

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Electoral and Community Governance Review Committee    **Date:** Thursday, 29 September 2011

**Place:** Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping    **Time:** 7.30 - 7.55 pm

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

**Other Councillors:** Councillors Mrs A Grigg, R Morgan and B Rolfe

**Apologies:** D Stallan and C Finn

**Officers Present:** I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), W MacLeod (Elections Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)

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### **20. Substitute Members (Council Minute 39 - 23.7.02)**

Councillor M Sartin attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor C Whitbread and Councillor C Pond attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor C Finn.

### **21. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

### **22. Terms of Reference**

The Terms of reference were noted.

### **23. Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2011 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **24. Parliamentary Constituency Review - Briefing**

The Assistant to the Chief Executive gave a short presentation on the Boundary Commission for England's initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituencies in the Eastern region.

The committee was informed that the consultation was currently open until the 5 December 2011 and anyone could respond, including Councils, electors, political parties, individual councillors and the public. The review was being coordinated on a regional basis with Epping Forest being in the East Region. The sub-regions are based on County Councils areas and District Wards but not Parish wards. Each

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constituency would then need an electorate that was within the 5% of the UK electoral quota of 76,641 to create the target 600 constituencies.

In the Eastern region the LGBC plan to reduce 58 constituencies to 56 and Essex from 18 to 17. Locally, Epping Forest gained the Lambourne ward, Harlow gained 3 wards from Uttlesford and Brentwood and Ongar lost Lambourne and gained Orsett ward, of Thurrock Council. The consultation asked for comments on local constituencies, the Essex Sub-Region, the Eastern Region and any suggestions for any alternatives which meet the requirements of the Act. The timescale was such that the Committee would need to report to Council on 1 November 2011.

Currently the Council has agreed for a Parish Boundary change in Matching Green and the local Government Boundary Commission was considering consequential changes to District Ward and County Division boundaries. It was felt that the Parliamentary boundary should also be amended as it would avoid confusion and only effect 160 voters. The Assist to the Chief Executive would be happy to attend a public hearing to argue the case for this further consequential change.

Members felt that Epping Forest constituency provided the best outcome for Epping Forest Residents.

**25. Parliamentary Constituency Review -Next Steps**

The Assistant to the Chief Executive reported on the next steps for responding to the Boundary Commission's proposal.

Members felt that the Boundary review proposals had been logical and there was a strong case for supporting the current proposals for Epping Forest Constituency.

Councillor Grigg confirmed that North Weald Village ward had changed so many times over past years that she was happy that the Commission had chosen not to change the constituency boundary again and that North Weald Village remained in Brentwood and Ongar.

Members support the idea of the Assistant to the Chief Executive attending the public meeting to support the change in the Matching Green boundary to include 160 voters in the Harlow constituency. Members felt that the local MP's should be informed of the Council's response to the consultation.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the Council accepts the Commissions proposals and strongly supports the review;
- (2) That the adjustment of the constituency boundary at Matching Green be part of the response to the consultation;
- (3) That the Assistant to the Chief Executive attend the public hearing to convey the importance of the boundary change at Matching Green of 160 electorates;
- (4) That the local MP's are advised of the Councils responses to the consultation; and
- (5) To organise another meeting before the next Council meeting on 1 November 2011, to gain final approval of the Council's response to the review.

**CHAIRMAN**