

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: SPECIAL GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date and Time: FRIDAY, 8 JANUARY 2016, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER, APPLETREE COURT, LYNDHURST

Telephone enquiries to: Lyndhurst (023) 8028 5000
023 8028 5588 - ask for Melanie Stephens
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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme on the item for discussion at this meeting. Speeches may not exceed three minutes. Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above.

In addition to the above, all members of the Council and Hampshire County Councillors representing New Forest District are invited to attend the meeting and to speak.

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

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This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

2. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

To consider the Local Government Boundary Committee for England's draft recommendations on the electoral review of Hampshire County Council.

To:

Councillors

S J Clarke (Chairman)
L R Puttock (Vice-
Chairman)
G C Beck
G R Blunden
Ms L C Ford
R L Frampton
A T Glass
L E Harris

Councillors

J M Olliff-Cooper
A K Penson
D N Tungate
A S Wade
Mrs C V Ward
J G Ward
Mrs P A Wyeth

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – 8 JANUARY 2016

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Committee for England (LGBCE) is undertaking an electoral review of Hampshire County Council. This Council, together with others in Hampshire, was consulted on the review, and the Council agreed initial views at its meeting on 13 July 2015. A copy of the Council's response to the LGBCE is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The LGBCE published its draft recommendations on 17 November 2015. These are available to view at http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/26883/Hampshire-draft-recommendations-2015-11-17-FINAL.pdf
The Committee is asked to give careful consideration to the proposals and to formulate the Council's response. Members will recall that, because of the short timescales applying, the Council has delegated power to the Committee to agree the Council's response.
- 1.3 All members of the Council and all Hampshire County Councillors representing Divisions within New Forest District have been invited to attend the meeting and to speak.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee is reminded that by law the LGBCE must follow three statutory criteria (summarised) when undertaking electoral reviews:
- Electoral equality (that is, the number of electors represented by each Councillor must, as nearly as is possible, be the same)
 - Community interests/identities with readily identifiable boundaries
 - Effective and convenient local government
- 2.2 No priority is placed on any one of these statutory criteria in either the law or in the Commission's guidance.
- 2.3 The LGBCE uses the estimated number of electors in an area five years after the date of their final recommendations as the basis for their reviews. Therefore, the recommendations for Hampshire are based on estimated 2021 electorates. The LGBCE should also recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for each division.
- 2.4 The LGBCE points out that, in reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, their approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. It regards 10% as being an acceptable variance.

3. LGBCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The LGBCE's detailed proposals for New Forest District are at Appendix 2 to this report. A map showing the recommendations is at Appendix 3.

3.2 It will be seen that the LGBCE is recommending that the total number of county councillors for Hampshire remains at 78, but that the number representing New Forest District be reduced from 11 to 10. Eastleigh Borough Council is to be allocated 8 County Councillors in place of the current 7. This has been done in order to achieve greater electoral equality across Hampshire. The proposed reduction in the number of Councillors in New Forest District involves the substantial redrawing of the Division boundaries in the district.

3.3 A reduction in the number of Councillors in the District from 11 to 10 would mean that the average number of electors represented by each County Councillor in the New Forest would be 14,291 (3.2% above the average for the County), compared with:

- average across the County - 1:13,846
- Eastleigh (which has smaller geographical divisions) - 1:13,121 (5.2% below the County average)
- If the number representing the District remained at 11 – 1:12,991 (6.1% below the County average)

3.4 In making its recommendations it appears that the LGBCE has given overriding priority to achieving electoral equality, which has resulted in recommendations that would split local communities in the District and would make local government less effective and convenient. These consequences do not accord with two of the three statutory criteria the LGBCE is required to follow.

3.5 Detailed Observations

3.5.1 It is significant that the LGBCE's recommendations mean that the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division would be the largest in geographical terms in the County, and would contain 15 whole and 1 part parishes. The proposed Brockenhurst Division would be the third-largest in the County in geographical terms, with 7 whole parishes and parts of 3 further parishes.

3.5.2 Some notable further consequences arising from the LGBCE's recommendations are:

- Copythorne Parish continues to be divided between two electoral divisions, with Copythorne North Ward of the Parish Council being in an amended Totton North Division, and the Copythorne South Parish Ward being in the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division;
- Netley Marsh Parish is divided between two different Divisions – Totton North; and Brockenhurst (the Parish is currently wholly within the Lyndhurst Division);
- A small area of Bransgore, but comprising approximately 1,522 electors (about 43% of the Bransgore electorate), is included in the proposed Ringwood Division, with the remainder of Bransgore in the revised Brockenhurst Division (Bransgore is currently wholly within the Lyndhurst Division).

3.5.3 Whilst it has been necessary in the past to divide parishes, especially the larger parishes with large electorates, between county divisions in order to achieve electoral equality, it is not desirable. Currently the following parishes in the District are divided across more than one county division:

- Copythorne (north ward in Fordingbridge Division, south ward in Lyndhurst Division)
- Totton (Totton East and Totton South Wards in Totton South & Marchwood Division; Totton Central; Totton North and Totton West wards in Totton North Division)
- Hythe and Dibden (Furzedown ward in South Waterside Division; remainder in Dibden & Hythe Division)
- New Milton (Barton, Becton and Milton wards in New Milton Division; Fernhill ward in Milford & Hordle Division; and Bashley Ward in Brockenhurst Division)

3.5.4 The LGBCE's proposals continue to divide the above parishes (although, in the case of Copythorne, in a different way), while dividing the following further parishes:

- Netley Marsh (North Ward in Totton North Division; South Ward in Brockenhurst Division)
- Bransgore (part in Ringwood and part in Brockenhurst Divisions). This will involve creating a separate polling district and a separate parish ward. Bransgore Parish Council elects ten councillors. The LGBCE intends to recommend that the new parish ward be represented by four parish councillors, and the remainder of the parish by six parish councillors. The projected electorate total by 2021 for Bransgore is 3,533, while the estimated electorate in the area proposed to be included in Ringwood Division is 1,522, 43% of the total. In the circumstances a ward returning four councillors would be appropriate.

3.6 HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CONSIDERATION

3.6.1 Hampshire County Council established a Working Group to oversee the review and to make detailed recommendations to the Group Leaders and then to the County Council. The County Council will be considering recommendations on 7 January 2016 – the report is available to view at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemdocuments.htm?sta=&pref=Y&item_ID=7200&tab=2&co=&confidential=

The County Council's decisions will be reported to the Committee on 8 January, but the following are the main recommendations which are likely to have a bearing on the Committee's consideration of the issue:

- That representations be made to the LGBCE for the number of county councillors in Hampshire to be increased to 79 to enable the continued allocation of 11 Councillors to New Forest District; or, if this is not agreed –
- the revised pattern of divisions set out in the map at Appendix 4, with their recommendations at Appendix 5.

3.6.2 The report to the County Council once again stresses the land mass of the New Forest and the fact that the inner New Forest has a widely dispersed population that leads to the largest and the third-largest Divisions across the County, with many

Parish Councils within some Divisions. These require the attendance of their County Councillor at their meetings, if good local governance is to be achieved.

3.6.3 The County Council's draft recommendations differ from the LGBCE's recommendations in the following respects:

- The proposed **Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge Division** excludes the parishes of Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley and Hyde, moving them to the **Ringwood Division**, but includes the Copythorne North Ward of Copythorne Parish Council, removing it from the **Totton North Division**
- The proposed **Totton North Division** includes Netley Marsh South Ward, removing it from the **Brockenhurst Division**
- The proposed **South Waterside Division** includes Exbury & Lepe Parish, removing it from the **Brockenhurst Division**
- The proposed **Brockenhurst Division** - excludes Netley Marsh South Ward, Exbury & Lepe Parish, and part of the Bashley Ward of New Milton Town Council; and includes the whole of Bransgore Parish
- The **Milford and Hordle Division** includes part of the Bashley Ward of New Milton Town Council
- The proposed **Ringwood Division** includes Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley and Hyde Parishes but excludes part of Bransgore Parish.

4. COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

- 4.1 The recommendations to be considered by the County Council have the advantage that the Copythorne, Netley Marsh and Bransgore Parishes would be wholly contained within single Divisions. There is, however, the disadvantage of splitting the Bashley ward of New Milton Town Council between two County Divisions (Milford & Hordle and Brockenhurst). It would necessitate creating a further ward of New Milton Town Council. The Town and the District Council wards would then no longer be co-terminous. However, under the proposals, New Milton would continue to be divided across three different County Divisions, as at present.
- 4.2 There is also some concern at placing the Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley and Hyde Parishes within the Ringwood Division. Anecdotally, these parishes, and particularly Hyde, have more community of interest with Fordingbridge than with Ringwood.
- 4.3 While the reasons for recommending that the Exbury & Lepe Parish be moved from the existing Brockenhurst Division to the South Waterside Division are understood, it is considered that Exbury and Lepe has little community of interest with the larger parishes of Fawley and Hythe & Dibden that comprise the South Waterside Division. The projected electorate in Exbury & Lepe in 2021 is only 136, and this number does not make a significant difference to the projected electorates in either County Division.

5. POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To overcome some of the disadvantages set out in paragraph 4, the Committee might wish to consider the following alternatives (using the recommendations to HCC as the base):

- Hyde Parish remaining in the Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division;
- Burley Parish moving to the Ringwood Division
- The whole of Bashley ward of NMTC remaining in the Brockenhurst Division;
- Exbury & Lepe Parish remaining in the Brockenhurst Division.

These are shown on the map at Appendix 6. The composition of the Divisions is shown in Appendix 7.

- 5.2 These suggested changes would have the effect of increasing the projected 2021 electorate in Brockenhurst to 15,100, which would then be the largest Division in the New Forest in electorate terms. However the electorate would be 9% above the county average of 13,846, within the tolerance of 10% generally acceptable to the LGBCE.

6. PROPOSED DIVISION NAMES

- 6.1 With the likely change in the composition of the County Divisions, different names for some of the Divisions might be appropriate. The following proposals are put forward:

LGBCE Proposal	Suggested alternative
Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge	North Forest
Brockenhurst	Mid-Forest
Ringwood	West Forest

- 6.2 It is noted that Hampshire County Council is also recommending the following change:

LGBCE Proposal	HCC recommendation
Milford & Hordle	Milford, Hordle and Fernhill

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 It is disappointing that the LGBCE is recommending that the number of County Councillors representing New Forest District be reduced to 10. The District is the largest geographically in Hampshire and the LGBCE's recommendations for the pattern of Divisions will mean that the proposed Lyndhurst and Fordingbridge Division will be the largest in the County, and the Brockenhurst Division the third-largest. The size of the Divisions and the number of parishes within each makes effective representation difficult. The fact that the LGBCE appears to have given inordinate weight to electoral equality, at the expense of the other two statutory criteria of community of identity and effective and convenient local government, has led to an increase in the number of parishes divided across more than one County Division. This is contrary to the principle of achieving effective and convenient local government. It will increase the workloads of most county councillors in the District, because many will represent electorates in more parishes than previously, and will mean that they will be attending more parish council meetings than at present.

- 7.2 The proposals being put forward for consideration by the County Council reduce the number of parishes to be divided across County Divisions. There are, however concerns about the proposals
- for Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley and Hyde parishes to be part of the Ringwood Division.
 - for the division of the Bashley ward of New Milton Town Council;
 - to include Exbury & Lepe within the South Waterside Division.
- 7.3 Further proposals that address the issues in paragraph 7.2 are made for members' consideration.

8. FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Enlarging the County Divisions and dividing parishes across different divisions will mean more and longer journeys by County Councillors to attend Parish Council meetings or to attend to other Parish issues, with resulting increased travel distances and higher travel claims by County Councillors.

9. CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the Committee considers whether it wishes to support the proposal to make representations to the LGBCE that the number of County Councillors for Hampshire be increased to 79, and that an extra County Councillor be allocated to New Forest District;
- 10.2 That the Committee considers and agrees the Council's response to the LGBCE's recommendations for the electoral review of Hampshire County Council in the light of the proposals being submitted to that Council on 7 January 2016, and possible alternatives set out in paragraph 5;:
- 10.3 That the Committee considers names for the proposed Divisions as set out in paragraph 6.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Published documents

Chief Executive

The Review Officer (Hampshire)
 Local Government Boundary Commission
 for England
 14th Floor
 Millbank Tower
 21-24 Millbank
 LONDON
 SW1P 4QP

My Ref: DY/RR

29 July 2015

Dear Sir

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – SUBMISSION BY NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

This letter conveys the views of New Forest District Council in response to the Commission's initial consultation on the electoral review of Hampshire County Council. These views were agreed unanimously at a meeting of the full Council on 13 July 2015.

To summarise, the Council's firm view is that no changes should be made to the number of members representing New Forest District on Hampshire County Council, and that there should be no change in the electoral division boundaries.

The Council came to this view in the full knowledge that one of the aims of the review is to deliver electoral equality across the county and that, in New Forest District, some County Councillors represent fewer electors than the average throughout the county. However, the Council considers that the unique circumstances that apply in New Forest District, because of the nature of the New Forest itself and the existence of the New Forest National Park, warrant a higher level of representation by democratically elected County Councillors than other districts or boroughs. When arriving at its conclusions, the Council was also aware that the Commission has indicated that it is minded to recommend that the overall size of the County Council remains at 78.

Reasons for the Council's views are set out below:

1. Statutory Criteria

1.1 The three statutory criteria to which the Commission is required to have regard in considering a pattern of electoral divisions, as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, are (summarised):

- Electoral equality
- Community interests/identities with readily identifiable boundaries
- Effective and convenient local government

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1.2 No priority is placed on any one of these statutory criteria in either the 2009 Act or in the Commission's guidance. In the case of New Forest District, the Council considers that, because of the very special circumstances that apply, the second and third considerations should be given greater emphasis than the first, simple electoral equality.

2. Size of Divisions

2.1 The District Council fully supports the principle adopted by Hampshire County Council that it is practical and logical for County Councillors in urban areas to represent larger electorates, because in urban areas travel distances are shorter and communities and community facilities are generally located in a compact area. The District Council agrees that this position is appropriate in the light of the Commission's guidance "*How to propose a pattern of wards*" – page 11, which states "We will look at the geographic size of the ward or division and try to ensure that it is not so large that it would be difficult for a councillor to represent".

2.2 New Forest District contains two of the largest Divisions, in geographic terms, in the County. These Divisions are expected to have electorates in 2021 well below the Hampshire average. However, both divisions are far larger than the County average, as illustrated below:

Division	Size	Variance vs County Average	No. Parishes
Fordingbridge	91.98 sq. miles	386%	13 whole; 1 ward of one
Brockenhurst	85.22 sq. miles	350%	7 whole; 1 ward of one

2.3 Despite the significant distances involved, the members for both Divisions make every effort to attend meetings of the Parish Councils within their Divisions, but, particularly in Fordingbridge with the larger number of parishes, this proves very time-consuming. It is also often difficult for County Councillors to attend because meetings of different parish councils are held on the same dates. This means that County Councillors are not always able to maintain regular face-to-face communication with the Parish Councils they represent, which is not conducive to effective and convenient local government.

2.4 Expanding the size of these two Divisions to achieve greater electoral equality would mean placing unacceptable workloads on the County Councillors representing those Divisions.

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29 July 2015
The Review Officer (Hampshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England

3. Development factors impacting on County Divisions

- 3.1 The centre, north and west (with the exception of the market towns of Ringwood and Fordingbridge) of New Forest District Council's area are mainly rural, with built-up areas along Southampton Water and the western Solent. There are constraints on housing development within the National Park. National and local policies within the National Park severely constrain new development and this places development pressures on the areas outside the Park. There are, and will continue to be, distinct urban and rural communities with little common identity or community of interest beyond a strong commitment to a New Forest identity.
- 3.2 Expanding an urban division into the sparsely populated rural areas, or vice versa, to achieve better electoral equality, would be inappropriate as there would be no specific community identity or community of interest.

4. Democratic Arrangements in the District

- 4.1 The New Forest National Park covers a large area of the District. The New Forest National Park Authority has statutory responsibility for some services, most notably planning. A number of other bodies such as the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Court of Verderers must also be consulted over a wide range of issues. This complicates and delays decision-making, making democratic representation more complex and onerous. It places additional burdens on Councillors representing Divisions wholly or partly within the National Park, and makes the delivery of "effective and convenient local government" more difficult. The District Council considers that the additional workload on County Councillors should be recognised as warranting departures from the electoral equality criterion.

5. Electorate Forecasts

- 5.1 While the District Council fully appreciates the need for the LGBCE to set a point in time for projected electorates to form the basis for a review, and while respecting the integrity of Hampshire County Council's Small Areas Population Forecasts on which the projected 2021 electorates are based, it is considered that the forecasts must be regarded with some caution. The effects of Individual Electoral Registration, introduced in 2014, on current electorates in the New Forest and nationally, are still uncertain. In addition, in order to meet national planning guidance, the District Council has commenced a review of its Local Plan for the period 2016-2036. New development areas and housing allocations will be considered as part of this process. Given this context of uncertainty over future development and electorate levels, the Council considers that it would be premature to reduce the County's representation in the District.

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The Review Officer (Hampshire)
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6. Dividing Rural Parishes

6.1 A consequence of achieving improved electoral equality following the last electoral review of Hampshire County Council was that some parish and towns were divided over different County Divisions. An example of this is Copythorne Parish, a rural parish with approximately 2,200 electors, which is divided between the Fordingbridge and the Lyndhurst Divisions. It is accepted that, because elector numbers are greater, larger towns and parishes have to be divided over different Divisions. However, the District Council holds the strong view that splitting rural parishes for the sole purpose of achieving electoral equality should be avoided. Such division of parishes is inevitably contrary to the principles of reflecting community interest and identity, and delivering effective and convenient local government.

There are some issues relating to the composition of the current County Divisions which the District Council considers are not ideal, such as:

- (a) the inclusion of a ward of Hythe & Dibden Parish Council within the South Waterside Division, which covers mainly the area of Fawley Parish Council;
- (b) the splitting of New Milton Town Council's area over three County Divisions;
- (c) the combination of two wards of Totton & Eling Town Council with the parish of Marchwood.

However, the difficulties which led to each are understood and the make-up of the Divisions has become accepted by local people and democratic representatives. The District Council is therefore not seeking any change to these as part of the current review. In general terms the District Council is content with the current arrangements for County representation and urges the Commission not to make any changes to the number of County Councillors representing the District or to County Division boundaries.

Yours faithfully



Dave Yates
Chief Executive

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LGBCE's DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW FOREST DISTRICT

New Forest District

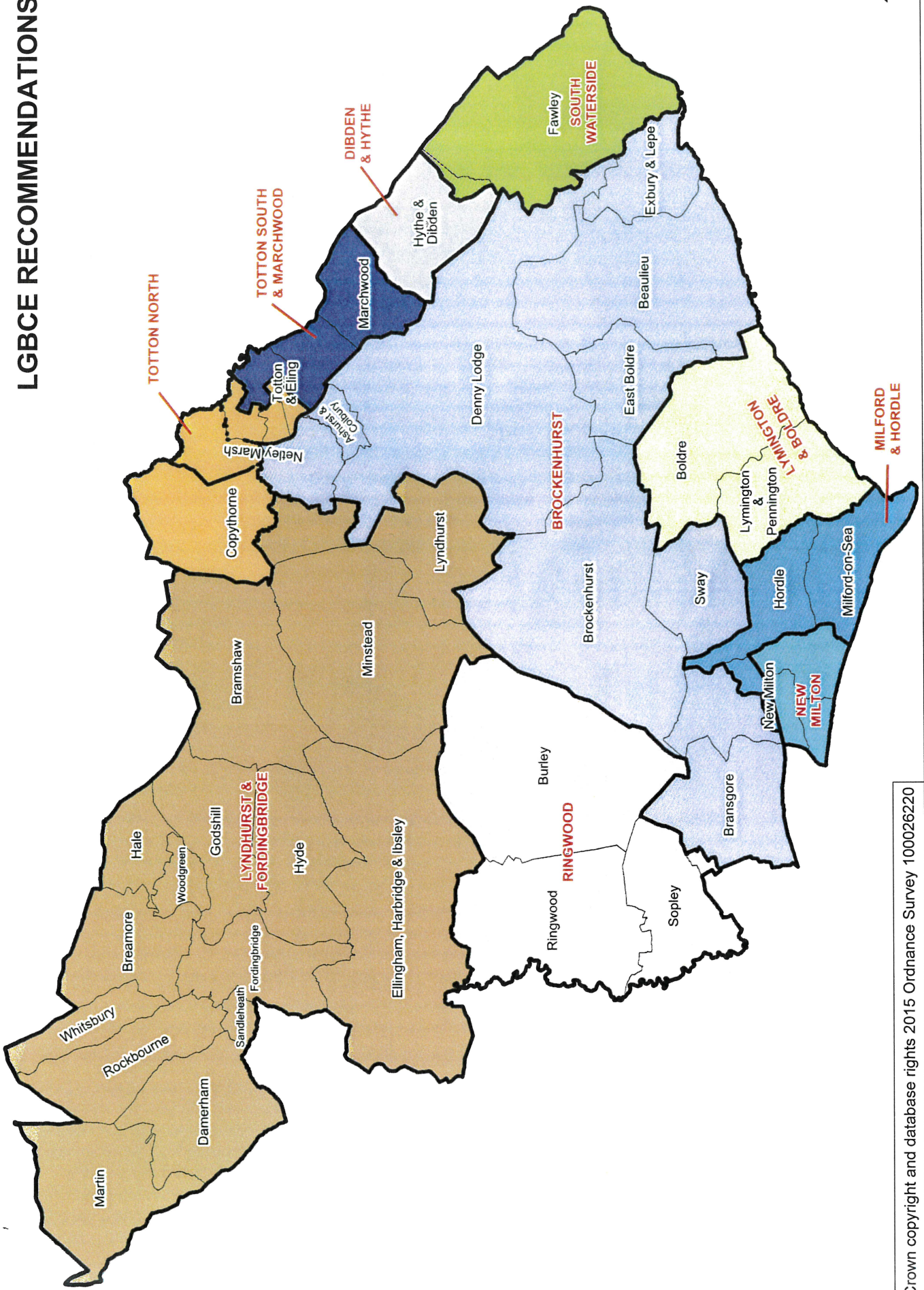
Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description	Detail
Brockenhurst	1	8%	This division comprises the parishes of Ashurst & Colbury, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, Denny Lodge, East Boldre, Exbury & Lepe, Sway and parts of Bransgore, Netley Marsh and New Milton parishes.	This division is based on our own arrangements and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. While this division is geographically large, we consider it broadly reflects the rural communities which make up the New Forest National Park. The A35 also provides a road link to either side of the division.
Dibden & Hythe	1	4%	Dibden and Hythe are located by the shore of Southampton Water. The division comprises the majority of Hythe & Dibden parish.	This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. This division also reflects our statutory criteria.
Lymington & Boldre	1	7%	This division comprises the parishes of Boldre and Lymington & Pennington parishes.	This division is based on our own arrangements and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. In order to provide for divisions with good electoral equality we propose to join Boldre and Lymington & Pennington parishes in the same division. Although the River Lymington runs through the middle of this division, both parishes are connected by Bridge Road and Rodlease Lane in the north of the division.
Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge	1	8%	This comprises the parishes of Bramshaw, Breamore, Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley, Fordingbridge, Godshill, Hale, Hyde,	This division is based on our own recommendations and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. While this division is geographically large, we consider it reflects the identities and interests of the rural communities which form the New Forest National Park.

			Lyndhurst, Martin, Minstead, Rockbourne, Sandeheath, Whitsbury Woodgreen and part of Copythorne parish.	Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division also results in improved electoral equality.
Milford & Hordle	1	0%	This division comprises the parishes of Hordle and Milford-on-Sea and part of New Milton parish.	This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.
New Milton	1	5%	Barton-on-Sea and New Milton comprise this division. The division is located on the shore of Christchurch Bay.	This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.
Ringwood	1	8%	This division comprises the parishes of Ringwood, Sopley and part of Brangore parish. + BURLEY	This division is based on our own proposals and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. We consider that our proposals provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria and accurately reflect community identities and interests in Ringwood and its immediate environs.
South Waterside	1	-9%	This division comprises Fawley parish and part of Hythe & Dibden parish. The division is located at the foot of Southampton water.	This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.

Totton North	1	2%	This division comprises the northern part of Totton & Eling parish and parts of Copythorne and Netley Marsh parishes.	This division is based on our own recommendations and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. This division includes part of Copythorne and Netley Marsh parishes which have road access over the M27 and via the A36 road towards Totton. We consider that our proposals provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria.
Totton South & Marchwood	1	0%	This division comprises Marchwood parish and the southern part of Totton & Eling parish.	This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. This division reflects our statutory criteria.

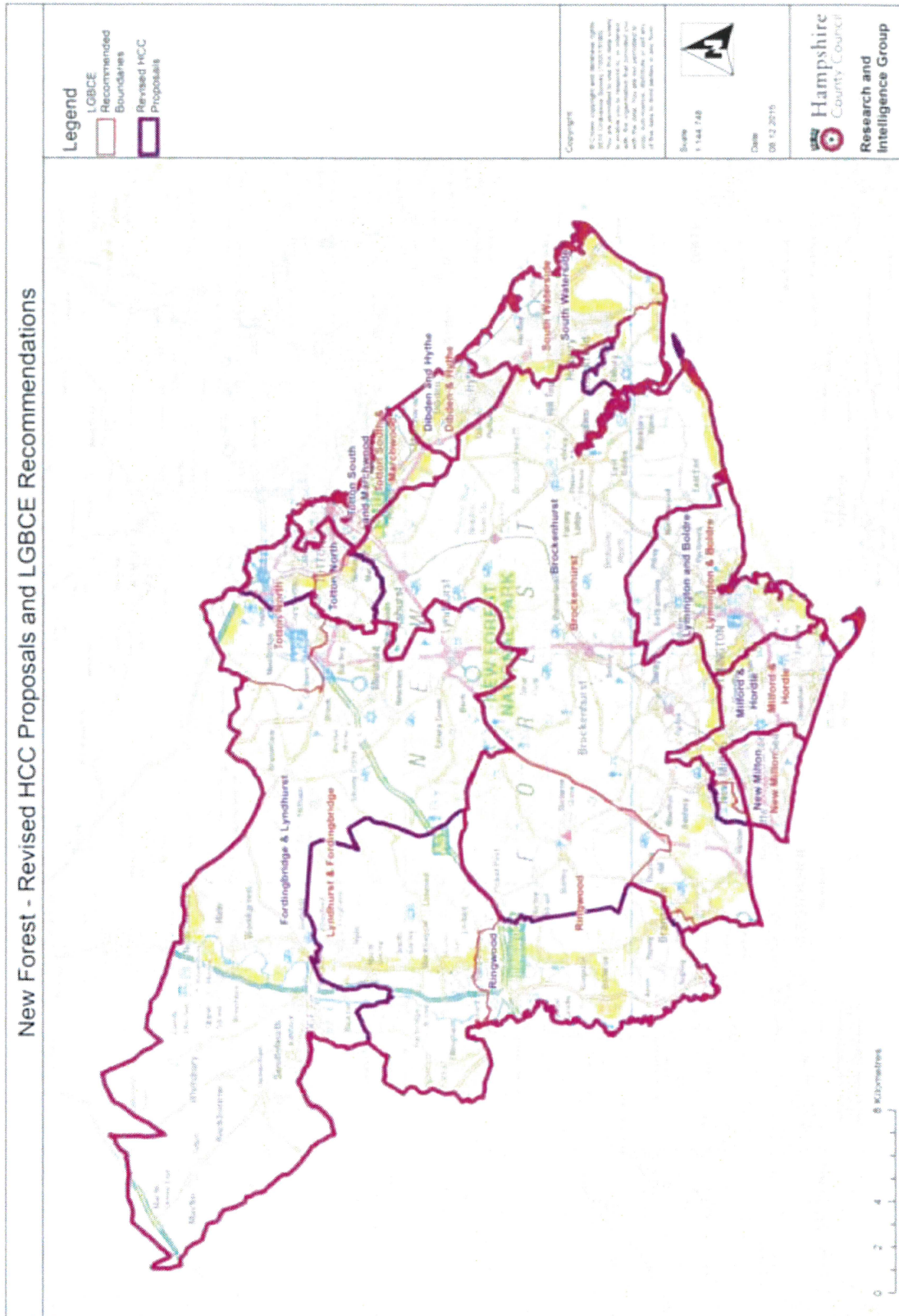
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LGBC RECOMMENDATIONS



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9. New Forest

- 9.1 The Commission has recommended that the New Forest district reduces from 11 to 10 County Councillors, each representing one division. The County Council has strong concerns that the loss of one County division would result in an average forecast electorate of 14,291 per County Councillor in the New Forest. As a consequence the promotion of community identity and effective and convenient local government is severely challenged.

The County Council requests the Commission to take into account the land mass of the New Forest, which is a predominantly rural area and contains the New Forest National Park. The inner New Forest has a widely dispersed population that leads to two of the largest divisions in the county with multiple Parish Councils within them that require the attendance of their County Councillor at monthly meetings if good local governance is to be achieved. There are numerous village communities in the New Forest, each with distinct identities and shared interests, which are very important to their people.

There are a range of unique considerations that apply in the New Forest. For example, the representational complexity and the protracted decision-making in the divisions which are located wholly or partly within the New Forest National Park, in terms of the necessity to consult with the organisations who have the power of veto, namely Natural England, the Court of Verderers, the Forestry Commission, that National Park Authority, New Forest District Council and parish councils, as well as the Commoners Defence Association who have influence and rights under statute. These additional considerations add to the workload of Members already serving large geographical divisions.

The geographical size of the New Forest, the number of Parish Councils, the need to consult with several statutory authorities and the limited transport network makes the task of a County Councillor to adequately represent the electorate in the New Forest divisions very challenging.

The County Council is concerned that the Commission's draft recommendations split a number of parishes which will, as a result, have difficulty in identifying who should represent them and on what subject as they will have two County Councillors. This would apply to the very large division of Brockenhurst which is to take parts of Bransgore, Netley Marsh and New Milton parishes, with the remainder of Bransgore parish in the Ringwood division; the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division takes part of Copythorne and Netley Marsh parishes with the remainder of these parishes in the Totton North division. This involves splitting well established communities who have strong identities, boundaries and commonality of interests.

For the reasons outlined above the County Council requests that the Commission consider an increase to 79 County Councillors to ensure the New Forest district area can continue to be adequately represented by maintaining its complement of 11 County Councillors.

Whilst the County Council urges the Commission to retain 11 divisions in the New Forest, for the reasons set out above, the Commission's draft recommendations for 10 divisions have been given careful consideration.

Set out below are revised proposals for the 10-division model to achieve greater electoral equality, to restore some commonality of interests and community cohesion, which may be more comprehensible to the many parishes and villages in the New Forest, and to achieve more effective and convenient local government.

9.2 Brockenhurst

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Brockenhurst	1	8%	This division comprises the parishes of Ashurst & Colbury, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, Denny Lodge, East Boldre, Exbury & Lepe, Sway and parts of Bransgore, Netley Marsh and New Milton parishes.
Detail			
This division is based on our own arrangements and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. While this division is geographically large, we consider it broadly reflects the rural communities which make up the New Forest National Park. The A35 also provides a road link to either side of the division.			

9.3. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation and notes that Bransgore parish is split between this division and the Ringwood division. To avoid splitting Bransgore parish, the County Council proposes that the remaining parts of Bransgore parish be moved from the Ringwood division to this division to reunite the parish area and better reflect community identity. The County Council also proposes that Burley parish be moved from the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division to this division to improve electoral equality.

In the interests of community identity the County Council proposes that Exbury & Lepe parish be moved from this division to the South Waterside division on the basis that geographically Exbury & Lepe parish sits better within the South Waterside division boundary due to the correlation between Exbury Road, Lepe and the Lepe Country Park.

The County Council further notes that Netley Marsh parish is split between this division and the Totton North division. To avoid splitting the parish, the County Council proposes that the remaining parts of Netley Marsh parish be moved from this division to the Totton North division to reunite the parish area and better reflect community identity.

To achieve improved electoral equality and to make better sense of geographical boundaries, the County Council further proposes that polling district Bashley 2 (NG) be moved from this division to the Milford & Hordle division.

9.4. Dibden & Hythe

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Dibden & Hythe	1	4%	Dibden and Hythe are located by the shore of Southampton Water. The division comprises the majority of Hythe & Dibden parish.
Detail			
This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. This division also reflects our statutory criteria.			

9.5. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council notes that the Commission's draft recommendation is in line with the County Council's proposals and therefore supports this recommendation.

9.6. Lymington & Boldre

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Lymington & Boldre	1	7%	This division comprises the parishes of Boldre and Lymington & Pennington parishes.

Detail

This division is based on our own arrangements and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. In order to provide for divisions with good electoral equality we propose to join Boldre and Lymington & Pennington parishes in the same division. Although the River Lymington runs through the middle of this division, both parishes are connected by Bridge Road and Rodlease Lane in the north of the division.

9.7. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation and is content with this recommendation.

9.8. Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge	1	8%	This comprises the parishes of Bramshaw, Breamore, Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley, Fordingbridge, Godshill, Hale, Hyde, Lyndhurst, Martin, Minstead, Rockbourne, Sandleheath, Whitsbury Woodgreen and part of Copythorne parish.

Detail

This division is based on our own recommendations and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. While this division is geographically large, we consider it reflects the identities and interests of the rural communities which form the New Forest National Park. Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division also results in improved electoral equality.

9.9. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation. The County Council proposes that polling district Copythorne S (CS) be moved from Totton North division to this division to better reflect the identities and interests of the rural communities which form the New Forest and fall within the boundaries of the New Forest National Park Authority.

In the interests of retaining rural community identity, the County Council also proposes that Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish and Hyde parish be moved from this division to the Ringwood division.

To improve electoral equality the County Council further proposes that Burley parish be moved from this division to the Brockenhurst division.

9.10. Milford & Hordle

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Milford & Hordle	1	0%	This division comprises the parishes of Hordle and Milford-on-Sea and part of New Milton parish.
<p>Detail This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.</p>			

9.11. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation. To achieve improved electoral equality and to make better sense of geographical boundaries, the County Council proposes that polling district Bashley 2 (NG) be moved from Brockenhurst division to this division.

To better reflect community identity, the County Council requests the Commission to consider renaming this division Milford, Hordle & Fernhill.

9.12. New Milton

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
New Milton	1	5%	Barton-on-Sea and New Milton comprise this division. The division is located on the shore of Christchurch Bay.
<p>Detail This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.</p>			

9.13. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council notes that the Commission's draft recommendation is in line with the County Council's proposals and therefore supports this recommendation.

9.14. Ringwood

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Ringwood	1	8%	This division comprises the parishes of Ringwood, Sopley and part of Bransgore parish.
<p>Detail This division is based on our own proposals and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. We consider that our proposals provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria and accurately reflect community identities and interests in Ringwood and its immediate environs.</p>			

9.15. Hampshire County Council response:

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation and notes that Bransgore parish is split between this division and the Brockenhurst division. To avoid splitting Bransgore parish, the County Council proposes that the remaining parts of Bransgore parish be moved from this division to the Brockenhurst division to reunite the parish area.

In the interests of retaining rural community identity, the County Council also proposes that Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish and Hyde parish be moved from the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division to this division.

9.16. **South Waterside**

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
South Waterside	1	-9%	This division comprises Fawley parish and part of Hythe & Dibden parish. The division is located at the foot of Southampton water.
Detail This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. We are satisfied that this division reflects our statutory criteria.			

9.17 **Hampshire County Council response:**

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation. In the interests of community identity the County Council proposes that Exbury & Lepe parish be moved from the Brockenhurst division to this division on the basis that geographically Exbury & Lepe parish sits better within this division boundary due to the correlation between Exbury Road, Lepe and the Lepe Country Park.

9.18. **Totton North**

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Totton North	1	2%	This division comprises the northern part of Totton & Eling parish and parts of Copythorne and Netley Marsh parishes.
Detail This division is based on our own recommendations and on the correct allocation of 10 councillors for New Forest District. This division includes part of Copythorne and Netley Marsh parishes which have road access over the M27 and via the A36 road towards Totton. We consider that our proposals provide for the best balance of the statutory criteria.			

9.19 **Hampshire County Council response:**

The County Council has considered the Commission's draft recommendation and proposes that polling district Copythorne S (CS) be moved from this division to the proposed Fordingbridge & Lyndhurst division to better reflect the identities and interests of the rural communities which form the New Forest and fall within the boundaries of the New Forest National Park Authority.

The County Council notes that Netley Marsh parish is split between this division and the Brockenhurst division. To avoid splitting the parish, the County Council proposes that the remaining parts of Netley Marsh parish be moved from Brockenhurst division to this division to reunite the parish area and better reflect community identity.

9.20. **Totton South & Marchwood**

The Commission's draft recommendation:

Division name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021	Description
Totton South & Marchwood	1	0%	This division comprises Marchwood parish and the southern part of Totton & Eling parish.
Detail			
This division is based on the existing division arrangements. The county-wide proposals for New Forest District supported retaining the existing arrangements. This division reflects our statutory criteria.			

9.21. **Hampshire County Council response:**

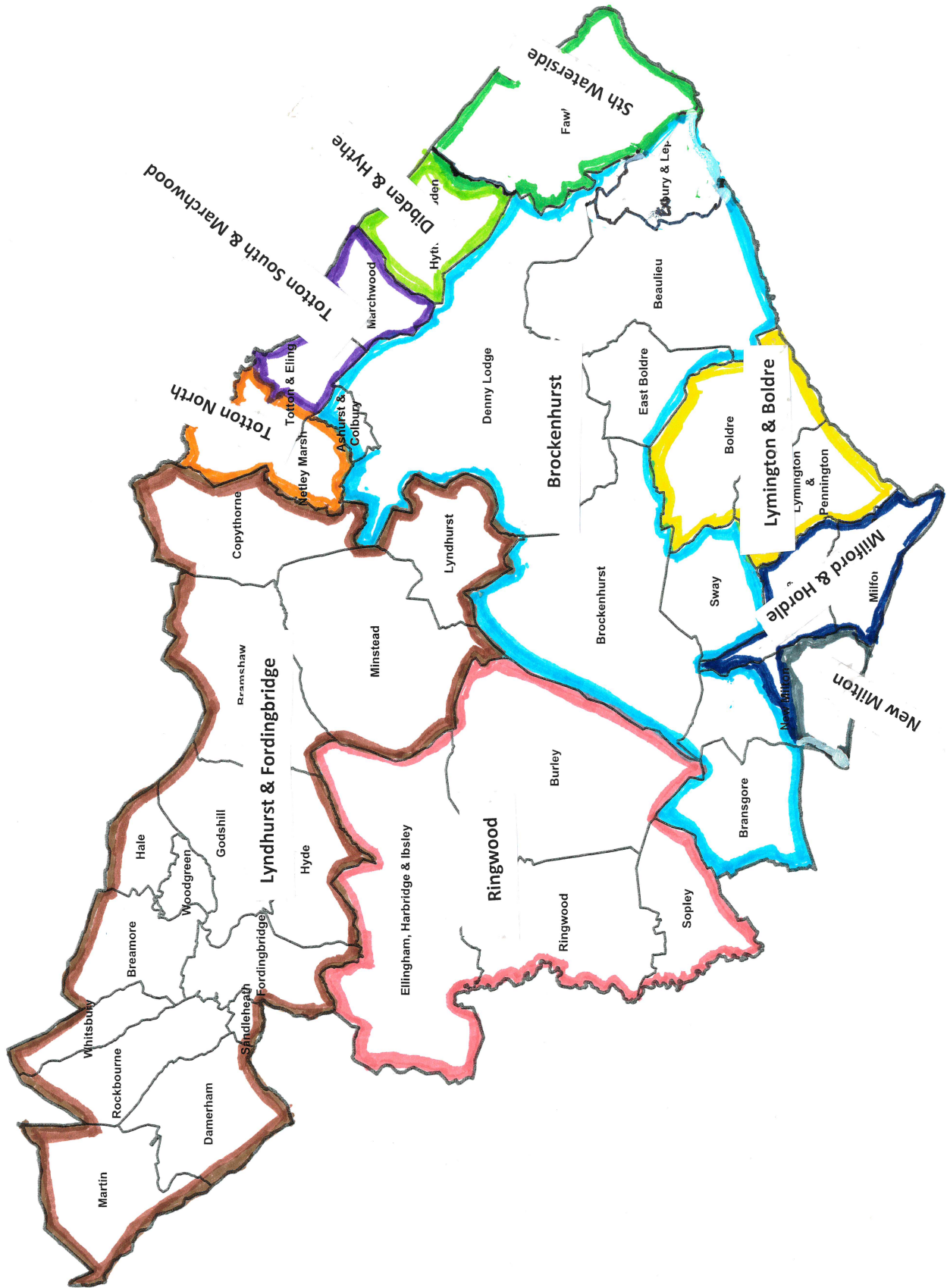
The County Council notes that the Commission's draft recommendation is in line with the County Council's proposals and therefore supports this recommendation.

9.22. Revised proposals for New Forest

Division name	Members	LGBCE Recommend		HCC Revised Proposal	
		2021 Electorate	2021 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Brockenhurst	1	15,010	8.4%	14,964	8.1%
Dibden & Hythe	1	14,371	3.8%	14,371	3.8%
Lymington & Boldre	1	14,749	6.5%	14,749	6.5%
Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge	1	14,935	7.9%	14,231	2.8%
Milford & Hordle	1	13,877	0.2%	14,989	8.3%
New Milton	1	14,511	4.8%	14,511	4.8%
Ringwood	1	14,930	7.8%	13,871	0.2%
South Waterside	1	12,602	-9.0%	12,738	-8.0%
Totton North	1	14,144	2.2%	14,705	6.2%
Totton South & Marchwood	1	13,781	-0.5%	13,781	-0.5%
Total	10	142,910		142,910	

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NFDC POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES



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APPENDIX 7

Suggested composition of County Divisions - for consideration by NFDC

			Variance from County Average - 2021 (13,846)
Brockenhurst		15,093	9%
Ashurst & Colbury	1833		
Denny Lodge	260		
Exbury & Lepe	136		
Beaulieu	663		
East Boldre	693		
Brockenhurst	2904		
Sway	2903		
Bashley ward of New Milton Town Council	2168		
Bransgore	3533		
Dibden & Hythe (as LGBCE's recommendation)		14,371	4%
The parish of Hythe & Dibden, with the exception of the Furzedown ward			
Lymington & Boldre (as LGBCE's recommendation)		14,749	7%
The parishes of Lymington & Pennington; and Boldre			
Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge		14,981	8%
Bramshaw	564		
Breamore	280		
Copythorne (north & south)	2,267		
Damerham	418		
Fordingbridge	4,994		
Godshill	379		
Hale	452		
Hyde	750		
Lyndhurst	2,681		
Martin	329		
Minstead	567		
Rockbourne	241		
Sandleheath	505		
Whitsbury	151		
Woodgreen	403		
Milford & Hordle (as LGBCE's recommendation)		13,877	0%
Parishes of Milford on Sea and Hordle; and the Fernhill ward of New Milton Town Council			

New Milton (as LGBCE's recommendation)		14,511	5%
Barton, Becton and Bashley wards of New Milton Town Council			
Ringwood		14,240	3%
Ringwood	11,641		
Burley	1,119		
Sopley	586		
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	894		
South Waterside (as LGBCE's recommendation)		12,602	-9%
Fawley Parish and Furzedown ward of Hythe & Dibden Parish Council			
Totton North		14,705	6%
Totton Central; Totton North and Totton West wards of Totton & Eling Town Council	12,890		
Netley Marsh North	314		
Netley Marsh South	1,501		
Totton South & Marchwood (as per LGBCE's recommendation)		13,781	0%
Totton South and Totton East wards of Totton & Eling Town Council	9,329		
Marchwood	4,452		
Total		142,910	