

LR93
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): BOARHUNT AND SOUTHWICK

LICENSING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

5 November 2003

ELECTORAL REVIEW – BOARHUNT PARISH

REPORT OF CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR

Contact Officer: Stephen Whetnall Tel No: 01962 848220 swetnall@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

LR83 – Electoral Review – Boarhunt Parish – 30 July 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At its meeting on 30 July 2003 the Committee agreed to the request 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 Parish Council 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 were undertaken by press notice, notices on parish notice boards and asking the Parish for their final view. No further representations have been received.

In the circumstances the review can be concluded and an appropriate order made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the City Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to make an Order under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 to increase the size of the Boarhunt 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