

**ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: SUBMISSION  
TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

*To:* Full Council

*Date:* 22nd July 2014

*From:* Head of Communications and Community Engagement

*Purpose:* To seek approval for the County Council's proposed submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on Council size as recommended by the Electoral Review Working Group.

*Recommendation:* The Council is recommended to approve the County Council's formal submission attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
Name:	Wilma Wilkie	Name:	Councillor Sebastian Kindersley
Post:	Head of Communications and Community Engagement	Chairman:	Electoral Review Working Group
Email:	<a href="mailto:wilma.wilkie@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">wilma.wilkie@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>	Email:	<a href="mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com">skindersley@hotmail.com</a>
Tel:	01223 699183	Tel:	01223 699171

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) wrote to the Chief Executive in July 2013, to advise that it would be reviewing the electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council. Following this, there were discussions between the County Council and the LGBCE regarding the timing and appropriateness of an electoral review. This is referred to in the draft submission document, attached at **Appendix 1**. However, the LGBCE decided to proceed with the review, and Group Leaders set up a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group to work on this on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The Working Group comprises Councillors Bullen, Count, Criswell, Frost, Hickford, Hipkin, Jenkins, Kindersley, McGuire, Reeve and Walsh. Other Councillors also attended and contributed to meetings of the Working Group, and information was sent, when appropriate, to all Members on the boundary scenarios that the Group was considering, to seek their views.
- 1.3 The aim of the Working Group was to prepare a draft submission on behalf of the Council as a whole. The attached submission was supported by a majority of Working Group members. The Working Group acknowledges that there were differing views from individual Members and political groups, but noted there is the option to prepare submissions.

## **2. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS**

- 2.1 The Guidance places particular importance on proposals for Council size being properly developed in the context of the Council's governance arrangements, and the representational role of Councillors in their local communities. Council size is the starting point for the review since it determines the optimum councillor/elector ratio to be achieved across all divisions of an authority, against which levels of electoral imbalance are measured.
- 2.2 The Working Group has considered various issues in depth in determining the Council size. These include projected growth in the electorate, the outcomes of electoral reviews in comparable two-tier County authorities and the Council's financial outlook.
- 2.3 Whilst agreeing that Members' workloads are increasing, as the county meets the challenges of the growth agenda, and the recent move to a Service Committee system of governance, the overriding concern has been the reduced funding available to local authorities, the reductions in budgets and staffing this necessitates, and the need for staff and Members to respond by working more smartly. Faced with these challenges and financial imperatives, many comparable authorities have taken the decision to reduce the number of Councillors.
- 2.4 In discussing the impact of these challenges, the Group concluded that a reduction in the number of County Councillors is the preferred option. A range of scenarios between 57 and 63 Members were considered by the Group. The most workable solution was 63 Members, and this forms the basis of the proposed submission.

### 3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 A presentation was given by the LGBCE at a Members' Seminar in February 2014.
- 3.2 In considering different boundary scenarios, the Working Group has consulted with all County Councillors, and has taken those Members' views and local expertise into account. It must be stressed that whilst it is proposed to send the Version 3.0 scenario to the LGBCE as evidence of the type of information considered during this process, **these boundaries do not form a proposal**, as those issues will be considered in greater detail at a later stage of the Electoral Review process, once the Council Size has been confirmed by the LGBCE. *[These are attached at Appendix 2 in black and white print; Members have already received electronic copies in colour].*
- 3.3 Responsibility for liaising with other interested parties, e.g. Parish, Town, District and City authorities, is the responsibility of the LGBCE, as set out in their technical guidance. The LGBCE has recently confirmed that they have commenced this consultation process.

### 4. TIMETABLE

- 4.1 The deadline for Council and other submissions on Council Size is 3rd August 2014.
- 4.2 Once Council Size, has been determined, the Council will be invited to present its proposals for new electoral division boundaries. This consultation will run from 23rd September to 1st December 2014. This will be followed by a wider public consultation on the LGBCE's draft recommendations, which will run from 12th May to 6th July 2015.

Source Documents	Location
Taking part in the Electoral review of Cambridgeshire County Council – a guide for Councillors (LGBCE)  Council size – helping you make the strongest possible case to the Commission: a guide for local authority elected members and staff (LGBCE)  Electoral Reviews: Technical Guidance (July 2012) (LGBCE)	Room 114, Shire Hall, Cambridge         <a href="http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10391/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf">http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/10391/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf</a>