

CABINET - 4 DECEMBER 2002

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES - NEW FOREST EAST AND NEW FOREST WEST

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 6 March 2002 the Cabinet considered the Boundary Commission's proposals for the review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries in Hampshire. The Cabinet confined its consideration to the proposals insofar as they affected New Forest District Council's area.
- 1.2 Because the Commission uses District wards as building blocks for parliamentary constituencies, there was a need to review the position with regard to Boldre and Sway. These are at present separate District wards, with Boldre being in New Forest East Parliamentary Constituency, and Sway in New Forest West. Boldre and Sway are to form a single District Ward with effect from the May 2003 elections and therefore both parishes must be placed within one Parliamentary Constituency.

2. COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The initial recommendations published by the Commission placed the Boldre and Sway ward in New Forest West. The Cabinet objected to the proposal on the grounds that Sway had many more historic, social and practical links with parishes and communities to the east than those to the west. The Council recommended that the new Boldre and Sway ward be placed in New Forest East rather than New Forest West.

3. PUBLIC INQUIRY AND COMMISSION'S REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 A public inquiry into the Commission's recommendations was held in Winchester on 18 - 20 June 2002. The inquiry was conducted by Mr Roger Ellis QC, Assistant Commissioner. New Forest District Council was represented at the inquiry by Cllrs Rickman and Wise, local members for Sway and Boldre respectively. Cllr Scott also spoke in support of the Council's objection.
- 3.2 Arising from the report of the Inquiry the Commission is to publish, on 28 November, revised recommendations for the Parliamentary Boundaries in Hampshire. These revised recommendations include locating the Boldre and Sway ward in New Forest East, as proposed by this Council. The following is an extract from the Assistant Commissioner's report of the Inquiry:

"The representations and evidence demonstrated overwhelming local support for the siting of Boldre and Sway in East and provided totally convincing testimony of the links and ties between Boldre and Sway and East and the absence of the same between Boldre and Sway and West. Put shortly I was thoroughly convinced that Boldre and Sway looks overwhelmingly to the east rather than to the west."
- 3.3 Representations on the Commission's revised recommendations may be made. The representation period is to run from 28 November 2002 to 5 January 2003. The

Commission is required to consider any representations on the revised recommendations, but is not statutorily required to hold a second inquiry. Those who make representations are requested to say whether they approve of, or object to, the Commission's revised recommendations and to give their reasons for approval or rejection.

- 3.4 The revised recommendations will mean that the composition of the Constituencies, based on 2000 electorates (the Commission was obliged to base its recommendations on the 2000 electorate figures), will be:

New Forest East - 69,646
New Forest West - 65,269

- 3.4 In the light of the Cabinet's decision in March, members might wish to support the revised recommendations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendation.

7. RECOMMENDATION:

- 7.1 That the Boundary Commission's revised proposals for the New Forest East and New Forest West Parliamentary Constituencies, placing the new Boldre and Sway Ward in New Forest East, be supported on the grounds of the historic, social and cultural links between Boldre & Sway and parishes and communities to the east.

Further information:

Rosemary Rutins
Democratic Services Manager
Tel: (023) 8028 5381
e-mail: rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Published Documents
Report of Public Inquiry 18-20
June 2002