

Public

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Election Frequency  
**Meeting/Date:** Council – 11th November 2015  
**Report by:** Managing Director  
**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is reviewing Huntingdonshire District Council's electoral arrangements. At the meeting in September, the Council approved a submission in which it recommended the retention of 52 Councillors based on variable numbers of Members per ward, rather than a fixed number.

A consequence of retaining this flexibility is that it will not be possible to hold elections in all wards every year. This is something the LGBCE would require if the Council is not to have single-member wards. This means that unless the Council decides to move to whole Council elections, the LGBCE is highly unlikely to accept the proposal on the number of Councillors.

The Council has been advised by the LGBCE that it should begin consulting on moving to whole Council elections. A consultation has, therefore, been launched on how often elections should be held to appoint District Councillors.

The outcome of the consultation will be submitted to the Council in December.

## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 This report contains information on recent developments relating to the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of the Council's electoral arrangements.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has been advised by the LGBCE that it should begin consulting on moving to whole Council elections.

## **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The LGBCE has recently announced it intends to undertake an electoral review of Huntingdonshire District Council. The first phase of the review was for the Council to produce a submission to the LGBCE, which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed Council size. The submission was approved on 30th September 2015 and duly forwarded to the LGBCE.

- 3.2 The submission recommended the retention of 52 Councillors based on variable numbers of Members per ward, rather than a fixed number. A consequence of retaining this flexibility is that it will not be possible to hold elections in all wards every year. This is something the LGBCE would require if the Council is not to have single-member wards. This means that unless the Council decides to move to whole Council elections, the LGBCE is highly unlikely to accept the proposal on the number of Councillors.

- 3.3 A consultation has, therefore, been launched on how often elections should be held to appoint District Councillors. Consultees have been asked to indicate whether they think the Council should hold elections by thirds or whole Council elections every four years. They are able to submit comments as well if they wish.

- 3.4 Various interested parties have been contacted and invited to submit their views. The list includes:

- District Councillors;
- County Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Neighbouring District / City Councils;
- Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Local Members of Parliament;
- Local Members of the European Parliament;
- The Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner;
- The Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations.

- 3.5 The consultation has been featured on the Council's website and responses can be submitted online. Printed copies of the consultation have been available from Pathfinder House. There also has been a press release.

- 3.6 The report to the Council in December will include analysis of the results and the Council's options.

**4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS?  
HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1 The risks are, firstly, that electoral equality will not exist and, secondly, that the LGBCE will reject the Council's proposals on Council size on the "technical" ground that the electoral cycle does not correspond with that recommended. The first risk is catered for by the purpose of the review itself. The second risk will be addressed at the full Council meeting in December.

**5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 The consultation commenced on 23rd October 2015 and will finish on 4th December 2015. The outcome will be reported to full Council on 16th December 2015. The LGBCE will then be informed of the Council's decision.

**6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 6.1 Working with our communities - we want our communities to get involved with local decision making. In particular the objectives to:
- create stronger and more resilient communities, and
  - empower local communities.

**7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The primary legislation in this area is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which consolidates and amends legislation previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This legislation specifies the requirement to undertake electoral reviews and prescribes their procedures and parameters.

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The cost of the review will be met from existing resources.

**9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The review is required 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.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – [Technical Guidance](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – [Taking part in the Electoral review of Huntingdonshire District Council – A guide for councillors](#)

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