

Ms Sandy Hopkins
Chief Executive's Office
East Hampshire District Council
Penns Place
Petersfield
Hampshire GU31 4EX

6 February 2018

Dear Ms Hopkins,

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EAST HAMPSHIRE: FURTHER LIMITED CONSULTATION IN ALTON, HORNDEAN, AND ROWLANDS CASTLE

Following our consultation on the draft recommendations for East Hampshire, I am writing to inform you of the Commission's decision to hold a period of further limited consultation prior to the publication of the final recommendations. This period of consultation relates only to our proposals in Alton, Horndean and Rowlands Castle. The Commission is not seeking submissions about any other part of the district.

This period of further consultation is, in part, required because we did not receive district-wide schemes during our first period of consultation. This resulted in us formulating our own draft recommendations without the input of community identity evidence. It is regrettable that we are extending the review but consider that these alternative warding patterns may better reflect the statutory criteria. We welcome your input at this stage.

Alton

Under the draft recommendations, the Commission proposed four wards for Alton – two single-councillor wards (Alton Ashdell and Alton Holybourne), a two-councillor Alton Eastbrooke ward, and a three-councillor Alton Westbrooke ward. A number of submissions that we received opposed these wards.

Two alternative patterns of wards were submitted for Alton. East Hampshire District Council (the Council) proposed five single-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward. However, this proposal did not provide for good electoral equality across the town; the Council's proposed Alton Wooteys ward would have a projected variance of -16% by 2023. We also considered that the two-councillor Alton Ashdell & Holybourne ward would not be likely to reflect community identities as it connects two areas of Alton that are separated by a large industrial estate, with poor road links between them. Accordingly, we were not persuaded to adopt the Council's alternative proposal.

However, the Commission recognises that our draft recommendations do not have local support and were formed in the absence of information about community identities. We considered that the submission from Alton Liberal Democrats, which provides for a pattern of seven single-councillor wards, and which would provide for good electoral equality by 2023, should form our

further draft recommendations and be consulted on. We consider that the boundaries are strong and may be more likely to reflect the statutory criteria than our original draft recommendations. Given the scale of change, we did not consider that these boundaries should be adopted straight into our final recommendations and so we are undertaking a period of further limited consultation on them. The boundaries are shown in detail on the maps available on our website (<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/hampshire/east-hampshire>).

Horndean and Rowlands Castle

As part of the draft recommendations, the Commission proposed three two-councillor wards for this area – a Rowlands Castle ward, including the parish of Rowlands Castle and the area of Horndean parish east of the A3(M), a Horndean Kings ward, and a Horndean Catherington ward. A significant number of submissions were received in response to our draft recommendations here. Whilst residents supported the recommendation to include the entirety of the parish of Rowlands Castle in one ward, objections were received to the proposal to use the A3(M) as a ward boundary, splitting the Blendworth area off from the rest of Horndean. Whilst no specific alternative boundaries were proposed by the majority of the respondents, the Commission acknowledges that the draft recommendations may be improved.

The Meon Valley Liberal Democrats submitted an alternative warding pattern for the Horndean area, dividing the parish of Horndean into single-councillor wards. However, its proposed boundaries in the south of the parish were not strong, and they created a Horndean Lovedean ward that had no internal access – to travel through the ward it would be necessary to leave East Hampshire district altogether. Amending the boundary to avoid this would have significant knock-on effects on the other wards in the area, and no compelling evidence was provided to recommend this warding here. Horndean Parish Council also submitted an alternative warding pattern, but the proposals resulted in three of the proposed five Horndean wards having variances greater than 10% from the average for the district, including a ward with a variance of 34%, which we do not consider is justified.

East Hampshire District Council submitted an alternative warding pattern for the Horndean area comprising a pattern of six single-councillor wards. The wards proposed by the District Council generally used clear and identifiable boundaries and were supported by the information provided in the other submissions received about the Horndean area.

The Commission are undertaking a period of further limited consultation across Horndean in light of the fact that the draft recommendations were not locally generated and, we consider, are not likely to reflect community identities:

Horndean Catherington, Horndean Downs, and Horndean Murray

The further draft recommendations are based on the Council's Horndean Catherington, Horndean Downs, and Horndean Murray wards, with a minor alteration to include the entirety of the housing around Lith Lane and Down Road in the Horndean Downs ward. We consider that, subject to this alteration, these three single-councillor wards may be more likely to accurately reflect the Commission's statutory criteria, and accordingly we are undertaking a period of further limited consultation on them.

Horndean Kings, Blendworth & Rowlands Castle

The further draft recommendations combine the Council's proposed Horndean Kings, Horndean Hazleton & Blendworth, and Rowlands Castle wards into a three-councillor Horndean Kings, Blendworth & Rowlands Castle ward with a variance of 7%. We consider that combining these wards reflects the views expressed that the A3 (M) does not divide the communities within Horndean. We have combined the wards and not adopted the three single-councillor wards that the Council proposed for two main reasons. Firstly, because the Council's proposed Horndean Kings ward would not have internal access links; it would be necessary for electors in the Beech Way and Mapleton Avenue area to pass out of the ward in order to access the areas of Horndean Kings to the west. Secondly, we do not consider we have yet received sufficient evidence of community identity to justify a Rowlands Castle ward with 15% more electors than the average for East Hampshire.

Next steps

We welcome further views and evidence in relation to our further draft recommendations. In particular we welcome evidence that demonstrates that an alternative warding pattern would better reflect the statutory criteria. We particularly welcome further views in relation to a single-councillor Rowlands Castle ward.

Our further draft recommendations for both Alton and Horndean can be seen on the Commission's website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/hampshire/east-hampshire>.

This period of further limited consultation commences today, **6 February 2018**, and closes on **5 March 2018**. During this period, the Commission welcomes comments and supporting evidence on its further draft recommendations for the areas outlined above. In light of the representations received we may change our recommendations when we publish our final recommendations. The Commission is not seeking submissions about any other parts of the district.

The Commission would like to hear whether people support its proposed changes, and the reasons for their views. We therefore encourage those who have a view on the further draft proposals to write to us, whether they agree with the proposals or not.

Representations must be submitted to the Commission by **5 March 2018**. All representations received during the consultation period will be taken into account and the Commission will then consider the evidence received prior to the publication of the final recommendations.

Representations should be made in writing to reviews@lgbce.org.uk or:

Review Officer (East Hampshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
London SW1P 4QP

Any respondents who submit comments during this period of the review, and who do not want any part of the response or name made public, must state this clearly in the response. Any such

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 14th Floor, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Tel: 0330 500 1525; Fax: 0330 500 1526; reviews@lgbce.org.uk; www.lgbce.org.uk

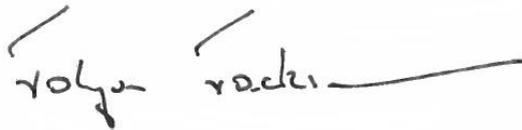
request should explain why confidentiality is necessary, but all information in response may be subject to publication or disclosure as required by law (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000).

Following the conclusion of this further limited consultation, the Commission will consider any further evidence received and prepare its final recommendations for East Hampshire as a whole.

The Commission's final recommendations for East Hampshire will now be published on **7 April 2018**.

If you have any queries, please contact reviews@lgbce.org.uk or 0330 500 1525.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jolyon Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jolyon Jackson CBE
Chief Executive
reviews@lgbce.org.uk
0330 500 1525