

REPORT OF THE  
**Cabinet**  
PART I

**131. FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL –  
COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY  
COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND**

1. On 29 August 2014 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ('LGBCE') advised the County Council that it had determined that a Further Electoral Review (FER) of the County Council's Electoral Arrangements should take place. An FER is a review by the LGBCE carried out under Section 56 (2) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'), and is triggered where the Commission consider 'significant' electoral inequality exists. 'Significant' electoral inequality, sufficient to trigger a review, occurs where:

- 30% (or more) of Divisions have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for that Authority; and/or
- one (or more) Division(s) has an electoral imbalance of more than 30% from the average; and
- the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

2. Analysis by the LGBCE using data from the February 2014 Electoral Register showed that 25 (33%) of Divisions within the County Council had an electoral variance of greater than 10%, and in consequence a FER was required by the LGBCE.

**Last Electoral Review of the County Council**

3. The last Review of the County Council's Electoral Arrangements was undertaken in the period 2002 – 2004 ('the 2002-2004 Review'). The outcome of the 2002-2004 Review was that there should be an increase of four Members to 78 Members. The boundaries of all electoral divisions changed to achieve better electoral equality, coterminosity, to better reflect community identity, and also because district wards had changed as a result of district electoral reviews.

**Electoral Review Process**

4. An FER has two distinct parts. Part 1 is consideration of 'Council Size'. Council Size is the number of Councillors required for the effective conduct of the County Council's business corporately, and by individual Members. In determination of Council Size, the LGBCE will consider proposals of the County Council in this regard, and any other submissions it receives. This is the main purpose of this report.

5. Part 2 of the process is consideration of new electoral division boundaries. This occurs after the LGBCE publishes its initial conclusions on Council Size. A further report on this phase will be prepared.

6. A timetable for the Review is attached at Annex 1 to this report. A briefing for Members on the electoral review process was held on Wednesday 25 March 2015 as part of the established Members Briefing Programme and a further briefing on Part 2 of the process will be held.

### **Part 1 – Council Size**

7. As indicated at Paragraph 3.1 above, Part 1 of FER is consideration of “Council Size”. LGBCE guidance indicates that in exercise of its judgement as to Council Size it will consider three key areas. These are:

- (a) The County Council’s governance arrangements, and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities;
- (b) The County Council’s scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making, and the County Council’s responsibilities to outside bodies; and
- (c) The representational role of County Councillors in the local community, and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the County Council on local partner organisations.

8. A copy of a draft submission to the LGBCE addressing these three key areas is attached as at Annex 2 to this report. A copy of the draft submission was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 30 March 2015. The draft has also been considered at a meeting of the Group Leaders.

### **Current Electorate and Electorate Forecasts**

9. Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act requires that when making its recommendations at the conclusion of the FER, the LGBCE should take into account any changes to the number and distribution of Local Government electors likely to take place within the five years following the end of the Review. Since the review is due to be concluded in 2016, this means that electoral forecasts are required to 2021. Electoral forecasts are required as part of the Part 1 electoral review process, as electoral forecasts are also used by the LGBCE in its determination of its conclusions on Council Size.

10. Current electoral and forecast figures to 2021 are contained at Appendix 9(a) to the draft Council Size Report attached at Annex 2. Electoral forecasts are broken down per district area as, following consultation with the County Council on electoral division boundaries after initial determination of Council Size, the LGBCE will allocate a specific number of County Councillors to each district before drawing up a pattern of divisions. This is because electoral divisions cannot cross the external boundaries of any district. Consideration of electoral division patterns will take place at Part 2 of the review.

11. Details of the electorate forecasting methodology is contained at Appendix 9(b) of the draft Council Size Report contained at Annex 2. In considering electoral forecasts the LGBCE places weight on both the methodology used and consistency of application. It is therefore important that the same methodology is used consistently throughout the Council’s area in producing the electoral forecasts required for the review. 2021 electorate estimates are based on the 2014 based Small Area Population Forecast (‘SAPF’). The SAPF model is a proven forecasting model developed within

the County Council's Research and Intelligence Team, and is consistently used throughout the County Council's area for various service planning roles, including school place planning.

12. At the time of publication of the Cabinet report further work was being done on the impact of major planned development in Hampshire for the report to full Council. In consequence delegated authority was given by Cabinet to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to amend the draft submission to take account of work done between the meetings of Cabinet and full Council. It has now been ascertained that the Welborne site in Fareham had not been taken account of in the electorate forecast figures. This has resulted in a projected increase of 2,165 in the forecast figure for the Fareham Town Division, and consequential minor adjustment to other figures for Fareham. In addition it has been ascertained that the figures for Hart required further adjustment. The reason for this is that a potential allocation in North East Hook had been incorrectly placed in Fleet and Yateley East, Blackwater and Ancells Divisions. The allocation has now been correctly placed in the Odiham Division. The impact is an increase in the forecast electorate figure for Odiham by 995 and a reduction in the forecast electorate for Fleet and Yateley East, Blackwater and Ancells Divisions by 641 and 315 respectively. There are minor secondary effects (less than 10) as a result of migration patterns in the other Hart Divisions.

13. Figures for 2014 are the December 2014 registered electorate data supplied by each of the eleven District Councils within the administrative area of the County Council. **The LGBCE have made it clear that the figures presented to them in respect of current electorate figures must come from the Electoral Registers of December 2014.** If any individual Member has concerns about the use of the December 2014 data as the baseline, such concerns would have to be raised direct with the LGBCE. 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 1,079,999. Based on the current number of 78 Members this equates to an increased average electorate per Member of 13,846, indicating a cumulative projected increase of 766 (5.9%) of electors per Member on the 2014 figures. Whilst the exact increase per district varies, an increase in numbers of electorate is forecast in all eleven District Council areas.

14. To help Members to have a clear understanding of the methodology used for the electorate forecasting exercise, a Workshop has been convened on Thursday 23 April 2015 at 10.00am to which all Members are invited. The Workshop will be facilitated by the County Council's Research and Intelligence team. If any change to the registered electorate forecast figures arises between the date of full Council and the deadline for submission of the Council Size Report requiring an update to the Council Size Report delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, is sought to enable this to be done.

## **Part 2 – Electoral Division Patterns**

15. As indicated at Paragraph 10 of this report, the LGBCE will not consider electoral division boundaries until such time as it has made its initial conclusions on Council Size. The reason for this, as per LGBCE guidance, is that it is difficult to formulate proposals for division patterns until the optimum number of electors per Councillor needed to achieve electoral equality is known. A further report will be

prepared for County Council in due course with more detail in this regard, following the outcome of Part 1 of the FER process.

### **Members' Working Group**

16. As indicated above, consideration of electoral division patterns takes place after determination of Council Size. At this stage the County Council has the opportunity to submit proposals to the LGBCE on electoral division patterns based on its 'minded to' decision on Council Size.

17. It is proposed that a Members' Working Group is convened to support the Group Leaders Working Group. The role of the Members' Working Group would be to make recommendations to the Group Leaders Working Group on the proposed pattern of electoral division as part of the present FER process. The group would have representation from all Political Groups represented on the County Council. It is suggested that this comprise 12 Members with one Member having the responsibility for chairing the Working Group and 11 Members having a local co-ordinating role for each of the District/Borough Council areas. Membership would be drawn from the Conservative Group (7 Members), Liberal Democrat Group (2 Members), UKIP Group (1 Member), Labour Group (1 Member), and Independent Group (1 Member). Proposed terms of reference for the Members' Working Group are attached at Annex 3 to this Report.

18. In accordance with the timetable set by the LGBCE, proposals from the County Council on electoral division patterns are required to be submitted to the LGBCE by 3 August 2015. This means that the Members' Working Group would need to conduct its work and make its recommendations to the Group Leaders Working Group by 17 June so that a report can be prepared for consideration by the County Council at its meeting on 16 July 2015 in order to meet the LGBCE's submission deadline.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the County Council:

- (a) Approve the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council Size (attached at Annex 2 to this Report), indicating the argument and evidence to remain with 78 Members, notwithstanding the forecast indicates an increase in the average number of registered electors by 766 per Member.
- (b) Authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to amend the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (attached at Annex 2 to this Report) to take account of any change to registered electorate forecast figures as a result of any further information arising between the date of full Council and the deadline for submission of the Council Size Report.
- (c) Approve the proposal that a Members' Working Group be convened as suggested at Paragraph 15 of this Report in order to make recommendations to the Group Leaders Working Group in respect of the County Council's pattern of electoral divisions, together with the Terms of Reference for the Members' Working Group, as set out at Annex 3 to this Report.