

Date of meeting:	24 June 2024
Title of Report:	Electoral Review 2024
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Liz Bryant
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Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the Council's commitment to the delivery of a statutory Local Government Boundary Commission for England Electoral Review. It outlines the purpose of the review and the recommended option being put forward as part of our Council Size submission.

Recommendations and Reasons

That Full Council:

Considers the report and resolves that the preferred submission option to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is that the council increases its size with three additional councillors (60 in total across 20 wards).

Reason: To comply with the statutory requirement to carry out an Electoral Review (Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Sec 56)). The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has a legal requirement to review all local authority boundaries from time to time. An Electoral review is an examination of a Council's electoral arrangements and Plymouth was last reviewed over twenty years ago; and

That recommendations set out in paragraph 3 in the briefing report relating to next steps are approved and progressed.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. As part of the Electoral Review process and in gathering data and evidence as part of the Council's submission on Council Size, a number of options were considered in relation to the future size of the Council and the number of elected councillors required (taking into consideration governance arrangements, scrutiny and regulatory functions and councillor roles in their local communities. These options were:
 - a. A reduction in Council Size. This was not recommended as it would increase the pressure on remaining councillors. Individual councillors would be required to attend more council meetings, committees, outside bodies, and partnerships. The casework load would be spread over fewer councillors, and this would result in a reduction in the level of service provided to their communities. It could lead to councillors leaving office

or being reluctant to take up positions, and increase the challenge associated with improving councillor diversity.

- b. Maintaining the current Council size. This was not recommended because it is not sustainable in the long-term given the city's growing population, and need for Councillors to provide effective representation for the increased diversity of communities across the city. Councillors have clearly indicated that the time spent on their duties has grown exponentially over the years since the last review, and maintaining the status quo would not address this. The increase we have seen in casework volumes and complexity is a trend that is set to continue given the predicted population and housing growth, the persistent deprivation across a significant proportion of the city and our aging population.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Effective democratic leadership and good governance impacts upon all aspects of the Corporate Plan

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The resource implications of the preferred option would be the funding of a further three councillors (payment of their basic annual allowance), as well as any additional expenses incurred. The basic allowance rate including National Insurance contributions is approx. £13,000 per councillor per annum. This would mean an additional annual cost of approx. £39,000 per annum plus expenses. No additional staffing resource will be required.

An additional budget for IT, telephone and training etc. would be required for three new councillors.

Financial Risks

None as a direct result of this report other than outlined above

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None as a result of this report.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There is a risk that increasing the number of councillors and as a result more spending may have reputational impact at a time when the authority has significant budget pressures. The counter argument to this being that with further budget savings to be made, the authority will face challenges to respond to concerns within communities, and that a small increase in additional councillors will become more important in ensuring communities are effectively represented and the voices and needs of local people, in increasingly diverse communities, are heard.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Final Council Size Submission							
B	Council Size Submission Briefing Note							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Liz Bryant

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 14/06/2024