

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Assistant Director of Democratic Services

To: Council – 28th February 2013

Author: Rory Ringer, Democratic Services Team Leader

Subject: Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review – Council Size Submission

Purpose:

To agree a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on Council Size. The submission is attached to this report.

Recommendation(s):

To authorise the Chief Executive to submit the proposal on Council Size attached to this report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

1. BACKGROUND

This paper sets out the Council's formal response to a request from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to put forward a submission for Council size.

The LGBCE informed the Council in August 2012 that Breckland had been identified as requiring an Electoral Review on the basis that one or more of its District wards has an electoral imbalance of more than 30%. The review is due to formally commence in February 2013.

The Council welcomes the Electoral Review, and has engaged fully with the process of building a case for a reduced council size following an examination of the business needs of the Council.

This submission makes a case for reducing the number of Councillors, which after enquiry and detailed analysis of Councillors workloads, the appropriate number should be reduced from 54 to 50.

The submission has been developed by a cross-party working group of Breckland Councillors. The approach in this submission has been to follow the guiding principles to support a proposed change to the size of the Council.

2. OPTIONS

The Authority is obliged to provide assistance to the Boundary Commission with conducting the review. The options available to the Council are to approve the recommendations as put forward by the Working Group. If it is not recommended, the Council will need to be mindful that the Boundary Commission may suggest their own Council Size for Breckland.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The LGBCE have requested an initial submission on proposed Council size prior to the commencement of the formal review at the end of February 2013.

The attached submission document on Council Size outlines the justification for the proposal to reduce the Council's number of elected members from 54 to 50.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS

N/A

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 **Legal** – The duty to comply with the law rests with LGBCE.

5.2 **Risks** The report does not require a risk assessment because of the issues covered by the recommendations are not significant in terms of risk.

5.3 **Financial** - N/A

5.4 **Timescales** - The Review formally commences in February 2013, reviews typically take 12 months to complete, and any changes to the current arrangements will come into force at the next scheduled elections in May 2015.

5.5 **Equality and Diversity** – N/A

5.6 **Stakeholders / Consultation** – This will be undertaken by the LGBCE

5.7 **Contracts** – N/A

5.8 **Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998** – N/A

6. WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

ALL

Background papers:- None

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Director/Officer who will be attending the Meeting

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Key Decision – Yes

Appendices attached to this report: Submission on Council Size for the LGBCE (Feb 2013)