

Minutes of the meeting of the **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 6 October 2014 at 12.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor P A Watkins

Councillors: P M Beresford (as substitute for Councillor F J W Scales)
S S Chandler
M R Eddy

Officers: Head of Democratic Services
Team Leader - Electoral and Land Charges
Team Leader – Democratic Support

7 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor F J W Scales.

8 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, that Councillor P M Beresford had been appointed as substitute member for Councillor F J W Scales.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 August 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11 POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

The Head of Democratic Services introduced the report on the outcome of the consultation on the Polling District Review.

The Committee considered the 8 responses received, which related to the following areas:

- Capel-le-Ferne
- Eythorne
- Sholden
- Castle Ward
- Areas within the South Thanet Constituency
- Wingham
- Ash
- Areas within the Dover District Council Area

In respect of the proposals from Aylesham Parish Council for a polling district in Elvington as part of the Eythorne Ward, the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that no response had been received from Eythorne Parish Council in respect of it.

Councillor M R Eddy suggested that high levels of deprivation could be an obstacle for residents in Elvington in travelling to the polling station in Eythorne and that the community centre at Elvington could be a potential venue for a polling station. In response the Head of Democratic Services advised that this would require the creation of a new polling district in an already warded parish and that the options of postal and proxy voting was available for residents in Elvington who were not able to travel to the polling station in Eythorne.

In respect of the consultation response for Sholden, the Head of Democratic Services expressed reservations that it would not be practical to have one polling station serving two different electoral areas.

In respect of the other consultation responses, the consensus of opinion was that no changes to the current scheme were required.

It was proposed by Councillor S S Chandler, and duly seconded, that the current scheme be recommended to Council without amendment.

Councillor M R Eddy was unable to move an alternative proposal in the absence of a seconder.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That each Polling District be designated as the Polling Place.
- (b) That where no suitable Polling Station was available the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to designate an adjoining Polling District for that Polling Place.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18, Councillor M R Eddy requested that his vote against be recorded.)

12 WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

(a) Kent County Council

The Head of Democratic Services informed the Committee that the Local Government Boundary Commission England (LGBCE) would be starting its review of Kent County Council in October 2014 as more than one-third of its divisions had a variance of 10% or more from the electoral average.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(b) Dover District Council Electoral Arrangements

The Head of Democratic Services provided an update on the degree of electoral variance from the electoral average in the Dover District. The Committee was advised that at this point there was insufficient variance to automatically trigger a review by the LGBCE. However, the Council could still request a review if it wished in respect of expected population growth or changes to the Council size.

It was the consensus of opinion that no action should be taken until the outcome of the Kent County Council review was known.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.32 pm.