

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 29 th January 2019
Report Subject	Flintshire Electoral Review
Report Author	Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW) is reviewing the electoral arrangements for the County of Flintshire and will formulate proposals for future electoral arrangements.

The twelve week consultation period began on 1 November 2018 and closes on 30 January 2019. This has been extended to allow Flintshire County Council to consider its proposals at County Council on 29 January 2019.

Appendix 1 of the report outlines the proposals to be submitted to the Commission based on the extensive work undertaken with the Members of the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Council agrees to submit the proposals set out in Appendix 1 with or without variation.
2	That the Council provide background information to the Commission in support of the positive proposals included in Appendix 1 and, in the case of those areas where no compliant proposal is made, the full set of options considered by Members.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLINTSHIRE
1.01	The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 requires the Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW) to publish a ten year programme of electoral reviews.
1.02	In June 2016 the then Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government published a Written Statement asking the Commission to restart its ten year programme with a new prioritised timetable and an expectation that all electoral reviews be completed in time for the new arrangements to be put into place across Wales for the 2022 Local Government Elections.
1.03	The Commission has published a Policy and Practice document and has adopted a methodology to determine the number of elected members appropriate for each council. This is explained in Appendix 2 - Council Size Policy. Flintshire has been given a category allocation number 2. The Councillor to population ratio is 1:2,500. Our current divisions have electorates between 1,041 and 4,582. Therefore, the number of Councillors determined for Flintshire after constraints have been applied will be 63. The aim is to obtain a Councillor/electorate ratio of 1:1,895.
1.04	The Commission met with Group Leaders and Officers in October to explain the process and timeline for the review.
1.05	The Commission gave a presentation to the full Council, and to the County Forum of Town & Community Councils on 23 October 2018. The Commission explained the process and outlined what would and would not be included as part of the review. The Policy and Practice document, statistical information and a map showing the existing variance in electoral representation from the proposed County average was circulated at these meetings. It was decided at that Council meeting that the preference was to reach a local agreement area by area for submission to the Commission as far as is possible.
1.06	Members were then invited to make suggestions on how to create electoral wards as close to 1:1,895 electors as possible.
1.07	The first stage of the process began on 1 November 2018. The 12 week initial consultation period closes on 23 January 2019. The Commission has agreed to extend the consultation period until 30 January 2019 so that this report can be made to full Council on 29 January 2019. Representations can be made to the Commission as a member of the public, as an individual Councillor, local Party or as a Town or Community Council.
1.08	An internal member workshop was held on 6 December 2018 to discuss review possible proposals.
1.09	An update was given to Council on 11 December 2019 on the process for engaging Members and the progress made to develop proposals.

1.10	During December a 'drop in' facility was provided where Members were able to prepare their proposals in detail with officers. Twenty-two Members attended the sessions and officers have assisted Members in developing these proposals.
1.11	A second workshop was held on 9 January 2019.
1.12	An email was sent to all Members to provide feedback from the workshop. Members were reminded that they had until Friday 18 January 2019 to submit any alternative suggestions or comments to be considered by Council.
1.13	Members have worked together to make proposals to the Commission for changes where it is felt these will improve local representation.
1.14	It is noted that Members representing rural areas have raised concerns that the size and topography of a ward is not taken into account by the Commission in balancing the ratio requirement with the logistics of local representation.
1.15	<p>Appendix 1 of the report outlines the proposals to be submitted to the Commission for them to consider in developing their draft proposals. Each electoral ward has been given a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – Proposals where there is agreement and it is within a variance of 25% of the proposed County average. • Amber – Proposals where there is some disagreement but is a 'favoured' option and it is within a variance of 25% of the proposed County average. • Red - Proposals where there is no agreement or the proposal is not compliant as it is not within a variation of 25% of the County average.
1.16	<p>Detailed maps and associated electoral information will be submitted to the Commission where any new boundaries are suggested and where any consequential changes are also required to Town / Community wards.</p> <p>All information previously collated which includes Members representations will also be submitted to the Commission to consider in developing their draft proposals.</p>
1.17	Once the initial consultation period has ended Stage two of the process will begin. The Commission will prepare Draft Proposals for the electoral arrangements for the County of Flintshire. These will be published in Autumn 2019 and there will then be a further 12 week consultation period.
1.18	At Stage Three the Commission will prepare a Final Proposals Report which will be submitted to Welsh Government (in 2020 along with those for all other councils in Wales).
1.19	Following that Welsh Government will consider these proposals at Stage Four of the process.

1.20	After six weeks Welsh Government may make an Order and there will be an opportunity to write to Welsh Government with comments.
1.21	The final Stage will be the electoral arrangements coming into force for the 2022 local government elections.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications within this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The Commission are consulting with all Members of the Council, Town and Community Councils and other interested parties.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None specific

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Flintshire County Council’s Proposals

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice document 2016 http://ldbc.gov.wales/reviews/electoralreviews/58417614/?lang=en</p> <p>Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Presentation to County Council on Tuesday 23 October 2018</p> <p>Email of the Democratic Services Manager to all Members dated Wednesday 31 October 2018.</p> <p>Officer’s suggestions and Member representations circulated at the workshop on Wednesday 9 January 2019.</p> <p>Email of the Democratic Services Manager to all Members dates Monday 14 January 2019.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Lynn Phillips, Team Leader – Democratic Services Telephone: 01352 702329 E-mail: lyn.phillips@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales: The role of the Commission is to keep under review all local government areas in Wales, and the electoral arrangements for the principal areas, and to make such proposals to the Welsh Government as seem desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government.</p> <p>Local Government (Democracy) Wales Act 2013: An Act of the National Assembly for Wales to make provision about the constitution and functions of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales; to make various provisions relating to local government; and for connected purposes.</p> <p>Electoral Review: A review of electoral arrangements for a local authority area.</p> <p>Council Size Methodology: A model the Commission has adopted for determining the size of Councils.</p> <p>Assessment: The programme is based upon the base data in the assessment table but moving principal councils up or down the order to take into consideration the Cabinet Secretary's desire for review of certain council's to be undertaken first.</p>