

**Wiltshire Council**

**Full Council**

**10 July 2018**

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**Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council – Supplementary Submission to the  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

**Executive Summary**

The Electoral Review Committee was established by Full Council at its meeting on 17 October 2017 to progress the Council's response to the Boundary Commission's Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council.

Following approval by Full Council of a submission on proposed council size on 20 February 2018, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England requested supplementary information before making a determination.

The Committee has prepared a draft supplementary submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for Council to consider.

**Proposal**

That Council approves the draft supplementary submission on council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, subject to any minor drafting and consequential changes to be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee.

**Reason for Proposals**

To provide supplementary information in support of the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the preliminary stage of their review

**Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director - Communities, Transformation and Resources**

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Full Council**

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## **Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council – Supplementary Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

### **Purpose**

1. For Full Council to approve a draft supplementary submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on council size as recommended by the Council's Electoral Review Committee.

### **Background**

2. On 15 September 2017 Wiltshire Council was notified by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('the Commission') of its intention to carry out an electoral review of the Council in its 2018/19 work programme. This was because 25 of the 98 electoral divisions in Wiltshire had a variance from the average number of electors per councillor greater than 10% and 2 had a variance of more than 30%.
3. On 17 October 2017 Council established the Electoral Review Committee ('the Committee') to progress the Council's response to the review, and to formulate recommendations on any submissions to be made to the Commission during the review process.
4. Following consideration of evidence and preparation of a submission on Council size by the Electoral Review Committee ('The Committee'), Full Council on 20 February 2018 resolved:  
*To approve the draft submission on Council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, subject to any minor drafting and consequential changes to be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee.*
5. The submission was presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('The Commission') on 4 April 2018.
6. The submission stated that Wiltshire Council ('The Council') considered that its proposed Council size of 99 was the most appropriate to enable the Council to provide effective and convenient local government within Wiltshire, taking into account the Council's governance arrangements, its regulatory and scrutiny functions, and the representational role of Councillors, in particular in relation to the community area system. Furthermore, that a retention of a single member division structure should be a requirement of any future Council.
7. On 24 April 2018 the Commission requested to meet with the Leader of the Council to discuss the Council's submission. This meeting took place on 15 May

2018 with the Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee also in attendance. The Commission also met with representatives of the Liberal Democrat Group.

8. On 31 May 2018 the Commission formally requested that supplementary information be provided on a number of aspects of the Council's submission, to assist in its decision on Council size.

### **Main Considerations**

9. The requested information from the Commission included:
  - i) How the Council's proposal provided a balance between strategic decisions and operational management;
  - ii) To fully understand scrutiny members' role in policy development and why Portfolio Holders are needed;
  - iii) Why such a large number of councillors need to be involved in such a very small proportion of the total number of planning applications;
  - iv) Why a minimum of four councillors is needed for an Area Board to operate effectively;
  - v) Why a smaller council would compromise the Council's ability to discharge its duties and represent the people of Wiltshire.
10. The Committee held a workshop meeting on 12 June 2018 to consider the request from the Commission and to recommend a course of action for the Council to follow.
11. On 25 June 2018 the Committee considered a draft supplementary submission and additional evidence, and resolved that Council should reaffirm its submission that a council size of 99. The Committee also delegated confirmation of the draft submission to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Chairman.
12. A copy of the original submission is appended here for reference.
13. A copy of the final draft submission will be circulated as a supplement ahead of the Council meeting on 10 July 2018.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

14. There are no safeguarding implications.

### **Public Health Implications**

15. There are no public health implications.

### **Procurement Implications**

16. There are no procurement implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

17. There are no equalities implications.

### **Environmental Implications**

18. There are no environmental implications.

### **Financial Implications**

19. Work to date has been carried out within existing resources. Financial considerations are not relevant for the purpose of determining council size.

### **Legal Implications**

20. The Electoral Review is a statutory process carried out by the Commission in accordance with its obligations and powers as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

### **Risks**

21. If the Council failed to respond to the review the Commission would determine matters based on the submission of other interested parties.

### **Options Considered**

22. The Committee evaluated all relevant evidence and considered a range of potential council size options against the relevant criteria.

### **Ian Gibbons - Director of Legal and Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer)**

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Appendix 1 – Extract of the Minutes of the Electoral Review Committee, 25 June 2018

Appendix 2 – Original Submission

Appendix 3 – Supplementary Submission – to follow

## **Appendix 1**

### **Minute 35, Electoral Review Committee, 25 June 2018**

A report was presented outlining the progression of the Electoral Review since the last meeting.

Following the submission being provided to the Committee on 4 April 2018 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England informed the Council that it was not in a position to make a determination on council size. The Commission requested a meeting with the Leader of the Council, which took place on 15 May 2018 along with the Chairman of the Committee. A separate meeting took place between the Commission and representatives of the Liberal Democrat Group, who had made a separate submission to the Commission.

Following that meeting a letter was received from the Commission on 31 May 2018 formally requesting supplementary information from the Council in relation to its submission, with a new deadline for the preliminary stage of the Electoral Review of 13 July 2018.

A workshop meeting was held for the Committee on 12 June 2018 at which it considered the letter from the Commission and how the Council should respond to the request for information. Additional evidence relating to the submission was also considered.

Agenda Supplement 1 was then discussed at the meeting, being a draft supplementary submission taking account of the points raised by the Committee at the workshop meeting. Further evidence on committee number assessment, councillor hours and other comparisons were also considered.

The Committee discussed the draft, including whether they considered the evidence still supported a recommended council size of 99, and at the conclusion of discussion, it was,

#### **Resolved:**

**That on the basis of the evidence to recommend that Full Council continue to support a proposed council size of 99; and**

**To endorse the draft supplementary submission on council size to Council for recommendation to the LGBCE, subject to any minor drafting and consequential changes to be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services after consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee.**