

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 2 November 2011)

1. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES (REPORT A – 2 NOVEMBER 2011) (MINUTE NO. 37)

On 13 September 2011 the Boundary Commission for England published its initial proposals for the review of Parliamentary Constituencies in the United Kingdom.

There is a 12 week consultation period on the Boundary Commission's proposals, ending on 5 December 2011. The review is being conducted on the basis of the new rules laid down by Parliament that involve a reduction in the number of constituencies in the UK from 650 to 600, and in England from 533 to 502 (including two for the Isle of Wight). They require that every constituency (apart from the Isle of Wight) must have an electorate that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473

Following a consultation exercise, the Boundary Commission decided to subdivide the 500 constituencies on the basis of the European Parliamentary regions. This gave the South East Region (in which New Forest District is situated) 81 constituencies (plus two for the Isle of Wight).

The initial proposals for Hampshire and the New Forest district involve a reduction in the number of constituencies in Hampshire (including Portsmouth and Southampton) from 18 to 17. The proposals for New Forest District are:

- (a) the existing New Forest West constituency be extended further to the east, to include the Boldre & Sway; Brockenhurst & Forest South East and Lyndhurst district wards currently in New Forest East; and
- (b) the creation of a new "New Forest East and Romsey" constituency extending into Test Valley Borough Council.

The proposed, extended, New Forest West Constituency will comprise 80,464 electors, just 9 fewer than the maximum permitted. The proposed New Forest East & Romsey constituency will comprise 76,543 electors, which is 3,930 below the maximum.

The Cabinet is of the view that an attempt should be made to improve the electoral equality across the two constituencies and reflect the Forest elements of the area more appropriately. This could easily be achieved by retaining the Lyndhurst District Ward (2,392 electors) in New Forest East & Romsey, rather than moving it to New Forest West, as proposed by the Boundary Commission. The numbers of electors in each constituency would then be:

New Forest West	78,072
New Forest East & Romsey	78,935

The Cabinet has therefore agreed that representations will be made to the Boundary Commission for the Lyndhurst District Ward (2,392 electors) to form part of the proposed New Forest East and Romsey Parliamentary Constituency on the grounds that improved electoral equality will be achieved across the district with two constituencies that contain traditional Forest elements and are more representative of the area as a whole.

2. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011 – 2014 AND 2011/12 BUDGET UPDATE (REPORT B – 2 NOVEMBER 2011) (MINUTE NO. 38)

The Cabinet has considered and noted the progress of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2011 – 2014 together with details of the latest estimated financial outturn position for 2011/12.

The Council has taken a targeted approach to the spending review through the Workstreams which have so far achieved savings over and above targets. This has worked well for 2011/12 and will need to continue in future years. For 2012/13 there will be further reductions in grant together with additional unknowns such as the national pay award and council tax proposals. The continuing need to identify savings will be addressed through ongoing service reviews and the work of the Task and Finish groups. It is important to note that there are no future funding guarantees to many of the Government's specific grants. For 2013/14 changes to the Local Government Finance system are anticipated which together with business rate changes and welfare reform will mean that the Council has to continue to identify and make further savings.

The latest outturn position shows that income from car parking continues to be below target. There is also concern at the major proposed changes to the HRA which will mean that the Council has to pay the Government around £140m. A Task & Finish Group has been set up to review the HRA business plan.

A further Budget Task & Finish group has been set up by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel to review the budget strategy and its implications. This will give members the opportunity to comment and contribute to the proposals and the Cabinet encourages all members to take up this opportunity.

The Cabinet at their meeting in January will consider again the draft Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012/13 when further detail on the grant settlement will be available. The recommendations from the Budget Task & Finish group will be reported to the Cabinet in February 2012 as part of the overall budget consideration.

3. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY (REPORT C – 2 NOVEMBER 2011) (MINUTE NO. 39)

Following a review, the Cabinet has agreed an updated policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The revised policy reflects the latest legislative requirements and sets out procedures that clarify the actions that the Council, as a responsible district authority, should take.

Officers have been working with other Hampshire Districts on this extremely important policy. Arrangements are underway to train large numbers of people in this difficult subject and the Cabinet has agreed that members as well as officers should undertake the basic training package in due course.

The Cabinet is pleased to support the revised policy which will provide a framework for officers and members alike to approach this very important topic.

**Cllr B Rickman
CHAIRMAN**