

4 February 2009

Electoral Review of the County Council



Report of Lesley Davies, Acting Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update to the Council on the latest position with the Electoral Review.

Background

2. I reported to the Council on 5 November, 2008 that the Boundary Committee had not yet come to a decision on the most appropriate council size (Stage 1 of the Review) for the new unitary authority and was seeking further evidence/reasoning on Member workload, including expectations around their community leadership/engagement role and why as a result of all the relevant factors the Council felt that it needed a certain number of Members.

3. Members of the Boundary Review Group met with representatives of the Committee on 17 December 2008 to discuss how best now to move forward the Review, including an agreed conclusion to our Stage 1 submission.

Next Steps

4. Since our submission back in September, 2008, we have kept the Boundary Committee appraised as our Governance Structure has taken shape, along with other relevant developments such as the new Area Action Partnerships (AAPs).

5. The Boundary Committee has scheduled its own meeting for 2 March to conclude its consideration of our submission. For that meeting it has requested that we supplement our first submission with a further document which summarises the factors which influence the number of Members and how we have reached our own conclusions on future council size now that our new governance structure, AAPs etc are essentially settled.

6. The intention is to submit the proposed summary to the Council meeting scheduled for 27th February for Members to consider and share this at the same time with the Boundary Committee. Any further changes as a result of that Member consideration would be immediately notified to the Boundary Committee. In addition, either the Boundary Review Working Group or Group Leaders will be consulted beforehand on the draft summary.

Next Elections

7. During the meeting with the Boundary Committee on 17 December their representatives stressed that their focus at present was to conclude our Review. The question of when the new council size and electoral arrangements would come into being (i.e. the next election date) was a matter for discussion and representation to the Electoral Commission after the conclusion of the Review.

Conclusion

8. Members are asked to note the present position.

Background Papers

Various correspondence with and from the Boundary Committee.