

## REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government in 2015 decided to reduce the number of members of Parliament from 650 to 600. In 2016 the Boundary Commission for England published and consulted on initial proposals for revised Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and, after taking responses into consideration, published further proposals at the beginning of 2017. Revised proposals have now been published by the Commission and comments invited.
- 1.2 The Cabinet is asked to consider the proposals that affect New Forest District. The existing and proposed boundaries are shown in Appendices 1 and 2.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission will make recommendations for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries in September 2018. The rules under which the Commission must operate require a reduction in the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 501 and require that the electorate in every constituency (apart from the Isle of Wight and two constituencies in Scotland) – falls within 5% of the “electoral quota” of 74,757. This means that every constituency, other than the three mentioned, must have an electorate that is no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507.
- 2.2 The Commission has approached its task, initially on a regional, and then a sub-regional basis. On that basis the South East Region of England has been allocated 83 constituencies, a reduction of one from the current 84. Hampshire (including the unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton) has been allocated 17 seats, a reduction of one from the current 18.
- 2.3 The Boundary Commission’s initial proposals, published at the beginning of 2017, were:  
**New Forest West:**  
Current composition with the inclusion of the Boldre and Sway District ward, resulting in an electorate of 71,289.  
**New Forest East:**  
Current composition, without Boldre & Sway, and including the Test Valley Borough wards of Blackwater and Dun Valley, resulting in an electorate of 72,750.
- 2.4 The District Council did not object to the initial proposals, recognising that the status quo across New Forest District could not be maintained.

### 3. CURRENT PROPOSALS

- 3.1 There were, however, representations opposing the proposals for New Forest East. Views were expressed that residents of the Dun Valley area (proposed for inclusion in New Forest East) had strong ties to Romsey, Andover, Salisbury or Winchester, rather than New Forest communities. While acknowledging that this is a finely balanced matter, the Commission has been persuaded by these arguments and now proposes that the New Forest East Constituency takes in the Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams Ward of Test Valley Borough Council, rather than Blackwater and Dun Valley. The revised proposals are shown in Appendix 2.

- 3.2 In making its recommendation, the Commission has recognised that residents of Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams might feel limited affinity with the rural areas of the New Forest East Constituency, but might have more similarities with the built-up area in and around Totton, which is in New Forest East constituency.

#### **4. DISTRICT COUNCIL'S VIEWS**

- 4.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the revised proposals for the New Forest East and West Constituencies and decide whether to make representations for schemes other than those now proposed by the Boundary Commission.
- 4.2 In doing so, the Cabinet will be aware, as it has been during all stages of the Parliamentary boundary review, that retaining two self-contained constituencies for New Forest District is not an option under the revised electoral equality calculations that apply. The current New Forest East Constituency, while containing a large rural, sparsely populated, areas on its west and north sides, also includes the more urban areas of Totton and the Waterside. It therefore does not appear unreasonable to include a further, small, "urban" area in the constituency.
- 4.3 In all the circumstances, it is suggested that no objection be raised to the Boundary Commission's revised proposals.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There will be additional costs of administering Parliamentary elections because of the proposed cross-boundary arrangements (with part of New Forest overlapping with Test Valley), but these costs would be met by the Government as part of the administration of the elections.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are none.

#### **7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS**

- 7.1 I am satisfied that a suitable solution has been found to achieve the necessary changes.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATION:**

- 8.1 That, as the current position of two self-contained Parliamentary Constituencies covering New Forest District cannot be maintained under the new rules, no objection be raised to the revised arrangements proposed by the Boundary Commission for the New Forest East and New Forest West Parliamentary Constituencies.

**Further information:**  
Rosemary Rutins  
Service Manager, Democratic Services &  
Member Support  
Tel: (023) 8028 5588  
e-mail: [rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:rosemary.rutins@nfdc.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:**  
Published documents