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19 June 2018

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 Wednesday 27 June 2018 at 4.30 pm 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 "Nicky", written over a white background.

Chief Executive

Electoral Matters Committee Membership:

K E Morris (Chairman)
S S Chandler (Vice-Chairman)
M R Eddy
B Gardner
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 3)

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.

4 **MINUTES**

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 March 2018 (to follow).

5 **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL** (Pages 4 - 12)

To consider the attached report of the Chief Executive.

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 are normally published within five working days of 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, Democratic Services Manager, 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.

Subject:	DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGMENTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL
Meeting and Date:	Electoral Matters Committee – 27 June 2018 Council – 25 July 2018
Report of:	Chief Executive
Classification:	UNRESTRICTED

Purpose of the report: To consider the proposed draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Dover District Council currently being consulted upon by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Recommendation: Electoral Matters Committee:

(a) To consider the proposed response to the consultation on the draft electoral arrangements for Dover District Council and make recommendations to Council.

Council:

(a) To authorise the Chief Executive to make a submission on the draft electoral arrangements for Dover District Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Council.

1. Summary

This report sets out the Council’s proposed response to the consultation being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on its draft recommendations.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council at its meeting held on 6 December 2017 authorised the Chief Executive to make a submission on a future council size of 32 councillors to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The LGBCE announced on 30 January 2018 that it was minded to make a recommendation of a future council size of 32 councillors.

2.2 Following a further period of consultation between 30 January 2018 and 5 June 2018 the LGBCE published its recommended pattern of wards for a council size of 32 councillors. It is now consulting on those proposals between 5 June 2018 and 13 August 2018.

New Electoral Arrangements for Dover District Council

2.3 The LGBCE received a number of full or part responses to its consultation on warding arrangements. The draft recommended pattern of wards is not consistent with a single proposed pattern submitted during the consultation but instead consists of elements of a number of different proposals.

2.4 It is noted that the LGBCE were disappointed with the level of evidence of community identity in the Council’s final submission. However, the report to the Council’s Electoral Matters Committee on 1 March 2018 and the subsequent report to the full Council on 28 March 2018 which was the basis for the proposed pattern of wards

submitted to the LGBCE by the Council, endeavoured to strike the best balance between electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government and we note that the LGBCE also found itself having to strike a balance between the these considerations.

Statutory Criteria

2.5 The LGBCE in proposing new electoral arrangements must deliver the three statutory criteria. The criteria are as follows:

- **Electoral Equality:** each councillor represents the same number of voters.
- **Community Identity:** reflects the identity and interests of local communities. This includes transport links, community groups, facilities, interests and identifiable boundaries.
- **Effective and convenient local government:** helping the council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

2.6 As part of the LGBCE's proposed new electoral arrangements for the Dover District a number of questions were posed which this report seeks to address. In drafting a response officers have given consideration to the statutory criteria.

2.7 The proposed responses to the recommended new electoral arrangements have been grouped in accordance with those used by the LGBCE in its consultation document and can be found at Appendix 1.

3. Identification of Options

3.1 Option 1: To authorise the Chief Executive to make a response based on Appendix 1 of the report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Council in respect of the consultation on the new electoral arrangements for Dover District Council. This is the recommended option.

3.2 Option 2: To authorise the Chief Executive to make a different response from that set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of the consultation on the new electoral arrangements for Dover District Council.

3.3 Option 3: To not make a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in respect of the consultation on the new electoral arrangements for Dover District Council.

4. Evaluation of Options

4.1 Options 1 and 2 would ensure that the Council made a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and had the opportunity to put its views forward for consideration as part of the current consultation process.

4.2 Option 3 is not recommended as it would deny the Council the opportunity to put forward its views on the proposed electoral arrangements for Dover District Council.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 There are no resource implications arising from this stage in the Electoral Review process.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

7. Background Papers

Draft Recommendations Report for Dover District Council
(<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/dover>)

Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, Democratic Services Manager 01304 872304

Proposed Response to the LGBCE consultation on the recommended New Electoral Arrangements for Dover District Council

Eastry Rural, Little Stour & Ashstone and Sandwich Wards

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Eastry Rural	2	-1%
Little Stour and Ashstone	2	4%
Sandwich	2	-1%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q1. Several submissions were received regarding the parish of Sholden. These submissions uniformly opposed Dover District Council's proposal to link the parish of Sholden with an area of Deal. The respondents argued that Sholden is not linked with Deal; the Council's proposal linked the parish with the northern part of the town. Residents argued that the Council's proposal linked two areas that have significant differences. We are therefore proposing to include the parish of Sholden in the proposed Eastry Rural ward, with the exception of the area that lies to the east of the railway line. We note that this area has no road links with the rest of the parish of Sholden, and we consider that the railway line forms a strong and identifiable boundary. We are therefore proposing to include this area in the proposed North Deal ward, as proposed by the Labour Group and by a local resident. We are also proposing to include the housing around Hyton Drive and Church Meadows in the proposed Middle Deal ward, to allow residents on Hyton Drive and Cornfield Row access into the road without leaving the ward. We consider that evidence received supported the village of Sholden being included in the more rural Eastry Rural ward. ***We would particularly welcome submissions regarding this area during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 42)

A1. 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.

The Council also supports the proposal to include the Golf Road area 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

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Middle Deal	2	-1%
Mill Hill	2	4%
North Deal	2	-2%
Walmer	2	4%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards and has nothing to add to the comments made under the Eastry Rural, Little Stour & Ashstone and Sandwich Wards in relation to North and Middle Deal Wards.

Consultation Question Response

The LGBCE does not ask a specific question as part of the consultation on these wards.

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

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Guston & St Margaret's-at-Cliffe	1	-2%
Kingsdown Rural	1	7%
Whitfield	2	-7%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

In respect of the proposed Whitfield Ward, the Council understands and supports the electoral equality and topographical reasoning behind the decision to create the proposed Dover Town Council Rokesley parish ward and include it within the Whitfield Ward at district level. We recognise that the LGBCE cannot alter the external boundaries of parish councils and this supports the logic of creating a new parish ward within the boundaries of Dover Town Council. In addition, there is anecdotal evidence that many of the children in the area of the Rokesley parish ward attend the nearby Green Park Community Primary School, which is within the administrative area of Dover Town Council.

We also recognise that the -7% variance for the Whitfield Ward allows for future housing growth beyond 2023.

Consultation Question Response

The LGBCE does not ask a specific question as part of the consultation on these wards.

Aylesham and Eythorne Ward

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Aylesham and Eythorne Ward	3	0%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for strong electoral equality and maintains community cohesion by not splitting communities.

We also recognise that the 0% variance for the Aylesham and Eythorne Ward allows for future housing growth beyond 2023.

Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q2. Our proposed three-councillor Aylesham & Eythorne ward comprises the parishes of Aylesham, Eythorne, Nonington, and Shepherdswell with Coldred, and would have a variance of 0% by 2023. Whilst we acknowledge that this proposed ward would combine a number of different communities, we consider that this is preferable to splitting any of the constituent communities between wards for the sake of achieving electoral equality. This proposal is based on the submission made by Eythorne Parish Council, and ***we would particularly welcome submissions regarding this proposed ward, and the name of the ward, during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 70)

A2. As previously stated, the Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for strong electoral equality and maintains community cohesion by not splitting communities. There are three main communities within this proposed ward - Aylesham, Eythorne and Shepherdswell. Although we recognise the desire to keep ward names reasonably concise, it is our view that the community in the south of the proposed ward (Shepherdswell) be reflected in the name of the ward and to that end the Council suggests a new ward name to become Aylesham, Eythorne & Shepherdswell Ward. This also has the advantage of continuing the names of the two previous wards that comprise this electoral area.

Capel-le-Ferne and River, Dover Downs Wards

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Capel-le-Ferne and River	2	-7%
Dover Downs	1	5%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards and 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.

Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q3. We propose to adopt the Labour Group's proposed warding pattern here, as it provides for good electoral equality and uses the parishes of the area as building blocks. We acknowledge Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council's wish to be separate from River and we recognise that this ward is not ideal given the distance between these areas. However, as stated above, the alternative proposal here would result in significant electoral inequality. We considered a number of alternatives here; in addition to the proposals outlined above, we also considered combining the parishes of Capel-le-Ferne, Hougham Without, River, Alkham, Temple Ewell, Lydden, and Denton with Wootton into a three-member ward with a variance of -3%. This three member ward would allow for the parish of Capel-le-Ferne to be linked with Alkham. However, we are not persuaded that this would provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria here but ***we particularly welcome submissions regarding this area during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 76)

A3. The Council recognises that the LGBCE has come across the same difficulty that it had in trying to balance electoral equality and community identity in what is largely a rural area with dispersed population centres. The exceptions are River which is an urban settlement with strong links to the town of Dover; Temple Ewell and Lydden which are smaller village settlements nestled in the North Downs; and Capel-le-Ferne situated close to the White Cliffs with links to Folkestone. Therefore whatever ward pattern and ward names that are proposed face the challenge of trying to balance these issues. The ward of Capel-le-Ferne and River benefits from being combined in terms of electoral equality, but the two settlements are at the opposing ends of the ward and there is little shared community identity. However, the Council recognises that this is the best proposal that can be achieved within the guidelines.

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.

Dover Town

Ward Name	Number of Councillors	Variance 2023
Buckland	2	-7%
Maxton and Elms Vale	1	5%
St Radigunds	2	-2%
Tower Hamlets	1	2%
Town and Castle	2	8%

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards.

Consultation Question Response

As part of the consultation, the LGBCE makes the following statement(s)/comment(s) and asks the question or seeks views (in italics):

Q4. We consider that the proposals for Dover put forward by the Labour Group are the most representative of the evidence we have received during the consultation. We are therefore proposing to include Alfred Road and Brookfield Place in the proposed Buckland ward, as we consider that the River Dour here provides for a strong boundary between Buckland and St Radigunds; this change also improves the electoral equality in the proposed Buckland ward. We consider that this ward follows strong and identifiable boundaries, and reflects Buckland's geographical position in Dover, but ***we would welcome submissions regarding this ward during the consultation on the draft recommendations.*** (Paragraph 82)

A4. In drafting the original proposals officers had considered similar options using the River Dour as a ward boundary and while ultimately a decision was taken to pursue a different option 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.

Parish Electoral Arrangements

The LGBCE is proposing amendments to parish wards in respect of three areas – Dover Town Council, Sholden Parish Council and Walmer Parish Council. In summary, these are as follows:

Dover Town Council

Parish Ward Name	Number of Parish Councillors
Buckland	4
Maxton and Elms Vale	2
Rokesley	1
St Radigunds	4
Tower Hamlets	2
Town and Castle	5

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.

Sholden Parish Council

Parish Ward Name	Number of Parish Councillors
Hyton	2
Sholden	4
Tenants Hill	1

Suggested Response

The Council supports the proposed pattern for these wards as it provides for effective and convenient local government by providing coterminosity with district ward boundaries.

Walmer Parish Council

Parish Ward Name	Number of Parish Councillors
Gladstone	2
Walmer	13

Suggested Response

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.

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.