

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 6 June 2016)

1. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (MINUTE NO. 6)

The Council will be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has been undertaking a review of Hampshire County Council's electoral boundaries. The Committee has considered this matter on two previous occasions, firstly, on 13 July 2015, after which the Council submitted initial comments on the review, and secondly, on 8 January 2016, when, acting under power delegated by the Council, it agreed recommendations in response to the LGBCE's draft recommendations.

The LGBCE's final proposals were due to be published on 5 April 2016. However, the LGBCE opened a new phase of public consultation in regard to the county division boundaries for the New Forest and for Havant. The proposals for New Forest District are shown in Appendix 1. The Committee met on 6 June to consider these amended final proposals. The deadline for submission of the Council's views was 6 June 2016. All members of the Council and Hampshire County Councillors representing the District were invited to attend the meeting of the Committee.

Having considered the proposals in detail, the Committee decided to submit the following comments to the LGBCE:

The Council:

- (i) Welcomes the fact that the revised final recommendations provide for the Bransgore, Copythorne and Netley Marsh Parishes to be contained within single electoral divisions;
- (ii) Is disappointed that the revised final recommendations provide for the division of the Bashley ward of both New Forest District Council and New Milton Town Council across two divisions, but accepts this in the light of the remainder of the recommendations now proposed;
- (ii) Reiterates its recommendations for the renaming of the following Divisions as indicated:

LGBCE Proposal
Brockenhurst
Ringwood
Milford & Hordle

NFDC suggested alternative
Mid-Forest
West Forest
Milford, Hordle & Fernhill

- (iv) Requests the following further change of name:

LGBCE Proposal
Totton North

NFDC suggested alternative
Totton North & Netley Marsh

- (v) Withdraws its previous recommendation to change the name of the proposed Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division.

However, in not opposing the LGBCE's final proposals, the Committee noted that the LGBCE is required by law to have regard to the following when undertaking electoral reviews:

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

The Committee has expressed grave concern that the LGBCE's proposals do not meet the latter two statutory criteria but instead appear to have been made merely to ensure electoral equality. In the light of this, the Committee is concerned that an unelected body such as the LGBCE has the power to determine the makeup of electoral areas, taking little or no account of views expressed by elected representatives who have greater insight into the needs and identities of the their communities. The Committee therefore recommends that the Council should lobby local Members of Parliament with regard to the matter.

RECOMMENDED:

That the local Members of Parliament be requested to take up the issue of the undemocratic nature of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, its lack of accountability, its perceived reluctance to take account of the views of local democratic representatives in determining electoral boundaries; and its apparent inflexible adherence to electoral equality considerations at the expense of

- ***Community interests and identities with readily identifiable boundaries; and***
- ***Effective and convenient local government.***

**CLLR S J CLARKE
CHAIRMAN**