

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the ELECTIONS PANEL held on Tuesday, 20 November 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor D Harty – Chairman.
Councillors P J Downes, J E Garner,
A N Gilbert, M F Newman and K Reynolds.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor G S E Thorpe.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 16th May 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

7. PARISH ELECTORAL REVIEW - FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 06/17, the Panel was acquainted with a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the present position in relation to the parish electoral review of the District, including the consultation exercise and comments received during that process.

Further consideration was given to the proposed new scale of parish council representation which had been developed to replace the existing scale that had been in existence since 1974. The Panel concurred with their previous discussions on the subject and concluded that the current scale was out of date and did not reflect the growth in the size of parishes for the year.

The Panel considered the representations received from interested parties in the formulation of the final recommendations for changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements and Members agreed that as a result of representations received from smaller parishes against some of the proposed amalgamations, such proposals affecting these parishes should not be put forward as final proposals.

In considering representations made in respect of Huntingdon, the Panel undertook to re-visit the electoral arrangements in the towns following the emergence of further detailed Regulations on community governance reviews under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Whereupon, the Panel

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to –

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

8. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the outcome of the recent review of polling districts and polling places as required under Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 which came into force on 1st January 2007.

The Panel was informed of the requirement to undertake a review of the polling district and all of the polling places in its area on a regular four-yearly cycle and noted that the first such review had to be completed by 31st December 2007.

Members were advised 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

RESOLVED

- (a) that the outcome of the review and consultation exercise be noted;
- (b) that the changes to polling district boundaries and polling places as detailed in the report now submitted be approved; and
- (c) that the Returning Officer be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel, to determine any changes necessary to polling places, within a ward, in the light of any housing development prior to the next scheduled review in four years.

9. ELECTIONS - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Panel was acquainted with a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing new

powers introduced under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 permitting the Electoral Commission to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services and collect information on costs.

Members were advised of details of a consultation paper that had been issued on indicators for the conduct of elections, together with a summary of the data and the new and proposed measures to be collected.

Having noted the comments relating to the difficulties associated with capturing data for the measures, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the general comments on the Electoral Commission's consultation paper be endorsed; and
- (b) that the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Councillor P J Downes, to respond to the detailed measures outlined in the Electoral Commission's consultation paper.

Chairman