

**To the Chair and Members of the  
ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE**

**SUBMISSION BY COUNCIL TO BOUNDARY COMMISSION ON COUNCIL SIZE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGCBE) has commenced an Electoral Review of Doncaster. The first stage of the Review is consideration of the number of Councillors needed to take decisions, manage the business of the Council and provide community leadership and representation. A cross-party Working Group has been established and representatives from the Working Group will present the Working Group's draft Submission and findings on Council size to the Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the Committee consider the draft Submission on Council size prepared by the cross-party Working Group and make recommendations to full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The LGCBE has commenced an Electoral Review of Doncaster. The Review is in two parts. The first part of the Review will consider how many Councillors are needed. If the LGCBE decides that a different number of Councillors is appropriate, the second stage of the process will be to consider introducing new ward boundaries to ensure that each Councillor represents broadly the same number of voters and that local wards reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
4. The LGCBE require significant amounts of data from the Authority, including:
  - 1) Current electorate figures by polling district, parish and parish ward
  - 2) Electoral Registers
  - 3) GIS mapping of polling districts and parishes
  - 4) Parish electoral arrangements, including wards and numbers of Councillors
  - 5) Five-year electoral forecasts to ensure electoral arrangements remain viable in the long-term
  - 6) Political management and decision making structures
  - 7) Analysis of demands of time on elected Members

- 8) The structure the Council operates for scrutiny and the impact on member time
- 9) The time Councillors spend in surgeries, case-work and ward matters
- 10) A range of other questions designed to build up a picture of the demands placed on Councillors and the effectiveness of current arrangements. This information is all relevant to the question of how many Councillors are needed and will be available at the meeting.

5. The cross-party Working Group has concentrated on three work streams that will inform the debate on Council size. The work streams are:-

- Councillor workload outside of formal Council meetings;
- The future role of local Councillors; and
- The Council's approach to scrutiny.

The work of the Working Group is on-going and they are next due to meet on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 to pull together the outputs from the three work streams and debate the question of Council size. At the time of writing this report, it was anticipated that the Working Group would have a further meeting prior to finalising the draft Submission on Council size, with representations from the Working Group and this Committee presenting to full Council on 25 July 2013.

6. On 8<sup>th</sup> July the following members of the Boundary Commission came to Doncaster and met with the Mayor and Cabinet and then the Group Leaders prior to briefing the Members of Council:-

Max Caller, CBE	-	Chair of the Commission
Professor Colin Mellors	-	Lead Commissioner
Archie Gall	-	Director of Reviews
Jessica Metheringham	-	Review Manager

Later the same day, Archie Gall and Jessica Metheringham briefed representatives from parish Councils.

7. The Council's Intervention Commissioners have already made a submission to the LGBCE and have recommended a reduction in Council size to approximately 40-42 Members, together with a move to all-out elections, rather than the election by thirds currently utilised.

8. Assuming that full Council authorises the Submission on Council size, the LGBCE will then consider the proposal alongside the same from the Intervention Commissioners and any others received and make a "minded to" decision on the size of the Council on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013. From 3<sup>rd</sup> September to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the Boundary Commission will undertake a public consultation on its "minded to" decision.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9. The Terms of Reference of this Committee require it to make recommendations to full Council in relation to a range of issues, including Electoral Reviews. The Council has an opportunity to participate within the Review and make its own submission to the LGBCE. If the Council did not make a submission then the LGBCE would make its determination on the basis of the information available to it.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

10. The nature of any recommendation to full Council will be a matter for the Committee once it has heard from the Working Group and deliberated on a draft Submission

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

11. All of the priorities below and the Council's other functions, obligations and priorities are best served by having a Council that is appropriately sized for the tasks.

	<b>Priority Outcome</b>	<b>Implications of this initiative</b>
1.	Doncaster's economy develops and thrives, underpinned by effective education and skills	
2.	Children are safe	
3.	Stronger families and stronger communities	
4.	Modernised and sustainable Adult Social Care Services with increased choice and control	
5.	Effective arrangements are in place to deliver a clean, safe and attractive local environment	
6.	The Council is operating effectively, with change embedded and sustained with robust plans in place to operate within future resource allocations	

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. Any decision of the Boundary Commission can only be implemented if approved by Parliament. The Council's Constitution at 3.8.2 requires the Elections and Democratic Services Committee to make recommendations to full Council on electoral reviews

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no direct financial implications relating to this report. However, there is likely to be a significant impact on staff time in the future which will have an indirect cost to the Council.

## **CONSULTATION**

14. Briefings and consultations have been undertaken with the Mayor and Deputy and the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee. Cross party consultation has been achieved through the working group and all members had the opportunity to meet representatives from the Boundary Commission.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15. Report to EDSC 9 July 2013  
Boundary Commission Guide to Council Size

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Appendix 1

<b>Current Review timescale</b>		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Date start</b>	<b>Date finished</b>
Preliminary period	April 2013	October 2013
Preliminary meetings with Mayor, Group Leaders, full Council, parish and town councils and officers	8 July 2013	
Council size Submission due	26 July 2013	
LGBCE meet with Group Leaders/ Cross-Party Working Group to discuss Council's Submission	Late July/Early August 2013	
LGBCE makes its "minded to" decision on Council size	13 August 2013	
LGBCE undertakes a public consultation on its "minded to" decision on Council size	3 September 2013	14 October 2013
Following public consultation LGBCE makes a decision on Council size	12 November 2013	
LGBCE undertakes a public consultation on warding arrangements in Doncaster. Proposals on warding arrangements will be sought based on the proposed Council size	26 November 2013	3 February 2014
LGBCE publishes its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements in Doncaster and consults on these	13 May 2014	28 July 2014