



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

FULL COUNCIL, 25 September 2019

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW, PART 1 (COUNCIL SIZE)

SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review of the London Borough of Havering's local government electoral arrangements. The outcome of the review will be implemented in readiness for the 2022 Council elections.

The review forms two parts. The first part determines the Council size; I.E. the total numbers of councillors in Havering. To assist the Council in recommending its preferred number to help inform the LGBCE decision on Havering's Council Size, officers have produced a draft submission which recommends that the Council retain its existing cohort size of 54.

Whilst it is recognised that Havering will experience an increase in population growth in some parts of the borough, there is sufficient capacity and resilience in the existing councillor cohort number to continue to fulfil their duties in relation to community leadership, representation, governance and scrutiny. Any increase in councillor numbers will incur additional expenditure at a time when the council is seeking to shrink the size of its workforce and limit the financial burden on taxpayers. It is for Full Council to determine whether the suggested number on council size is acceptable, or to determine an alternative recommendation.

The LGBCE will consider the council's submission when making its decision on the future size of the Council. The LGBCE's final decision on the size of the council is expected 29th September 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council recommends to the LGBCE that Council size remains at 54 councillors.

REPORT DETAIL

Periodically, the LGBCE undertakes reviews of local authority electoral arrangements. In doing so, it reviews the total number of councillors elected to the local authority; the number and boundaries of wards for the purposes of the election of councillors; the number of councillors for any ward of a local authority; and the name of any ward.

Havering's last review was in 1999. It saw the number of wards reduce from 25 to 18 and Councillors reduce from 63 to 54.

The Electoral Review process happens in two distinct parts, specifically Part 1 (Council Size) and Part 2 (Ward Arrangements).

To help inform LGBCE on initial part of the review on the Council Size, the council has prepared a submission which details the borough's governance arrangements, scrutiny functions and the representational role of Councillors.

The council's submission recommends that the Council size remain at 54 Members.

LGBCE will consider the council's submission and will subsequently publish their final decision on the future size of the Council. This is expected to be on 29th September 2020. Once LGBCE decision on Council size has been published, the second part of the review will commence which will focus on the ward arrangements of the borough.

Legal Implications and Risks:

The LGBCE has functions under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It may at any time conduct a review of the area of the council, and recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements.

The Council has an obligation to assist the LGBCE in determining Havering electoral arrangements. Indeed as part of the review, the Council may make submissions proposing electoral arrangements it considers to be appropriate.

Human Resource Implications and Risks:

There are none directly associated with this report.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender re-assignment.

Whilst it is the Boundary Commission which will determine Council size, this report has been drafted taking account the Council's obligations under section 149. The report recommends no change to Councillor numbers and therefore there is no impact. An EqHIA has been produced which reflects that position.

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Background paper List

None