

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

19 January 2016

FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW – COUNCIL INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Recommendations

It is recommended that this Committee makes recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on future polling districts and ward boundaries, given the earlier decision to reduce the Council's size of membership to 39 Members.

Summary

The report, and specifically appendix 2 herewith, seeks to assist the Committee to make recommendations to the LGBCE with regard to the future warding arrangements of Eastleigh Borough Council.

Statutory Powers

Section 56 (2), Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Introduction

1. On 5 September 2014, the LGBCE advised this Council that it had determined that a Further Electoral Review (FER) of the Council's Electoral Arrangements should take place. A FER is a review by the LGBCE, carried out under the 2009 Act cited above. Such a review is triggered where the LGBCE consider that 'significant' electoral inequality exists. Four of the 19 wards (21%) have an electoral variance of greater than 10%. The outlier ward is Hedge End Grange Park, which has 30% more electors than the average.
2. The timetable for the process is attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
3. The first significant action for the Council was to make a recommendation (to the LGBCE) of its future size of membership. This was carried out at Council on 15 October 2015, where a recommendation of reducing the Council size to 39 Members was made. This was then supported by the LGBCE.
4. All-out elections would take place in May 2018, with the "thirds system" coming back into operation over subsequent elections.

5. The LGBCE then launched the initial public consultation period for a new pattern of electoral wards on 24 November 2015; this runs to 1 February 2016. As part of this, this Council is asked to submit its comments, proposals and recommendations.
6. The Leader of the Council has prepared these, in consultation with Local Area Committee teams, and is attached to this report at Appendix 2 for discussion. The starting point is considering new polling districts (given significant changes in the electorate since the last review in 2002), which, in turn, will give rise to potential new ward boundaries, in the context of the Council's arrangements for Local Area Committee and internal governance.

Current Electorate and Electorate Forecasts

7. Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act requires that when making its recommendations at the conclusion of the FER, the LGBCE should take into account any changes to the number and distribution of Local Government electors likely to take place within the five years following the end of the FER. Since the review is due to be concluded in the autumn of 2016, this means that electoral forecasts are required to the latter part of 2021 as well.
8. This Council has the benefit of its FER following shortly behind the County Council's, and thus much of the process and criteria adopted by the County Council has been accepted as accurate by the LGBCE. The County Council devised its own 2021 electoral estimates utilising the 2014 Small Area Population Forecast (SAPF). The SAPF model utilises the following data sources:
 - 2011 Census / known dwelling stock
 - Number of dwellings demolished
 - Births and deaths numbers / Fertility and Mortality rates / Child health data
 - Migration rates
 - New housing supply figures including type, phasing etc
 - Population forecasts by single year of age and gender
9. The SAPF model is a proven forecasting model developed by the County Council and is highly regarded.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, other than officer time taken to work on the review.

Risk Assessment

11. It is a requirement in law (the 2009 Act cited above) that the Council responds to the LGBCE, otherwise it will have no input into the FER process.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report as the decision does not relate to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. However, ensuring electoral equality is not only a legislative requirement but makes good business sense ie that Members have a roughly comparable number of electors within each of their wards.

Conclusion

13. This report seeks the progression of the Council's recommendations on future warding arrangements to be made to the LGBCE by the close of the consultation period on 1 February 2016.

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Appendices Attached: Two

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

Appendix 1: Further Electoral Review (FER) Timetable

Stage	Date(s)
Preliminary period / initial discussions between EBC and LGBCE	May – October 2015
Council size recommendation from EBC to LGBCE	17 November 2015
Warding patterns consultation starts	24 November – 1 February 2016
LGBCE tour of the Borough	March 2016
Draft recommendations from LGBCE	19 April 2016
Consultation on draft recommendations	10 May – 4 July 2016
Further LGBCE tour	August 2016
Final recommendations considered by LGBCE	16 August 2016
Final recommendations published	6 September 2016
Community Governance Review*	End of 2016 / 2017*
Implementation	May 2018 (all-out) elections

* EBC will likely need to conduct its own community governance review after the conclusion of the FER, in order to ensure that parish boundaries tie in with the new Borough polling districts and warding arrangements.