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## EXTRA – ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

16 October 2025

Report of Bryn Roberts, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

# City of York Council Boundary Commission Size Submission

## Purpose of this report:

1. This Submission document has been developed in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) Electoral Review of the Council size (number of elected councillors) and the number of wards and ward boundaries in York.
2. The LGBCE Review will be undertaken in two distinct phases. Phase one, Council Size, Phase two, Ward Boundaries. This document comprises the Council submission in respect of Phase one of the process. The expectation from the LGBCE is that at the end of this first phase, the Council will present the LGBCE with a case for a council size that they believe is right for their authority.

## Background

3. The Council's size submission, as specified by the LGBCE, must include information in respect of the Councils:
  - **Governance and decision-making arrangements.**
  - **Scrutiny of Council Functions.**
  - **Representation from local Councillors.**
4. In addition, the submission report at Annex 1 ("the Report") includes information in respect of the Council's Profile, details of the survey undertaken by Elected Members and individual group submissions.
5. Members of the Council noted the short timescale presented for the preparation of the Council Size element of the LGBCE electoral Review, and the appointment of the Task and Finish Group sought to minimise

the impact of this truncated timetable. This Report is presented to the Council in line with that timetable.

6. Electoral reviews look at whether the boundaries of wards within a local authority need to be altered. The Boundary Commission has chosen to review the City of York Council because it has not been reviewed since 2013, and the Commission has a duty to review local authorities in England from 'time to time'.
7. The Boundary Commission will expect by the end of the preliminary stage of the review, the council and/or its political groups, to present the Commission with a case for a council size that they believe is right for their authority. Consideration of this report is in line with the agreed timeline for submission to the Boundary Commission.

## **Consultation**

8. To undertake this work, Elected Members resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group, a subcommittee of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. The Task and Finish Group met on 4 occasions and its members included Councillors Wann, Hollyer, Coles, Steward. The meetings were Chaired by Councillor D Merrett, in attendance at all meetings was a representative of the LGBCE. The Task and Finish Group were also supported in its work by Officers within the Council, including the Council's Monitoring Officer.
9. To assist the Task and Finish Group, all Members were invited to respond to a short questionnaire in relation to the amount of time they spent on Council-related activities. The results of this questionnaire have been included in the Council response.
10. The findings of the task and finish Group were considered at a meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 1 October 2025.
11. As the work of LGBCE progresses public consultation will be undertaken.

## **Options**

12. Council is not obliged to make a joint submission to the LGBCE, but such a joint submission would undoubtedly assist the LGBCE in its deliberations. The work of the Task and Finish Group was intended to explore whether such a joint submission was possible.

13. Unfortunately, the political groups were unable to reach a consensus on the proposed number of Councillors. As a result, each group — along with the Independent Member — has submitted separate proposals, each suggesting different Councillor numbers.
14. Council could, therefore, choose not to accept the overall Report, and could instead require that the first part of Annex 1 be submitted as a 'factual submission', and that the group submissions be provided separately to the LGBCE. However, this would not alter the overall content of the submissions to the LGBCE and would appear disjointed; this option is not, therefore, recommended.
15. Alternatively, Council could agree to submit the Report to the LGBCE in its present form, as a submission from all members of the Council; this option is recommended.

## Analysis

16. The Report is separated into two parts, part one includes information, in respect of the Council governance arrangements and Councillor workload. As the Council were unable to reach a consensus on the future size of the Council, Part 2 includes the separate submissions of the political groups.

## Council Plan

17. Councillors are integral to the delivery of the Council Plan, details of which are included in the main body of the Report.

## Implications

- **Financial** - There will be increased costs associated with any increase in the number of Councillors, e.g., for additional allowance payments. The current level of basic allowance paid to all Councillors is £11,757. It follows therefore that a reduction in the number of Councillors would achieve budget savings. The Council is currently forecasting an overspend in the current financial year and the medium-term financial position identifies that savings will continue to be needed to balance the budget each year.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no human resource implications at this stage of the Boundary Commission submission process.

- **Equalities** – There are no equalities implications at this stage of the Boundary Commission submission process.
- **Legal** – The Council Size issue if the first element of the LGBCE's Electoral Review to be determined, following representations from the Council, due by the close of business on 17 October. The LGBCE will then make a preliminary determination on the size to be adopted by 18 November, after which consultations will begin in relation to the Warding Pattern to be adopted. Ultimately, once the Warding Pattern is determined, an Order will be laid before Parliament for adoption, and the new Wards and Council Size will be implemented in time for the 2027 whole Council elections.
- **Crime and Disorder** There are no crime and disorder implications at this stage of the Boundary Commission submission process.
- **Information Technology (IT)** There are no IT implications at this stage of the Boundary Commission submission process.
- **Property** There are no property implications at this stage of the Boundary Commission submission process.

## **Risk Management**

18. A full risk assessment will be undertaken once the work of the Boundary Commission has been completed.

## **Recommendations**

19. Council is recommended:
  - a) To agree the Council's response to the phase one of the Boundary Commission Review, and to note the individual submission of the political groups as included in the report; and
  - b) To delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer to submit the response to the Boundary commission.

Reason for recommendations:

- a) To ensure that the Council provides a submission to the LGBCE in respect of the Council Size issue; and
- b) To ensure that such a response is provided to the LGBCE in advance of its deadline for submissions of 17 October 2025.

## **Wards Impacted**

All wards

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Author**

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<b>Report approved:</b>	Yes
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**Background Papers:**

- None

**Annexes:**

- Annex 1: Submission Report to the LGBCE