

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Policy and Governance	Council	10 April 2018

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CHORLEY COUNCIL – DRAFT COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To consider the council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) invitation to submit the preferred size of Chorley Council (number of councillors) and frequency of elections held (appendix A).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. To approve the council's submission on the future size and electoral cycle of Chorley Council, namely that Chorley Council should –
 - comprise of 42 councillors, and
 - continue to undertake its elections by thirds

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. In response to the LGBCE's announcement that it was to conduct an electoral review of Chorley Council which is due to commence in June 2018, a committee was formed to oversee the review process, make recommendations to council for consideration and implement the decisions made by the LGBCE.
4. The first meeting of the Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee took place on 7 March 2018. At that meeting, the committee considered evidence that is to be presented as part of the council's submission to the LGBCE. Following due consideration the committee identified the preferred council size to be 42 members, with the frequency of elections continuing by thirds.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

BACKGROUND

6. Members will be aware of the LGBCE's intention to conduct an electoral review of Chorley Council which is due to commence in June 2018. The review is a two stage process: -
- **Stage 1 - Council size;** before the LGBCE re-draws ward boundaries, it will come to a view on the total number of councillors to be elected to the council in future. A conclusion on council size will be drawn after hearing the council's (and/or councillors') views during the preliminary phase.
 - **Stage 2 - Ward boundaries;** the LGBCE will re-draw ward boundaries so that they meet their statutory criteria. The council will have the opportunity to put forward its ideas in two phases of public consultation.
7. A timetable for the review is detailed below:

Stage Starts	Description
Current stage until May 2018	Council to gather information for LGBCE included electoral forecast
June 2018	Number of councillors decided by LGBCE.
June 2018	Start consultation seeking views on new wards
September 2018	End of consultation; LGBCE analyse submission and form draft Recommendations
November 2018	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
January 2019	End of consultation; LGBCE begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
March 2019	Publication of final recommendations
Ordinary day of elections 2020	Whole of council election on new electoral arrangement

8. In preparation for this review a committee was formed with cross party membership to oversee the review process, put forward recommendation to full council and implement decisions made by the LGBCE.
9. At its first meeting on the 7 March 2018, the Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee received the council's draft submission to the LGBCE, not including the council size and frequency of elections. The draft submission addresses key points raised in the LGBCE's technical guidance which stresses the importance of submitting 'well-reasoned proposals that are based on the individual characteristics and needs of each local authority area and its communities.'
10. Furthermore, the council's submission satisfies the LGBCE's aims of being able to 'recommend a council size that allows:
- The council to take decisions effectively;
 - Manage the business and responsibility of the council successfully;
 - Provide effective community leadership and representation.'

COUNCIL SIZE AND FREQUENCY OF ELECTIONS

11. The LGBCE will use the electorate data from the 1st month in which the review commences (June 2018) to base its review. They will also take into account the projected forecasting figure for 2024 which has been calculated at 90,148. This figure has been reached using approved methodology based on the electoral register at the 1 December 2017 which had the total electorate at 85,575.

12. When considering the council size, the figure agreed may also have an impact on the frequency of its local government elections. The maximum number of councillors per ward the LGBCE would agree too is three. However, if the council wished to continue to elect by thirds (the fourth year being a fallow year for local government elections) the figure agreed must be divisible by 3 (ie 3 councillors per ward). Should the council wish to change its election pattern to whole-council elections every four years the LGBCE is able to propose any pattern of wards that it believes best meets its statutory criteria. This is usually a mixture of single, two and three member wards. Biennial elections would require an even number of councillors, two member wards.
13. When deciding on the council size and frequency of elections, the committee considered the council's draft submission and data comparison with Chorley Council's nearest neighbours, both geographically and those identified by CiPFA. The committee also considered the results of a recent councillor survey relating to their council duties, the time spent on those duties and support available.
14. After due consideration of the evidence provided and following debate, the committee concluded that the council size could be reduced from 47 to 42 councillors. This proposed reduction in council size is not considered a reflection of reduced activity, but rather an acknowledgement that the council does need to look to reduce the number of councillors to improve democratic accountability. This is balanced against consideration of the need to effectively discharge the regulatory functions of the council, the role and time placed upon councillors and also allows for a good level of democratic accountability to the residents of the borough.
15. The proposed figure of 42 councillors meets the LGBCE criteria for three member wards and a continuation of holding elections by thirds. Based on the 2024 forecasting figures this would equate to 14 wards with an average of 2,146 electors per councillor.
16. On the proviso members approve the council's draft submission at its meeting on the 10 April it will become the formal submission to the LGBCE on the council size. If accepted by the LGBCE it will become the base for their consultation on ward patterning the consultation for which commences in June 2018.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

17. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

18. Assuming there are no changes to individual allowances, a reduction from 47 to 42 members should result in a reduction in member's allowances of approximately £20k. Any other financial implications (staffing, elections, etc.) are likely to be minimal.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

19. The reasoning used to support the conclusion is cogent and in accordance with considerations and methodologies approved by the LGBCE.

REBECCA HUDDLESTON
DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Electoral Review	5 October 2017	https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s79211/Electoral%20Review.pdf	Executive Cabinet agenda
Electoral Review Update	23 January 2018	https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s82429/Report.pdf	Council agenda
The Electoral Review of Chorley Council Committee	27 February 2017	https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s83882/Electoral%20Review%20Committee.pdf	Council agenda

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Cathryn Filbin	5123	21 March 2018	***