

WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Special Council
DATE	28 January 2014
REPORT TITLE	Electoral Review of West Devon – Draft Warding Arrangements
Report of	Political Structures Working Group
WARDS AFFECTED	All

Summary of report: To consider a report which seeks to make a Council submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on alternative warding arrangements for West Devon Borough Council.

Financial implications: None arising directly from this report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Council agrees that Appendix A be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the Council's submission on alternative warding arrangements.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Political Structures Working Group, to finalise the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England before the deadline of Monday, 3 February 2014.

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Member contact: Cllr McInnes, Chairman of the Political Structures Working Group
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The LGBCE is responsible for reviewing local authority electoral arrangements, administrative boundaries and structure.

- 1.2 Members will recall that the Council resolved at its Special meeting on 1 July 2013 that *'the Council's submission to the LGBCE recommends that, when looking at the roles which need to be discharged by the Borough Council, coupled with the sparsity, rurality, and proposed population increases for West Devon, the Council size (eg number of Members elected) should not be reduced below the current number of 31. However, should the Boundary Commission wish to recommend any variation in Council size, then it should propose a marginal increase in number'* (Minute CM 27 refers).
- 1.3 At the conclusion of the consultation phase on Council size, the LGBCE met on 12 November 2013 to confirm its views. The Chief Executive was then informed on 27 November 2013 of the LGBCE decision to adopt a Council size of 31 Members for the purposes of consultation on warding arrangements.

2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Next Stage of the Review

- 2.1 This stage of the review began upon the receipt of the letter on 27 November 2013 and runs until 3 February 2014. The LGBCE has extended a general invitation to all interested parties to propose a new pattern of warding arrangements for the Council, with proposals being based upon a Council size of 31 Members.
- 2.2 After this deadline has expired, the Commission will consider the proposals it receives and then take a provisional decision on warding arrangements. It is then intended that these draft recommendations will be published in April 2014.
- 2.3 Upon this publication, there will then be a twelve week period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Commission considers all representations received and formulates its final recommendations. The final recommendations are expected to be published in October 2014.

Member Deliberations

- 2.4 At the request of Council, an all Member workshop was held on the afternoon of Monday, 13 January 2014. At this workshop, a number of discussion points were generated for the consideration of the Political Structures Working Group.
- 2.5 On Tuesday, 14 January 2014, these points were individually considered by the Working Group and a number of points were agreed which it was felt could form the basis of the Council's submission to the Commission.
- 2.6 Some Members also felt that, based upon these deliberations, it would be beneficial for officers to create some potential revised warding arrangements. In so doing, three options were created which were solely focused on a combination of Member views and the mathematics of ensuring compliance with the trigger points which prompted this Review.
- 2.7 Following a further consultation period with the wider membership, the Chairman of the Working Group has suggested that the first two options which had been

circulated and a new option 3 and option 4, coupled with the points raised during the Member deliberations, should be recommended, on an equal weighting, as the basis for the Council's submission to the Boundary Commission (Appendix A refers).

- 2.8 In suggesting to this meeting that the 4 options and the discussion points form the basis of the Council's submission, the Chairman of the Working Group has offered no personal preferences but believes that these will initiate Member consideration and discussion at this meeting. It will be a matter for this meeting to determine if (and if so, how many of) these options are included in the submission. Furthermore, the list of discussion points is by no means exhaustive and (if it is the wish of the meeting) further comments can be added (or indeed removed) before the submission is sent to the Boundary Commission.
- 2.9 Once the Council has reached a view on its submission, then it is recommended that the Democratic Services Manager be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of the Political Structures Working Group to finalise the Council's submission and send it to the LGBCE before the deadline of 3 February 2014.
- 2.10 During their deliberations, Members have wished to again reaffirm the point that all Members, local town and parish councils, community groups and residents are perfectly entitled to submit their own comments and patterns of warding arrangements for the Council to the LGBCE (www.lgbce.org.uk) before the deadline of 3 February 2014.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There is provision within the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 which established the ability for the LGBCE to conduct an Electoral Review.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risk management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks template.

Corporate priorities engaged:	All
Statutory powers:	Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
Considerations of equality and human rights:	No affected by this report
Biodiversity considerations:	Not affected by this report
Sustainability considerations:	No affected by this report
Crime and disorder implications:	Not affected by this report
Background papers:	Council Constitution Political Structures Working Group Agenda – 15 April 2013 Discussion points generated from the all Member Workshop held on 13 January 2014 Action points generated from the Political Structures Working Group meeting held on 14 January 2014

Appendices attached:

Appendix A: Draft Council Submission to the Boundary Commission

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 decision on a Council submission.	Failure to reach a decision on a submission may result in the LGBCE producing a pattern of warding arrangements for the Council which is deemed to be unacceptable.	4	3	12	↔	By the Council being able to reach a decision on its submission which is reasoned and justified.	Democratic Services Manager

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔