

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting17th September 2020

1. Title of Item/Report

Stockton-on-Tees Electoral Review 2020 - Local Government Boundary Commission – Council Size Submission

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to the content of the Council's proposed Council Size submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission as part of its electoral review of ward boundaries for the Borough of Stockton on Tees. The submission was to be considered for approval at full Council on 23rd September 2020.

The start of the electoral review process required the Commission to gather initial information from the local authority, including electoral forecasts and other electoral data to enable the Commission to decide how many Councillors should be elected to the local authority in the future. This decision is based on the evidence received from the local authority itself and any political groups that wish to make their views known. Factors taken into consideration by the Commission would be to understand elected members requirements across the following aspects presented as part of the Council size submission:

- Strategic Leadership – how many councillors are needed to give strategic leadership and direction to the authority?
- Accountability Scrutiny – how many councillors are needed to provide scrutiny to the authority?
- Regulatory – how many councillors are needed to meet the regulatory requirements of the authority?
- Partnerships – how many councillors are required to manage partnerships between the local authority and other organisations?
- Community Leadership – how the representational role of councillors in the local community is discharged and how they engage with people and conduct casework.

A sustained case was made throughout each Section of the proposed Submission, that validated the retention of Councillor number at its current size, and makes reference to the increasing workload of councillors, carrying out each of their various roles. With an increasing

population to serve and a rise in Independent elected representatives reflecting the wide political views and aspirations of the community, there was already huge demands required of each representative prior to the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak. Now, even greater emphasis is placed on each of our community representatives assisting community cohesion and rebuilding our economy, all of which would be shaped by our Council Plan. It was considered vital that all of our elected members can lead this critical work, communicating and engaging the message with all constituents of the Borough. The proposed submission therefore invited Council to recommend to the Boundary Commission that the Council size should at least be maintained at 56 Councillors to ensure that the inevitable increasing needs of constituents were met.

Appreciation was extended to all Political Group Leaders and those members that had participated in preparing this submission. It was noted that in addition to Council's recommendation to the Boundary Commission, each political group/individual could also make their own submission.

Subject to Council approval on the 23rd September of the Council Size submission, it was expected to hear back from the Boundary Commission on the 20th October when they would announce that consultation on warding patterns would officially commence from the 27th October-11th January 2021. Officers would continue to support Group Leaders and all members during this stage.

The Commission's decision on council size would not be formalised until the Final Recommendations were agreed and published at the end of August 2021.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the content of the proposed Council Size submission document be approved and be submitted to The Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To comply with instructions from The Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not applicable

Proper Officer
21 September 2020