

**Local Government Boundary Review – Council Size
Submission**

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ryan O’Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the Council’s Size Submission to be recommended to Council for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The submission recommends, and provides the evidence for, a Council size of 48 Councillors.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That Council be recommended to approve the Council Size Submission document (Appendix A) as the Council’s formal submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of the Council’s Local Government Boundary Review.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	23 November 2021
Council	8 December 2021

Local Government Boundary Review – Council Size Submission

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council’s overall achievement of its aims by ensuring an appropriate size for Council.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The Local Government Boundary Review aims to establish a suitable Council Size and equality of democratic representation for the electorate of Maidstone. By doing so it indirectly impacts on all objectives.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Risk Management	<p>The main risks associated with his activity are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Local Government Boundary Commission do not receive/accept a Council Size Submission from the 	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

	<p>Council and determine Council Size without Council input;</p> <p>2. That the Council puts forward an inappropriate Council size that impacts on the Council's future Governance capabilities.</p> <p>Both of these risks are managed through ensuring a robust evidence led process is followed.</p>	
Financial	<p>Whilst changing council size could have a financial consequence, it is not a driver for the changes and proposed council submission.</p> <p>(Please see note on staffing below)</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Staffing	<p>The Council size submission will indirectly impact on whether additional staffing is required to support Members in the future. If this is the case the need for additional staffing would be handled separately through the budget process.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Legal	<p>This work is part of the Local Government Boundary Review being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and the submission has been put together in accordance with their template, guidance and agreed timetable. The review will be conducted by the LGBCE under its powers in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>No impact identified.</p>	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<p>No direct impacts identified, however, one of the key aims of the boundary review is to ensure that there is equality for electors in their democratic representation.</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Public Health	<p>None</p>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Crime and Disorder	<p>None</p>	Democratic and Electoral

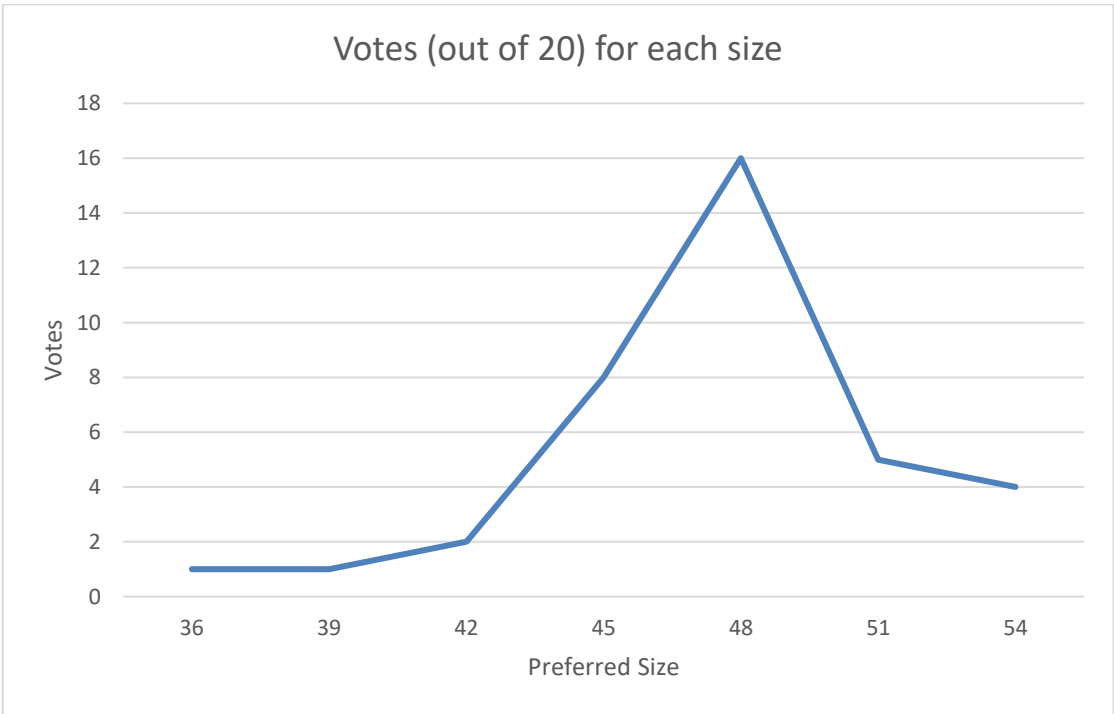
		Services Manager
Procurement	None	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Biodiversity and Climate Change	No direct impacts, however, biodiversity and climate change has been identified as a key priority within the workshops carried out on the size submission.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This report is the next part of a series of reports on bringing forward the Council’s Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE).

2.2 There have been three workshops held for all Members to attend that looked at future challenges, the role of the councillor and discussed council size. The third workshop held on 17 November 2021 established Members’ preferred size.

2.3 The key outcome from the third workshop was Members indicating their preferred size. All political groups were represented and 21 Members attended the event (20 were present for the voting). Their detailed consideration of the available evidence at the event and the distribution of council size preference based on voting was as follows:



- 2.4 The Committee are asked to consider the draft size submission and recommend it to Council on 8 December 2021 for approval and submission to the LGBCE.
 - 2.5 Anyone may make a submission to the Commission on Council size. This process concentrates on the Council's formal submission, but groups or individuals can make submissions too, separate to this process.
 - 2.6 The review of Council size is an opportunity for the Council to make positive changes to how it supports Members going forwards, to feed positively into the new Executive arrangements being considered, and to help shape the boundary review into something that works for the borough.
 - 2.7 The arguments in favour of the proposed submission are made within the submission itself as it is a document that needs to make its own case independently of this report.
 - 2.8 It is paramount that the Council's submission is an evidence led document, that makes a strong case for whatever size the Council wishes to have. The Commission have made it clear that the Council's own submission will carry no inherent additional weight over another submission and the case must therefore be made as strongly as possible.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee are asked to consider the council's size submission for recommendation to full Council. In doing so the committee can amend or change the document.
 - 3.2 The Council could decide not to make a size submission, but this would result in the Commission imposing a size on the Council or at least considering Council size with no input from the Council. This is not recommended.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the recommended Council Size Submission at Appendix A be recommended to Council for approval.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The two key risks are considered in the issues table above under '1.'
- 5.2 By making a robust submission both those risks are managed.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 A series of 3 Member workshops have been held and have fed directly into the Council Size Submission.
 - 6.2 A Councillor Workload Survey was conducted with all Councillors given the opportunity to respond. The summary of that survey forms part of the evidence base to the Council's recommended Size Submission.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If approved the submission will then go to full Council on 8 December 2021.
 - 7.2 If approved the submission will then go to the LGBCE for consideration in January 2022 where they will agree their preferred size for the Council.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A: Local Government Boundary Review – Council Size Submission

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.