

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Electoral Review – Consideration of Council Size 15 March 2012

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the recent submission on Council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission, and to consider a further submission as requested by the Commission.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That the Committee consider approving a further draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission is currently undertaking a review of the District and that Council has authorised this Committee to consider and approve any submissions to the Commission.

- 1.2 At the last meeting of this Committee on 12 January 2012, Members considered making a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission on the number of members serving on the Council and, if so, what that number ought to be. It was resolved:

(1) *That the Head of Governance be authorised to prepare a submission to the Boundary Commission, on behalf of the Council, which advocated the continuation of sixty councillors on Lancaster City Council. The submission would be prepared in consultation with the Chairman.*

(2) *That the Committee would encourage individual political groups on the Council to make their own submissions to the Boundary Commission's review.*

- 1.3 A submission on behalf of the Council was prepared and sent to the Boundary Commission in the line with resolution (1) above for the Commission to take into consideration when making a decision on Council size at its meeting in February 2012.

1.4 After considering the submission the Boundary Commission was not satisfied that the Council had put forward a sufficient rationale for maintaining the size at sixty Councillors. In view of this, the Commission resolved to defer its decision on Council size and requested a meeting with the Council's political group leaders.

1.5 At the Commission's meeting with group leaders, held on 28 February 2012, it was agreed that the Commission would consider the Council size issue at its meeting on 17 April 2012 to allow sufficient time for the Council to prepare a further submission, with more detailed reasoning, for consideration at that meeting.

1.6 The deadline for the Commission to receive the further submission is 26 March 2012 and, since this Committee is the body authorised to consider and approve any submissions to the Commission, the draft submission is appended to this report for the Committee to consider and comment on.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 A draft submission is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 Group Leaders have been consulted on the draft submission and their comments will be reported at the meeting.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 The options open to the Committee are to decline to make the further submission on behalf of the Council or to put this submission forward as drafted or in a re-drafted form incorporating comments arising at this meeting. Alternatively, the Committee may wish to authorise the Head of Governance to finalise the submission in consultation with the Chairman.

4.2 Members are reminded that any submission must be finalised and submitted to the Commission by their deadline of 26 March 2012.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The Committee is asked to consider this further submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None directly arising from this report. The number of the electorate will be divided by the number of councillors to determine the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report. It is open to the Council to suggest any council size provided that it can justify its proposal.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report. The eventual size of the Council may have financial implications in terms of member allowances and support, but these cannot be quantified at this stage where the Commission is still considering proposals.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**Human Resources:**

None.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

None.

Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has prepared this report in her capacity as Democratic Services Manager.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council agenda and minutes 16 November 2011.

Council Business Committee agenda and minutes 12 January 2012.

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