

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.
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.			

9.11. 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	