

COUNCIL – 6 NOVEMBER 2014

ELECTORAL REVIEW – SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REGARDING PROPOSED WARD
BOUNDARIES

REPORT OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS83 – Review of Statutory Services ISG Recommendations – 23 September 2013

CAB2520 – Statutory Services ISG Recommendations – 23 October 2013

CAB2542 – Options for the Council's Electoral Cycle – 4 December 2013

CAB2567 – Governance Review – Options for the Council's Electoral Cycle – 19
March 2014

CAB2593 – Electoral Review – Future Size of the Council – 2 July 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the Council meeting held on 16 July 2014, it was agreed to propose a future Council size of 45 Members, which The Local Government Boundary Commission for England subsequently decided that it was 'minded' to accept, pending conclusion of the full review. This followed a decision by the Council on 2 April 2014 to retain the existing electoral cycle of election by thirds.

The purpose of this report is to propose a formal response to the Commission regarding the pattern of future Ward boundaries, following the work of the Electoral Review/Governance Informal Policy Group and a subsequent meeting between the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Principal Opposition and the Chairman of the Group (Cllr Godfrey).

The decision of Council will be forwarded to the Commission and that will conclude this phase of the process.

The Commission will then consider the Council's submission (along with any others received). At the beginning of February 2015, the Commission will publish its draft recommendations and commence a further consultation on those proposals, running until 30 March 2015. The Commission will then analyse any further submissions and publish its final recommendations in June 2015. There is no further consultation on these final recommendations and any changes would only be to rectify factual errors.

There will be an all-out election in 2016 to give effect to the warding changes agreed by the Commission. In 2017, it is the County Council election year. Thereafter, elections by thirds for the City Council will continue in 2018 onwards, with the councillors who were elected with the lowest votes in each ward in 2016 coming up for election first.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the suggested approach set out in Appendix 1 to this report be agreed and submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the City Council's response to this stage of the Electoral Review process.
- 2 That the suggested future approach for dealing with the emerging communities, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, also be forwarded to the Commission to assist in formulating their proposals.

COUNCIL – 6 NOVEMBER 2014

ELECTORAL REVIEW - SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND REGARDING FUTURE WARD BOUNDARIES

REPORT OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Work on the review has been steered by the Electoral Review/Governance Informal Policy Group. There have been nine meetings of the Group to date and the membership is as follows:-

Councillor Godfrey (Chairman) and Councillors J Berry, Clear, Learney, McLean, Weir and Wright.

- 1.2 The Group is supported by the Chief Operating Officer and the Electoral Review Manager.

- 1.3 Members received an initial briefing on the Review process on 7 November 2013 and then a further briefing from the Boundary Commission's Lead Commissioner for this Review (Professor Paul Wiles) on 31 March 2014.

- 1.4 The decisions by the Council to date and the next stages of the process have already been explained in the Executive Summary.

2 Future Ward Boundaries

- 2.1 Throughout its work, the Group has been mindful of the three principal considerations in any review – electoral equality; community identity; and effective and convenient local government. Whilst a range of warding options were considered at its last two meetings, the Group was unable to reach a consensus view on a pattern for the whole District.

- 2.2 Therefore, a meeting was held between the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Principal Opposition and the Chairman of the Group to agree a way forward. The result of that meeting was production of a list suggesting an approach which the Commission should take into account when preparing its draft scheme for public consultation next year (see Appendix 1).

- 2.3 From that list it will be noted that there is support for five 3-Member wards to represent the Winchester Town area, which would include Harestock and Barton Farm. There was no prevailing view of how the remainder of the District should be dealt with, but there was agreement about certain key issues and they are set out in the Appendix.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The political parties have not found sufficient common ground to enable the Council to put forward a full warding scheme, but in a recent conversation the Commission indicated that this is now not an unusual situation.
- 3.2 What has been agreed is a suggested approach which the Council will hopefully adopt as a framework for the future warding pattern. If this approach is acceptable, it should help the Commission produce a sound draft scheme for the whole District, which will then be published for public consultation early next year.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

Reviewing the arrangements for the political leadership and electoral accountability of the City Council are a key aspect of ensuring the Council is efficient and effective in the arrangements it makes for the conduct of business.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no particular resource implications associated with this element of the review process.

RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

If the Council does not take a proactive approach to the Review the future warding pattern will be determined by the Commission without the benefit of any local authority input. It is considered that the action summarised in the Conclusion of this report will reduce that risk.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Local Government Boundary Commission – Electoral Reviews - Technical Guidance](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Suggested Approach for Devising New Ward Boundaries

Appendix 2 – Comments regarding the approach for Dealing with Emerging Communities and future Community Governance Reviews

APPENDIX 1**SUGGESTED APPROACH FOR DEVISING NEW WARD BOUNDARIES**

Following a meeting between the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Principal Opposition and the Chairman of the Review Group, the following suggested approach is proposed for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:-

1. The Winchester "Town" area should have five 3-member wards.
2. The Barton Farm development should be part of the "Town" wards
3. Harestock should be part of the "Town" wards.
4. Existing parishes must not be split between different wards unless absolutely necessary
5. Established communities, should not be split between different wards unless absolutely necessary
6. The new development at the West of Waterlooville (WoW) should be split between two different wards to allow the existing and expected growth over the next 5 years to be represented acceptably following the Boundary Commission Review.
7. The existing Denmead Ward should have a proportion of the WOW development added to it to form one new Ward.
8. The remainder of the WoW development should be placed with the existing Southwick & Boarhunt Ward and Wickham and Knowle.
9. The Whiteley Ward and the North Whiteley development should be placed together in a separate ward to Wickham.
10. Durley or Upham parishes should be joined with Bishops Waltham to make a new single ward.
11. The two parts of the Soberton parish separated at the last review should be placed in the same new ward.
12. The parishes of Bishops Sutton, Tichborne, Old Alresford, Bighton and Itchen Stoke all look towards New Alresford as their local community hub, so should be placed in the same ward, if at all possible.
13. The parishes of Otterbourne and/or Compton & Shawford are a good fit with the existing Colden Common & Twyford Ward.
14. Colden Common and Twyford parishes share many community connections, so should remain in the same ward.
15. Littleton and Harestock communities could be placed in separate wards
16. Headbourne Worthy parish should be placed in the same ward as Kings Worthy.

APPENDIX 2

COMMENTS REGARDING THE APPROACH FOR DEALING WITH EMERGING COMMUNITIES AND FUTURE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

Each of the three areas set out below will accommodate significant numbers of electors in the coming years and the following comments will hopefully assist the Commission in planning future representation.

West of Waterlooville (WoW)

The WoW area did not develop at the rate envisaged by the last review process in 2002 and the consequent electoral imbalance was the main reason that the current review was commenced by the Commission. The Taylor Wimpey development (in Denmead Ward) is now progressing well and the Grainger 'Berewood' development (in Boarhunt & Southwick Ward) now has some occupants, together with a new primary school.

Both Denmead and Boarhunt & Southwick Parish Councils had considered for some time that the new community emerging from the above developments would be best served by establishing its own parish council. Therefore, the two Parishes were instrumental in setting up the West of Waterlooville Advisory Group, to monitor and advise on issues affecting the locality until such time as a parish council is formed. The Group consists of representatives from the two Parish Councils affected, City Councillors and others working with the community. The Group has performed a very useful role and will no doubt continue to do so, until there are sufficient residents to enable an effective parish council to be established through a Community Governance Review.

Bearing this in mind, the proposal to split the WoW area between two Wards needs to be configured in such a way as to enable the easy amalgamation of the new development areas in the future, as a potential separate parish. The best way to achieve this is for both new District wards to have parish wards of a similar size. In that way, the boundaries of a potential parish council covering both new development sites can be formed.

Barton Farm

The first residents are not anticipated until late 2015 but it is already clear that this development should come within the Winchester Town area. Headbourne Worthy Parish is very small and it would not be appropriate to place it with a scheme that will eventually produce 2,000 dwellings. The Parish Council is keen to be in the same ward as Kings Worthy Parish as this would be a far more appropriate solution and this view is supported by the Council.

Again, with suitable warding arrangements, it will be possible to define the Barton Farm area in such a way as to make the establishment of any Parish Council in the future a relatively straightforward exercise, in terms of a clear and sensible boundary. A Community Governance Review will be required to change the boundary for Headbourne Worthy Parish.

North of Whiteley

This development is the least advanced of the three but, again, there is already an apparent case to change boundaries to facilitate a sensible community solution for the future. In this instance, the development falls within the parish of Curdrige but the Parish Council has been clear from the outset that a large, new development would not sit appropriately with a small, rural settlement.

Curdrige Parish Council contends that it would be a far better solution to amend the joint parish boundary with Whiteley Parish, so that Whiteley is extended to embrace the new development, as that is a parish made up of relatively recent residential estates. Whiteley Town Council is in agreement with this approach and would be happy to extend their boundary accordingly.

A Community Governance Review is required to amend a parish boundary, but it would be sensible to devise warding arrangements as part of this exercise to facilitate that later work.

Bakeland Gardens, New Alresford

This is a recently completed development of 34 dwellings and so is not in the same category as those above. However, there is a clear boundary anomaly here as whilst the development technically sits within Tichborne Parish, it is so close to Alresford that from both the visual and practical aspects it would be appropriate to amend the boundary and have the development within New Alresford Parish.

Again, a Community Governance Review is required to amend a parish boundary, but it would be sensible to devise warding arrangements as part of this exercise to facilitate that later work.
