

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Electoral Review Sub-Committee**
held on Monday, 30th October, 2023 in Committee Suite 1, 2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)
Councillor C Browne (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Bratherton, J Clowes, L Crane (for Cllr Wilson) and S Edgar (for Cllr O'Leary)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services and Governance
Nick Billington, Economic Research and Intelligence Officer
Peter Jones, Senior Lawyer
Laura Bateman, Senior Project Officer
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services
Diane Barnard, Electoral Services Manager

APOLOGIES

Councillors C O'Leary, J Pearson and F Wilson

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2023 be approved as a correct record.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKING / OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

11 CHESHIRE EAST ELECTORAL REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered the draft council size submission for recommendation to the Corporate Policy. It also considered the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology report.

At an informal meeting of the Sub-Committee on 22nd September 2023, members had considered and endorsed a report on the electoral forecast methodology and results. The final version of the electoral forecasting

methodology main report, and its sister document Appendix 1, were now presented to the Sub-Committee for approval. Further proposed changes to the methodology report had been circulated to members following publication of the agenda. Officers advised that following feedback from the Boundary Commission, the forecast end date in the methodology report had been changed from December 2029 to January 2030; the change had no impact on the accuracy and interpretation of the forecasts.

At the informal meeting on 22nd September, members had also considered and endorsed a first draft of the council size submission. Officers undertook to ensure that each subsequent draft of the submission would show clearly, by the use of tracked changes, any amendments agreed by members to the previous draft.

Members now considered a revised draft council size submission, showing those sections of the submission that had been added, deleted or changed since the Sub-Committee's meeting on 22nd September. The submission included the results of a survey of all members regarding their workload. Further proposed changes to the submission had been circulated to members following publication of the agenda.

Officers advised that the revised submission stated that a reduction from the current council size of 82 was likely to result in unsustainable pressures on Members and that the current size of 82 members continued to reflect sufficient capacity in terms of members to electorate ratio and still provided sufficient room for growth.

Members agreed a number of amendments to the council size submission:

Agenda page:	Amendment
30	Insert: 'This model involves 80 of the 82 members of the Council serving on standing committees.'
32	Replace 'the Council has large committee memberships' with 'the Council has inclusive committee memberships'
37	Delete reference to a vacancy on the Southern Planning Committee.
38	Insert: 'The Borough also has (x) conservation areas and (x) SSSIs which further demonstrates the complexity of decisions taken by planning committees and places additional responsibilities on some ward members.'
43	Replace: The Council encourages residents to take up queries and complaints with officers, as opposed to directly with Members' with 'Residents are encouraged to contact the Council as appropriate.'
46	1 st sentence, replace: 'and its Members are frequently unable to serve and support residents, business and partner organisations effectively' with 'and its Members face frequent pressures on their workload in supporting residents, business and partner organisations'

78	Delete the sentence referring to discussions on a potential devolution agreement.
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Members asked whether, once the Council had approved its recommendation on council size and had forwarded its submission to the Boundary Commission, there would be any scope or flexibility to adjust the council size figure if it became apparent during the subsequent review of warding arrangements that a different council size might be appropriate. Officers undertook to seek clarification from the Boundary Commission.

The Corporate Policy Committee would be recommended at its meeting on 30th November 2023 to approve the Council's draft council size submission for recommendation to full Council. A further meeting of the Sub-Committee was scheduled for 16th November which would provide an opportunity to agree any further changes to the submission before it was presented to the Committee.

The Boundary Commission had asked for earlier sight of the draft submission and had agreed that the Council could provide the draft submission by 22nd November, the date of publication of the agenda for the Corporate Policy Committee. Any feedback from the Commission prior to the Corporate Policy Committee's meeting would be reported to the Committee together with any comments by the Sub-Committee.

It was agreed that the Sub-Committee should seek delegated authority to make any further changes to the council size submission prior to the submission of the documentation to the Boundary Commission by the deadline of 18th December.

RESOLVED

That the Sub-Committee

1. approves the draft council size submission for recommendation to the Corporate Policy Committee on 30th November 2023, subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting, and subject to any further content which may be brought to the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 16th November;
2. approves the final version of the electorate forecasting methodology main report and its sister document, Appendix 1; and
3. agrees to seek delegated authority to make any further changes to the council size submission and related documentation prior to submission to the Boundary Commission.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 10.40 am

Councillor S Corcoran (Chair)