

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
13 September 2011

Subject: COUNCIL SIZE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

**All Wards
Scrutiny Committees
Leader: Councillor N W Huxtable**

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 The Council has agreed in principle to ask the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) to undertake a review of electoral arrangements at the Council with a view to reducing the number of Councillors. The Council has indicated its initial view that the appropriate number of Councillors should be 22. By natural process the LGBC have indicated the Council is also due for a periodic electoral review as some ward/elector ratios are out of balance by more than 10%.

1.2 The LGBC has indicated that the review will formally commence in March 2012. This report suggests a procedure for determining and evidencing the Council's initial proposals on Council size and warding prior to submission to the LGBC.

2.0 SUGGESTED APPROACH:

2.1 The LGBC sets out in guidance the evidence which should be provided and the issues which should be considered in reaching conclusions on electoral arrangements. The Council has already determined that some form of consultation be undertaken.

2.2 It is recommended that an Electoral Arrangements Working Group be established to consider detailed proposals, undertake consultations and make recommendations to Council. It is suggested that the Working Group be made up as follows:-

- Leader/Deputy Leader of the Council
- 4 nominees from Conservative Group
- 1 nominee from each of the other Party Groups

2.3 The following is a suggested timescale for the Working Group's activities:-

• Initial meeting(s) to agree proposals for consultation with Parishes	September/October 2011
• Consultation (Seminar for all District Council Members; Letter to all Parishes)	November/December 2011
• Consideration of consultation responses	January 2012
• Report to Council	February 2012

2.4 Prior to the first meeting of the Working Group Members will be asked to complete a questionnaire on the time they spend on Council business to inform the review.

2.5 It should be remembered that the LGBC will be conducting its own consultations over an extended period during 2012 and there will be further opportunities for the Council to consider its position.

3.0 LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

3.1 Efficient and effective Member decision-making are key to delivering the Council priorities.

4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

4.1 There are no significant risks.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 None.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND EFFICIENCIES:

6.1 The cost of the process can be borne from existing resources.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 None.

8.0 SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998:

8.1 None.

9.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES:

9.1 None.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION:

10.1 That an Electoral Arrangements Working Party be established as set out in Section 2 of this report.

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Background papers: Correspondence between Chief Executive and Local Government
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