

Minutes of the meeting of the **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 20 November 2017 at 3.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor K E Morris

Councillors: P M Brivio
S S Chandler
M R Eddy
F J W Scales

Also Present: Councillor S F Bannister
Councillor M J Ovenden

Officers: Chief Executive
Director of Governance
Democratic Services Manager

1 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute members appointed.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 **ELECTORAL REVIEW - OPTIONS FOR GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Director of Governance presented the report on the Options for Governance Arrangements for the Electoral Review on Council Size.

Members were reminded that the Council had made a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) requesting that its electoral arrangements be reviewed with a view to reducing the number of councillors to 'around 35'. As part of the preliminary stage of the review it was for the Council to demonstrate that it could effectively manage the business of the Council with the preferred number of Members and the report sought to provide potential governance models as evidence of this. However, the determination of the number and boundaries of wards was a matter for the next stage in the review process.

The report set out potential governance arrangements that were based on maintaining a committee workload for members that was similar to the current level, despite the proposed reductions in the overall number of members. For the scrutiny function, options for a single scrutiny committee or maintaining the current two scrutiny committee model were identified. Members were advised that at this stage in the process they were not being asked to implement the proposed governance arrangements as this would be a matter for a future report to full Council.

Councillor K E Morris drew Members attention to the comparison with the sizes of Kent District and Borough Councils and the CIPFA 15 Nearest Neighbours and in particular to the similarities in the number of electors per councillor for Canterbury City Council (2,710 per councillor) and Shepway District Council (2,704 per councillor) with a council size of 32 members for Dover District Council (2,725 per councillors).

The proposed governance arrangements for 32 members resulted in a ratio of committee seats to members of 1.96 seats per member as opposed to the current ratio of 1.86 seats per member. This was within the target of 2 seats or fewer per member.

Councillor M R Eddy circulated a proposed governance model for 37 councillors as an alternative to the proposals in the report. The key features of this model were:

- the retention of two scrutiny committees of 10 members each;
- the merging of the General Purposes Committee and the Electoral Matters Committee into a single body; and
- the merging of the Joint Staff Consultative Forum and the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare forum into a single body.

The proposals resulted in a ratio of committee seats to members of 1.94 seats per member with an electorate to councillor ratio of 2,356 electors per councillor. It was stated that by retaining two scrutiny committees of 10 members it would allow for greater involvement of backbench members in the decision-making process.

Members discussed the potential workloads for larger ward sizes and the impact of areas of urban deprivation.

Councillor F J W Scales asked for an update on the issue of the Capel-le-Ferne Ward boundary with Shepway District Council. The Democratic Services Manager advised that she would raise it with the LGBCE but that the previous position was that it would require agreement between Dover District Council and Shepway District Council for any changes to the shared external boundary of the authorities. Councillor K E Morris proposed that the Council Size to recommend to the meeting of full Council on 6 December 2017 be 32 councillors.

Councillor M R Eddy proposed that the Council Size to recommend to the meeting of full Council on 6 December 2017 be 37 councillors.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council that a submission on Council Size for 32 councillors be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of the Dover District Council Electoral Review.

The meeting ended at 3.28 pm.