

Copeland to propose drop in councillor numbers

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COPELAND Council is set to request its councillor numbers to be reduced by more than a third.

Subject to agreement by the full council at a meeting on August 31, Copeland will ask the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) to reduce the number of members it is required to have from 51 to 33.

After considering Copeland's submission, the LGBC will confirm the councillor number in October, and the reduction it imposes will take effect from the next election in May 2019.

A joint statement has been made by Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, and Lena Hogg and David Moore, the Leaders of the Labour and Conservative groups respectively.

They said: "In 2015, Copeland Council voted to invite the LGBC to review our governance.

"Since then, a thorough internal research process has been carried out by an experienced and independent person, uninfluenced by the Mayor or the political parties.

"It has considered the Council's statutory functions and committees, the role of councillors in a modern council, and comparisons with neighbouring councils and similar authorities in other parts of the country.

"This review has arrived at the figure of 33 councillors, and we are fully supportive of this number.

"This Council as an organisation has significantly reduced in size over recent years, yet the number of councillors has remained at 51, with the ratio of councillors to the electorate as the lowest in Cumbria.

"We have a large number of dedicated and experienced councillors, who are passionate about their wards and the people they represent, and their contribution is of enormous value to this Council and the residents of Copeland.

"However, given the fundamental changes that the Council has experienced latterly, we believe 33 is

an appropriate and sustainable number of councillors for us to have in the future.”

Further to the proposed reduction in numbers, the LGBC will re-draw the borough council’s ward boundaries and rename the new wards – based on the new councillor numbers – also for the May 2019 election.

The public will be asked for its views on this stage of the process in two stages of consultation that will run from October to January, and March to May. All final governance arrangement will be confirmed by the LGBC in July 2018.



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