

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee **Date:** Tuesday, 1 March 2011

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.40 pm

Members Present: Councillors J Philip (Chairman), D Jacobs, Mrs M Sartin, C Whitbread and D Wixley

Other Councillors: Councillors A Boyce and R Morgan

Apologies: Councillor D Stallan

Officers Present: I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive) and P Sewell (Democratic Services Assistant)

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor R Morgan declared a personal interest by virtue of being Chairman of Matching Parish Council. The Councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and he would stay for the meeting.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

9. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - CURRENT POSITION

At the meeting held on 18 November 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake a second stage of consultation with regards to a boundary change in Matching Green village. A site meeting was held on 9 December 2010 at Matching Green, attended by the Parish Clerks from MBL and Matching, Parish Councillors from each Council, the District Ward Councillors for Moreton & Fyfield and for Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village. The existing boundary was walked and an agreement was reached on how it might be altered to include the whole village in Matching Parish.

As this boundary was a District, County, and Parliamentary demarcation as well as a Parish one, concern was expressed regarding the need for them to be consistent. A letter was sent to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission though no reply had been received to date, probably due to the protracted period of debate in Parliament concerning the national review of constituencies.

Members noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) had also been contacted with regards to the District and County boundaries. A reply had been received outlining that, although the Commission was unlikely to have any difficulty making an order to amend the District and County electoral boundaries to match

changes made to the Parish boundary, an additional election would be required at District level to reinstate the normal electoral cycle. Only one of the Districts involved would be required to hold an out of turn election.

The LGBC had also stated that the Parliamentary Constituency boundary would not change as a result of the Electoral and Community Governance Review. The new Parliamentary Constituencies due to be identified by the current national review are anticipated to be in place for the General Election in 2015. If Parish boundaries were changed and a General Election were to be called before 2015, it would result in Matching Green residents once again voting in different polling stations. It was noted that should this happen, polling arrangements would need careful planning and publicity in order to avoid voter uncertainty.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the new boundary identified be used as a formal proposal;
- (2) That the second stage consultation documents be amended to reflect the Parliamentary position and County and District provisos; and
- (3) That any decisions regarding extra elections be deferred until the completion of this consultation.

10. STAGE TWO CONSULTATION MATERIAL AND REVISED TIMETABLE

The Committee were informed that the Council was required to consult all those affected by the proposed boundary change, though no details were specified. Members felt that although the Matching Green Village residents in the MBL ward would be affected most, residents of the wider Matching Parish and those of MBL would also be involved and should therefore be included in the consultation process. It was felt that the forthcoming consultation should be weighted to reflect these varying positions.

Members noted that the legislation stipulated that Community Governance Reviews must be completed over a period of one year from its inception. A revised timetable was presented, which avoided the election period in respect of the second stage of consultation. This would minimise voter uncertainty regarding the May 2011 elections.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revised timetable be approved;
- (2) That all electors in the Matching Green section currently in MBL be consulted;
- (3) That consultation of residents in MBL and the rest of Matching be undertaken on a household basis;
- (4) That the consultation documents be simplified, with more detailed information provided online; and
- (5) That a public meeting be arranged on Friday 1 April 2011 for Matching and MBL residents to discuss the proposal and ask questions.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

Noted that the next meeting would be held in the week commencing 16 May 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Epping, on a date to be agreed.

CHAIRMAN