

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Electoral Review - Consideration of Council Size 18 November 2020 Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider whether the Council should make a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission on Council size, and, if so, to determine the contents of that submission.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee considers whether it wishes to make a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the appropriate size for the Council, and, if so, to consider the contents of the submission. A draft submission has been provided for consideration.**
- (2) That, if a submission is agreed, the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to send the submission to the Commission.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall that on 3 August 2020 Councillors received a remote briefing from representatives of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England concerning the forthcoming Electoral Review of Lancaster City Council. The review has now commenced.
- 1.2 The review will first decide Council size, that is, the number of Councillors, and then go on to review the number of wards and their names and boundaries. Council, at its meeting on 30 September 2020, authorised this Committee to consider and approve any submissions to the Commission during the course of the review.
- 1.3 The Commission has indicated that by mid-January it hopes to meet to consider the submissions and other evidence to make a decision on the most appropriate council size for the Council. It has therefore requested evidence by 8th of December. in relation to the most appropriate council size for the Council. It is a matter of choice whether or not the Council makes a response. Political groups and individual Councillors are able to make their own responses too if they wish.
- 1.4 The Commission will require a good rationale for what is proposed, particularly where any substantial change is proposed, and will test the rationale and underpinning assumptions. Any proposals will need to be based on technical evidence, for example on governance arrangements and committee places. Submissions should be made on the Commission's template, as attached.

- 1.5 The council size will subsequently determine the average (optimum) number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards of the Council. This number is achieved by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors on the Council.
- 1.6 The Committee therefore needs to consider whether it wishes to make a proposal in respect of council size, and if so, to formulate that proposal and authorise the Head of Democratic Services to submit it to the Commission.
- 1.7 Attached at **Appendix 1** is the Commission's Guidance document relating to council size.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Committee first needs to decide whether it wishes to make a submission on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2 If the Committee feels that it is appropriate to submit a response, then Members are asked to make a decision about the content of the response at this meeting using the Commission's template.

3.0 Previous Boundary Review

- 3.1 The Council's last Boundary Review took place over the years 2012/2013 and the results took effect from the May 2015 elections. In 2013, the Commission took the decision not to change the Council size, leaving it at 60 Members.
- 3.2 In 2012, as has happened for this review, Council gave Council Business Committee delegated authority to consider and approve responses to LGBCCE consultations on behalf of the Council. At its meeting on 12 January 2012, Council Business Committee resolved that a response be submitted advocating the continuation of sixty Councillors on Lancaster City Council. The Committee also resolved to encourage individual political groups on the Council to make their own submissions to the Boundary Commission's review.

4.0 Draft Submission

- 4.1 Should the Committee decide to submit a response, a draft has been provided as a starting point at **Appendix 2** using the Commission's template. The draft submission advocates remaining with 60 Councillors on the basis that this was the number the Commission decided upon at the last review and very little has changed in the structure and governance framework of the Council since that time that would result in a larger or smaller Council size being appropriate. This draft is for consideration and can be used as a starting point for discussions at the meeting.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is for the Committee to decide whether to make a response on behalf of the Council and, if so, to determine whether that response is to request that the number of Councillors be increased, decreased or remain the same. Any response should provide a robust rationale for the request and be submitted on the Commission's template.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety,
Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

None identified.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications as a result of this report. However, if the number of Councillors changes in the future there would be an increase/saving of £3,728 per annum per Councillor based on current allowances.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services,
Property, Open Spaces**

None identified.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGBCE website.

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