

# **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

**Monday 4 January 2016**

## **ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that the Committee respond to the draft recommendations consultation in respect of the electoral review of Hampshire County Council.**

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#### **Summary**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has published its draft recommendations on the current electoral review of Hampshire County Council. This Council has been invited to submit its views on these as part of the consultation process.

#### **Statutory Powers**

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

### **Introduction**

1. The LGBCE is required to conduct reviews from time to time in all principal council areas, so as to ensure electoral equality. Members will be aware that the consultation period is currently 'live' in respect of this Council's own electoral review.
2. At this Committee's meeting on 29 June 2015, Members prepared an initial consultation response to the electoral review of Hampshire County Council.
3. The following is an extract from the minutes of that meeting:

'Members raised a number of points and concerns where broader electoral equality was no longer being achieved, for example Eastleigh Central which was now double the size of a two-member Borough ward. Such issues would be addressed in the forthcoming Borough Council ward review, so it was felt that key headlines should be made now with more detailed points being made when specific proposals come from the Boundary Commission on the County Review, and when this Council's own review commenced.'

Key points therefore were:

- Polling districts must be the 'building blocks' as to what comprises a County electoral division.
- Wherever possible, Borough wards should not be split across County electoral divisions so as to maintain consistency and established communities in all electoral arrangements.
- Based on the electorate now, and looking ahead to the 2021 forecasts, Eastleigh should have an eighth County Member. Significant developments in the Borough area warrant this and would enable some anomalies to be addressed eg Hedge End Grange Park and West End is not a distinct community in itself.
- Having three 'two Member' County divisions is confusing and it is suggested that all County divisions should be covered by a single Member.

**RESOLVED that the above points be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission as this Council's response to the initial consultation on the boundary review of Hampshire County Council'.**

4. The LGBCE has now published its draft recommendations, and a further consultation period is now running (until 11 January 2016) for interested parties to make comments on these.
5. The draft recommendations and proposed revisions to the County electoral divisions can be accessed at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5188>.
6. In respect of the Eastleigh Borough area, the LGBCE state in their draft recommendations report that they "have partly based on our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals for eight councillors. The proposals for West End resulted in a division with poor electoral equality. The geographical location of West End means it is difficult to include parts of Eastleigh or Hedge End in the division. Therefore, we have decided to create a two-member Hedge End and West End division which includes both the Hedge End and West End communities. We received submissions from respondents in Botley who objected to dividing the parish between divisions. However, in order to achieve good electoral equality between divisions, we have included the West Botley area in Hedge End and West End division". A map is attached at Appendix 1 to show this.
7. Whilst an eighth County Member was sought by this Committee, the intention was not to have this within a re-working of an existing division as all of the other divisions within the Borough are represented by a single Member (indeed the majority of County Divisions are represented by a single Member). Members will likely wish to discuss this specific point and decide on the wider representations it wishes to make to the LGBCE.
8. It should be noted that the County Council is looking at an alternative model for three Divisions broadly in the Hedge End, West End and Botley (HEWEB) area and Fair Oak which could be considered by this Committee. A breakdown of electorates for these are shown at Appendix 2 to this report.

There are clear advantages to this: the Horton Heath/West End development area would be in one County Division; Botley would be kept in one County Division; a small new polling district would be avoided in Grange Park and the 'double division' referred to in the previous paragraph would be removed. However, West End would remain split.

9. Given that the Boundary Commission will not accept any proposals that are more than 10% above or below the average for the County, there isn't a perfect solution
10. In addition, potential implications on the Borough's own review also need to be taken into account in this evening's discussions.
11. Final recommendations from the LGBCE are expected to be published on 5 April 2016, with new electoral arrangements coming into effect at the 2017 elections.

### **Financial Implications**

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Risk Assessment**

13. The Council needs to respond to this consultation to help ensure accurate and appropriate democratic representation at a County level.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

14. An equalities assessment has not been carried out on this occasion.

### **Conclusion**

15. The Committee is therefore asked to identify key issues and considerations in order to formulate a Borough Council response to the current LGBCE electoral review of Hampshire.

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Appendices Attached: 2

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information

None.