

Consideration was given to a report of the Electoral Registration Officer advising the Board of the next steps required by the Borough Council regarding the statutory review currently being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), and to make recommendations to Full Council.

Members were given clarity by the Electoral Registration Officer regarding 28 members being the minimum necessary to enable Gosport Borough Council to deliver its strategic priorities, legislative requirements and governance arrangements. With the current number of boards/committees this would enable each Member to sit on 3.

Members wished to recognise the excellent report and thanked Officers for the hard work that had gone into it.

Members were reminded that the responsibility of the Board was to make recommendations to Council and if approved the Boundary Commission may not choose to accept the recommendations and would also consider submissions from other persons/groups.

It was proposed and seconded that an amendment be made to the recommendation set out in the report; that recommendation e) reads "in consultation with the three group leaders"

A Member voiced their concern for the amount of money being spent by the LGBCE at a time when the future of Councils in 2022 were uncertain.

A Member proposed an amendment to recommendation b) to establish a task and finish group increase the amount of consultation by Members on this decision.

Members were pleased to accept that various other options could be explored by the Task and Finish group, without which the LGBCE may not accept the submission.

Members asked for clarification of what, if any information had been shared with LGBCE and were advised that only evidence of the political forecast of the electoral size for 2026 had been submitted. The rest of the report needed be submitted before the 12th October 2020.

Members were also advised that at Stage 1 of the process the LGBCE were only looking at the number of Councillors, and not the frequency or make up of elections.

The Board considered whether it was appropriate for the Task and Finish Group to meet prior the Council meeting as the Board was making a recommendation to the Council and the Task and Finish Group could potentially amend this or the supporting documents, but it was felt acceptable, given the short timescale for the return. It was accepted that the Group Leaders would make any amendments to recommendation or the document they considered appropriate.

The amendments to the recommendation were made under Standing Order 6.5.2.

RESOLVED The Policy and Organisation Board recommend that Full Council approve

- a) Local Government Boundary Commission for England: Polling District Forecasting Tool for the Borough of Gosport – attached as Appendix 1;
- b) Council Size submission for the Borough of Gosport to the LGBCE – attached as Appendix 4; subject to an all party Task & Finish group consisting of the three group leaders or their deputies being set up to consider and agree the Council's proposals prior to their submission to LGBCE

- c) Gosport remains with the current electoral cycle and elects by halves;
- d) Gosport remains with the current 'alternative arrangements';
- e) authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer, in consultation with the group leaders, to make further editing changes, correction and updates to the Council Size document prior to submission to the LGBCE.