

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

27 June 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WARD BOUNDARIES

An update on the proposed review of ward boundaries in Tonbridge & Malling, including the revised provisional start date and timeline.

1.1 Further Electoral Review

- 1.1.1 Members may recall that a full ward boundary review is due to start later in 2011. This was previously communicated with members of the Electoral Review Working Group, and latterly with letters to newly elected Members following the 2011 elections.
- 1.1.2 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is responsible for undertaking the 'Further Electoral Review' (FER), which will involve a complete review of all ward boundaries within Tonbridge & Malling. This work was initially triggered by electoral imbalances - the number of electors represented by each Borough Councillor across the borough, and one of the principal objectives of the work will be to resolve those imbalances.
- 1.1.3 We have recently been advised by the LGBCE (Annex 1) that the formal FER process will commence in January 2012. Prior to this, starting in November 2011, an informal preliminary period will begin to allow preparations for the review. Previous guidance has indicated that the greater the level of preparatory work undertaken locally, the more likely the final proposals will appropriately reflect local circumstances.
- 1.1.4 The formal processes of the FER are likely to take not more than one year, so the boundary changes made will take effect from the May 2015 scheduled elections.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 The LGBCE are obliged to conduct the review, and we have the responsibility to assist them as far as we are able to. The review process will remove the electoral imbalances, making councillors more equally representative of residents.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 The local costs associated with the review will be met from existing budgets; it is anticipated that these will be negligible. The most significant contribution will be staff time and expertise, and it is in the best interests of the Council and our residents to make that contribution to ensure local circumstances are reflected in the final outcomes.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 There is a risk that the final ward boundaries fail to take into account local circumstances. This risk will be minimised by officer involvement in the process, as well as formal and informal consultations through the review period.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 As an information report, an equality impact assessment is not required. However, as the review commences a formal assessment of the equality impacts will be undertaken.

Background papers:

contact: Richard Beesley

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive