

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Support Committee 10 October 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Electoral Review</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law &amp; Governance</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Francis Oppler Chair of Corporate Support Committee
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:</b> Ensuring that the correct democratic structure is in place within the Arun District supports all of the Council's corporate aims and objectives.	
<b>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</b> Responsibility for the Electoral Services function and related workstreams sits within the Law & Governance Group.	
<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</b> There are no financial implications associated with this report. Funding of the Electoral Review will come from within existing budgets and a report on funding the Review has already been considered by the Corporate Support Committee and Policy & Finance Committee.	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree Terms of Reference for the Electoral Review Working Party in relation to an Electoral Review of the Arun District.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the draft Terms of Reference set out at Appendix 1 and agrees the Terms of Reference and membership of the Working Party.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report follows reports to this Committee on 31 January and 30 April 2024, when the Committee agreed the scope and timetable for the Electoral Review.
- 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 to 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 meetings in January and April 2024 the Committee agreed the timetable for the Electoral Review together with how the review would be funded. The Committee received a report from officers that funding would be met from within existing budgets, and this information was also presented to the Policy & Finance Committee in March 2024.

4.5 This report now asks the Committee to consider Terms of Reference for the Electoral Review Working Party. The Working Party will undertake the bulk of the work associated with the Review and will make recommendations to the Committee. The Working Party is not a decision-making body and therefore will only be able to make recommendations to its parent committee – the Corporate Support Committee.

- 4.6 Due to the fact that the Working Party will not be a decision-making committee under the Local Government Act 1972, it is also not required by statute to have a formal quorum. Nevertheless, the Group Head of Law & Governance strongly advises that the Committee agrees a quorum number once it has agreed the number of councillors who will sit on the Working Party.
- 4.7 The Working Party's membership should principally be drawn from the membership of the Committee. Nevertheless, it is recommended by officers that the Committee considers ensuring that the Working Party's membership is sufficiently representative of Arun District as a whole. Membership should be considered from the perspective of serving the whole of the district in the Review.
- 4.8 Draft Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1 and the Committee is requested to consider the draft and to consider any amendments it wishes to make before agreeing a final version.
- 4.9 The calendar dates for Working Party meetings agreed by the Committee on 30 April 2024 are:
- 9 December 2024
  - 6 January 2025
  - 10 February 2025
  - 10 March 2025
  - Week commencing 6 May 2025.

## **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 financial implications arising from this report.

## **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.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None