

## REPORT TO CABINET

<b>Open</b>		Would any decisions proposed :		
<b>Any especially affected Wards</b> None	Mandatory	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	NO	
		Need to be recommendations to Council	YES	
		Is it a Key Decision	NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Brian Long, Leader E-mail: cllr.brian.long@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted: Cross Party Boundary Review Task Group		
Lead Officer: Ray Harding, Chief Executive E-mail: ray.harding@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616245		Other Officers consulted: Sam Winter, Mary Colangelo		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES

Date of meeting: 2 May 2017

### **ELECTORAL REVIEW – SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION**

#### **Summary**

Members will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission has decided to undertake an electoral review of the Borough Council. The 'Preliminary Stage' of the review has now commenced and runs until 15<sup>th</sup> May which is the deadline for submissions on the council size from the Borough Council itself and/or from council groups. The recommendations from this meeting will feed directly into the Special Council meeting, immediately prior to the Annual Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May in order to ensure that the Council's submission is endorsed prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> May submission date.

Once the size of the Council has been determined the review goes on to determine the names, number and boundaries of wards and the number of councillors to be elected from each ward. This report relates primarily to the preliminary stage of the review, in particular the development of a submission from the Council for the overall number of councillors required to effectively and efficiently lead the Council.

The Commission will make its judgment on Council size by considering three broad areas:-

- The governance arrangements of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- The Council's scrutiny arrangements relating to its own decision making and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- The representational role of councillors in the local community and how members engage with people, conduct casework and represent the

Council on local partner organisations.

The Commission requires an evidence-based submission.

### **Recommendation**

- 1) That the attached report be approved for submission to the LGBC, with the recommendation of 54 Councillors for the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- 2) That the preference would be for single member wards, but for larger areas 2 member wards, and only in exceptional circumstances should a 3 member ward be agreed.

### **Reason for Decision**

To agree the Borough Council's submission to the LGBC on the future size of the Council.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBC) has confirmed that it is to undertake an electoral review of the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk. The preliminary stage of the review commenced with the pre-Council briefing in February and concludes in May. The review is scheduled for completion in April 2018. This paper focuses on the preparation of the Council's submission on the future size of the Council.
- 1.2 As explained at the previous Cabinet meeting the Commission considers three broad areas when forming a judgment on the appropriate number of Councillors; these are summarised below:-

### Governance arrangements

The Commission aims to ensure that councils have the right number of councillors to take decision and manage the business of the council in an effective a now and in the future.

*To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about cabinet and/or committee responsibilities, number of committee members and their workload, delegation to official, other bodies and plans for the future.*

### Scrutiny functions

Every local authority has mechanisms to scrutinise the executive functions of the council and other local bodies. They also have significant discretion over the kind (and extent) of activities involved in that process. In considering council size, the Commission will want o

satisfy that these responsibilities can be administered in a convenient and effective way.

*To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about the number of councillors your authority needs to hold the decision makers to account and ensure that the council can discharge its responsibilities to other organisations (e.g. other public sector bodies, partnerships, and trusts).*

### Representational role of councillors

The Commission understand that there is no single approach to representation and members will represent and provide leadership to their communities in different ways. However, we are interested in hearing about the extent to which members routinely engage with communities and how this affects workload and responsibilities.

*To support your view, the Commission is looking for evidence about how councillors interact with their communities, their caseloads and the kind of support they need to effectively represent local people and groups.*

## **2 The process to date**

- 2.1 The Cross Party Task Group set up at the Cabinet meeting 11 April 2017 has met twice to consider the draft report and to discuss the number of Councillors for the future Council, along with the preferences for the number of Councillors per ward.
- 2.2 Following the first meeting on 12 April 2017, all Councillors were invited to a workshop session to discuss the Council's position on numbers of Councillors.
- 2.3 Feedback from that session was given to the Task Group at its next meeting on 18 April along with information on the LGBC's position to date on reviews carried out across Norfolk. The Task Group considered this information and has recommended to Cabinet that a proposal be taken forward for 54 Councillors for the Borough Council.
- 2.4 In considering the preferences for the numbers of councillors per ward the Task Group agreed to recommend that the preference would be for single member wards, but for larger areas 2 member wards, and only in exceptional circumstances should a 3 member ward be agreed.

## **2.0 Options Considered**

- 2.1 The Cross Party Task Group considered a range of options in terms of the proposed number of Councillors required for the Borough Council within a range of 48-62 (current level). Following detailed consideration of the evidence base set out in the report together with benchmarking against recent LGBC council size determinations in Norfolk (Breckland/South Norfolk/North Norfolk) alongside input from the Member Workshop the Task Group concluded 54 Councillors would best

meet the future needs of the authority whilst ensuring that Member workloads at a Ward level are manageable.

### **3.0 Policy Implications**

3.1 There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **5.0 Personnel Implications**

5.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

### **6.0 Statutory Considerations**

6.1 There are no statutory considerations arising directly from this report.

### **7.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(Pre-screening report template attached)

7.1 There are no equality issues arising from this report.

### **8.0 Risk Management Implications**

8.1 Unless a comprehensive evidence-based submission with full input from Members is prepared and submitted in accordance with the LGBC deadline, there is a risk that the Boundary Commission will come to incorrect conclusions with respect to the most appropriate number of Councillors required to provide the required democratic leadership for the Borough Council in future years.

### **9.0 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted**

9.1 None

### **10.0 Background Papers**

10.1 Electoral Review of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council



## Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/service/function	Electoral Review				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	Existing				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Electoral Review by LGBC				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<p><b>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups <b>according to their different protected characteristic</b>, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</b></p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			✓	
	Disability			✓	
	Gender			✓	
	Gender Re-assignment			✓	
	Marriage/civil partnership			✓	
	Pregnancy & maternity			✓	
	Race			✓	
	Religion or belief			✓	
	Sexual orientation			✓	
	Other (eg low income)			✓	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comments</b>			
<b>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</b>	No				
<b>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</b>	No				
<b>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</b>	No				
<p><b>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</b> If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<b>Actions:</b>			
		<b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> .....			
<b>Assessment completed by:</b> <b>Name Ray Harding</b>					
<b>Job title Chie Executive</b>	<b>Date 7/3/17</b>				

**Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.**