

<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>16 April 2013</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Establishing a Political Structures Working Group</b>
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Democratic Services Manager</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>All</b>

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**Summary of report:**

To consider a report which seeks to establish a Political Structures Working Group at West Devon Borough Council until the end of the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

**Financial implications:**

There will be a minimal cost associated with administering an additional Working Group. However, delegating responsibility to the Working Group to lead upon the detailed work associated with the Boundary Review (rather than all Members) it could be viewed as generating a small saving to the Council.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

1. with immediate effect, a Political Structures Working Group be established until the end of the 2013/14 Municipal Year; and
2. the draft Terms of Reference (as outlined at Appendix A) be agreed.

**Officer contact:**

Darryl White, Democratic Services Manager (email: darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk).

**Lead Member contact:**

Cllr Sanders, Leader of Council (email: cllr.philip.sanders@westdevon.gov.uk).

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**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 There are a number of ongoing and future issues which require Member involvement and which affect the democratic process at West Devon Borough Council. Such issues include: the Boundary Review, the two committee structure pilot, the merits of establishing a Council Tax Setting Panel and the increasing public opinion that the Council should be using electronic voting means at its Committee meetings.

1.2 In addition, the establishment of a Political Structures Working Group will enable Member(s) to bring forward additional issues which relate to the Council's decision-making processes for discussion and review.

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

2.1 It is suggested that the Working Group has terms of reference as outlined in Appendix A.

2.2 Officers acknowledge that the Working Group could have been established at the annual meeting of Council. However, such are the tight time constraints associated with the Boundary Review that it has been concluded to establish the Working Group now in order for it to commence its work immediately.

2.3 If the Council is minded to support this proposal, it is felt appropriate for the Working Group to comprise of six Members and to meet on an ad-hoc basis. In light of the close proximity to the annual meeting of Council, it is suggested that these appointments are made for the period up to the end of the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

## **3. RISK MANAGEMENT**

3.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

## **4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	All
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	Local Government Act 2000
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Background papers:</b>	Council Constitution
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	A. Draft Terms of Reference

## STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Reaching a consensus view.	The Working Group is not able to reach a majority view on a recommendation to be reported to full Council.	1	2	2	↔	Officers will compile a report to reflect the differing views and it will be a matter for the full Council to reach a decision.	Democratic Services Manager
2	Cost of convening extraordinary Council meetings	Due to the nature of the issue, there could be a potential need to convene a number of additional extraordinary Council meetings.	1	1	1	↔	The proposal to establish a Working Group should negate the need to convene additional Council meetings and the subsequent cost.	Democratic Services Manager

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔