

	REPORT TO CABINET TO BE HELD ON 11 APRIL 2017
	Key Decision Yes Forward Plan Ref No 2
Corporate Priority To be an efficient and effective Council which is financially sustainable for the future	Cabinet Portfolio Leader Holder

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – 17/81

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND ON COUNCIL SIZE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive to submit the proposal on Council size set out in Appendix 1 of this report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To enable the Council to express its view on what the size of the Council should be as part of the preliminary stage of the LGBCE's review of the Borough

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS: That the Council loses this initial important opportunity to influence the LGBCE's review of the Borough.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas.

The purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards – for a local authority.

1.2 The LGBCE's obligations set out in law when making its recommendations are to:

- Deliver electoral equality for voters (this means ensuring that the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward is as nearly as possible the same)
- Reflect local community interests and identities
- Promote effective and convenient local government

1.3 In May 2016, the Council agreed to request the LGBCE to undertake an electoral review of the Borough and delegated to the Cabinet in consultation with the Governance Working Group, the Council's submissions to the LGBCE.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 To be an efficient and effective Council which is financially sustainable for the future.

3. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

3.1 The Council's request last May to the LGBCE to undertake an electoral review of the Borough was based on an indicative reduction in councillors from 50 to 40. The chief reasons put forward in favour of such a reduction were: (i) the last review of the Council's electoral arrangements was carried out in 1999 prior to the introduction of the Local Government Act 2000 and the implementation of executive arrangements, which have brought significant changes to the way the Council operates. The Localism Act 2011 has introduced further changes which have streamlined Council's decision making e.g. in standards; and (ii) considerable technological advances have also affected councillors' representative role highlighting further the need for a review.

3.2 The LGBCE accepted the Borough Council's request and in January briefed Members on the different stages of the review. The preliminary stage is now drawing to a close in which the Council through the Cabinet forwards its view on what the future size of the Council should be. Then in May the LGBCE will consider this and any other submissions and will publish a Council size which it is 'minded to' recommend and invite ward proposals based on that Council size. This opens the next stage of the public consultation on ward boundaries which will run until the end of July. Then in mid-October the LGBCE will publish draft recommendations on new wards for the local authority and a public consultation on them until mid-December. Finally, in mid-February 2018 the LGBCE will publish its final recommendations to be submitted to Parliament for implementation at the Borough Council elections in May 2019.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The proposals in this report have been discussed with the cross-party Governance Working Group and with the wider membership of the Council through the group leaders and the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The LGBCE's Technical Guidance sets out the following key criteria for determining the size of the Council:
- The governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities;
 - The scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making, and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies; and
 - The representative role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the Council on local partner organisations.
- 5.2 The initial arguments outlined in the report to the Council in May 2016 have now been developed in accordance with these key criteria and with the support of two important pieces of evidence: (i) electoral forecasts of the Borough until six years after the review, 2023, and (ii) a survey of how councillors spend their time working for the authority, with a particular emphasis on their representative role in the local community. This forms the submission on Council size set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Policy

- 6.1 No specific implications

Financial

- 6.2 With effect from 2017/18, the Council's basic allowance for an elected member is £4,041.24. To reduce the total number of councillors by 10% (5), would save £20,206.20. In 2015/16, councillors claimed £15,618.30 in expenses. To reduce this figure by 10%, would save £1561.83. There would also be ICT and other savings in Member support costs.

Legal

- 6.3 The LGBCE is undertaking this electoral review in accordance with statutory criteria. Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires the LGBCE to have regard to:
- The need to secure equality of representation
 - The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - The need to secure effective and convenient local government

Sustainability

- 6.4 None.

Equalities and Diversity

- 6.5 Securing equality of representation and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities are key aspects of this electoral review.

Others

- 6.6 I have considered whether there are any Staffing, Planning, Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety, and Environmental implications arising from this report and am satisfied that there is no identified implication that will arise from this decision.

7. ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 See paragraph 3.2



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Background Papers:

Further information about the process for conducting electoral reviews can be found at: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/policy-and-publications/guidance>

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR.

Risk Matrix

Risk Ref	Date	Risk	Consequences	Mitigation	Current Risk Score	Target Score	Service Unit Manager/ Responsible Officer	Action Plan
1	April 2017	That the Council loses this initial important opportunity to influence the LGBCE's review of the Borough.	The LGBCE lacks evidence for its review from the Borough Council.	Prepare and submit an evidence-based Council size submission	C3	A3	Democratic Services Manager	See report

Glossary of Terms

Risk

An event which may prevent the Council achieving its objectives

Consequences

The outcome if the risk materialised

Mitigation

The processes and procedures that are in place to reduce the risk

Current Risk Score

The likelihood and impact score with the current mitigation measures in place

Corporate Objectives

An assessment of the Corporate Objectives that are affected by the risk identified.

Target Risk Score

The likelihood and impact score that the Council is aiming to achieve

Service Unit Manager

The Service Unit or Officer responsible for managing the risk

Action Plan

The proposed actions to be implemented in order to reduce the risk to the target score

Risk Scoring

Impact	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
		A	B	C	D	E
	Likelihood					

Likelihood:

A = Very Low

B = Not Likely

C = Likely

D = Very Likely

E = Almost Certain

Impact

1 = Low

2 = Minor

3 = Medium

4 = Major

5 = Disaster