

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee - 30 April 2024
SUBJECT:	Electoral Review
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Francis Oppler, Chair of Corporate Support Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Ensuring that the correct democratic structure is in place within the Arun District supports all of the Council's corporate aims and objectives.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Responsibility for the Electoral Services function and related workstreams sits within the Organisational Excellent directorate.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: Full Council has resolved that a report be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee setting out an assessment of the costs of undertaking an electoral review. The recommendations in this report to the Corporate Support Committee do not carry any financial implications that sit outside of existing budgets.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider recommendations in relation to an Electoral Review of the Arun District.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Considers and approves the electoral review timetable set out in the Appendix to this report and reports its approval of the timetable to Full Council;
- (ii) Notes the outcome of the report to the Policy & Finance Committee on 7 March 2024 regarding the costs of conducting the electoral review; and
- (iii) Recommends to Full Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be invited by the Council to carry out a review of:
 - (a) The number of councillors needed within Arun District, but with a specific focus on reducing members; and
 - (b) The warding arrangements within Arun District.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report follows a report to this Committee on 31 January 2024.
- 3.2 The purpose of an electoral review is to consider the total number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward.
- 3.3 The electoral review process takes around a year to complete and includes at least two phases of public consultation where proposals/comments on ward boundaries will be invited. Throughout the process, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England aims to work closely with the Council, local people and organisations.
- 3.4 The review aims not just to deliver boundaries that are fair for voters and reflect community ties, but it can also help councils align their local leadership ambitions with their decision-making arrangements.

4. DETAIL

4.1 At its meeting on 9 November 2022 the Full Council received a motion asking Full Council to agree to invite the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out a review of the number of councillors needed in Arun, and the warding arrangements within the district.

4.2 Full Council resolved that:

(1) The Council carries out an assessment of the costs of doing a local government boundary review and provides recommendations to the Policy & Finance Committee on the resourcing implications of such a review;

(2) The Council sets up the appropriate processes and timetable for carrying out such a review, and reports this back to Full Council;

(3) Once the above steps are complete, invites the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out a review of:

- (a) The number of councillors needed at Arun, but with a specific focus of reducing members
- (b) The warding arrangements in the Arun District

This Council also agrees to:

(4) Instruct Officers to carry out an assessment of how much an individual member costs the council. This should include the Basic Allowance, IT provision and all hidden officer support;

(5) Once the number of Councillors is determined, instruct the Constitution Working Party to review the number and frequency of Committees in light of a reduction in Councillors; and

(6) Invite the Independent Remuneration Panel to review Councillor allowances in light of the above changes, once confirmed.

4.3 At its meeting on 31 January 2024 this Committee considered a report that included a draft timetable for the electoral review, and the Committee resolved as follows:

“(1) Having considered the draft timetable for the electoral review and taking into account the comments provided, Officers bring a final timetable to the Committee at its meeting on 30 April 2024, for reporting to Full Council; and

(2) The Committee requests that Officers carry out an assessment of the costs of conducting an electoral review and submits a report to a meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee ahead of the Corporate Support Committee’s next meeting on 30 April 2024, in accordance with Paragraph 1 of the 9 November 2022 Full Council resolution.”

4.4 At its meeting on 7 March 2024 the Policy & Finance Committee considered a report concerning officer’s assessment of the costs of conducting the review, and that report concluded that the costs of officer time, consultation, advertising and any other associated costs would be met from within existing budgets. The Policy & Finance Committee noted the contents of the report and that a further report would be taken to the next meeting of the Corporate Support Committee on 30 April 2024.

4.5 This report now asks the Corporate Support Committee to note the outcome of the costs assessment undertaken by the Policy & Finance Committee, and to approve the electoral review timetable contained within the Appendix to this report. Since its last meeting, the timetable has been updated to reflect that the 2024/25 civic timetable has since been largely agreed by Full Council and Working Party dates have been included.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The draft timetable sets out when and the frequency at which elected members, officers, the LGBCE, the public and other stakeholders will be engaged with through consultation and decision-making.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 Full Council has passed a resolution that must be progressed. Failing to move forward with the agreed actions is not an option for this Committee, and would be a matter for Full Council to consider. However, it should be noted that it is highly likely that the LGBCE would soon be identifying the Council for a periodic electoral review in any event. The aim of this report is to commence a process that puts the Council in a position of beginning that conversation with the LGBCE at an early stage in the 2023-27 cycle.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, with a costs assessment paper to be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee at its 7 March meeting.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 A full risk assessment and risk register will be produced by officers are part of the project following the initial approach to the LGBCE later in 2024.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 Electoral Reviews are conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in accordance with statute, particularly the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Any changes to the district would be made by Parliamentary Order to take effect at the next District Council elections in May 2027. The Council has a duty to support the Commission's work and to provide input to that work.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications. This work will be carried out by officers under their day-to-day duties.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None