
Elections Panel

Report of the meeting held on 27th August 2008

Matters for Information

1. ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has been acquainted with recent legislative changes that enable the Council to alter its electoral cycle. Since 1974 the Council has undertaken elections for a third of its Members each year followed by a fallow year when no District elections are held. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has made it possible to move to whole council elections and, should the need arise, to revert to elections by thirds. A report by the Head of Administration containing further details of this change, the procedure involved, the implications for town and parish councils, the financial implications and other consequential considerations is attached as an Appendix hereto.

Before coming to a view on whether the Council should change its electoral cycle, the Panel has requested that a range of further information is collected and that District Council Members are consulted on what would be suitable electoral arrangements for the Council. Should the Council wish to move to whole Council elections it will need to pass a resolution to that effect by the end of 2010.

2. REVIEW OF PARISH ARRANGEMENTS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has received an update on progress of implementation of recommendations made following the conclusion of the review of parish arrangements in Huntingdonshire. Following approval by the Council at its meeting on 20th February 2008 of a series of recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements, the necessary Orders have been made, which bring the changes into effect. Copies of the Orders have been sent to the councils affected and to various other bodies prescribed in legislation.

At the time the review was completed the Council did not have the powers under the legislation then in force to implement a significant number of its recommendations. Instead, these had to be submitted to the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to consider and act upon. This situation changed when the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force and the Council now would be responsible for implementing many of these recommendations. However, under the associated transitional arrangements, on this occasion, the Department of Communities and

Local Government will undertake the process of implementing the recommendations. Once this process has been completed the Council will be responsible for taking resulting consequential actions such as making Orders to specify the number of councillors a new parish council has. There are expected to be a small number of other minor boundary changes that the Electoral Commission will be requested to make. The Panel has asked that those parishes affected by these recommendations are informed of progress.

D Harty
Chairman