

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

02 February 2015

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 BOUNDARY REVIEW OF KCC ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

To outline the current review of the KCC Electoral Divisions, and to approve the response to the current consultation on electoral arrangements for the County Council.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) are undertaking a review of the KCC electoral divisions (the County equivalent of Wards). The intention is to make any changes in readiness for the next scheduled elections in May 2017.

1.1.2 The overall timetable is as follows:

- 1) Completed December 2014
Preliminary period, to consider the proposed new Council size. KCC submitted a preference for single-member wards, and a preference to retain 84 councillors.
- 2) 9 December 2014 to 2 March 2015
Consultation on division arrangements. This is the opportunity for interested parties to submit potential electoral arrangements for the whole or part of the county. These proposals will then be considered by the LGBCE, with draft recommendations being produced by them thereafter.
- 3) 12 May 2015 to 6 July 2015
Consultation on draft recommendations.
- 4) 29 September 2015
Final recommendations, following consideration of previous consultations.

1.1.3 The current stage is the consultation on division arrangements. This is a complex and time-consuming task, and in reality requires consideration of the whole of Kent if we were to consider putting a proposal forward.

1.2 Response to the current consultation

- 1.2.1 At present, all county divisions within Tonbridge & Malling are coterminous with ward boundaries. It is important that any new county divisions remain coterminous, as it makes for more effective and convenient local government – for electors knowing who their councillors are, for Councillors understanding their Borough counterparts, and for administration of elections.
- 1.2.2 I therefore recommend that TMBC submit the response to the LGBCE consultation as set out below.

The KCC County Divisions within the Borough of Tonbridge & Malling are currently coterminous with our wards. This has proven to lead to more effective and convenient local government. Electors are able to identify their County and Borough Councillors more readily, County Councillors are able to work more closely and effectively with their local Borough counterparts, and elections are more effectively and efficiently managed.

We therefore propose that any new County Divisions also be coterminous with local Borough and District wards, and be based on the new wards that take effect within Tonbridge & Malling at the May 2015 elections.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None. There is no legal requirement to respond to this consultation. However, doing so will help ensure the best interests of our residents are represented in the review of County electoral divisions.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 There is no financial cost to TMBC to responding to this consultation in this way.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Members are invited to **approve** the response from TMBC to the consultation on KCC electoral divisions, as set out below paragraph 1.2.2.

Background papers:

contact: Richard Beesley

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive