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26 September 2014

Dear Councillor

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE** will be held in the Council Chamber at these Offices on Monday 6 October 2014 at **12.00 pm** or upon the rising of the Cabinet meeting, whichever is the later, when the following business will be transacted.

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Rebecca Brough on (01304) 872304 or by e-mail at rebecca.brough@dover.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Brough", written over a white background.

Chief Executive

Electoral Matters Committee Membership:

Councillor P A Watkins (Chairman)
Councillor S S Chandler (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor M R Eddy
Councillor P J Hawkins
Councillor F J W Scales

AGENDA

1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To note appointments of Substitute Members.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** (Page 4)

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be

transacted on the agenda.

4 **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 6)

To confirm the attached Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 August 2014.

5 **POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW** (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider the attached responses received to the consultation and the Officer responses.

Also attached is the report of the Head of Democratic Services submitted to the last meeting which details the requirements of the Review. The Committee is requested to consider this matter and make recommendations to Council.

6 **WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15** (Pages 13 - 14)

(a) Kent County Council Electoral Arrangements

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is expected to launch its review of the Kent County Council Electoral Arrangements.

Kent County Council has submitted its view on Council size to the Commission and has requested that the number of Members remain at 84. The LGBCE will give its response to this when the review is formally launched.

The Head of Democratic Services will give an update on any progress at the meeting.

(b) Dover District Council Electoral Arrangements

At the last meeting the Committee requested more information on the possibility of requesting a review of its Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Committee for England.

Attached is a schedule showing the current local government electorate by Ward with the electoral variance for each Ward.

Access to Meetings and Information

- Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees. You may remain present throughout them except during the consideration of exempt or confidential information.
- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.
- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting.

Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.dover.gov.uk. Minutes will be published on our website as soon as practicably possible after each meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting.

- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your right to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Rebecca Brough, Team Leader - Democratic Support, telephone: (01304) 872304 or email: rebecca.brough@dover.gov.uk for details.

Large print copies of this agenda can be supplied on request.

Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

Minutes of the meeting of the **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 4 August 2014 at 12.01 pm

Present:

Chairman: Councillor P A Watkins

Councillors: S S Chandler
M R Eddy
P J Hawkins
F J W Scales

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 December 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS

The Head of Democratic Services introduced the report on the Statutory Review of Polling Districts.

The Council was required to undertake a review of its existing scheme of Polling Districts (a geographical sub-division of an electoral area) by no later than 31 January 2015. While there was no requirement to sub-divide an electoral area, the Council must ensure that all electors had reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable, including designating a Polling Place for each Polling District.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that as part of the review, the Council would undertake a 5 week period of public consultation on the current Polling District scheme. The results of that consultation would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for it to determine what recommendations it wished to ultimately make to the full Council.

RESOLVED: That the Polling District scheme be approved for consultation.

6 WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Head of Democratic Services gave a verbal update to the Committee on items for the work programme during the municipal year 2014/15.

(a) Kent County Council Electoral Arrangements

The Committee was advised that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was about to commence a review of the electoral arrangements for Kent County Council. It was stated that the outcome of this review was likely to impact on the County Electoral Division boundaries in Dover.

(b) Dover District Council Electoral Arrangements

The Head of Democratic Services advised that the Council had the option of approaching the LGBCE to request a review of its own electoral arrangements if it wished.

Councillor P A Watkins requested a report on these matters for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposed work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.26 pm.

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in Dover District

No.	Individual/Public Body making representations	Area	Representation	Officer Response
1	Individual resident in Capel-le-Ferne	Capel-le-Ferne	Are there sufficient voters in Capel le Ferne to warrant a second polling station at the church hall in Albany Road, to cater for those living on the sea-side of the New Dover Road	Capel-le-Ferne Ward currently has two Parishes with a Polling District for each. PCF has 1634 electors for Capel-le-Ferne with 395 electors in PHM for West Hougham. 1634 electors does not warrant two Polling Districts.
2	Linda Keen Clerk Aylesham Parish Council	Eythorne	Aylesham PC wants another polling station at Elvington - perhaps the Community Centre - because it is too far up and down hills to the one in Eythorne.	Aylesham Parish Council are requesting consideration of an additional Polling District and Polling Station for Elvington that forms part of the Parish of Eythorne. The Parish of Eythorne is warded with a Parish Ward for Eythorne (1896 electors) and a Parish Ward for Barfreestone (43 electors). Unfortunately it has proved necessary for both Wards to be allocated the same Polling Station at The Resource Centre in Eythorne. The electors in Barfreestone have further to travel to the Polling Station than those in Elvington.
3	Mary Shaw Clerk to Sholden Parish Council	Sholden	Sholden Parish includes residents who live in the Golf Road / Greenacres / Chequers Inn area. Currently they have a long distance to travel in order to cast their votes. The polling station for Sholden is located in Sholden village at Scout HQ in The Street. Therefore, in order to allow these residents local access to a polling station, members suggest use of The Golf Road Centre as a polling station for 2 districts (North Deal and Sholden). Residents from this outlying part of Sholden Parish are more likely use their democratic right if they had access to a nearby polling station. Furthermore, it would make more sense to include	It is appreciated that this Parish and therefore Polling District is elongated. There are currently 930 electors served by this Polling Station. It would not be practical to have one Polling Station serving two different electoral areas. This would cause confusion for the electorate and would cause delays at the Polling Station.

No.	Individual/Public Body making representations	Area	Representation	Officer Response
			this part of Sholden parish into North Deal when the review of internal county boundaries is carried out later this year.	
4	Age UK DOVER	Castle Ward	Would like to offer the use of The Riverside Centre as use as a Polling Station in the future. The Riverside Centre has been used for this purpose in the past.	The Returning Officer welcomes the offer of the use of Age Concern as a Polling Station. This venue has been used in the past however, the existing venue is more suitable in terms of size. In the event that the current venue becomes unavailable then this venue would receive positive consideration.
5	Acting Returning Officer, Thanet District Council	Areas that fall within the South Thanet Parliamentary constituency	Whilst our Acting Returning Officer clearly has an interest in their disposition in so far as part of these areas fall within the Thanet South Parliamentary constituency, we are aware of no significant concerns on this matter arising from the 2010 Parliamentary election and thus do not feel that we would be in a better position than your Acting Returning Officer to assess their suitability in practice.	It is noted that the Acting Returning Officer is satisfied that the existing Polling District scheme has proved successful and that Polling Stations have been able to be allocated on that basis.
6	Wingham Parish Council	Wingham	<p>Thank you for your letter of 6 August enclosing the public notice of the Review of Polling Districts which has been shared with Wingham Parish Councillors.</p> <p>The Miles Room of Wingham Village Hall is currently used as the polling station for our parish which the council consider to be the only appropriate facility in the village and can suggest no alternative at this time. The Miles Room is accessible to all electors, including the disabled and has ample parking.</p>	No change to existing arrangements requested.
7	Lisa Jones Clerk to Ash Parish Council	Ash	I refer to the Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places and the	The Returning Officer welcomes the suggestion of an alternative venue for use

No.	Individual/Public Body making representations	Area	Representation	Officer Response
			<p>request for feedback by 09 September 2014.</p> <p>Council considers there may be an alternative venue available in Ash village, as a backup for the Ash Village Hall which is the usual and preferred venue for elections.</p> <p>The United Reform Church hall in The Street, Ash is the possible alternative. It offers a double door entry which opens fully, has a removable ramp for wheelchairs to ascend the one step into the Hall, has vehicle access (though tight) off The Street to allow disabled users to more readily gain access to the Hall, has toilets and a kitchen where water is available. Parking would be limited to on street opportunity in The Street and the DDC carpark in the retail centre of the village which is a short walk away from the URC hall.</p> <p>The use of the Hall is subject to it being consistent with the values of the Church (which for example excludes events where alcohol might otherwise be present).</p>	<p>as a Polling Station in the event that the current venue becomes unavailable.</p>
8	Acting Returning Officer, Dover District Council	Dover District Council area	<p>The existing Polling Districts have proved successful and I will not therefore be submitting any recommendations for changes. Where alternative Polling Stations have been suggested by consultees consideration will be given to those venues and a primary or secondary location.</p>	<p>It is noted that the Acting Returning Officer is satisfied that the existing Polling District scheme has proved successful and that Polling Stations have been able to be allocated on that basis.</p>

Subject:	STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS
Meeting and Date:	Electoral Matters Committee – 4 AUGUST 2014
Report of:	Head of Democratic Services
Decision Type:	Non-Executive
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: The Council is required to carry out a review of Polling Districts by 31 January 2015. This report details the requirements and seeks agreement on whether to carry out the statutory consultation on the existing Polling District Scheme or to propose amendments to the existing scheme for consultation purposes.

Recommendation: To approve the Polling District Scheme for consultation.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The legislation requires the Council to undertake a review of Polling Districts by 31 January 2015. The Committee will consider the existing scheme and determine whether any changes should be proposed prior to consulting on the scheme. Following the consultation process the Council will determine the Polling District Scheme to be used for Parliamentary and Local Government Elections and Referendum. The Electoral Registration Officer will make any changes agreed and publish the register reflecting the changes.

2. Introduction and Background

Designating Polling Districts

- 2.1 A Polling District is the geographical sub-division of an electoral area, eg UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.
- 2.2 The Council is responsible for dividing its area into polling districts for UK Parliamentary elections and for keeping the polling districts under review.
- 2.3 Although there is no requirement to sub-divide local government electoral wards into polling districts, it is recognised good practice to do so. When doing so, every effort must be made to ensure that the polling district scheme for Local Government elections mirrors as closely as possible that agreed for Parliamentary elections.
- 2.4 When designating polling districts, the Council must seek to ensure that all the electors in the Constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 2.5 In addition, and unless there are special circumstances that lead the Council to determine otherwise, each parish must be in a separate polling district.

- 2.6 The Council must designate a polling place for every polling district in the District, unless the size or other circumstances of the polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electorate.
- 2.7 The Council must keep the polling places under review.
- 2.8 The Council must:
- seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
 - seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.
- 2.9 In addition, the polling place for a polling district must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.
- 2.10 A copy of the current Polling Districts Scheme including the current Parliamentary Electorate figures are attached at **Appendix 1** together with the maps depicting the current Polling District Scheme at **Appendix 2**.

Polling Place

- 2.11 A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.
- 2.12 The current Scheme designates the Polling Place as follows:-
- 2.13 Each Polling District be designated as the Polling Place. Where no suitable Polling Station is available the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to designate an adjoining Polling District for that Polling Place.

Polling Stations

- 2.14 A Polling Station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district. This function is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

Consultation

- 2.15 Representations will be invited on the Polling District Scheme. The Consultation will be included on the Council website in addition to consulting elected representatives. The Acting Returning Officer for the Dover Constituency and for the South Thanet Constituency and local disability groups will also be consulted.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 To undertake the statutory consultation utilising the existing Polling District Scheme

3.2 To propose changes to the existing Polling District Scheme and to undertake the statutory consultation on the proposed revised Polling District Scheme.

4. **Evaluation of Options**

4.1 Were any changes to be proposed and not included in the consultation process this would prevent the statutory and non-statutory consultees from commenting on the changes.

5. **Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. The consultation process and review will be conducted within existing budgets.

6. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Existing Polling District Schemes and current Parliamentary electorate.

Appendix 2 – Maps of existing Polling District Scheme

7. **Background Papers**

Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

Contact Officer: Louise Cooke – Head of Democratic Services

District Electorate As At June 2014

Agenda Item No 6

Ward	Polling District	Polling District Electorate (06/2014)	Total Ward Electorate (06/2014)	No. of Ward Cllrs	Ward Electorate divided by No. Cllrs	Variance from Average Electorate
Aylesham	PAY	2994	3702	2	1,851	-3.64%
	PNN	708				
Buckland	BC1	3180	5562	3	1,854	-3.48%
	BC2	2382				
Capel-le-Ferne	PHM	1653	2052	1	2,052	6.51%
	PCF	399				
Castle	BD	1877	1877	1	1,877	-2.21%
Eastry	PEA	1939	4088	2	2,044	6.14%
	PGM	611				
	PNR	585				
	PSU	623				
	PTI	330				
Eythorne & Shepherdswell	PDD	151	3755	2	1,878	-2.18%
	PDW	162				
	PEX1	1895				
	PEX2	40				
	PSL1	1370				
	PSL2	137				
Little Stour & Ashstone	TGD	312	5559	3	1,853	-3.53%
	TAS	2608				
	TPR	563				
	TSP	444				
	TST	229				
	TWG	1403				
Lydden & Temple Ewell	PLN	559	1992	1	1,992	3.69%
	PTE	1433				
Maxton, Elms Vale & Priory	BE	2892	5600	3	1,867	-2.77%
	BF	2708				
Middle Deal & Sholden	AB1	1939	5940	3	1,980	3.11%
	AB2	1667				
	AB3	1407				
	TSH	927				
Mill Hill	AC1	2321	6058	3	2,019	5.00%
	AC2	1484				
	AC3	2253				
North Deal	AA4	588	5728	3	1,909	-0.48%
	AD1	1976				
	AD2	1933				
	AD3	1231				
Ringwould	PRG	315	1722	1	1,722	-11.41%
	PRK	1407				
River	PAK	578	3785	2	1,893	-1.37%
	PRV	3207				
Sandwich	TSA	2107	5657	3	1,886	-1.74%
	TSB	1907				
	TWN	855				
	TWR	788				

District Electorate As At June 2014

Ward	Polling District	Polling District Electorate (06/2014)	Total Ward Electorate (06/2014)	No. of Ward Cllrs	Ward Electorate divided by No. Cllrs	Variance from Average Electorate
St Margaret's-at-Cliffe	PGS	610	3523	2	1,762	-8.91%
	PLG	469				
	PRP	324				
	PSM	2120				
St Radigund's	BG1	1645	3734	2	1,867	-2.76%
	BG2	2089				
Tower Hamlets	BH1	2237	4223	2	2,112	9.14%
	BH2	1986				
Town & Pier	BJ1	923	1485	1	1,485	-29.19%
	BJ2	562				
Walmer	AA1	2171	6267	3	2,089	8.16%
	AA2	2530				
	AA3	1566				
Whitfield	PWH	1919	4021	2	2,011	4.58%
	PWT	2102				

	WARDS	TOTAL ELECTORATE	CLLRS	AVERAGE ELECTORATE PER CLLR
TOTALS	21	86330	45	1918

When the electoral variances in representation across a local authority become notable, an electoral review is required. The LGBCE criteria for initiating a review in those circumstances are as follows:

CRITERIA	Number of wards +/- 10%	PCT% Wards at Imbalance	Notes
CRITERION 1: more than 30% (7) of a council's wards/divisions having an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority; and/or	2	9.52%	Although only 2 wards meet the criterion, 8 wards (38%) are electorally imbalanced by 5 - 9%
CRITERION 2: one or more wards/divisions with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and	0	0.00%	At -29.19%, Town & Pier only requires a further reduction of 10 electors
CRITERION 3: that the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.			