

## **Local Government Boundary Review – Council Size Submission**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 In June 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) informed Derby City Council that an electoral review would be undertaken. The Commission has a legal duty to complete reviews of local authority areas from time to time, with the previous review of the council's area having taken place in 2001.

- 1.2 The boundary review will take place in two stages:

**Part 1 – Council Size** – the Commission determines the total number of councillors required to discharge the Council's functions and represent residents effectively.

**Part 2 – Warding Patterns** – the Commission will determine warding patterns based on three statutory criteria, which are:

- delivering electoral equality for local voters;
- protecting interests and identities of local communities; and
- ensuring effective and convenient local government.

- 1.3 The Council is required to make an evidence-based proposal for a suggested council size to the Commission by 5 October 2021.

The draft submission at Appendix 1 is presented to Council for approval. The submission has been prepared by Council Officers in consultation with Group Leaders and incorporates feedback from a survey of all councillors.

- 1.4 The remainder of the review will be conducted in several stages throughout 2021 and 2022. The draft proposals of the LGBCE in respect of council size and warding patterns will be considered by a future meeting of Council and will be subject to a full public consultation.

The Commission intend to publish their final recommendations in November 2022, with an order expected to be laid in Parliament shortly afterwards and an anticipated implementation date of May 2023.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the report and commit the support of the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for the duration of the boundary review.

2.2 To agree the following points of principle:

- The Council would not support any reduction in the number of councillors.
- The Council would not oppose a recommendation from the Commission to maintain the current Council size.
- The Council would support a small increase in the number of councillors.
- The Council supports maintaining three member wards.

2.3 To approve the draft Council Size proposal attached at Appendix 1 for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

## Reasons

- 3.1 To ensure that the views of Council are taken into consideration by the LGBCE in determining its recommendations in respect of council size.
- 3.2 The Council Constitution requires that matters relating to the variation of local government electoral areas and representation are approved by Council.

## Supporting information

- 4.1 The LGBCE have supplied a template to allow the necessary information to be provided by the Council. The template requests that information is provided on the context of the proposal in respect of national trends affecting local government and a city profile containing demographic and geographic data. A proposal for future council size is included at the conclusion of the document.
- 4.2 The template encourages Council's to consider three areas in making a Council Size proposal. These are:
- **Governance arrangements** – how is the Council constituted to take decisions across its range of responsibilities?
  - **Overview and Scrutiny** – how does the Council scrutinise its own decisions and those of outside bodies for which it is responsible?
  - **Community representation** – how do councillors engage with residents, conduct casework and represent the Council with local partners?
- 4.3 The Commission have identified three wards where the criteria for electoral inequality apply based on the current number of electors in those wards (Alvaston, Arboretum and Chellaston). In these cases, the variance from the average ratio of councillors to electors in the city is greater than 10 per cent.
- 4.4 Based on the data collated in Appendix 1 and consultation with councillors, four points of principle have been established. On this basis, it is recommended that a Council size of either 54 or 57 members is proposed.

This proposal is based on the following factors, detailed within the draft submission:

- Anticipated population growth in Derby by 2043
- Average council size in relation to Derby City Council's closest comparators
- Broad support for three councillor wards

- Increasing volume and complexity of casework
  - Ensuring sufficient appointments can be made to committees and outside bodies
  - Reduced level of direct officer support to councillors since 2001
  - The changing role of the Council and increased relevance of locality working
  - Recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced councillors.
- 4.5 The Council's Electoral Services team, with support from the Planning and Policy & Insight services, are providing a range of technical information to the LGBCE, to ensure that their proposals are based on the latest available data.
- 4.6 Once a recommended Council Size has been determined, the LGBCE will examine warding patterns under the three statutory criteria detailed at paragraph 1.2. This will include recommendations relating to the total number of wards; ward boundaries; the number of councillors elected to each ward; and, the names of each ward.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 The LGBCE met with Group Leaders, Councillors and Council Officers in July 2021 to establish a timetable for the boundary review.
- 5.2 A survey of councillors was completed in September 2021, requesting further information from councillors in relation to the volume of casework undertaken; community leadership; and, duties undertaken on behalf of outside bodies. The findings of the survey have been collated and incorporated within the council size proposal.
- 5.3 The recommendations of the LGBCE will be subject to a full public consultation. The Commission intend to consult extensively with residents, businesses, the local media and community groups in formulating their proposals as part of the second stage of the review.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 None. The LGBCE is an independent body established by Parliament; the recommendations of the Commission will be laid before Parliament at the conclusion of the review period. Failure to make a proposal would result in recommendations being imposed upon the Council.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 Any increase or decrease in councillor numbers will yield costs or savings in relation to councillors' allowances and the support services provided to elected members.

The current Basic Allowance for councillors is £11,523 per annum. No increase in the number or level of Special Responsibility Allowances is envisaged resulting from the increase in councillor numbers proposed at Appendix 1.

## Legal implications

- 8.1 The LGBCE was created under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Climate implications

- 9.1 None directly arising.

## Other significant implications

- 10.1 Upon implementation of the recommendations of the LGBCE, a single, whole-Council election will take place (likely to be in May 2023). Unless a resolution of Council is made to the contrary in the intervening period, the current system of election by thirds will continue from May 2024 onwards.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Emily Feenan – Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services	10/09/2021
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Simon Riley – Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	13/09/2021
<b>Other(s)</b>		

  

<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Council Size Submission Appendix 1A – Constitutional Appointments 2021-22 Appendix 1B – Portfolios, Scrutiny and Management Structure 2021-22 Appendix 1C – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-20 Appendix 1D – Outside Bodies and Charities appointments 2021-22