

Porter, Johanna

From: Fuller, Heather
Sent: 27 March 2015 14:33
To: Porter, Johanna
Subject: FW: Boundary Review - Lincolnshire County Council

From: CllrM Hill [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 March 2015 12:43
To: Reviews@
Subject: Boundary Review - Lincolnshire County Council

Dear Sirs

Having reviewed the revised figures which have now been agreed, which increase the projected 2021 electorate from 556389 to 580447, the Conservative Group continue to support having 71 councillors in future.

The projected increase of 15020 would suggest an approximate increase of 200 electors per councillor or around 2.5%. We do not believe that such a marginal increase would warrant a change in our recommendation. It would still put Lincolnshire below the average of our statistical neighbours and similar councils nationally.

There are many Divisions currently which have 8000 or more electors and those councillors are able to discharge their duties properly which demonstrates effective precedence.

As stated before, improvements in technology and communications mean that it is far easier and quicker to access information from the council and liaise with electors, groups and formal bodies. Much work is now done by email and social media, which is far more immediate and personal than previous methods.

We are a large county but there is a 5000-mile network of roads to facilitate cross country travel and there are no major geographical barriers in the county, so no-one is more than 30 minutes away within Divisions.

Most of our services are now outsourced and, as we roll-out the commissioning model, oversight and scrutiny will focus on agreed outcomes instead of delivery methods and process. This important function will require better focus and organisation which will not be as demanding of time for councillors, but hopefully will add quality.

Functions of the council have changed since 1999. We have gained Public Health, but much delivery is now by agencies and partners such as LEPs and Health and Wellbeing boards. The greatest effect is probably Academy schools which are now divorced from local authorities. Councillors are not automatically entitled to be on Academy governing bodies, a role which was previously expected of them and was time consuming.

The expectation from Government is that councils will move away from direct delivery and concentrate on place-shaping and "holding the ring" locally.

The future role for committee work is smaller, focussed units often time-limited which have often proved more effective than larger, more formal committees. The latter will deal with strategy, etc. which will be less frequent. One committee will likely oversee financial and performance monitoring. The Executive could operate successfully with several fewer places.

Finally, parish councils are the bedrock of effective councillor engagement, being themselves elected representatives. Depending on population, they tend to meet quarterly, bi-monthly, every 6 weeks or monthly. Some larger ones have sub-committees, which means they do not always meet monthly. There are also parish meetings for small communities of 150 or less which sometimes only meet annually.

Parish councils appreciate seeing their county and district councillors regularly, but not necessarily at every meeting, and often will allow them to deal with relevant matters at the beginning in order to leave earlier. In our two-tier county, the attendance responsibility can be shared between the district and county member. In any event, telephone and email can be used by clerks and chairmen to contact us for urgent and unusual matters.

Our new contract with Serco will bring improvements to our website and transactional arrangements, which will make it much easier to self serve by individuals and groups. This will also remove workload for councillors.

In summary, all the evidence points towards a reduction in councillors and, as the organisation shrinks in number of employees, it is only appropriate that it is matched by elected representatives. This will also be a cost saving in financially difficult times.

Regards

Martin Hill

Cllr Martin J Hill OBE
Leader of the Council

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