

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date: 30 July 2015

Report of: Head of Democratic Services

Subject: Hampshire County Council Electoral Review – Consultation Response

SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is carrying out a review of Hampshire County Council electoral division boundaries to deliver electoral equality across the county. A ten week public consultation has commenced inviting proposals for a new pattern of electoral divisions for Hampshire.

Fareham Borough Council is invited to submit a consultation response to give a view on where the new County division patterns should be drawn. This will close on 3 August 2015 after which the LGBCE will publish its draft recommendations with final proposals being published in April 2016. It is intended that the new electoral arrangements will come into effect in time for the County Council elections in 2017.

The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee considered the report and draft response at its meeting on 7 July 2015 and recommended that Council approves the response on behalf of Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- (a) approves the report attached as Appendix A as the formal response from Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation on Hampshire County Council electoral boundaries; and
- (b) authorises the Chief Executive Officer to submit the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England within the consultation period.

INTRODUCTION

1. On 24 August 2014, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England advised Hampshire County Council that a review under Section 56(2) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 would be undertaken as it is considered significant electoral inequality exists. The aim is to seek to correct imbalances which occur where some county councillors represent many more, or many fewer, electors than their colleagues across the county.
2. The Commission is minded to recommend that 78 county councillors should be elected to Hampshire County Council in future. The LGBCE now invites proposals from Hampshire County Council. Interested parties and members of the public on a pattern of electoral divisions to accommodate those councillors.
3. The consultation period began on 26 May 2015 and members will recall that the Chairman announced the details at the meeting held on 2 June 2015. Details of the consultation can be found at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/hampshire-county-council> where there is information about how to get involved and the type of evidence the LGBCE is seeking in support of any division patterns. The consultation period will end on 3 August, after which the Commission will publish its draft recommendations in November 2015. A further period of consultation will then commence to seek views on the draft recommendations between November 2015 and January 2016 with final recommendations being published in April 2016. It is intended that the new electoral arrangements will come into effect in time for the County elections in 2017.
4. The Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee considered the report and draft response at its meeting on 7 July 2015 and recommended that Council approves the response on behalf of Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation.

THE CONSULTATION ISSUES

5. As mentioned above, the review is triggered when the Commission considers significant electoral inequality exists in the following areas:
 - a) 30% or more of divisions have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for that Authority; and/or
 - b) One (or more) division(s) has an electoral imbalance of more than 30% from the average; and
 - c) The imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.
6. Data was supplied to Hampshire County Council by each of the eleven district councils within the administrative area of the County Council. The figures show a current electorate of 1,020,276. Based on the present number of 78 members, this equates to an average electorate per member of 13,080. Electorate forecasts to 2021 indicate an overall projected increase in electorate to 1,077,968, increasing the average electorate per member to 13840. The figures for Fareham are shown in the table overleaf.

Division	2014	2021 Electorate forecast
Fareham Crofton	11,729	11,689
Fareham Portchester	14,491	14,150
Fareham Sarisbury	12,026	13,481
Fareham Titchfield	11,759	11,678
Fareham Town (2 member division)	27,946	28,718
Fareham Warsash	11,188	11,251
Total	89,139	90,967

A 10% variance in the average figure of 13080 requires the electorate in each division to be in the range of 11772-14388 electors. It is therefore clear that a number of amendments will be required to satisfy the criteria

7. In drawing up a pattern of electoral divisions, the Commission must balance its three statutory criteria, namely:
 - To deliver electoral equality where each county councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county.
 - That the pattern of divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
 - That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

The Commission will test proposals against the criteria before drawing up draft recommendations; accordingly, all proposals should demonstrate how they meet the three requirements. Decisions will be based on the strength of the evidence presented and not merely on assertion. For example, details of community interests such as location and use made of local facilities, services and local organisations demonstrating how a community manifests itself will carry greater weight than submissions that simply assert that an area has community identity.

The Commission will consider all submissions on their merit. A well-evidenced submission from an individual which addresses the three statutory criteria will be more persuasive than one which does not, even if the latter is from an elected individual or body.

8. As shown by the timetable detailed in paragraph 3 on this report, the electoral review process has two distinct parts. Part 1 is consideration of Council size, which is the number of councillors required for the effective conduct of the County Council corporately. Part 2 of the process is consideration of new electoral division boundaries, this occurs after the LCBCE publishes its initial conclusions on Council size.
9. Further details regarding the current electoral arrangements are available on the LGBCE website <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5188>
10. A suggested consultation response is attached as Appendix A. This was

considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee at its meeting held on 7 July and recommended that Council approved the document as Fareham Borough Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on Hampshire County Council electoral boundaries.

RISK ASSESSMENT

11. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

CONCLUSION

12. Members are invited to agree the report attached as Appendix A as the formal response from Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation on Hampshire County Council electoral boundaries: and to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to submit the response to the LGBCE within the consultation period.

Appendix A – Draft consultation response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Hampshire County Council electoral boundaries.

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

Details of the review are available at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/hampshire/hampshire-county-council>

Interactive maps of the current division boundaries across the county. There is a facility to draw boundaries and upload documents to the site.

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5188>

Electoral reviews, technical guidance www.lgbce.org.uk/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance

Practical guide for submissions www.lgbce.org.uk/documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/proposing-new-wards-guidance.pdf

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Elaine Wildig (Ext 4587).

APPENDIX A

Draft consultation response from Fareham Borough Council:

Fareham Borough Profile

Fareham Borough is a coastal area lying between the two cities of Portsmouth and Southampton on the south coast of Hampshire. It covers an area of approximately 30 square miles, being 8 miles long from east to west and has a population of approximately 110,000 living in 48,000 households consisting of 89139 electors. Whilst over half of the land area is countryside, the Borough is mainly urban in character consisting of a number of sizeable settlements all of which are located close to each other. Fareham is the largest town with a population of around 37,300. The Western Wards (Sarisbury, Locks Heath, Park Gate, Swanwick, Titchfield Common and Warsash), together are a similar size to Fareham (30,500 population), whilst Portchester in the east of Borough has a population of 17,600 people. Other key settlements include Whiteley, Titchfield and Stubbington & Hill Head.

There are currently seven County Councillors representing Fareham, five representing one division and two representing a joint division as shown below:

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Crofton	1	11,729	-10.3%	11,665	-15%
Fareham Portchester	1	14,491	+10.8%	14,117	+2%
Fareham Sarisbury	1	12,026	-8.1%	13,456	-2%
Fareham Titchfield	1	11,759	-10.1%	11,641	-15%
Fareham Town	2	27,946	+6.8%	30,883	+1%
Fareham Warsash	1	11,188	-14.5%	11,214	-19%
Total	7	89,139		92,976	

The existing pattern of divisions across the Borough serves the electorate and the distinct communities within the divisions effectively but it is recognised by Fareham Borough Council that the majority of the divisions fall outside of the + / - 10% variance threshold required by the statutory criteria of this review.

It is not proposed to suggest any name change to any of the divisions.

The proposed amendments to address the variances in each division are as follows:

Fareham Crofton

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Crofton	1	11,729	-10.3%	11,665	-15%

This division currently comprises Hill Head & Stubbington wards forming a single urban area with a range of services including a local centre, doctors, dentists, two primary schools, a secondary school and a community centre. Its boundaries are well defined by Solent Water to the south, Gosport divisions to the east, a strategic gap to the north and open fields to the west. These features create a natural

settlement boundary separating the division from Titchfield division to the west and Fareham Town to the north.

It is accepted that the figures fall outside of the + / - 10% variance threshold required by the statutory criteria of this review but it is considered that this settlement in terms of its geography is isolated and no changes should be made to the existing division boundaries.

RECOMMEND: No change

Fareham Portchester

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Portchester	1	14,491	+10.8%	14,117	+2%

Fareham Portchester division comprises Portchester East and Portchester West ward and forms part of the eastern boundary of the Borough. The main settlement of Portchester consists of modern residential and industrial development alongside the A27 road and the railway, both of which link Fareham and Portsmouth. This part of Portchester has a railway station, a public library and health centre and a large shopping centre. A market is held on Wednesday in the pedestrian area of the shopping precinct. From the centre of Portchester, Castle Street leads to the Grade 1 Listed Building, Portchester Castle located on the southern boundary of the division. Along the way there are many 18th century houses with much unspoilt character. It is considered that these areas are served by the central hub of the shopping area in West Street and the recently built Community Centre in Westlands Grove providing an important role in supplying local facilities and services to the community.

Moving west from Portchester shopping centre along the A27, the development is disassociated from the district centre as the land falls towards the viaduct and the slip road from the M27 motorway in the town centre of Fareham. It is considered that the electorate in this area are more likely to use the facilities available in Fareham town centre than to consider themselves part of the Portchester settlement. By moving part of the electorate from Portchester West 4 district to Fareham Town division, both divisions will achieve the Hampshire average in terms of electorate.

RECOMMEND: Transfer the western part of Portchester West 4 district to extend the eastern boundary of Fareham Town division.

Fareham Sarisbury

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Sarisbury	1	12,026	-8.1%	13,456	-2%

Fareham Sarisbury division currently comprises of Park Gate and Sarisbury wards. This includes the smaller village settlements of Swanwick, BurrIDGE and Sarisbury together with the more modern development of Whiteley. The division is constrained by the River Hamble to the west and the Borough boundary which separates

Fareham from Winchester and Eastleigh. As the electorate falls within the + / - 10% variance threshold required by the statutory criteria of this review, no change is considered to be necessary.

RECOMMEND: No Change

Fareham Titchfield

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Titchfield	1	11,759	-10.1%	11,641	-15%

Fareham Titchfield division currently comprises Titchfield and Titchfield Common wards. It is situated in the centre of the borough with the mainly urban area of the Titchfield Common to the west, the village settlement of Titchfield in the centre with large areas of open fields surrounding the village and the urban Peak Lane and Catisfield areas adjacent to the western edge of Fareham town of to the east.

Titchfield village has a local centre, doctors, dentists, a primary school and a community centre serving the local population.. It is separated from Titchfield Abbey by the A27 and there are conservation areas at Titchfield and Titchfield Abbey. The key factors shaping future development in the village include its important historic environment and its position in the Meon Valley separating the two main urban areas within Fareham.

As the village is restricted in housing development terms, the division includes areas which form part of both main urban areas, Fareham Town to the east and the Western Wards to the west. As the electorate is forecast to be significantly lower than the Hampshire average, it is considered that the urban area to the east which forms districts 2, 3 and 4 of Fareham West ward are included within Titchfield division and districts 3 and 4 of Titchfield Common ward are transferred to Fareham Warsash division to retain the identities of the communities.

Titchfield Common was formed as a ward at the conclusion of the last Boundary Commission review in 2001 as the number of properties had increased substantially in the Western Wards to merit a re-organisation of wards. In addition, the area has been defined in the Fareham Borough Council Local Plan as part of the Western Wards and the electorate are disassociated with the other areas in the division.

RECOMMEND:

1. Add polling districts FW2, FW3 and FW4 from Fareham Town division; and
2. Transfer polling districts TC3 and TC4 into Fareham Warsash division

Fareham Town

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Town	2	27,946	+6.8%	30,883	+1%

Fareham Town is a two member division which forms the main focus for facilities and services in the Borough and currently comprises of the following wards:

- Fareham East
- Fareham North
- Fareham North West
- Fareham South
- Fareham West

The division includes the main urban town centre which has good public transport links and the M27 motorway and A27 run east to west. The division also includes the rural area north of the M27 motorway adjacent to the boundary with Winchester City Council divisions and the proposed new development of Welborne will also be included in the division.

It is considered that the existing arrangement of a two member ward should continue as the stability will assist in supporting the existing communities within the division whilst developing Welborne, a major new community being planned for the north of Fareham which will include up to 6,000 homes, workplaces, schools, green space, shops and local community services. New roads and utilities infrastructure will also be required to support the new community. In the circumstances, two members will be required to adequately address all the issues which cut across the whole division.

It is recognised that the electorate for this division will be in excess of the 2021 Hampshire average. To achieve electoral equality, it is necessary to transfer polling districts from Fareham Town west into Titchfield division and add Portchester West 4 district into Fareham Town division for the reasons stated in previous paragraphs.

RECOMMEND:

1. Transfer polling districts FW2, FW3 and FW4 into Fareham Titchfield division
2. Add PW4 to Fareham Town division

Fareham Warsash

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate	2021 Variance
Fareham Warsash	1	11,188	-14.5%	11,214	-19%

This division covers the south western section of the borough and includes Warsash and the central part of Locks Heath as well as a large area of open country fronting the Solent. The division currently includes Locks Heath and Warsash ward. A district centre is located at Locks Heath with a local centre in Warsash which provide day to day services to a local catchment area. Locks Heath in particular, has a good range of shops and services including a library, community facilities and public transport. The recent opening of a Waitrose branch has assisted in increasing vitality and viability to the centre which is complemented by 3 hour free parking.

Whilst this area saw substantial growth during the last 20 years, the electorate is significantly below the 2021 Hampshire average. To achieve electoral equality, it is necessary to add the built up districts of Titchfield Common which traditionally form the area of the Borough grouped together as the Western Wards and are strategically linked with public transport which run through the Locks Heath hub.

RECOMMEND: Add polling districts TC3 and TC4 to Fareham Warsash division

Conclusion

Having regard to the proposals, the revised divisions would be as follows:

Division name	Members	2021 Electorate (Existing Forecast)	2021 Variance (Existing Forecast)	2021 Electorate (Proposed)	2021 Variance (Proposed)
Fareham Crofton	1	11,665	-15.8%	11,665	-15.8%
Fareham Portchester	1	14,117	2.0%	13,717	-0.9%
Fareham Sarisbury	1	13,456	-2.8%	13,456	-2.8%
Fareham Titchfield	1	11,641	-15.9%	13,105	-5.4%
Fareham Town	2	30,883	11.5%	27,364	-1.2%
Fareham Warsash	1	11,214	-19.0%	13,669	-1.3%
Total	7	92,976		92,976	

In support of the recommendations a map showing the electorate in the settlements using a dot for each address which clearly shows the demarcation of the distinct settlements within electoral divisions is attached:

Map of Fareham Borough showing electorate as settlements

