

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 14(a)
10 JULY 2013	PUBLIC REPORT

Contact Officer:	Diane Baker, Head of Governance	Tel. 452559
------------------	---------------------------------	-------------

SUBMISSION BY PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL ON COUNCIL SIZE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (LGBCE) – REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW GROUP (ERG)

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM : The Electoral Review Group	Deadline date : August 2013
Council is requested to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note and approve the submission of the Electoral Review Group, who are the cross party working group, as outlined in Appendix A attached; and 2. Agree that this submission can be presented to the LGBCE for their consideration in determining Peterborough City Council's 'Council Size' as part of their electoral review of the Council. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 Peterborough City Council has been selected for review as part of the LGBCE's programme of work. The selection has occurred because some of the city's wards show electoral imbalances and the LGBCE is responsible for deciding whether the boundaries of wards or divisions within a local authority need to be altered to ensure a fairer representation at local government elections.
- 1.2 The review is scheduled to conclude in January 2015, when the LGBCE's final recommendations will be published.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The first part of the review is a consideration of 'council size' which means the total number of councillors who represent the local authority. The next stage of this process involves consideration of ward boundaries and will commence when council size is finalised
- 2.2 A cross party working group, known as the 'Electoral Review Group' was convened for the purpose of determining a council size, which would allow the council to take decisions effectively, manage the business and responsibilities of the council successfully; and provide effective community leadership and representation. Membership and Terms of Reference for the ERG are set out at Appendix A.
- 2.3 The ERG met on four occasions between March and June 2013. The group followed the LGBCE's guidance on how to assess council size, which led to a consideration of the following areas:
 - The Council's governance and decision-making
 - Committees and scrutiny
 - Councillors' representational roles
 - Future – what changes might be made to current arrangements

- 2.4 The ERG's report, which contains detailed evidence to support an increase in the number of councillors from 57 to 60, is set out at Appendix B.
- 2.5 Council is asked to approve the submission of the ERG and to agree that this report can be presented to the LGBCE as the Council's formal submission under this part of the review.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE ELECTORAL REVIEW GROUP

- 3.1 The ERG recommends that the number of councillors on Peterborough City Council is increased from 57 to 60.
- 3.2 This recommendation is based on a number of key factors such as the rise in population, the Council's wider growth agenda, the Council's support for economic development, the rate of births in the city and the rate of economic migration into the city and is considered in the context of future arrangements and plans. This is to ensure the arrangements remain relevant for the longer term.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 All members, including Parish Councillors', have been invited to attend briefings by the LGBCE and updates by key officers involved in the review.
- 4.2 All officers who have contributed to the review have been invited to comment on the final submission.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Legal** - The legal implications are referred to within the report.
- 5.2 **Finance** – There may be financial considerations at a later stage in the review. These will be addressed in subsequent reports to Council.

6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None.

Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)**Further Electoral Review (FER) OF Peterborough City Council****Terms of Reference for Electoral Review Group (ERG) – Cross Party Working Group****Membership of the ERG**

Cllrs Ash, Fox, Hiller, Holdich, Khan, Peach, Sandford, Scott, Shearman, Swift, Thacker, Thulbourn

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act)

Section 56 of the 2009 Act requires the LGBCE to review “from time to time” every principal local authority in England and make recommendations in respect of their electoral arrangements. In addition, it can at any time review the arrangements by carrying out a further electoral review (FER) if it considers it desirable.

As a consequence, Peterborough City Council (PCC) is being reviewed under a FER by the LGBCE, which involves a full review of both the Council “size” i.e. the number of elected members needed to conduct the business of the council and its representation of the electorate/residents, and also the ward boundaries so as to ensure greater equality in the ratio of member:elector levels of representation for each ward.

Schedule 2 of the 2009 Act sets out the statutory criteria to which the LGBC is required to take into account in conducting the review. In broad terms they are required 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.

In order to facilitate the review, a ‘cross-party working group’ of elected members will be tasked with looking into all aspects of the review, taking into account the statutory criteria as indicated, in order to prepare a submission to the LGBC in respect of both council size and ward boundaries.

Council Size

In relation to ‘council size’, the main factors to be considered are:

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

Ward Boundaries

The second phase of the review to be undertaken involves looking at the councillor: elector ratio for each existing ward of the City to ensure that equality of representation is reflected as

near as practicable in any proposals for change that the LGBCE is seeking. In doing so, regard must be given to both community ties and distinct geographic indications of boundaries, such as roads, rivers and other natural barriers. Projected levels of population change over the next five years will also be taken into account.

The number of wards and the number of councillors for each ward will be in relation to the determined 'size' of the council decided by the LGBCE.

No changes will be made under the review of any parish councils that are unaffected by any changes to the City wards.

Review Timetable

The LGBCE's current proposed timetable for the review of PCC is set out below:-

Current Review timescale		
Stage	Date start	Date finished
Preliminary period	April 2013	October 2013
Preliminary meetings with Group Leaders, full Council, parish and town councils and officers	April-May 2013 (or sooner)	
Council size submission due	August 2013	
Council size dialogue meeting with group leaders (to explore the rationale behind a submission)	August 2013	
Initial Council size LGBCE meeting	10 September 2013	
Council size consultation	24 September 2013	05 November 2013
Council size decision LGBCE meeting	December 2013	
Stage 1 consultation start	14 January 2014	01 January 2014
Tour	May 2014	
LGBCE analysis and deliberation	June 2014	
Draft recommendations consultation	14 July 2014	06 October 2014
Tour	November 2014	
LGBCE analysis and deliberation	December 2014	
Final recommendations published	20 January 2015	

Glossary of Terms

Council size

The total number of elected members (councillors) for Peterborough City Council.

Electoral equality

Every vote has the same weight: each councillor represents a similar number of electors and in a council in which not all wards have the same number of councillors, an appropriate multiple.

Electoral ratio

The number of electors for an area divided by the number of elected representatives of that area.

City ward

A ‘ward’ is the geographical electoral unit of the City Council.

Polling district

A polling district is a geographical sub-division of a ward or parish area, which is designated by the local authority.

Polling Place

An area or building designated within a polling district for the allocation of a polling station.

March 2013

This page is intentionally left blank