

Wiltshire Council

Electoral Review Committee

25 January 2018

Council Size Submission Update

Purpose

1. For the Electoral Review Committee (“The Committee”) to agree a recommended council size, with evidenced reasoning, for consideration by Full Council on 20 February 2018.

Background

2. At its meeting on 11 January 2018 the Committee, after initial consideration of relevant evidence that had been gathered on governance arrangements, scrutiny arrangements and the representational role of councillors, resolved that the most appropriate council size was between 93-99.
3. In particular the Committee determined that the preservation of the existing community area model was critical whatever council size was adopted due to its significance to 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.

Main Considerations

4. It is important that any council submission be precise and be accompanied by sound reasons relating to the three valid criteria as set out in the technical guidance from the Commission.
5. The Committee therefore needs to agree which number between 93-99 should form the basis of any council submission.
6. Two appendices have been prepared to assist the Committee, on the basis of its core reasoning as detailed in paragraph 3, in selecting the most appropriate single figure for overall council size. These draw on information from the council submission in 2008, the Wiltshire Council Constitution, the Business Plan 2017-2027, material discussed at the committee workshops, correspondence with the Commission and information from the Chairman responding to the resolution at the last meeting.
7. The Committee is asked to consider the information supplied adding further evidence where appropriate in anticipation of challenges likely to be made by the Commission on these significant issues.

8. The project team will pull the other parts of the submission together from the evidence already discussed and agreed with a view to having the first full draft submission available for the Committee's next meeting on 7 February. The project team will continue the open dialogue the Commission's review officer and follow a submission format identified as a model of good practice.
9. Should the Committee approve the submission it will be taken to Full Council on 20 February for approval. The final deadline for submission to the Commission is 15 March.

Proposal

10. That the Committee determine what council size to recommend to Full Council and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, along with key reasoning, in order that the submission can be properly drafted.

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Appendix 1 - Community Area Model and Electoral Equality
Appendix 2 - Portfolio Holders and Representational Role