

13. Conclusions on Proposed Electoral Division Patterns

- 13.1 The County Council's submission on proposed Electoral Division Patterns is based on the three statutory criteria of: electoral equality, community identity, and effective and convenient local government, as referred to in Paragraph 1.5 of this submission. In making its submission the County Council has worked within the Commission's "minded to" recommendation of 78 Members.
- 13.2 In making its submission the County Council has aimed to achieve electoral equality as far as possible, but taking into account local interest and communities, geographical boundaries, and the need to ensure that the pattern of electoral divisions proposed works in terms of size and topography of geographical area, both rural and urban, effectiveness of representation, and the requirement to work within the parameters of existing District Council boundaries.
- 13.3 67 proposed electoral divisions are within a plus/minus 10% variance of registered voters based on 2021 electoral forecast figures¹. Of the remaining nine divisions the reasons for the variance, supported by evidence taking account of all three statutory criteria, are explained in the submission. The County Council is not proposing any change to the number of Councillors in any District Council area.
- 13.4 A number of name changes are proposed in respect of existing electoral divisions and proposed new electoral divisions, where it is considered that a new name better reflects communities within the proposed divisions. Proposed name changes are detailed within individual electoral division proposals. Overall the proposal is to change 12 of the current division names becoming 13 if the split of the existing two Member division of Bedhampton and Leigh Park into two single Member divisions is accepted.
- 13.5 In drawing up its proposals the County Council has sought as far as possible to make County Council divisions coterminous with District Council wards. However with 11 districts within the overall area of the County Council, and the statutory requirement not to split District Council boundaries, this has not always been possible to achieve. Some district wards have been split in order to achieve an acceptable level of electoral equality. In such cases preserving the natural contours of the local community has been the guiding principle. In some cases it has been possible to 'reunite' previously split District Council wards. Overall based on a proposed total number of 76

¹ Measured to nearest whole percentage point. Winchester Downlands (-10.2%) and Fleet (+10.1%) have been rounded to -10% and +10% respectively and are included in the 67 figure.

electoral divisions, 35 divisions (46%) consist of whole District Council wards (or existing split District Council wards), and 41 divisions (54%) incorporate one or more split District Council wards.

- 13.6 Currently the County Council has two ‘doughnut’ divisions – Alton Rural and Romsey Extra. In its proposal Alton Rural remains a doughnut division. The renamed Romsey Rural is however no longer a doughnut division. Increased electoral equality has also been achieved. There are no proposals for detached electoral divisions.
- 13.7 In order to achieve better electoral equality the proposal includes three split polling districts affecting five electoral divisions; one in Fareham affecting two electoral divisions, and two in Hart affecting three electoral divisions (both Options). The proposal also involves a total of 18 split parishes, six of which are new. Of the 13 parishes split by the current arrangements, eight are unchanged, four remain split but in different ways, and one has been reunited under the new proposals for East Hampshire.
- 13.8 Currently there are three two-member electoral divisions: Leesland & Town in Gosport, Fareham Town in Fareham, and Bedhampton & Leigh Park in Havant. It is proposed that the existing two member divisions of Leesland & Town and Fareham Town remain as both work well, but that the existing two member division in Bedhampton & Leigh Park be split into two single-member electoral divisions for reasons explained in the report.
- 13.9 The County Council is very mindful that efficiency of cost is important, particularly at a time when Councils are facing unprecedented pressure on finance. The County Council has based its proposal on Electoral Division Patterns on the Commission’s “minded to” recommendation that the County Council should remain at 78 Members, and accordingly recommends the proposals as set out in this submission to the Commission.