
Council Size Boundary Review - Phase 1

Committee considering report:	Extraordinary Council
Date of Committee:	22 November 2016
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Roger Croft
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	10 November 2016
Report Author:	Andy Day
Forward Plan Ref:	C3029

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To appraise Council of the work that has been undertaken in relation to the Boundary Review (Council Size) and to recommend a single figure as the proposed future number of Members with effect from the next 2019/20 District Council elections.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Governance Report be approved and adopted.
- 2.2 That, for the purposes of Phase 1 of the Boundary Review process, the Council be requested to agree that the number of Members required from 2019/20 be reduced from the current number of 52 to 40 (+ or -1).

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** If this report is approved then savings of around £84,000 are available.
- 3.2 **Policy:** N/A
- 3.3 **Personnel:** N/A
- 3.4 **Legal:** This review is being conducted in accordance with the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 3.5 **Risk Management:** N/A
- 3.6 **Property:** N/A
- 3.7 **Other:** N/A

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 N/A

5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 At its meeting on 17 September 2015 the Council agreed to approach the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) with a view to having a Council Size Boundary Review undertaken. Arising from this approach the Council were notified that its request had been approved and Phase 1 - draft Council Size submission would have to be completed by the end of November 2016.
- 5.2 Phase 1 of the review requires the Council to look at its future governance arrangements having regard to the financial challenges it faces and to suggest a future Council size (new single number of Councillors) going forward. The Council is also required at this stage to review its electoral forecasts having regard to a number of factors including the projected number of new houses to be built across the District.
- 5.3 Phase 2 of the review will involve looking at warding patterns having regard to the proposed new number of Councillors. The LGBC believe that factors that influence Council size can be drawn together into four broad elements:
- (i) The decision making process - what decisions, taken where, and how is it managed?
 - (ii) Quasi-judicial processes - e.g. planning and licensing – what is the workload and how is it managed?
 - (iii) The scrutiny process - what is scrutinised and how is the total scrutiny workload managed?
 - (iv) The representative role of the elected Member.
- 5.4 A cross party Working Group has been set up to manage the two phase process and this has met twice. The report attached to this report sets out the current governance arrangements and suggests that changes will be required going forward to reflect the likely resources available to support this.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Working Group has considered the requirements of Phase 1 of the review and is recommending that the future number of Members to represent the electorate of West Berkshire from 2019/20 be reduced from 52 to 40 (+ or – 1).

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 7.2 Appendix B - Equalities Impact Assessment
- 7.3 Appendix C - Electoral review of West Berkshire Council – Proposed Council Size Submission
- 7.4 Appendix D - Members Survey Results