

# COUNCIL

15 October 2015

## FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW – COUNCIL SIZE

### Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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#### Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- (1) That approval be given to this draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on future Council size of membership; and
  - (2) That the Council recommend to the Boundary Commission a future reduced Council size of 39 Members, given the calculations and considerations as set out in Appendix 2.
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#### Summary

The report seeks to advise Council as to the process and timetable associated with the Further Electoral Review (FER) of the electoral arrangements of this Council, shortly to be undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The first task for Council in this process is to authorise a submission to the LGBCE on the size of the Council's membership to come into effect in 2018.

#### Statutory Powers

Section 56 (2), Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

#### Introduction

1. On 5 September 2014, the LGBCE advised this Council that it had determined that a FER of the Council's Electoral Arrangements should take place. A FER is a review by the LGBCE, carried out under the 2009 Act cited above. Such a review is triggered where the LGBCE consider that 'significant' electoral inequality exists. Four of the 19 wards (21%) have an electoral variance of greater than 10%. The outlier ward is Hedge End Grange Park, which has 30% more electors than the average.
2. The last review of the Council's electoral arrangements took effect in the May 2002 elections.

3. The LGBCE gave a presentation and briefing to Members, immediately prior to the last Council meeting in July, on the process and timescales involved.
4. Whilst this Council's FER won't formally commence until 17 November 2015, the Council needs to indicate its preferred future size of membership prior to this start date.

### **Further Electoral Review Process**

5. A FER has two distinct parts. The first, to be actioned now, is consideration by the Council of its future size. This refers to the number of elected Members required for the effective conduct of the Council's business corporately, and by individual Members. In determining size, the LGBCE will consider not only this Council's proposals but also any other submissions it receives. This is the main purpose of this report.
6. Part 2 of the process is consideration of new polling districts, and, in turn, new ward boundaries. This occurs after the LGBCE publishes its initial conclusions on Council size. A further report on this phase will be produced in due course.
7. A timetable for the FER is attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

### **Part 1 – Council size**

8. LGBCE guidance indicates that in exercise of its judgement as to Council size, it will consider three key areas:
  - The Council's governance arrangements, and how it takes decisions across the range of its responsibilities;
  - The Council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision-making, and the Council's responsibilities to outside bodies; and
  - The representational role of Borough Councillors in the local community, and how they engage with residents, conduct casework and represent the Council on partner organisations.

### **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 FER. Since the review is due to be concluded in the autumn of 2016, this means that electoral forecasts are required to the latter part of 2021 as well. Electoral forecasts are required as part of the Part 1 FER process, as electoral forecasts are also used by the LGBCE in its determination of Council size.
10. Current electoral and forecast figures to the end of 2021 are contained in Appendix 2.

11. Details of the electorate forecasting methodology is also contained in Appendix 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.
12. This Council has the benefit of its FER following shortly behind the County Council's, and thus much of the process and criteria adopted by the County Council has been accepted as accurate by the LGBCE. The County Council devised its own 2021 electoral estimates utilising the 2014 Small Area Population Forecast (SAPF). The SAPF model utilises the following data sources:
  - 2011 Census / known dwelling stock
  - Number of dwellings demolished
  - Births and deaths numbers / Fertility and Mortality rates / Child health data
  - Migration rates
  - New housing supply figures including type, phasing etc
  - Population forecasts by single year of age and gender
13. The SAPF model is a proven forecasting model developed by the County Council and is highly regarded.
14. The County Council, of course, had the massive task of pulling this information together into SAPF from all the districts and boroughs in the County. Therefore officers from this Council have worked with County officers to update those relating to this Borough (as our FER effectively runs on a few months, to the end of the 2021 house-building season) to ensure consistency in forecast numbers given to the LGBCE / justify our Council size recommendation.
15. The Planning Policy team have, though, revised the initial figures given to us by the County Council, so as to seek to more accurately factor in this Council's knowledge and awareness of large developments into the relevant polling district alongside the County's predictions of wider demographic change.

### **Warding and electoral arrangement considerations for Part 1**

16. If the intention is that the Council continues to elect on the "thirds system" (ie a third of the seats are up for election each year in rotation, with a fourth year 'off' for the County elections), then the LGBCE will be minded to insist that the overall number of seats on the Council is divisible by three so that each ward would have an election each year that a Borough Council election takes place.

The current membership of 44 seats does not allow for this, and thus this needs to be given initial consideration now.

17. All-out elections would take place in May 2018, with the “thirds system” coming back into operation over subsequent elections.

## **Part 2 – Detailed Warding Patterns**

18. The LGBCE will not consider ward boundary matters until such time as it has made its initial conclusions on Council size. The reason for this, as set out in the LGBCE guidance, is that it is difficult to formulate proposals for warding patterns and arrangements until the optimum number of electors per Member needed to achieve electoral equality is known. A further report will be prepared for the Administration Committee’s consideration in due course, following the outcome of Part 1 of the FER process. Prior to this, though, LAC teams will be asked to look at the more detailed polling district numbers and potential boundaries so that a more comprehensive set of considerations can be drawn up at that stage.

## **Financial Implications**

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, other than officer time taken to work on the review.

## **Risk Assessment**

20. It is a requirement in law (the 2009 Act cited above) that the Council responds to the LGBCE, otherwise it will have no input into the FER process.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

21. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report as the decision does not relate to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. However, ensuring electoral equality is not only a legislative requirement but makes good business sense ie that Members have a roughly comparable number of electors within each of their wards.

## **Conclusion**

22. This report seeks approval of the draft submission to the LGBCE on future Council size of membership.

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Appendices Attached:

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### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information: None

## Appendix 1: Further Electoral Review (FER) Timetable

| <b>Stage</b>  | <b>Date(s)</b>                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Preliminary period / initial discussions between EBC and LGBCE</b> | <b>May – October 2015</b>            |
| <b>Council size recommendation from EBC to LGBCE</b>                  | <b>17 November 2015</b>              |
| <b>Warding patterns consultation starts</b>                           | <b>24 November – 1 February 2016</b> |
| <b>LGBCE tour of the Borough</b>                                      | <b>March 2016</b>                    |
| <b>Draft recommendations from LGBCE</b>                               | <b>19 April 2016</b>                 |
| <b>Consultation on draft recommendations</b>                          | <b>10 May – 4 July 2016</b>          |
| <b>Further LGBCE tour</b>   | <b>August 2016</b>                   |
| <b>Final recommendations considered by LGBCE</b>                      | <b>16 August 2016</b>                |
| <b>Final recommendations published</b>                                | <b>6 September 2016</b>              |
| <b>Community Governance Review*</b>                                   | <b>End of 2016 / 2017*</b>           |
| <b>Implementation</b>   | <b>May 2018 (all-out) elections</b>  |

\* EBC will likely need to conduct its own community governance review after the conclusion of the FER, in order to ensure that parish boundaries tie in with the new Borough polling districts and warding arrangements.

## Appendix 2

The Council has successfully operated a Local Area Committee (LAC) system since 1996, taking decisions locally wherever possible and with devolved budgets. The LAC system is well-respected, reflecting natural communities and settlements. When Members and Officers met with the Boundary Commission for England earlier in the year, it was agreed with them that this would remain the underpinning factor in our calculations.

The current total electorate at September 2015 is 98,133 (so a current average member:elector ratio of: 1:2230)

The forecasted total electorate at end of 2021, using the SAPF method (see paragraph 12) is 106,177 (see end of report for break down by individual polling districts).

Looking at some potential future options, given the anticipated 2021 electorate per LAC area, the following calculations can be made:

|               | 2021 electorate forecast | %    | If 39 Cllrs | If 40 Cllrs | If 41 Cllrs | If 42 Cllrs | If 43 Cllrs | If 44 Cllrs | If 45 Cllrs | <b>Rounded at 39 Cllrs</b> |
|---------------|--------------------------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| BHH           | 15939                    | 15.0 | 5.9         | 6           | 6.2         | 6.3         | 6.5         | 6.6         | 6.8         | <b>6</b>                   |
| BIFOHH        | 17555                    | 16.5 | 6.4         | 6.6         | 6.8         | 6.9         | 7.1         | 7.3         | 7.4         | <b>6</b>                   |
| CFH           | 17389                    | 16.4 | 6.4         | 6.6         | 6.7         | 6.9         | 7.0         | 7.2         | 7.4         | <b>6</b>                   |
| ELAC          | 23644                    | 22.3 | 8.7         | 8.9         | 9.1         | 9.4         | 9.6         | 9.8         | 10.0        | <b>9</b>                   |
| HEWEB         | 31650                    | 29.8 | 11.6        | 11.9        | 12.2        | 12.5        | 12.8        | 13.1        | 13.4        | <b>12</b>                  |
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>106177</b>            |      |             |             |             |             |             |             |             | <b>39</b>                  |

The table above shows that 39 is the only number that, when rounded to whole numbers, gives LACs with a number divisible by three (a requirement of the LGBCE, see paragraph 15 above).

Moving DL (Velmore) from ELAC to CFH, which is a logical consequence of the creation of Chandler's Ford Parish Council, does not give a model that fits with the Boundary Commission guidance for three Member wards:

|     | 2021 electorate forecast | %    | If 39 Cllrs | If 40 Cllrs | If 41 Cllrs | If 42 Cllrs | If 43 Cllrs | If 44 Cllrs | If 45 Cllrs |
|-----|--------------------------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| BHH | 15939                    | 15.0 | 5.9         | 6           | 6.2         | 6.3         | 6.5         | 6.6         | 6.8         |

|               |               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| BIFOHH        | 17555         | 16.5 | 6.4  | 6.6  | 6.8  | 6.9  | 7.1  | 7.3  | 7.4  |
| CFH           | 19891         | 18.7 | 7.3  | 7.5  | 7.7  | 7.9  | 8.1  | 8.2  | 8.4  |
| ELAC          | 21142         | 19.9 | 7.8  | 8.0  | 8.2  | 8.4  | 8.6  | 8.8  | 9.0  |
| HEWEB         | 31650         | 29.8 | 11.6 | 11.9 | 12.2 | 12.5 | 12.8 | 13.1 | 13.4 |
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>106177</b> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Of course, it can be noted that the member:elector ratio is significantly higher on the 39 Member model since the last boundary review in 2002 when the electorate was 89,031 (thus the member:elector ratio then was 1:2023 and would be 1:2722 in 2021 – an increase of 35% over the 19 years).

A comparison of other authorities' current member:elector ratios (who also elect on thirds) shows that there is a good degree of variation in this respect, for example:

Basingstoke – 1:2185

Hart – 1:2142

Havant – 1:2463

Rushmoor – 1:1705

Winchester – 1:1597

Given, though, the established Leader & Cabinet model in place, the devolvement of significant responsibilities to LACs, and the focused scrutiny conducted through both Audit & Resources Committee and Policy and Performance Scrutiny Panel, the proposed membership is considered to be manageable and sustainable.



## Detailed breakdown of current & forecasted electorate figures

| PD | Area                          | Ward                    | 2015 Electorate | PD 2021 Electorate | Predicted % increase or decrease (rounded) |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| AA | Bishopstoke North West No. 1  | Bishopstoke West        | 989             | 1525               | + 54                                       |
| AB | Bishopstoke Central No. 1     | Bishopstoke West        | 980             | 988                | + 0.8                                      |
| AC | Bishopstoke North West No. 2  | Bishopstoke West        | 1081            | 1090               | + 0.8                                      |
| AD | Bishopstoke Central No. 2     | Bishopstoke West        | 1270            | 1280               | + 0.8                                      |
| AE | Bishopstoke East No. 1        | Bishopstoke East        | 2519            | 2506               | - 0.5                                      |
| AF | Bishopstoke East No. 2        | Bishopstoke East        | 905             | 900                | - 0.6                                      |
| AG | Bishopstoke East No. 3        | Bishopstoke East        | 977             | 972                | - 0.5                                      |
| AH | Fair Oak & Horton Heath No. 1 | Fair Oak & Horton Heath | 3115            | 3840               | + 23                                       |
| AI | Fair Oak & Horton Heath No. 2 | Fair Oak & Horton Heath | 1970            | 2301               | + 17                                       |
| AJ | Fair Oak & Horton Heath No. 3 | Fair Oak & Horton Heath | 1802            | 2153               | + 19                                       |
| BA | Bursledon (Bursledon) No. 1   | Bursledon & Old Netley  | 3432            | 3896               | + 14                                       |
| BB | Bursledon (Pilands) No. 2     | Bursledon & Old Netley  | 1269            | 1440               | + 13                                       |
| BC | Bursledon (Old Netley) No. 3  | Bursledon & Old Netley  | 628             | 713                | + 14                                       |
| BD | Bursledon (Kanes Hill) No. 4  | Bursledon & Old Netley  | 574             | 652                | + 14                                       |

|    |                            |                                   |      |      |       |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| BE | Hamble-le-Rice             | Hamble-Le-Rice and Butlocks Heath | 3674 | 3726 | + 1   |
| BF | Butlocks Heath             | Hamble-Le-Rice and Butlocks Heath | 840  | 1032 | + 23  |
| BG | Ingleside                  | Netley Abbey                      | 1098 | 1228 | + 12  |
| BH | Netley Abbey               | Netley Abbey                      | 3197 | 3252 | + 2   |
| CA | Chandler's Ford East No. 1 | Chandler's Ford East              | 780  | 786  | + 1   |
| CB | Chandler's Ford East No. 2 | Chandler's Ford East              | 1149 | 1158 | + 1   |
| CC | Chandler's Ford East No. 3 | Chandler's Ford East              | 1861 | 1875 | + 1   |
| CD | Chandler's Ford West No. 1 | Chandler's Ford West              | 1821 | 1785 | - 2   |
| CE | Chandler's Ford West No. 2 | Chandler's Ford West              | 1057 | 1036 | - 2   |
| CF | Chandler's Ford West No. 3 | Chandler's Ford West              | 1927 | 1889 | - 2   |
| CG | Hiltingbury East No. 1     | Hiltingbury East                  | 941  | 940  | - 0.1 |
| CH | Hiltingbury East No. 2     | Hiltingbury East                  | 1368 | 1367 | - 0.1 |
| CI | Hiltingbury East No. 3     | Hiltingbury East                  | 1796 | 1791 | - 0.3 |
| CJ | Hiltingbury West No. 1     | Hiltingbury West                  | 1463 | 1662 | + 14  |
| CK | Hiltingbury West No. 2     | Hiltingbury West                  | 889  | 993  | + 12  |
| CL | Hiltingbury West No. 3     | Hiltingbury West                  | 1887 | 2107 | + 12  |
| DA | Eastleigh Central No. 1    | Eastleigh Central                 | 1065 | 1631 | + 53  |

|    |                         |                     |      |      |       |
|----|-------------------------|---------------------|------|------|-------|
| DB | Eastleigh Central No. 2 | Eastleigh Central   | 1273 | 1415 | + 11  |
| DC | Eastleigh Central No. 3 | Eastleigh Central   | 2770 | 3062 | + 11  |
| DD | Eastleigh Central No. 4 | Eastleigh Central   | 1352 | 1438 | + 6   |
| DE | Eastleigh Central No. 5 | Eastleigh Central   | 1026 | 1053 | + 3   |
| DF | Eastleigh Central No. 6 | Eastleigh Central   | 733  | 752  | + 3   |
| DG | Eastleigh North No. 1   | Eastleigh North     | 2247 | 2261 | + 1   |
| DH | Eastleigh North No. 2   | Eastleigh North     | 1390 | 1512 | + 9   |
| DI | Eastleigh North No. 3   | Eastleigh North     | 2626 | 2774 | + 6   |
| DJ | Eastleigh South No. 1   | Eastleigh South     | 2142 | 2341 | + 9   |
| DK | Eastleigh South No. 2   | Eastleigh South     | 1460 | 1469 | + 0.6 |
| DL | Eastleigh South No. 3   | Eastleigh South     | 1980 | 2502 | + 26  |
| DM | Eastleigh South No. 4   | Eastleigh South     | 1390 | 1434 | + 3   |
| HA | Hedge End St. Johns     | Hedge End St. Johns | 1957 | 2013 | + 3   |
| HB | Hedge End St. Helens    | Hedge End St. Johns | 2621 | 2626 | + 0.2 |
| HC | Hedge End Freegrounds   | Hedge End St. Johns | 1781 | 1791 | + 0.6 |
| HD | Hedge End Wildern       | Hedge End Wildern   | 2440 | 2454 | + 0.6 |
| HE | Hedge End Shamlehurst   | Hedge End Wildern   | 1760 | 1770 | + 0.6 |

|    |                            |                       |              |               |            |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| HF | Hedge End Grange Park East | Hedge End Grange Park | 2500         | 2711          | + 9        |
| HG | Hedge End Grange Park West | Hedge End Grange Park | 3305         | 3338          | + 1        |
| HH | West End North No. 1       | West End North        | 1004         | 1140          | + 14       |
| HI | West End North No. 2       | West End North        | 1525         | 1732          | + 14       |
| HJ | West End North No. 3       | West End North        | 1699         | 1929          | + 14       |
| HK | West End South No. 1       | West End South        | 2228         | 2238          | + 0.4      |
| HL | West End South No. 2       | West End South        | 1474         | 1493          | + 1        |
| HM | West End South No. 3       | West End South        | 1002         | 1021          | + 2        |
| HN | Botley No. 1               | Botley                | 1768         | 2057          | + 16       |
| HO | Botley No. 2               | Botley                | 1805         | 1822          | + 1        |
| HP | Botley No. 3               | Botley                | 531          | 1515          | + 185      |
|    | <b>TOTAL</b>               |                       | <b>98113</b> | <b>106177</b> | <b>+ 8</b> |

#### Comment

The breakdown of figures above shows real variation in projected electorate increases and decreases between polling districts, ranging from – 0.6% to 185%. How this translates to new / revised ward boundaries is the key aspect of Part 2 of the FER process, which will involve LAC teams prior to consideration by Administration Committee.