

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee**

**Date**                **7 July 2015**

**Report of:**        **Director of Finance and Resources**

**Subject:**         **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW**

#### **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.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee recommends a response to Council on behalf of Fareham Borough Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation on Hampshire County Council electoral boundaries.

## **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 purpose of this report is to alert the committee to the provisions of the consultation paper and to invite members to respond to this stage of the review.

## **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. A breakdown of the figures in the table above is attached as Appendix A to this report together with a map indicating the position of the polling districts in the Borough.

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> and all members will be

invited to visit the portal at an early stage and to give their views to this committee to contribute to the submission of a response to the next meeting of Council. Any proposals will be tabled at the meeting.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

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

### **CONCLUSION**

11. Members are invited to consider the information in this report and available on the Commission's website in order to contribute to the Council's response to the consultation. Comments received by councillors will be tabled at the meeting for consideration.

## **Appendix A – Breakdown of County divisions into wards and districts and map**

### **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](http://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](http://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).