

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – WARDING PATTERN PROPOSALS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:-

- (a) the attached “Warding Patterns Proposal – Electoral Review” (Appendix 1) be approved and submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as the Council’s official response to the LGBCE consultation; and
- (b) authority be delegated to the Executive Head of Governance and Housing, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make further editing changes, corrections and updates to the document and maps prior to submission.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND DETAIL

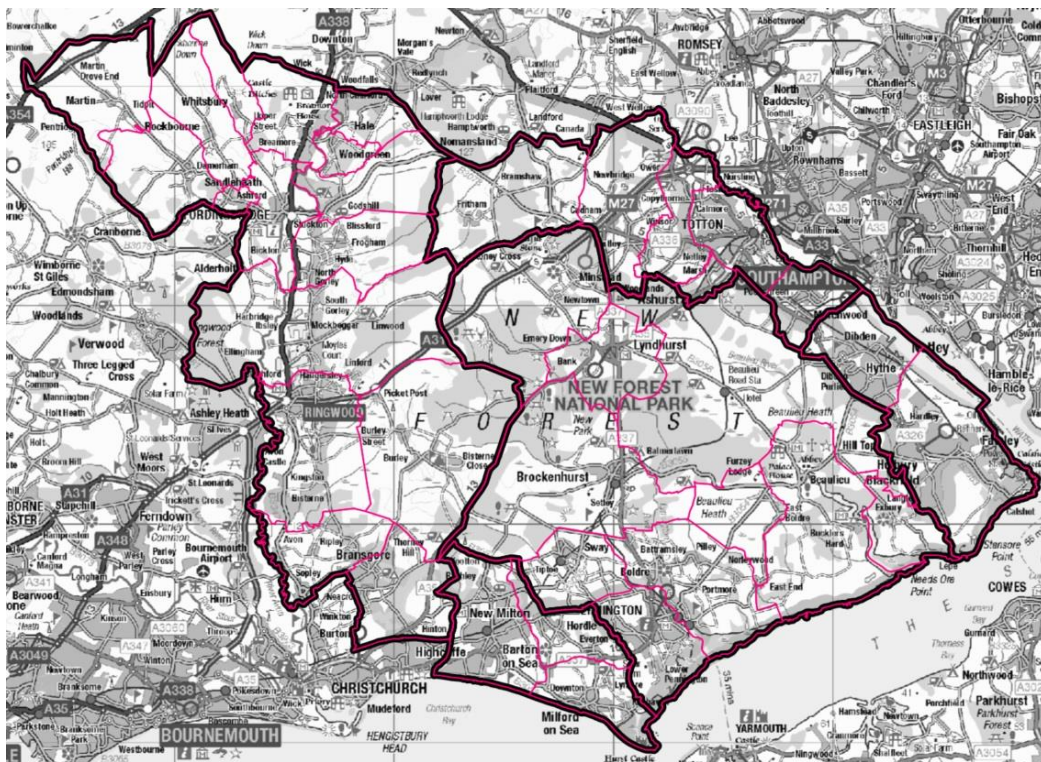
- 2.1 Following a meeting of the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) on 19 November 2019, the Council received notification from the LGBCE that it was “minded to” approve that 48 councillors should be elected to New Forest District Council from the May 2023 quadrennial elections. This is consistent with the Council’s own proposals for a Council Size of 48, agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 14 October 2019. At this stage, it was recognised that the Council Size could change by +/- 1 (47 or 49) to satisfy a viable warding pattern.
- 2.2 On 17 December 2019, the LGBCE launched a formal public consultation, seeking views on how wards could be drawn in the New Forest District. This consultation ends on 2 March 2020. To ensure that the Council’s views are adequately represented when the LGBCE meets to develop a draft warding pattern, the Council was invited to submit its own warding pattern scheme for the full District area.
- 2.3 The scope for a warding pattern includes the number of wards, the names of wards, where the boundaries between wards should lie and the number of councillors for each ward. In developing a warding pattern, the Council should have regard to the three statutory criteria applied by the LGBCE:-
 - Electoral Equality
 - Community Interests and Identities
 - Effective and Convenient Local Government

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 On receipt of the notification from the LGBCE that it intended to launch its initial consultation, the Electoral Review of the District Council Task and Finish Group met to agree an approach to developing warding patterns for submission by the consultation deadline of 2 March 2020.
- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group agreed to arrange the District into “zones”, representing five clearly identifiable areas within the District using the Town and Parish Councils as building blocks. Each zone achieves electoral equality, therefore allowing effective warding patterns to be developed within these zones that each achieve high levels of electoral equality and represent clear community identities, without the risk of having an impact on another area within the District. The five zones are as follows:-

- The West – comprising the parishes of Bransgore, Breamore, Burley, Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley, Fordingbridge, Godshill, Hale, Hyde, Martin, Ringwood, Rockbourne, Sandleheath, Sopley, Whitsbury and Woodgreen.
- New Milton, Milford & Hordle – comprising the parishes of Hordle, New Milton and Milford.
- Lymington & Pennington & Rural Central – comprising the parishes of Beaulieu, Boldre, Brockenhurst, Denny Lodge, East Boldre, Exbury & Lepe, Lymington & Pennington, Lyndhurst, Minstead and Sway.
- South Waterside – comprising the parishes of Fawley and Hythe and Dibden.
- Totton & North East – comprising the parishes of Ashurst & Colbury, Bramshaw, Copythorne, Marchwood, Netley Marsh and Totton and Eling.

3.3 The map below displays the “zone” areas, alongside each of the Town and Parish Council boundaries within them, used as the building blocks for the proposed warding pattern.



3.4 The Task and Finish Group arranged a series of meetings for each of the five zones, inviting all local ward councillors to contribute towards the development of a warding pattern proposal for their zone area. A number of proposals were submitted by local ward councillors throughout the series of meetings. Having considered these proposals in conjunction with the statutory criteria, LGBCE guidance and the overriding ambition of the Council to preserve Town and Parish Council areas where possible, the Task and Finish Group resolved to develop a final warding pattern proposal to support a Council Size of 49.

3.5 A 49 councillor scheme brings about the option to avoid additional split wards across a number of parishes. Furthermore, it resolves a number of known anomalies and corrects a number of proposed wards within +/- 10% of 3,012 electors per councillor. In submitting Appendix 1 to the LGBCE, the Council invites the LGBCE to revise the Council Size from 48, to 49.

4. THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The 49 councillor scheme, outlined in Appendix 1, consists of 25 wards (6 one councillor wards, 14 two councillor wards and 5 three councillor wards).
- 4.2 All proposed wards, by 2025, achieve an electoral ratio within +/- 10% of perfect electoral equality for the District.
- 4.3 For each of the proposed wards contained within the report, the electoral ratio for 2025 is outlined, alongside a brief explanatory narrative, including the local factors which support community interests and identities, and effective and convenient local government.
- 4.4 A summary of the scheme is outlined below.

Name of ward	Number of cllrs per ward	Electorate 2019	Variance 2019	Electorate 2025	Variance 2025
THE WEST					
Fordingbridge	2	6006	3%	6238	4%
Downlands & Forest North	1	2917	0%	3035	1%
Bransgore, Burley & Sopley	2	5304	-9%	5460	-9%
Ellingham & Ringwood North	2	6216	7%	6430	7%
Ringwood Town Central	2	6316	8%	6458	7%
NEW MILTON, MILFORD & HORDLE					
Milford & Hordle	3	8915	2%	9234	2%
Barton & Becton	3	8966	3%	9290	3%
Milton	2	5985	3%	6146	2%
Bashley & Fernhill	2	6460	11%	6648	10%
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON & RURAL CENTRAL					
Lyndhurst & Minstead	1	3128	7%	3212	7%
Brookenhurst	1	2854	-2%	2949	-2%
Sway	1	2916	0%	3045	1%
Buckland	1	2780	-5%	2821	-6%
Boldre & Forest South East	1	2702	-7%	2814	-7%
Lymington Town & Boldre South	2	5376	-8%	5568	-8%
Pennington	2	5267	-10%	5422	-10%
TOTTON & NORTH EAST					
Ashurst, Bramshaw, Copythorne & Netley Marsh	2	6263	8%	6496	8%
Totton North	3	8585	-2%	8916	-1%
Totton Central	2	5808	0%	6025	0%
Totton South	2	6312	8%	6550	9%
Eling & Marchwood	2	6332	9%	6543	9%
SOUTH WATERSIDE					
Dibden & Hythe	3	7845	-10%	8133	-10%
Butts Ash, Dibden Purlieu, Furzedown & Langdown	3	8515	-3%	8787	-3%
Hardley, Holbury & North Blackfield	2	5480	-6%	5670	-6%
Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot & Langley	2	5469	-6%	5701	-5%

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the LGBCE will publish their draft recommendations by the end of May 2020. A further consultation period will follow to allow interested parties to respond to these recommendations. The Task and Finish Group will meet shortly after the draft recommendations are published to develop a response.
- 5.2 The process will conclude with the publication of the LGBCE final recommendations in Autumn 2020, before the necessary parliamentary orders are laid and then made from late 2020 into 2021. The new electoral arrangements will be implemented from the May 2023 quadrennial district elections.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The LGBCE will publish a set of draft recommendations, regardless of the responses made by the deadline. Therefore, whilst the Council could choose not to submit a

proposed warding pattern, it would not be in the Council's interest, as the draft recommendations could be made without regard to the Council's views on an appropriate warding pattern.

- 6.2 A number of warding pattern options were considered by the Task and Finish Group, including options to support a Council Size of 48. These alternative options have been rejected as they are not effective in meeting the overall ambition of the Task and Finish Group to use the Town and Parish Councils as the building blocks for wards and do not satisfy the statutory criteria as effectively.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 A successful Electoral Review of the District Council will bring about more representative democracy in the New Forest, as electoral inequality would have been addressed as far as possible as part of the review. Currently, six wards have greater than +/- 10% of the average with one ward greater than +/- 20%. All wards within the proposed warding pattern at Appendix 1 have a ratio within +/- 10%.

11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 11.1 I would like to thank the members of the Task and Finish Group for all their hard work in bringing this matter forward, alongside all district councillors who engaged in the development of wards for their local areas. I would encourage all interested parties, including Town and Parish Councils, to submit their views to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of their consultation, ahead of the initial deadline of 2 March 2020.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Warding Patterns Proposal – Electoral Review

For further information contact:

Matt Wisdom
Democratic Services Manager
023 8028 5588
Matt.wisdom@nfdc.gov.uk

Rebecca Drummond
Service Manager - Elections and
Business Improvement
023 8028 5588
Rebecca.drummond@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

[Cabinet report – 5 June 2019](#)
[Cabinet report – 2 October 2019](#)
[NFDC webpage](#)
[LGBCE webpage](#)
Task and Finish Group documents