

MINUTE EXTRACT

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 NOVEMBER 2016

32 NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS - REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

The Chair introduced the report of the Scrutiny Review Panel that set out the findings and recommendations arising from a Scrutiny Review – ‘Number of Councillors’ completed in November 2016. The Review initially arose from a Notice of Motion to Council on 20 October 2014 (minute no 57 refers) and was subsequently commissioned by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of its work programme.

The aim of the review was for Members to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding this subject that included the role of the local councillor in Wirral, the role of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and a review of data comparing Wirral with other local authorities in England.

The Chair informed that it had been Panel Members aim to reach an informed view on whether the Council should actively progress a referral to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to conduct an Electoral Review that would as part of such a review consider amongst other things, the number of Councillors.

The Chair further informed the Environment Overview and Scrutiny that the findings of the investigation were self-evident. He stated that the Panel had been careful to maintain an analytical, data-led approach to the review.

Members noted the content of the report that summarised that the electoral arrangements employed by Wirral Borough Council compared favourably to its statistical neighbours; that those arrangements did not fall foul of any indicators prescribed by Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission), and therefore did not trigger a Further Electoral Review; and that only the Commission may direct Local Authorities to alter those arrangements. (Local Authorities may not alter electoral arrangements themselves).

The Chair informed that the Panel had developed the following recommendation as detailed in the report at Section 3.0 (Executive Summary & Recommendations) as follows, that:

“Having regard to the evidence presented, the Panel notes that the number of Councillors in Wirral is consistent with comparable local authorities. Consequently the Panel recommends that the Council does not request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England conduct a review of its electoral arrangements at this time.”

The Chair thanked Patrick Torpey, Scrutiny Officer for his support during the review, and his excellent work in the preparation of the report.

Resolved - That

- (1) the Number of Councillors – Report of the Scrutiny Review Panel be noted, and that the findings and recommendations of the review be endorsed; and**
- (2) the Review Panel report and recommendations be REFERRED TO CABINET for its endorsement.**