

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the ELECTIONS PANEL held at Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon on Wednesday, 25 June 2003

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates - Chairman
Councillors D Harty, M F Newman,
K Reynolds and J Taylor

APOLOGIES: Councillors P J Downes and T D Sanderson

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R L Clarke and J A P Eddy

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27th May 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Panel considered a summary of recommendations arising from the County Council's Periodic Electoral Review Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been produced following a period of consultation with interested parties.

The Panel were advised of revised proposals for Huntingdonshire which included two options to be presented by the County Council to the Boundary Committee - a preferred option with no two-Member divisions and a reserve option with four two-Member divisions. In considering the two options, Members expressed concern with the County's preferred option as it had failed to address concerns expressed previously by the Panel in relation to the number of Councillors in Huntingdonshire, the lack of coterminosity with District Ward boundaries and the lack of a community of interest in several of the divisions proposed.

While asserting that neither of the two options was particularly appropriate for Huntingdonshire, the Panel expressed a preference for the reserve option on the basis that 12 out of the 18 divisions proposed were coterminous with District ward boundaries and there was an improved community of interest among several of the divisions proposed.

Members were acquainted with the views of Councillors J A P Eddy and R L Clarke who had been invited to contribute to the debate and addressed the Panel on their concerns about the options proposed by the County Council.

Having regard to the alternative scheme based upon 19 Members in multi-Member divisions, the Panel suggested amendments to several of the divisions proposed. (A summary of the scheme has been appended in the Minute Book). The Panel suggested that the comments raised and the alternative scheme previously conveyed to the County Council, suitably amended to reflect smaller variations in

the Councillor/elector ratio in the Huntingdon East/Godmanchester and the Buckden/Gransden and the Offords Divisions and to deal with the St Ives District Wards as a two Member Division should be submitted to the Boundary Committee as representing the District Council's formal comments on the Review. Whereupon, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Executive Director of Central Services be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel, to determine an amended alternative submission to the Boundary Committee based upon 19 County Councillors in multi-Member Divisions in Huntingdonshire; and
- (b) that the District Council's submission to the Boundary Committee be copied to the County Council, District Councillors and Town and Parish Councils in the District.

Chairman