

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the SPECIAL meeting of the COUNCIL held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 16 December 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor P L E Bucknell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, T D Alban, K M Baker, D Brown, G J Bull, R C Carter, S Cawley, B S Chapman, Mrs S Conboy, S J Criswell, Mrs A D Curtis, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs L A Duffy, M Francis, R Fuller, I D Gardener, L George, D A Giles, J A Gray, S Greenall, A Hansard, D Harty, T Hayward, R B Howe, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, Ms L Kadic, D J Mead, J P Morris, J M Palmer, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, K D Wainwright, R J West and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates, Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs A Dickinson, R S Farrer, R Harrison, B Hyland, S M Van De Kerkhove, Mrs R E Mathews and M C Oliver.

41. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

42. CONSIDERATION OF MOVING TO ALL-OUT ELECTIONS

Further to Item No. 30 of the meeting of the Council held on 30th September 2015 and in conjunction with a report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Managing Director acquainted Members with details of the results of the responses received during the consultation of the Council's election frequency. Members were reminded that the consultation had been undertaken as part of the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of the Council's electoral arrangements. It was noted that this resolution required two-thirds of those present and voting in order for it to be passed.

The Chairman drew Members attention to the recommendation of the Standards Committee to retain elections by thirds (Item No. 8 of their report refers of the Council meeting held on 16th December 2015) and discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of moving to all-out elections or retaining elections by thirds. Concern was expressed regarding the potential difficulty of Councillors currently representing large rural wards and the further difficulties that

Members would experience if elections by thirds are retained, as the requirement would be for a three Member ward.

Members shared the view that preference was to retain the existing warding pattern, however concern was also expressed regarding the confusion for voters with elections three out of every four years leading to voter apathy and decreased turnout.

Councillor P D Reeve outlined his support for the recommendation of the Standards Committee, thereby allowing electors the right for their voice to be heard each year. Whereupon, Councillor Ms L A Duffy moved the recommendation (b) and it was duly seconded by Councillor P D Reeve and upon being put to the vote the Motion was declared to be lost.

The Executive Leader, J D Ablewhite, reminded Members of the cross party Working Group that had been established to review the electoral arrangements and the decision that had been taken by the Council to retain a membership of 52 Councillors. Whereupon, the Chairman moved the recommendations of the report (a) and (c) which were duly seconded by the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite and

RESOLVED

that a recorded vote be taken on this item.

It having been previously moved and seconded, upon being put to the vote it was further

RESOLVED

(a) to move from elections by thirds to all-out elections with effect from the ordinary day of elections in May 2018; and

(b) to make an order to change the ordinary day of elections for parishes in the District so that they all elect councillors in 2018 and every four years thereafter.

Voting on recommendations (a) and (b) resulted in 39 votes in favour and 2 votes against, thereby achieving the required two-thirds of those present and voting in order for it to be passed.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

Chairman