

COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolio: Leader of the Council

Wards affected: All

Purpose

To enable the Council to make a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England concerning its view of the future size of the Council at the start of the review process.

Recommendation

To approve the document in Appendix 1 of the report to go forward to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the Council's submission regarding its preferred proposal for the future size of the Council.

1. Background

1.1 At its meeting on 25 November 2015 the Council considered a report concerning the future size of the Council. The Council resolved:

- a) That the current council size of 60 Members should be reduced
- b) That the number of elected Members should be in a range between 42 and 48.

1.2 The process for electoral review is set out in the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's document 'Electoral reviews: technical guidance'. This can be found on the Commission's website at:

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/10410/technical-guidance-2014.pdf

2. The review process

2.1 Members received a presentation from representatives of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England outlining the process for the review. The Commission's technical guidance document details the process for reviews. In the presentation and in the guidance the Commission has indicated that at the start of the review process it will expect the Council to set out its own view about the proposed future size of the Council.

3. The Commission's information requirements

3.1 In order to conduct a review effectively and thoroughly the Commission requires some information before a review is commenced. The requirements are set out in the Commission's electoral review technical guidance. In this document the Commission advises that Council size is the starting point for any electoral review

since this determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards in the Borough.

3.2 In the technical guidance document the Commission gives a template for Council submissions concerning Council size. The document in Appendix 1 presents the information requested by the Commission in the format recommended.

3.3 The Commission considers that councils should take the opportunity provided by an electoral review to consider how many councillors they need, having regard to their political management arrangements, regulatory and scrutiny functions and the representational role of councillors, both in terms of their ward work and representing the council on external bodies. Much of this work was undertaken by the Governance Committee in preparing the report which was submitted to the Council in November 2015.

4. Submission regarding future council size

4.1 Officers have prepared a draft submission of the information required by the Commission. The submission which has been prepared has drawn upon the information which was presented to the Council in the report considered in November 2015 and on which basis the Council set the range for future size of between 42 and 48 elected Members. The information in the submission complements this with other information specifically requested by the Commission in the 'Electoral reviews : technical guidance' document.

4.2 Guidance sought from the Commission in the preparation of this report has confirmed that in making a submission about future size the Council needs to recommend a specific number of Councillors rather than the range which was resolved by the Council in November 2015. Following consultation with all of the Political Groups it is considered that it is appropriate to recommend to the Commission a council size within the range agreed in November 2015. The submission itself provides the detailed rationale for the Council in future to be made up of 44 elected Members. This is considered to be a robust proposal based on the evidence set out in the report to Council in November 2015 and some further and more detailed work which has been undertaken since that time.

4.3 Whilst it is known that the Commission will take the Council's preferred council size as its starting point it does reserve the right to "change this number slightly in order to ensure better levels of representation across the district" (paragraph 4.29 of the Commission's technical guidance) where this is necessary. Therefore the Council should be advised that whilst the Boundary Commission will take the Council's preferred number as its starting point it does reserve the right to vary that number in the final proposal.

4.4 A copy of the draft submission is given in Appendix 1 of this report.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

5.1 Electoral reviews are conducted under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6. Finance and Resource Implications

7. Major risks

8. Earlier resolutions

Council resolution of 25 November 2015

9. Background papers

Local Government Boundary Commission for England 'Electoral reviews : technical guidance' April 2014

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Council size submission to The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The appendices to the submission itself have not been included in the document at Appendix 1 as these are all published documents and in the public domain. Below are web links to these documents.

Appendix A – Member Development Strategy

<http://sviam/documents/s19839/Member%20Development%20Strategy%202016%20-2017.pdf>

Appendix B – Planning Delegations

<http://sviam/documents/s17653/DELEGATIONS%20-%20Planning%20June%202015.pdf>

Appendix C – Licensing Delegations

<http://sviam/documents/s17651/DELEGATIONS%20-%20Licensing%20May%202014.pdf>

Appendix D – Role Description for Councillors

<http://sviam/documents/s15974/APPENDIX%2017%20-%20ROLE%20OF%20COUNCILLORS.pdf>

Appendix E – Member Survey

<http://sviam/documents/s18263/Appendix%201%20Members%20Survey.pdf>

Appendix F – Member Survey – Summary Findings

<http://sviam/documents/s18261/Appendix%201-ElectoralArrangements%20Summary%20Findings.pdf>

Appendix G – LGA Peer Review Report

<http://sviam/documents/s15296/NuL%20Cttee%20Review%20Report%20-%20finaldraft150115.pdf>

Appendix H – Scrutiny Call-in Flow Chart

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<http://sviam/documents/s15370/APPENDIX%2010%20Annex%202%20-%20Call%20in%20flowchart.pdf>

Appendix I – Outside Bodies

<http://sviam/documents/s20123/FULL%20List%20of%20Outside%20Bodies%20for%20Council%2020052015%20COMPLETE.pdf>

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