

Minutes of the meeting of the **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 27 June 2018 at 4.30 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor K E Morris

Councillors: S S Chandler
M R Eddy
B Gardner
F J W Scales

Officers: Director of Governance
Democratic Services Manager

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Director of Governance advised that officers had identified the areas in the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) consultation document that asked for further comments and had drafted suggested responses for members to consider.

Councillor K E Morris stated that the Committee would work through each area in turn.

Eastry Rural, Little Stour & Ashstone and Sandwich

Councillor M R Eddy advised that the area of coastal Sholden wasn't part of what was usually considered by the Golf Road area. It was suggested that the response be amended to refer to it as the area north of Golf Road instead.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That the Council supports the proposed pattern for the Eastry Rural, Little Stour and Ashstone and Sandwich Wards.
- (b) That the Council supports the proposal to include the housing around Hyton Drive and Church Meadows within the proposed

Middle Deal Ward as the area is connected by road to the Middle Deal Ward and access to the remainder of Sholden would be by footpaths or driving through another ward.

- (c) That the Council supports the proposal to include the area to the north of Golf Road to the east of the railway line within the North Deal Ward as the area is connected by road to the North Deal Ward and access to the remainder of Sholden would also be by footpaths or driving through another ward.

Deal and Walmer

There were no specific questions asked as part of the consultation for these wards. The Director of Governance suggested that if Members had no objection to the proposals that a response be made to the LGBCE supporting the proposed ward pattern for Deal and Walmer.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council that it supports the proposed pattern for the Mill Hill, Middle Deal, North Deal and Walmer Wards.

Guston and St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Kingsdown Rural and Whitfield

There were no specific questions asked as part of the consultation for these wards. The Director of Governance suggested that if Members had no objection to the proposals that a response be made to the LGBCE supporting the proposed ward pattern for these wards.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council that it supports the proposed pattern for the Guston and St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Kingsdown Rural and Whitfield Wards.

Aylesham and Eythorne

The Director of Governance advised that the proposed consultation response was to include the southern population centre of Shepherdsweil within the ward name.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That the Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for strong electoral equality and maintains community cohesion by not splitting communities.

The Council also recognises that the 0% variance for the Aylesham and Eythorne Ward allows for future housing growth beyond 2023.

- (b) There are three main communities within this proposed ward - Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdsweil. Although the desire to keep ward names reasonably concise is recognised, it is recommended to Council that the community in the south of the proposed ward (Shepherdsweil) be reflected in the name of the ward and to that end that the Council proposes a new ward name of Aylesham, Eythorne & Shepherdsweil Ward. This also has the advantage of continuing the names of the two previous wards that comprise this electoral area.

Capel-le-Ferne & River and Dover Downs

Councillors S S Chandler and F J W Scales advised that they could not agree to the proposed Capel-le-Ferne and River Ward as they felt that it did not reflect community identity and that the area would be better served as two one member wards.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That the Council agrees with the LGBCE view that there is not a persuasive argument for joining the two wards in a single 3 member ward as this, in our view, would not best reflect community identity. It would also result in a large ward in the southwest of the district covering a diverse range of urban and rural areas with little in common. Although the Dover Downs Ward name has little recognition within the local communities it will contain, it doesn't favour one village over another and the Council acknowledges that it is probably the best name that can be proposed within the guidelines.
- (b) That officers be requested to identify alternative proposals for the proposed Capel-le-Ferne and River Ward on the grounds that the two settlements are at the opposing ends of the proposed ward with little shared community identity.

Dover Town

Councillor B Gardner proposed that the part of Lorne Road to the south of the River Dour be included within the Buckland Ward rather than the St Radigunds Ward.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That the Council supports the proposed pattern for the Maxton & Elms Vale, Tower Hamlets and Town & Castle Wards.
- (b) That in respect of the Buckland and St Radigunds Wards, the Council supports the proposal of the LGBCE to include Alfred Road and Brookfield Place within the proposed Buckland Ward as it provides for a strong ward boundary and community cohesion.
- (c) That Cawsey Cottages and The Old Flour Mill (Lorne Road) currently proposed to be part of the St Radigunds Ward be moved to be included within the Buckland Ward.

Parish Electoral Arrangements

The Director of Governance advised that due to concerns over the proposed parish warding arrangements for Walmer it was suggested that the Walmer Parish Ward be split into an Upper and Lower Walmer Parish Ward.

Councillor S S Chandler asked officers to check that the Gladstone Ward did mirror the southern North Deal Ward boundary.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council:

- (a) That the proposed pattern of parish wards for Dover Town Council be supported as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.
- (b) That the proposed pattern of parish wards for Sholden Parish Council be supported as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.
- (c) That while the Council recognises and supports the changes in respect of the southern ward boundary of North Deal Ward and the subsequent need to create the revised Gladstone Parish Ward, it is concerned that the proposed Walmer Parish Ward of Walmer is too large in terms of the criteria of effective and convenient local government. This has a number of aspects as follows:
- Walmer previously had four parish wards (Upper Walmer; Lower Walmer, Wellington; Lower Walmer, St Saviour's; and Gladstone) which allowed for a more representative distribution of councillors with more manageable electorates.
 - The number of candidates (13) in the largest of the two parish wards risks over/under voting and voter confusion/apathy due to the number of candidates.
 - Administratively we are concerned that in a contested election the size of the ballot paper could cause difficulties and that there would be a financial burden on the parish council in the event of a by-election for the largest parish ward.
- (d) That it is the Council's view that these issues could be overcome by dividing the proposed Walmer Parish Ward of Walmer into two smaller parish wards. We propose that these be as follows:

Parish Ward Name	Number of Parish Councillors
Gladstone	2
Lower Walmer	7
Upper Walmer	6

The Gladstone Parish Ward would remain unchanged from the LGBCE proposals while the subdivided Walmer Parish Ward would be split along the boundary of current polling district AA1 (Upper Walmer Parish Ward) to create the parish wards of Upper Walmer and Lower Walmer.

The meeting ended at 4.57 pm.