

Fuller, Heather

From: Alan Sheepy [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 June 2014 11:58
To: [REDACTED] Owen, David
Subject: RE: Electoral review of Warwickshire

Darren/David

At the meeting of the Audit Committee yesterday the following comments were agreed:

- that the change in the numbers of County Councillors from 62 to 57 was modest;
- that, wherever possible, the new proposals should result in single-member Electoral Divisions; and
- the proposed Electoral Divisions covering the Stratford-on-Avon District should be coterminous with the District Council Ward boundaries

Alan Sheepy
Democratic Services Officer
Legal and Democratic Services

[REDACTED]

Subject: **Electoral Review of Warwickshire County Council**

Lead Officer: **Darren Whitney**
Contact on 01789 260210

Lead Member: **Councillor P Seccombe**

Summary

The purpose of the report is to respond to the consultation set by the Local Boundary Commission for England regarding stage 1 consultation of the electoral review of Warwickshire County Council.

Recommendation

That the report is sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to be formally noted by them.

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is undertaking a review of the Council size and the boundaries of the electoral divisions in Warwickshire.
 - 1.2 The last review of this sort for Warwickshire was completed in 2004 and the new divisions commenced in 2005.
 - 1.3 The LGBCE is undertaking the review as it considers there is a significant imbalance in the electoral equality between the current electoral divisions hence the aim of the review is to secure better electoral equality and convenient government whilst reflecting community identities.
 - 1.4 Any changes would be implemented in time for the next County elections in May 2017 based on electorate forecasts for 2020 (which are legislation led).
 - 1.5 There is no set formula for determining the overall size of a Council and the LGBCE is minded to recommend that 57 (currently 62) County Councillors should be elected to Warwickshire County Council in the future.
 - 1.6 Stratford-on-Avon District area would lose one County Councillor under the proposal.
 - 1.7 **Current Consultation**
 - 1.7.1 The LGBCE has opened up consultation on the figure of 57 Councillors and invited proposals for a new pattern of electoral divisions. This consultation closes on 23 June 2014 and LGBCE have agreed to receive
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comments from this Committee on 24 June. The LGBCE will have already received a copy of this report.

- 1.7.2 Due to the timetable of the review coinciding with Local and European Parliamentary elections all members were invited to a drop in session on Tuesday 3 June 2014 or alternatively email comments to the Democratic Services Manager by close of play on 3 June regarding any comments or proposals they might wish to make. No representations were received.
- 1.7.3 It should be noted that Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) did not make any official response to the consultation at this stage during the last review. It was decided to make comment on at draft recommendation stage.

1.8 *Considerations for the LGBCE*

- 1.8.1 SDC has just completed a review with the LGBCE on Council numbers and wards which will come into effect in May 2015. In addition a Community Governance Review on the Parishes within the District which was completed in July 2013 would also commence in 2015.
- 1.8.2 As the changes from the review of the county electoral divisions will not commence until 2017 the reviewers should be aware that the above changes were not taken into account when using the initial electoral data and that these should be considered when drawing up any draft recommendations.

2 Options available to Audit Committee

- 2.1 To make no formal comment – a risk remains in the LGBCE not taking into account the changes happening in May 2015 to the District and Parishes.
- 2.2 To formally remind the LGBCE of the changes as a result of the Boundary and Community Governance Reviews. This is the preferred option.
- 2.3 To respond to the LGBCE with any further comments the Committee may wish to make.

3 Evidence Base

- 3.1 Evidence regarding the Warwickshire review can be found at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/west-midlands/warwickshire/warwickshire-county-council>
- 3.2 The review concerning Stratford-on-Avon DC can be found at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/west-midlands/warwickshire/stratford-on-avon-fer>
- 3.3 The Community Governance Review for parishes in the SDC area is at <https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s20909/Audit%20-%20Community%20Governance%20Review.pdf>

4 Members' Comments

- 4.1 No comments received.
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5 Implications of the proposal

5.1 *Legal/Human Rights Implications*

5.1.1 Included within the report.

5.2 *Financial*

5.2.1 None at the current time for SDC.

5.3 *Environmental*

5.3.1 Geographical size of county divisions will have environmental impact to councillors.

5.4 *Corporate Strategy*

5.4.1 Electoral equality comes under Aim 3 – Improving Access to Services.

5.5 *Analysis of the effects on Equality*

5.5.1 Should improve electoral equality.

6 Risk Assessment

6.1 Contained with options.

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report whilst not making any formal recommendations of the pattern of electoral divisions does point out considerations the LGBCE need to be making when formulating the draft recommendations.

Paul Lankester
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background papers:

None.
