
Elections Panel

Report of the meeting held on 20th November 2007

Matter for Decision

1. PARISH ELECTORAL REVIEW – FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Item No. 4 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 18th April 2007, the Panel has considered further information arising from the parish electoral review of the District, including comments received as part of the consultation exercise.

The Panel has taken into consideration the representations received from interested parties in the formulation of final recommendations for changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements and as a result a number of proposals for amalgamation of the smaller parishes have not been put forward as final proposals.

The Panel has approved a new scale of Parish Council representation which has been developed to replace the existing scale that has been in existence since 1974, in the light of significant changes to the size of parishes over the years. This has resulted in a review of the number of Councillors of some of the parishes.

A separate report on the subject appears on the Agenda for the Council to consider. The Panel therefore

RECOMMEND

- (a) that the new scale of parish council representation as outlined in the report be approved;**
- (b) that the final recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements as detailed at Annex A for the Council to implement these changes by Order at the next scheduled parish elections be approved;**
- (c) that the proposal to invite the parishes of Buckden and Diddington to group under a common parish council be supported; and**
- (d) that the final recommendations for changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements as detailed at Annex B be approved for submission to the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission.**

Matter for Information

2. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 requires the Council to undertake a review of the polling district and all of the polling places in its area on a regular four yearly cycle. The first such review must be completed by 31st December 2007. The aim of the review is to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that the polling places are accessible to all electors.

The Panel has noted the results of the consultation exercise that was undertaken and specific consultation with all District Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, Returning Officers, political agents/parties and local disability groups. Arising from the representations made, the Panel has approved the changes to the polling district boundaries and polling places. The Panel has also noted that a review of all the polling places will be undertaken at least every four years, but in the intervening period, authority has been delegated to the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Panel to determine any changes necessary to polling places, within a ward, in the light of any housing development.

3. ELECTIONS – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Panel has been advised of new powers introduced under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 that permits the Electoral Commission to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services and collect information on costs. A consultation paper has been issued on indicators for the conduct of elections and the Panel has been acquainted with a summary of the data, together with the new and proposed measures to be collected.

Having endorsed the general comments on the Commission's consultation paper, specifically the difficulties associated with capturing data for the measures, the Panel has authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman and Councillor P J Downes, to respond to the Electoral Commission on the detailed measures.

D Harty
Chairman