

Governance Committee
1 MARCH 2017

Present: Councillors: Toni Bradnum, Peter Burgess, Philip Circus,
David Coldwell, Leonard Crosbie, Matthew French, Christian Mitchell,
Michael Willett and Tricia Youtan

Also Present: Councillor Nigel Jupp

1 **CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Michael Willett be elected Chairman of the Committee for the current Council year.

2 **VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED

That Councillor David Coldwell be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the current Council year.

3 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee of its terms of reference, which had been approved by Council on 7th December 2016.

5 **ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HORSHAM: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (LGBCE)**

The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was currently undertaking an Electoral Review of the District to deliver electoral equality for voters in local elections.

In this respect, on 21st July 2016, the Council had agreed a submission to the LGBCE, proposing a Council size of 47 councillors from May 2019. On 27th September 2016 the LGBCE had advised the Council that it was commencing its consultation on proposals for a new pattern of electoral wards and that it was minded to recommend that 47 district councillors should be elected to Horsham District Council in future.

On 7th December 2016, the Council had approved a submission to the LGBCE on warding arrangements from May 2019 and in doing so agreed that the LGBCE be asked to approve a Council size of 48 councillors (an increase in one from that originally proposed).

The LGBCE had now opened its public consultation on its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Horsham District Council with a closing date of 3rd April 2017. The draft recommendations were based on this Council's proposal for 48 members, as electoral equality was improved under this number. However, the LGBCE had modified the ward boundaries for Broadbridge Heath, Denne, Forest, Southwater North and Shipley & Southwater South wards from those proposed by the Council to reduce electoral variances which were close to or above 10%.

The Committee discussed proposals for a Council response to the LGBCE's draft recommendations, acknowledging that the recommendations were largely based on this Council's submission but asking the LGBCE to reconsider its proposals in respect of the boundaries between Broadbridge Heath/Denne wards and Southwater North/Shipley & Southwater South wards.

It was noted that an Extraordinary Council meeting would need to be called to enable a response to be submitted within the consultation period.

RECOMMENDED

That the following be approved as this Council's response to the LGBCE consultation on its draft recommendations:

"The Council acknowledges and welcomes that the draft recommendations of the Local Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on the electoral arrangements for Horsham are largely based on this Council's submission. However, the Council has two main areas of concern where it requests the LGBCE to consider amending its proposals, as follows:

(a) Horsham Town and Broadbridge Heath

The Council considers that the suggested inclusion of the Highwood area in the Broadbridge Heath ward, whilst improving electoral equality, does not reflect community identity or provide for effective and convenient local government. This area is separated from the rest of the Broadbridge Heath ward by the A24 dual carriageway (which forms a distinct boundary to the Horsham town area on its western side) and is quite clearly within the town of Horsham. The residents in this area have no obvious connection with Broadbridge Heath other than the possible use of the out of town shopping area and leisure centre, in common with many other residents of Horsham town as a whole.

Broadbridge Heath is a distinct parish area with its own community identity and a growing population due to a number of new developments

including the development of 165 residential units on land north of Old Guildford Road which was not included in the original electorate projection and is currently being implemented.

The Council therefore requests that:

- the Highwood area to the east of the A24 is included in the Denne ward proposed by the LGBCE (including the area between Horn Brook and the railway line), giving this ward an electoral variance of +7%, and
- the Broadbridge Heath ward is retained on the existing parish boundary with a projected variance of -13% on the basis that this is a distinct area with its own community identity and the additional development not included in electorate projections is likely to reduce the variance below 10% by 2022.

(b) North-west Horsham

The reasons the Council proposed the boundary between the two Southwater wards (Southwater North and Shipley & Southwater South) were twofold:

- to ensure that the village centre (Lintot Square etc.) was contained within the ward covering the larger and more densely populated part of the village (Southwater North), and
- to allow for an increase in the electorate in the Shipley & Southwater South ward above that projected due to the development of approximately 600 residential units on land west of Worthing Road, Southwater which was not included in the original electorate projection and is currently under construction.

The Council accepts the LGBCE's amendment to include the Raylands Country Park campsite in Southwater North. However, the Council requests that the dividing line it proposed within Southwater itself, which included the area between Worthing Road, Pond Farm Gill and south of Cedar Drive and Nutham Lane in the Southwater North ward, be used to define the boundary between the two wards as it is considered that the additional development in the Shipley & Southwater South ward will increase the electorate sufficiently to improve electoral equality. It is also considered that, from a community identity perspective, the village centre (which includes the parish council offices, library and shopping centre) is better located in the ward that contains the larger proportion of the Southwater parish electorate."

REASON

To encourage the LGBCE as far as possible to adopt the warding arrangements that the Council believes will be right for the authority from May 2019 to provide electoral equality whilst reflecting the interests and identities of local communities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

6 **THE CONSTITUTION OF HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that, under the Constitution, he had power to make minor variations to the Constitution to remove inconsistency or ambiguity; to reflect a decision of the Council or Cabinet; or as a consequence of legislative change.

Details of three minor variations currently required to the Constitution were reported.

The Committee considered that the proposed variations fell within the Monitoring Officer's remit of 'minor variations to the Constitution to remove inconsistency or ambiguity'.

RESOLVED

That the proposed variations be noted.

REASON

To give Member oversight in respect of proposed variations to the Constitution and support the Monitoring Officer in maintaining the Council Constitution.

7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the indicative work programme for 2017.

8 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no matters of special urgency to be considered.

The meeting closed at 6.35 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN