

**PARISH ELECTORAL REVIEW – DRAFT PROPOSALS**  
(Report by the Head of Administration)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Elections Panel held on 22nd August 2006, Members were acquainted with details of the background to the parish electoral review of the District and the issues that may be considered as part of the process.
- 1.2 The Panel considered a schedule of responses from interested parties to the preliminary consultation and the purpose of this report is to address any outstanding issues prior to preparation of draft proposals for public consultation.

**2. COUNCIL SIZE**

- 2.1 The Council's approved scale of parish council representation, outlined below, has been in existence since 1974, despite significant changes to the size of parishes over the years. Some parishes often have difficulty filling the number of vacancies and as such the Panel are invited to consider whether any changes are necessary to the scale. Members should also take into consideration the issue of Quality Council Status which states that, as part of the test, parish councils must show that all council seats are filled at the beginning of the term.

<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Members</u>
Up to 250	5 Members
251 to 500	7 Members
501 to 1000	9 Members
1001 to 1500	11 Members
1501 to 2000	13 Members
2001 to 3000	15 Members
3001 to 5000	17 Members
5001 to 10,000	19 Members
over 10,000	21 Members

- 2.2 If changes are proposed to the scale, Members are invited to consider whether the council size of existing parishes needs any amendments.

**3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Following consideration of the initial responses, Members formulated proposed changes to parish boundaries as detailed at Annex A. The alteration of parish boundaries is likely to have electorate implications for some parishes, by way of an increase or decrease in the electorate. As a result, Members are invited to consider whether the

size of the affected councils needs reviewing and whether some would benefit from further warding. Annex B that was submitted to the previous meeting listing the electorate and number of councillors is attached again for ease of reference.

### **Houghton and Wyton**

- 3.2 As a result of the proposed amendment to extend the eastern boundary of Houghton and Wyton to include the Houghton Grange development, the 2011 electorate would increase by approximately 160 electors to 1470 with 13 councillors and a ratio of 114 electors per councillor.

### ***Wyton-on-the-Hill***

- 3.3 With the proposed establishment of a new parish of Wyton-on-the-Hill, comprising the Airfield Ward of the parish of Houghton and Wyton and an electorate of 970 in 2011, the Panel are invited to consider the following –
- ◆ Currently Houghton and Wyton parish ward of Houghton and Wyton has 9 councillors and the Airfield parish ward has 4 councillors. The Panel are invited to consider whether the number of councillors would need reviewing in the light of the proposed changes outlined above.

### **Huntingdon**

- 3.4 Currently Huntingdon Town Council has 16 councillors and an electorate of 14,328, with a ratio of 896 electors per councillor. In 2011, the electorate is likely to increase to 15,290 if no changes to the boundaries are made. The proposed changes outlined below are likely to significantly increase the electorate of Huntingdon by approximately 1100 electors. As such the Panel are invited to consider whether the council size of Huntingdon Town Council needs reviewing.

### ***The Stukeleys (Hinchingsbrooke Ward) transfer to Huntingdon***

- 3.5 With regard to the proposed boundary changes around the Huntingdon area involving the incorporation of Hinchingsbrooke Parish Ward, currently part of The Stukeleys, into Huntingdon West, the electorate would increase by 458. In 2011 the combined electorate of Huntingdon West would be 4870.

### ***Northbridge Development***

- 3.6 It is estimated that 400 properties would be completed as part of the Northbridge development on land north west of Spittals Way and Ermine Street by 2011. The proposed amendment to the parish boundaries would increase the Huntingdon West electorate by approximately 712. There are an additional 650 properties scheduled for completion thereafter. So combined with the amendment outlined above, the electorate of Huntingdon West in 2011 would be 5582 and likely to increase further. The number of councillors combined would

be 7, representing a ratio of 798 electors per Councillor. The Panel are invited to consider the following –

- ◆ whether the council size is appropriate. Currently Huntingdon West has 4 councillors, The Stukeleys (Hinchingsbrooke Ward) has 3 councillors and the remaining Stukeleys Ward the The Stukeleys parish has 13 councillors; and
- ◆ the formation of further wards of the town, if appropriate.

### ***The Stukeleys***

- 3.7 As a result of the proposed amendments to the Huntingdon area outlined above, the Panel are invited to consider how to address the remaining part of The Stukeleys which encompasses 13 councillors and has a current electorate of 774. The Panel are invited to consider whether the number of councillors is appropriate.

### ***Little Paxton***

- 3.8 With regard to the proposed boundary changes around Little Paxton, the electorate would increase by approximately 250 to approximately 2960 in 2011 with a council size of 15 and a ratio of 198 electors per councillor. The Panel are invited to consider whether the number of councillors is appropriate.

### ***St. Ives***

- 3.9 Currently St Ives Town Council has 16 councillors and an electorate of 12,231, with a ratio of 765 electors per councillor. In 2011, the electorate is likely to increase to 12,660 if no changes to the boundaries are made. The proposed changes outlined below are likely to increase the electorate of St Ives by approximately 400 electors. As such the Panel are invited to consider whether the council size of St Ives Town Council needs reviewing.

### ***Fenstanton***

- 3.10 The proposed amendment to move properties from Fenstanton to St. Ives South would increase the electorate by approximately 400. Fenstanton is currently represented by 15 councillors and with this proposed amendment the electorate in 2011, would be 2090, with a ratio of 140 electors per councillor. The St. Ives South electorate in 2011 would be increased to 5380 with 6 councillors and a ratio of 897 electors per councillor. The Panel are invited to consider the following –

- ◆ a review of the number of councillors of Fenstanton and St Ives; and
- ◆ the formation of new parish wards, if appropriate.

## **St Neots**

- 3.11 In the light of the large projected growth in housing development in and around St. Neots, the Panel are invited to consider further the submissions received from interested parties in respect of the area. In particular, the areas to focus upon are St. Neots Eynesbury, St. Neots Priory Park, Eynesbury Hardwicke and St. Neots Rural.
- 3.12 Currently St Neots Town Council has 18 councillors and an electorate of 20,135, with a ratio of 1119 electors per councillor. In 2011, the electorate is likely to increase to 21,370 if no changes to the boundaries are made. The proposed changes outlined below are likely to significantly increase the electorate of St Neots by approximately 3000 electors. As such the Panel are invited to consider whether the council size of St Neots Town Council needs reviewing.

### ***Eynesbury Hardwicke (Town) transfer to St Neots***

- 3.13 Following the proposed amendment to the southern boundary of St. Neots to include the town ward of Eynesbury Hardwicke parish in the Eynesbury ward of St Neots, the electorate of Eynesbury would increase by 1362, with a combined current electorate of 7333 and 8220 in mid-2011. If the numbers of councillors are combined a total of 12 would be achieved, with a ratio of 685 electors per councillor in 2011. The Panel are invited to consider the following –
- ◆ a review of the number of councillors;
  - ◆ the formation of new parish wards; and
  - ◆ if so, should St. Neots Eynesbury be further warded to run along the Cromwell Road? The current electorate of this area would be 3433. What should the new ward be named and how many councillors should the new ward have? Currently St. Neots Eynesbury has 6 councillors and Eynesbury Hardwicke (Town) has 6 councillors.

### ***St. Neots Rural transfer to St Neots***

- 3.14 With regard to the proposed amendment to the eastern boundary of St. Neots Eynesbury and St. Neots Priory Park, the electorate would increase by approximately 1,940 electors following full completion of the development east of the railway line. By 2011 it is anticipated that an estimated 400 units would have been completed, representing approximately 700 electors with an additional 700 units due for completion thereafter. Currently the development lies in the parish of St. Neots Rural which has an electorate of 52 with 5 parish councillors. By 2011 it is anticipated that this electorate would increase to 760, with a ratio of 152 electors per councillor. The Panel are invited to consider the following –
- ◆ should the development remain as part of St. Neots Rural?
  - ◆ should the east of the railway line development be incorporated into a town ward;

- ◆ if added to St. Neots Priory Park, the electorate in 2011 would be 5508 with 4 councillors and a ratio of 1377 electors per councillor. Should the number of councillors be increased?
- ◆ should the development become a new ward of the town? If so, what should it be named and how many councillors should the new ward have?

***Remaining parts of Eynesbury Hardwicke and St. Neots Rural***

3.15 As a result of the proposed amendments to the St. Neots area outlined above, the Panel are invited to consider how to address the remaining parts of Eynesbury Hardwicke and St. Neots Rural which may include –

- ◆ combining the remaining parts of Eynesbury Hardwicke and St. Neots Rural with Abbotsley to form a new parish, thereby adding approximately 100 electors to Abbotsley to increase their electorate to 432; and
- ◆ determining the number of councillors to be elected for the new parish. Currently Eynesbury Hardwicke (Spinney) has 3 councillors, St Neots Rural has 5 councillors and Abbotsey has 7 councillors.

**The Offords**

3.16 The proposed combining of the parishes of Offord Cluny and Offord D'Arcy would produce a combined electorate of 1050 in 2011. The number of councillors combined would be 14, representing a ratio of 75 electors per councillor. The Panel are invited to consider the following -

- ◆ a review of the number of councillors; and
- ◆ the name of the new parish.

3.17 At the last meeting, the Panel were presented with details of the five year forecast of electorate which had been prepared by the County Council's Research Unit. In addition to the proposed changes outlined above, Members are also invited to review any parishes with large changes in electorate size as a result of projected dwellings completions. These include Godmanchester, whose electorate would increase to 5090 in 2011, with a ratio of 340 electors per councillor.

**4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 Having regard to the proposed changes to parishes formulated at the last meeting, Members of the Panel are invited to consider the outstanding issues outlined above prior to the preparation of draft proposals for public consultation.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Local Government and Rating Act 1997

Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews – The Electoral Commission July 2002.

Guidance on the establishment and review of parish electoral arrangements and related alterations to district ward and county division boundaries - The Electoral Commission August 2006.

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