

Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance Services
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Submitted to:	Overview and Scrutiny Board
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Date:	18 October 2023
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Title:	Ward Boundary Review – Council Size Submission (Phase One)
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Report for:	Decision
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	All
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Key decision:	Yes
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Why:	Not applicable
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not applicable
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Executive summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body responsible for determining the electoral arrangements of local authorities across England.

Each year, the Commission considers electoral data to establish if there is a need for an electoral review. Due to an identified electoral inequality in Middlesbrough, the Commission advised the Council that it will carry out such a review.

Phase One, which considers councillor size, is considered first, followed by Phase Two which will examine warding patterns.

Overview and Scrutiny Board received a copy of the Council's draft submission regarding Council size at the meeting held on 18th September 2023. Following recommendations by the Board, the draft Council size submission has been amended.

The revised document is submitted for approval by the Board, prior to submission to the Boundary Commission by the deadline of 31st October 2023.

Purpose

1. To present Members with the final submission with regard to Council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission in respect of the forthcoming Electoral Review.

Background and relevant information

2. On 26 July Overview and Scrutiny Board received an overview of the proposed Ward Boundary review. The overview covered how the review would take place and the timescales involved. It was explained the process consisted of two phases the first focussing on overall size of the Council – that is the number of elected Members that the Council requires to properly undertake its duties and responsibilities.
3. The draft Council size submission was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 18th September 2023, where members suggested a number of minor amendments to the document.
4. The revised Council size document is submitted for approval by the Board, prior to submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission. The deadline for submissions with regard to Council size is 31 October 2023.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

5. That Overview and Scrutiny Board:

Recommend that the attached Council submission to phase one – Council size, of the Local Government Boundary Review 2023 be submitted to the Local Government Ward Boundary Commission.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

6. As well as addressing the electoral imbalance that has arisen in the authority, Phase One of the review will give members the opportunity to comment on, and submit proposals about, how many councillors are needed to provide the Council's governance and representation requirements.
7. Councils play a major part in promoting local democracy and provide pathways by which people can influence decision making. The task of the Local Boundary Commission is to establish and maintain the conditions for a fair and representative democracy at a local level. During an electoral review the Boundary Commission will work closely alongside members and officers in order to determine the best electoral arrangements that will work to support the Council and its ambitions for the people of Middlesbrough.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

8. There is an opportunity for all individual Councillors, and political groups, to submit proposals in respect of Council size.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

9. There are no legal implications in relation to this decision as this is simply a proposal for a decision that will be made by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

Strategic priorities and risks

10. This submission contributes to the Council's Quality of Service strategic objective; *We will ensure that we place communities at the heart of what we do, continue to deliver value for money and enhance the reputation of Middlesbrough.*

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

11. No protected groups are affected by the decision.

Financial

12. At present, each Member is entitled to an annual basic allowance of £7,608. The Council has proposed to the Commission that one additional Member is appointed. If this is agreed, it would impact on the Members Services budget in 2027/28 which is outside of the current MTFP period.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Submit Council Size Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission	Ann-Marie Wilson	31 October 2023

Appendices

1	Copy of Council Size Submission
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

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