

AGENDA

Meeting: Electoral Review Committee
Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN
Date: Wednesday 7 February 2018
Time: 12.00 pm

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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Public Participation

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 25 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 **31 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 **2 February 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**

At its meeting on 25 January 2018 the Committee resolved to recommend to Full Council that a council size of 99 be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

A draft submission for the Committee's consideration is being prepared, and will be circulated ahead of the meeting.

7 **Work Programme**

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.

The Council will be informed of the Commission's decision on council size in April 2018.

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 25 JANUARY 2018 AT THE SALISBURY ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, 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, Cllr Graham Wright and Cllr Ruth Hopkinson (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Thorn

8 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Clare Cape, who was substituted by Councillor Ruth Hopkinson.

Councillor Ian McLennan gave apologies that he would arrive late to the meeting.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 were presented for consideration and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign as a true and correct record.

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

11 Chairman's Announcements

Through the Chair there was the following statement:

At the last meeting Cllr Seed raised the question of the three staff submissions received to the review consultation. He questioned whether staff advising the committee could remain impartial if they were involved in the submissions.

The Committee requested that staff be consulted. However, staff were advised erroneously by a member of staff, and without the prior knowledge or approval of the Director for Legal & Democratic Services and the Corporate Director, that any submissions would be anonymous. Whilst incorrect this position must now be supported as it was on that basis that staff have responded.

The Corporate Director and Director for Legal & Democratic Services advise the committee that the submission will be drafted by themselves and the Head of Service for Democratic Services. None of these staff were involved in the staff submissions in any way.

I hope this addresses the valid question raised by Cllr Seed at our last meeting

12 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

13 **Electoral Review Update**

At its meeting on 11 January 2018 the Committee, having reviewed the available evidence against the valid criteria of governance arrangements, scrutiny arrangements and the representational role of councillors, determined that the most appropriate council-size for the Wiltshire Council area was between 93-99 councillors. In particular the Committee had determined that the community area structure was very significant due to its impact on council governance, engagement and service delivery. Other significant factors included the role played by executive portfolio holders and the relating impact upon committee membership and scrutiny engagement, and the representational role of councillors within a large, rural unitary council.

The Chairman introduced two supplementary documents which explored the impacts of council sizes of 93-99 upon the community areas, average division size, as well as reasoning for the presence of executive portfolio holders and the particular challenges arising from a large, rural authority, including the engagement with and assistance to large numbers of parish councils.

The Committee discussed the information, noting that electoral equality was the most significant factor, and considered which if any of the proposed range of council sizes met that requirement in addition to being supported by other factors. It was argued that the historic nature of the community areas along with their centrality to council governance and service delivery in localities, which would only increase in years to come, justified maintaining a council size which did not make more than minor adjustments to the external boundary of a community area.

It was accepted that even with council sizes at the upper end of the range, significant changes would be made to division boundaries to achieve electoral equality, and the acceptable level of variance from the average division was debated, along with whether it was felt there was a practical level at which no

more area boards could be reduced to 3 members and be as effective as possible.

Other issues discussed included the conclusions of Peer reviews regarding council governance arrangements, whether there had been or would be an overall reduction or increase in the workload of councillors in years to come, the particular challenges posed by rurality, electorate forecasts and updates from the Commission.

During debate a motion for a council-size of 99 to be recommended to Full Council as the figure to be submitted to the Commission was moved by Councillor Jonathon Seed, seconded by Councillor Ian McLennan, and at the conclusion of discussion it was,

Resolved:

That based on the evidence presented the Committee considered 99 to be the appropriate council size and they therefore instructed officers to draft a proposed submission to the LGBCE based on that figure, to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting

14 **Work Programme**

The work programme was noted, with the next meeting to be the 7 February 2018 meeting, ahead of Full Council on 20 February 2018.

15 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 11.30 am - 12.20 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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