

## Report to Audit and Governance Committee



Date of Meeting	9 March 2020
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Resources
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Public/Private Document	Public

### Council Size Report for the Electoral Review of Rochdale

#### Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review of Rochdale Borough Council's (the Council) local government electoral arrangements. The outcome of the review will be implemented for the 2022 Council elections.
- 1.2 The first part of the review determines the Council size. To help inform the LGBCE decision on Rochdale's Council Size, the council has produced a submission for LGBCE, which requests that the Council size remains at twenty Wards with three Councillors per Ward.
- 1.3 This recommendation has been made as it is considered that in the future, this is needed to ensure Councillors can continue to fulfil their duties in relation to community leadership, democratic representation, governance and scrutiny, in consideration of the already high levels of case work and the increasing demands of partnership working and oversight with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Health and Social Care Integration as well as forecasted population growth.

#### Recommendation

- 2.1 To recommend that Full Council approves the Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

#### Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council's submission is informed by reviewing Councillor's meeting and decision-making commitments, casework loads, community engagement work, forecast population growth, engagement with all Councillors and comparisons

to other local authorities. The full reasoning for the submission is set out in the appended submission document.

### **Key Points for Consideration**

- 4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has informed the Council of its decision to carry out an Electoral Review of the Council size (number of elected Councillors) and the number of wards and ward boundaries for the Council.
- 4.2 The LGBCE will be reviewing all Greater Manchester boroughs that haven't had a review since the programme began in the early 2000's.
- 4.3 The Council is required to provide, under stage 1 of the Review, a 'Council Size Submission' to the LGBCE. This provides the Council's view on the appropriate council size and relevant supporting evidence based on three broad areas.
  - Governance and decision making
  - Scrutiny functions
  - Representative role of councillors
- 4.4 The Council Size Submission has been led by a cross party member steering group consisting of members from each of the two main political parties; Labour and Conservative.
- 4.5 The recommendation from the cross party member group is that the Council should remain at 60 councillors across 20 wards (3 members per ward).
- 4.6 The submission date for the report and all supporting data to the LGBCE is the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

### **Alternatives Considered**

- 4.7 No alternatives have been considered as this is a statutory requirement for the Council to produce information to the LGBCE in regards to the Councils recommended Council size.
- 4.8 Should Members disagree with the content of the submission any alternative proposals must meet the statutory criteria and whose knock-on effect can be demonstrated not to prejudice the achievement of the statutory criteria in neighbouring areas across the borough.

### **Costs and Budget Summary**

5. There are no financial implications

## Risk and Policy Implications

6. Under Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the LGBCE must from time to time conduct a review of the area of each principal council and recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements for that area. The Council has not had an electoral review since 2003. The Council has a responsibility to support the LGBCE in the review and to ensure that our democratic arrangements are appropriate for the future needs of the Borough.

## Consultation

7. The LGBCE will consider the Council's recommendations for future council size before publishing their own final recommendations which the Council will be required to adopt.
- 7.1 Following this there will be a consultation period from June to August 2020 which will be jointly facilitated by the Council and LGBCE in regards to the future ward boundaries of Rochdale borough.

### Background Papers

### Place of Inspection

8. Council Size Submission Template from the LGBCE

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