

County Council – 14 October 2010

Electoral Review of Staffordshire

Recommendations of the Leader of the Council

1. The views of Members are requested on the attached draft response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation on Council size.
2. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to update the draft response to take on board Members' views and to then forward the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England by the consultation deadline of 25 October 2010.

Report of the Chief Executive

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The first stage in the Electoral Review process is to determine the appropriate size of the Council (the total number of Councillors). This figure will then be used as the basis for consultation on the other stages of the Review which will consider the possible electoral arrangements including the number of Councillors per Electoral Division; the boundaries of each Division; and the names of Divisions.

Background

4. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently carrying out an Electoral Review of Staffordshire. This is due to the fact that, since the last review (200/2003) the electorate in our Divisions has changed to the extent that 42% of those Divisions now have electorates which vary by more than 10% from the average. (The threshold for a review is 30%). The aim of the Review will be to correct this so as to ensure that each County Councillor represents approximately the same number of electors as his or her colleagues.

5. The Review will be divided into the following stages:

- Consultation on overall number of councillors (the Council size) –14 Sept 2010 to 25 Oct 2010
- Commission publishes its recommendation on Council size – Nov 2010
- Consultation on possible electoral arrangements – 30 Nov 2010 to 21 Feb 2011
 - Number per division
 - Number of divisions
 - Boundaries of divisions
 - Names of divisions.
- Publication of proposals – circa May 2011

- Consultation on proposals – May to August 2011
- Publication of final recommendations – October 2011.

The proposals should be in effect for the 2013 elections.

6. As indicated in paragraph 5 above, the first stage in the Electoral Review process is to determine the appropriate size of the Council (the total number of Councillors). This figure will then be used as the basis for consultation with interested parties on the other stages of the Review which will consider the possible electoral arrangements including the number of Councillors per Electoral Division; the boundaries of each Division; and the names of Divisions.

7. The attached draft response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation on Council size has been prepared following a survey of Members' views and meetings with Political Group Leaders. A copy of the draft response has also been circulated to the Council's key partners and any responses received will be reported orally at the Council meeting.

Appendix 1

Equalities implications: None

Legal implications: The Boundary Commission's recommendations in relation to the Electoral Review of Staffordshire will be implemented by a Parliamentary Order

Resource and Value for money implications: If the Boundary Commission were minded to recommend an increase in the size of the Council this would be likely to increase costs through, for example, the payment of additional Basic Responsibility Allowances, travel and subsistence allowances, provision of equipment (Smartphone and Computer), and additional training required by new Members.

Risk implications: Since the last Electoral Review (200/2003) the electorate in County Council Divisions in Staffordshire has changed to the extent that 42% of those Divisions now have electorates which vary by more than 10% from the average. Failure to address these variances will result in inequalities in the number of constituents each County Councillor represents.

Climate Change implications: None

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List of Background Papers

Papers	Contact/Directorate/ext number
Letters from Local Government Boundary Commission dated 28 July and 14 September 2010	Michael Bradbury Law and Democracy (01785) 276133