

Initial Project Proposal Document

Project: Preparation for 2019 Reduction in Membership

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1. Purpose of Document

The Boundary Review Panel on 26 February 2015 considered a report with proposals on council size, which included information on members' roles, demands on their time and information on the current governance, decision making and scrutiny roles. The Council subsequently concluded that the Boundary Commission for England be requested to undertake a review, with the aim of reducing the Council's membership.

The Boundary Commission for England's review concluded in early 2017, and determined that the council be reduced from 48 to 36 members with effect from May 2019.

The purpose of this document is to plan ahead for the reduced membership and to establish an optimum committee structure to take effect from May 2019 to ensure that the council continues to have effective governance and democratic processes.

2. Project Description

The principal outputs will be:-

- Revised committee structure
- Revised Constitution
- Review of members' allowances

A Members' Task and Finish Group, supported by the Legal and Democratic Services Manager, will be set up to inform the project.

It will consider [not necessarily an exhaustive list]:

- Review of the current committee structure, the role and function of members and their workload
- Review of the scheme of delegation and Standing Orders
- Appropriate amendment to the constitution as required
- An appropriate committee structure taking into account the reduced membership

On concluding the work of the Task and Finish group, it will be necessary to reconvene the Members' Remuneration Panel to undertake a review of the members' allowances scheme. This is to make sure the scheme remains fit for purpose following the reduction in number of councillors, and in light of the revised governance arrangements.

3. Reasons

- With the reduced membership from 48 to 36 councillors and with increased workloads in some areas where the number of ward members has reduced, members will have less time to commit to the current requirements placed on

them in terms of membership on committees, panels and forums and task and finish groups.

- The consequences of not doing this could lead to less effective decision making and inappropriate governance arrangements.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- The optimum number of committees, panels and forums, boards etc. set up for a reduced membership and the appropriate level of membership on those committees etc. to enable members to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Governance arrangements and decision making which is sustainable at an appropriate level following the reduction in membership.
- An updated members' remuneration policy that reflects the new governance arrangements of the Council.

5. Timescales

Expected key dates are:-

Task and finish group review: June - July 2018

Report to Council for approval: September 2018

Members Remuneration Panel: Sep – Dec 2018

Revised remuneration policy approved Jan 2019

Overall the project needs to be completed by March 2019 to take effect following the elections in May 2019.

6. Project Costs and Resources

Costs (£)		Source
One-Off	Not applicable	
Revenue	Not applicable	
Savings	Some savings may arise following a reduction in the membership of the council, but this will need to be subject to a review of the members remuneration policy, Any savings would apply from the 2019/20 financial year.	Members allowances, mileage & expenses, printing costs.
Services to be involved in the project delivery	Legal and Democratic Services Independent Remuneration Panel	

7. Benefits Against Investment

Savings may arise following the review.

8. Identify Risks

- Less members on committees etc. may lead to instances where a meeting may not be quorate.

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