

AGENDA

Meeting: Electoral Review Committee
Place: The Salisbury Room - County Hall, Trowbridge
Date: Thursday 25 January 2018
Time: 11.30 am

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Kieran Elliott, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718504 or email kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115.

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Membership:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling	Cllr Christopher Newbury
Cllr Clare Cape	Cllr Ashley O'Neill
Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman)	Cllr Jonathon Seed (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Gavin Grant	Cllr Stuart Wheeler
Cllr Ian McLennan	Cllr Graham Wright

Substitutes:

Cllr Peter Fuller	Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Ruth Hopkinson	Cllr Ricky Rogers
Cllr Nick Murry	Cllr Ian Thorn

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Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

For assistance on these and other matters please contact the officer named above for details

AGENDA

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes** (*Pages 5 - 8*)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chair.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item.

Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **18 January 2018** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **20 January 2018**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6 **Electoral Review Update**

A paper will be circulated regarding council size submission options.

The Committee is asked to consider the evidence and commentary to support the resolution on the council size range agreed at the last meeting.

This will need to focus on the key aspects of area board structure and development, and the case for executive portfolio-holders. The paper will outline the views expressed by members at the committee and workshops to date, along with the constitutional requirements, operational experiences, business plan intentions and independent reviews undertaken on the importance and effectiveness of these components.

The Committee has already commented and expressed its support for Wiltshire Council's current Cabinet and committee arrangements, overview and scrutiny set-up and councillor representational role based on the information/evidence supplied at the workshops and to the Committee.

In the light of further discussion, the intention is for the Committee to also define its preferred position on council-size.

Following the Committee, the project team will work on completing a first draft of the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) under the preliminary stage on council size for finalisation by the Committee on 7 February.

7 **Work Programme**

25 January – Committee Meeting – Finalise Recommendations

7 February – Committee Meeting – Finalise Submission to Council

20 February (or extraordinary) – Council Meeting – Approve Submission to Commission

The Project Board will be scheduled to meet periodically to ensure the requirements of the Committee are delivered by the project team.

8 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business, which the Chairman agrees to consider as a matter of urgency.

ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018 AT THE NORTH WILTSHIRE ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Jonathon Seed (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Graham Wright

Also Present:

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson

1 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 were presented for consideration and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

4 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

5 Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance.

6 **Electoral Review Update**

The Chairman introduced all of the documentation that had been publicly published following the two workshop sessions held on 20 December 2017 and 3 January 2018, to enable the Committee and others to make data based analyses of appropriate council size options. This had included details on the council's governance and scrutiny arrangements, the representational role of council, comparative local authority data, electorate forecasts, survey data from councillors, and the responses from the consultation with council staff the Committee had requested. A member felt that any consultation response requested from staff should include details of which officer submitted the responses.

The Committee considered all the data published including the submissions, and discussed whether the evidence as presented justified any particular council sizes. It was confirmed electorate to councillor ratios and cost factors were not relevant considerations, and it was agreed that the council needed to support whatever number it felt the evidence suggested, not attempt to assume the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had a target number to reduce the council to, and to react to such an assumption.

The Committee considered that area board arrangements in Wiltshire, being formal area committees with delegated executive authority and distinct budgets designated for historic community areas, were a significant factor to consider. With only minor reductions in the overall council numbers the representational role of councillors was significantly impacted in several areas. The evidence as submitted suggested the workloads for councillors had already increased over time and would continue to do so, as it was not accepted that a certain level of delegation of assets to towns and parishes would reduce unitary councillor workloads, particularly in rural areas. The council's governance and scrutiny arrangements operated effectively and were efficiently organised, and it was noted the most recent peer reviews of scrutiny indicated the arrangements were appropriate and working well. As a result, some members suggested an increase in councillor numbers would develop and improve the effectiveness of the present arrangements further, rather than a reduction below 93, which it was felt would make the governance arrangements unworkable.

It was noted that Cornwall Council had recently been reviewed and had been reduced in size by a third, however it was also noted that Cornwall had also undertaken devolution arrangements with central government, whereas Wiltshire Council had decided pursuing such arrangements was not suitable and was not subject to any agreement regarding devolution arrangements. Additionally, its Community Network Areas lacked the significance of the delegated powers of the Area boards, and it had even fewer parish councils than Wiltshire.

Other issues raised included more details on area board arrangements and the need for both council administrative and democratic efficiency.

At the conclusion of discussion, and upon the moving of Councillor Jonathon Seed, seconded by Councillor Graham Wright, it was,

Resolved:

That the evidence as presented supported a council size of between 93-99, and that further work be undertaken ahead of the meeting on 25 January 2018, where the Committee would determine the precise appropriate figure.

7 **Work Programme**

It was confirmed that it was not felt necessary to hold an additional workshop meeting on 16 January 2018.

Resolved:

To note the work programme.

(Duration of meeting: 12.35 - 2.00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718504, e-mail kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

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