

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: FIRST PHASE CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S HUNTINGDONSHIRE ELECTORAL REVIEW

Meeting/Date: Council – 23rd March 2016

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader

Report by: Managing Director and Returning Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

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. Subsequently, the Council further resolved to move from elections by thirds to all-out elections with effect from the ordinary day of elections in May 2018. The next phase of the process is to devise warding patterns for Huntingdonshire.

At the Council meeting in February 2016, Councillors J D Ablewhite, G J Bull, S J Criswell, Ms L A Duffy, M Francis, T Hayward, T D Sanderson and M F Shellens were appointed to the Electoral Boundary Review Working Group. The Group was tasked with making recommendations on future warding patterns, which would form the basis of the Council's response to the first phase consultation. The Working Group has met on a number of occasions and considered various permutations. Its recommendations appear in Appendix 1.

Recommendation(s):

That Council approve submission of the warding proposal, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as a Council response to the first phase of the review.

1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 To approve submission of a Council response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) first phase of consultation on new warding patterns for Huntingdonshire.
- 1.2 This proposal is recommended for submission by the Electoral Boundary Review Working Group.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 To enable the Council to submit a preferred warding pattern for Huntingdonshire.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has begun a review of the electoral arrangements of Huntingdonshire District Council. This review has been initiated because of an imbalance in the number of people represented by each Member across the District.
- 3.2 The Council has previously resolved to move to all-out elections from 2018. This decision was made to ensure that the LGBCE could implement a warding pattern that gave the Council the flexibility to have a mix of one, two and three Member wards.
- 3.3 The Council also made a submission to the LGBCE recommending a Council Size of 52 members going forward. The submission made it clear that the Council is experiencing a period of substantial growth and would not support a reduction in the Council size.
- 3.4 At its meeting in December, the LGBCE supported the Council's proposals for a Council Size of 52 and approved the electorate forecasts, which had been submitted.
- 3.5 The LGBCE has now invited stakeholders and interested parties to submit proposals for the future warding of the District. This first phase of consultation is scheduled to finish on 4th April 2016. The consultation is open to all interested parties for comment and proposal.
- 3.6 The Electoral Boundary Review Working Group has met on several occasions and now recommends that Council approves the warding proposal attached at Appendix 1 for submission to the LGBCE. The Working Group has tried to recommend wards that have as few Members as possible. However, it has been necessary to remain with the constraints imposed by the LGBCE relating to equality of representation. This means the LGBCE will not accept a proposal if the ratio of electors to Members is either more or fewer than 10% from the average Member:Electors ratio. At the same time, every effort has been made to reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

4. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The consultation will finish on 4th April 2016. The LGBCE will then consult on its draft recommendations between 7th June 2016 and 2nd August 2016. A final decision will be taken on 8th November 2016.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLANS

5.1 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.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 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.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A budget for elections already exists.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 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.

9 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

9.1 To assist the Council to take a decision on a warding pattern for Huntingdonshire.

9.2 The Electoral Boundary Review Working Group recommend the Council to approve submission of the warding proposal, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as a Council response to the first phase of the review.

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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