

LR83
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): BOARHUNT AND SOUTHWICK

LICENSING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

30 July 2003

ELECTORAL REVIEW – BOARHUNT PARISH

REPORT OF CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A request has been received from Boarhunt Parish Council for an electoral review. The parish wants to increase the number of parish councillors from 5 to 6. The quorum for a meeting is 3 councillors. The Parish has indicated that there can be problems with the quorum e.g. if someone has to declare an interest and leave the meeting.

The Parish has suggested that the Parish is under-represented. It has an electorate of 449 represented by 5 councillors. It makes a comparison with Southwick, which has 9 councillors to represent an electorate of 525.

The City Council has powers to undertake an electoral review under S.17(2) of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. As the request only deals with the number of councillors the City Council may decide the outcome without needing to apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation. In undertaking a review the Council has to have regard to the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and to secure effective and convenient local government.

The current size and quorum for Boarhunt is the minimum required by law. There is no legal requirement that the electoral representation ratio should be similar for each parish in the District. Indeed there is a significant variation in some instances which has evolved from local views over the years. However, the current views of Boarhunt are relevant.

The potential difficulties in obtaining a quorum, of itself, is a reason to undertake a review.

There is no need on the facts of this case to split the Parish into separate Parish electoral wards given the number and distribution pattern of the current electorate. The Director of

Development Services population forecast shows no material change over a five year period – 570 in 2003 to 572 in 2007. The dwelling stock is only likely to change from 210 to 220 in this period.

The Parish has requested that, if possible, the changes be implemented in time for the next Parish elections – June 2004.

In this instance the consultation arrangements could be undertaken by press notice, notices on parish notice boards and asking the Parish for their final view. This would be undertaken during September – which would enable the timetable to be met.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That an electoral review be undertaken of Boarhunt and Southwick Parish Council indicating that the preliminary view is that the City Council is minded to make an Order to increase the size of the Parish Council from 5 to 6 Members with effect from the next scheduled Parish election in 2004.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

1 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 1.1 Helping Parish Councils assists with the aim of partnership working.

2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 2.1 Officer time (minimal) and external advertisement costs (under £500) can be met from existing budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

City Secretary and Solicitor's file.

APPENDICES:

None