

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Monday 20 November 2017

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS

Report of the Senior Specialist (Elections and Democratic Services)

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Administration Committee considers the recommendations of the Boundary Commission with changes to constituency boundaries and to decide if it wishes to make any representation to the Boundary Commission by 11 December 2017.

Summary

This report updates the Committee of the recommendations of the Boundary Commission on changes to Hampshire constituency boundaries and the impact on the Borough of Eastleigh.

Statutory Powers

Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 Part 2.

Strategic Implications

1. The content of this report does not directly contribute to the achievement of Corporate Plan objectives. However, it is important that the Borough Council aligns with national electoral policy concerning the size of Parliamentary constituencies.

Introduction

2. In September 2016 a report was submitted to this Committee regarding the proposals to change the number constituencies. The Government was under pressure to make politics less expensive. To this end, it passed the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act (referred to in this report as 'the Act'). This legislation provided that the number of constituencies in the United Kingdom be reduced from 650 to 600.
3. As well as reducing the number of constituencies, the Act sought to ensure that electorates be made more equal. It was recommended that every

constituency must have an electorate that is no less than 95% and no more than 105% of the UK electoral quota.

4. Accordingly every constituency in the UK should have an electorate that is no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78, 507.
5. One notable exception to this rule is the Isle of Wight, who must have two constituencies regardless of electorate size, as stipulated by section 11 of the Act.
6. The organisation tasked with carrying out this undertaking, was the independent public body, the Boundary Commission for England (BCE).
7. By September 2018, the BCE must give their report to the Government that will turn their recommendations into draft legislation. Parliament may only support or reject the proposals and does not have the choice to amend the BCE package.
8. The BCE has stated that it wants to keep the impact of its proposals to a minimum, although this will be difficult considering the radical nature of the restructure. Schedule 2 of the Act sets out a number of factors that must be taken into consideration to help limit the inconveniences felt by the electorate;
 - Special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - Local government boundaries as they exist on the most recent ordinary council-election day before the review date;
 - Boundaries of existing constituencies;
 - Any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies;
 - The inconveniences attendant on such changes.
9. The consultation period is open from 17 October 2017 until 11 December 2017.

Revised Proposal for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton

10. This sub-region has a combined electorate of 1,273,506. It is proposed that this will be split into 17 different constituencies, a reduction of one from the existing allocation.
11. In respect of the Hampshire and Eastleigh Borough area, the initial BCE proposal published in September 2016 states “we propose significantly reconfigured constituencies of North West Hampshire and Test Valley. We propose that the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane wards of Pamber and Silchester, Bramley and Sherfield, and Sherborne St. John are transferred from the North East Hampshire constituency to the North West Hampshire constituency. Consequently, we propose to include the District of Test Valley wards of Anna, Amport, and Penton Bellinger in our proposed Test Valley constituency. To ensure the Test Valley constituency is within 5% of the

electoral quota and to accommodate the loss of a constituency in the sub-region, we propose to include the Twyford and Compton areas of the Borough of Winchester and the Hiltingbury and Chandler's Ford areas of the Borough of Eastleigh in our Test Valley constituency."

12. In Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton, three of the existing constituencies remain unaltered, while a further four are altered only by the transfer of one ward.
13. The initial September 2016 proposals have undergone two consultation exercises involving written comments and oral submissions. In October 2017, revised proposals were published.
14. Eastleigh is one of the three constituencies that have been untouched by the proposed changes. However, it has been proposed by the BCE that the Hiltingbury and Chandler's Ford wards be moved to the Test Valley constituency.

Financial Implications

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

Equality and Diversity Implications

16. 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.

Conclusion

17. The Committee is invited to consider the proposals of the BCE proposals and decide if it wishes to make any representation to the Boundary Commission.

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Appendices Attached: 1

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.

(Revised Proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in the South East region) from Boundary Commission.