

COUNCIL

10 July 2017

ELECTORAL REVIEW: SUBMISSION ON COUNCIL SIZE

Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr T Mathias, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Places (Highways, Transport and Market Towns)	
Contact Officer(s):	Debbie Mogg, Director for Resources	01572 758358 dmogg@rutland.gov.uk
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Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Approves the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on council size recommending that the number of Councillors remains unchanged.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on council size based on:
 - The Council's Governance and Decision Making
 - Committees and Scrutiny
 - Councillor's representational role.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The last review of electoral arrangements took place in 2002. A link to the final report for this review can be found below:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/east-midlands/rutland/rutland>

- 2.2 The LGBCE notified the council in late 2016 that it had scheduled an electoral review to commence in under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 2.3 Rutland has been identified as having poor levels of electoral equality with 5 out of 16 wards having a variance of greater than +/-10% (See table below)

Electoral ratios as at 1 December 2016

Ward	Electorate	No. of cllrs	Ratio	Variance from average
Braunston & Belton	1,076	1	1,076	-5%
Cottesmore	2,248	2	1,124	0%
Exton	1,210	1	1,210	7%
Greetham	1,046	1	1,046	-7%
Ketton	2,255	2	1,128	0%
Langham	1,168	1	1,168	4%
Lyddington	1,159	1	1,159	3%
Martinsthorpe	960	1	960	-15%
Normanton	2,420	2	1,210	7%
Oakham North East	2,058	2	1,029	-9%
Oakham North West	3,432	2	1,716	52%
Oakham South East	2,030	2	1,015	-10%
Oakham South West	1,836	2	918	-19%
Ryhall and Casterton	2,306	2	1,153	2%
Uppingham	3,038	3	1,013	-10%
Whissendine	1,064	1	1,064	-6%
Average	29,306	26	1,127	

2.4 An electoral review determines the following 5 things:

- Total number of councillors
- Total number of wards
- Boundaries of each ward
- Number of councillors elected to each ward
- Names of each ward

2.5 Under the 2009 Act the LGBCE have a statutory obligation to have regard to:

- The need to secure equality of representation;
- The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

2.6 The first stage of the electoral review is for the LGBCE to make a proposal regarding the future size of the council (i.e. the number of councillors) the Council is invited to make a submission setting out our proposal before it publishes its own for consultation. Regardless of whether a change is proposed or not this submission must be justified and be supported by evidence.

2.7 The Second stage of the review concerns warding arrangements. The Council size will be used to determine the average (optimum) number of Electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards of the authority. This number is reached by dividing the electorate by the number of Councillors on the authority.

2.8 A timetable for this review is shown below:

PART ONE: COUNCIL SIZE	
Draft Report on Council Size to Constitution Review Working Group	20 April 2017
Council approval of Submission on Council Size	10 July 2017
Submission on Council Size to LGBCE	11 July 2017
PART TWO: WARDING ARRANGEMENTS	
LGBCE Consultation on Warding Patterns	25 July 2017 – 2 October 2017
RCC Response to the Consultation – Proposed Warding Patterns Submission	11 September 2017
LGBCE Draft Recommendations Presented to Council	December 2017
LGBCE Consultation on Draft Recommendations	5 December 2017 – 19 February 2018
RCC Response to Consultation	15 January 2018
LGBCE Final Recommendations Published	May 2018
Order comes into force	2019 Elections

2.9 The commission will form its view about the right council size for an authority by looking at:

- governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- the council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 An initial background and fact finding paper was presented to the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) on 23 March 2017. Following a discussion of the paper the CRWG requested that a submission on council size be drafted on the basis that the number of Councillors remained the same. The CRWG received the Draft Submission on Council Size at their meeting on 20 April 2017. Members of CRWG requested a series of minor additions/alterations to the submission, which were incorporated into the draft.
- 3.2 The draft submission has also been sent to the LGBCE for comment and feedback. The LGBCE did not identify any requirement for additional information and were satisfied with the draft as submitted.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative options would be to submit a recommendation that the Council size increase or decrease, but there is insufficient evidence to justify a change to the number of Councillors.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as no changes have been proposed.
- 5.2 RCC Officer support for this review will be contained within existing budgets.

6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 provides that the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England must be reviewed from time to time. The LGBCE has a rolling programme of electoral reviews and Rutland has been identified as having poor levels of electoral equality with 5 out of 16 wards having a variance of greater than +/-10%.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening form has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

8 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no community safety implications.

9 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

10 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Taking into account the evidence within this paper there appears to be sufficient number of members of the council to ensure that the business of the council remains sustainable. It is recognised that there is inequality of representation in some areas, but it is proposed that this inequality can be acceptably dealt with by reviewing the ward boundaries based on the existing number of members (26).

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are no background papers.

12 APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A –RCC Submission to LGBCE on Council Size

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.