



Minutes of the special meeting of the **Cabinet** held in Committee Rooms, East Pallant House on Thursday 31 March 2016 at 11.30 am

**Members Present:** Mr A Dignum (Chairman), Mrs E Lintill (Vice-Chairman), Mr R Barrow, Mr B Finch, Mrs G Keegan and Mrs S Taylor

**Members not present:** Mrs P Hardwick

**In attendance by invitation:**

**Officers present all items:** Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive), Mr S Carvell (Executive Director), Mr P E Over (Executive Director), Mr J Ward (Head of Finance and Governance Services) and Mr P Coleman (Member Services Manager)

174 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 8 March 2016, be signed as a correct record.

175 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

176 **Declarations of Interests**

No interests were declared at this meeting.

177 **Public Question Time**

No public questions had been submitted.

178 **Chichester Electoral Review: Creating a Pattern of Wards**

The Cabinet considered the report circulated with the agenda (copy attached to the official minutes).

Mr Dignum introduced the report, explaining that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had agreed, at the Council's request in the last Council term, to carry out an electoral review of Chichester District. The LGBCE had stated that it was 'minded to' recommend a Council size of 36 – also as requested by this Council - a 25% reduction from the present 48.

Having made that provisional decision on council size, the next stage was to divide the district into wards. The LGBCE had launched a consultation on 26 January 2016, inviting proposals on a pattern of wards to accommodate 36 councillors. The closing date for responses was 4 April. People and organisations might have made recommendations direct to the LGBCE of which the Council was not aware.

However, the Council's Boundary Review Panel had prepared a set of proposals, drawing on the product of three area workshops involving local ward members. Those proposals were set out in Appendix One to the report and had been the subject of a consultation exercise.

The Boundary Review Panel on Monday 21st March had reviewed all the representations received from the consultation. These were set out in Appendix 2. The Panel had made recommendations which were set out in Appendix 3 in the form of a draft submission to the LGBCE.

In preparing proposals, the Panel and the Council had to consider three statutory criteria, which the LGBCE was bound by. These were set out in section 4 of the report:

- Electoral equality
- The interests and identities of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government

In practice these aims were sometimes incompatible, and so there was scope for judgement. The Council's judgement and that of the Boundary Commission might differ but the Boundary Commission had the final say.

The District's projected electorate divided between 36 members gave a target size of ward of 2,744 electors per councillor. If possible proposals should keep within a tolerance of  $\pm 10\%$ , i.e. within a range 2,470 to 3,018.

Three of the Panel's proposed wards were outside that tolerance:-

Oving Ward: -14.7%. But this included the Shopwhyke Lakes Strategic Development location so that headroom would be taken up over time.

Bosham Ward: +15.2%. This was dealt with in paragraph 6.7 of the report.

Harting Ward: +11.3%. But the Panel had looked carefully at options for transferring whole parishes elsewhere, and the parishes had made good cases on community interests grounds to stay in Harting.

There were only two areas of real controversy:

**Selsey and Sidlesham.** The local members and the parish council had made a strong argument that their communities had little in common and should not be combined. The solution suggested by Selsey members had been rejected by the Panel for reasons set out in para 6.4 on page 17. Looked at alone, the Selsey members' proposal might have merit but its knock-on effect would be likely to reduce the Council's total size to 34. This further reduction was unacceptable as the proposed 36 was already a radical change from the present 48. An alternative solution also putting all of Selsey in one ward as local members requested and

creating two 2-member wards for the area from Bosham to Sidlesham had also been rejected by the Panel.

**Lurgashall/Northchapel and Lodsworth.** These parishes too felt that they had little in common with the other parishes in the proposed wards that included them. Again, the Panel had many other options, but none of them worked.

Mr Dignum concluded with regret that it was impossible to satisfy everyone, and proposed that the Panel's report be recommended unamended to the Council.

With the Chairman's permission, Mr Connor stated that soon after he had been first elected to the Council in 2007, he had felt that Selsey did not require the present number of five district councillors, and he had expected that this would be reduced at the electoral review. However, he had not expected that it would be necessary to combine Selsey with another area. Neither Selsey nor Sidlesham wished to be combined and they had made strong representations to the Boundary Review Panel. There were too many undesirable aspects to the proposal. Selsey electors would outnumber Sidlesham electors in any configuration of wards. The Sidlesham Parish and Selsey Town Councils held their meetings on the same evenings. However, if numbers prevailed over democratically expressed views, the combined area would accord with the proposed County Electoral Division. In his view, and that of his fellow members, however, a configuration of two 2-member wards was to be preferred to the Panel's recommendation of a 3-member ward for most of Selsey and a single-member ward for Selsey North with Sidlesham. Such a configuration would improve the chances of candidates from Sidlesham being nominated.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Ridd (Chairman of the Boundary Review Panel) reassured members that the Panel had been very conscious of the wishes of Sidlesham and Selsey not to be combined in the same ward and the Panel had spent a great deal of time considering the alternative possibilities. However, every alternative had had an unacceptable knock-on effect elsewhere.

Mr Barrow acknowledged that he had been a lone voice in supporting Selsey being combined with Sidlesham, and expressed support for Mr Connor's proposal of two 2-member wards.

Mr Finch expressed his support for the proposed reduction in the size of the Council. He considered that the Panel's recommendations met as well as possible the LGBCE's statutory criteria.

With the Chairman's permission, Mr Potter supported the proposed name of 'Goodwood' for the new ward combining the present Boxgrove ward with Westhampnett.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the members of the Boundary Review Panel and the supporting staff, including Philip Coleman.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the Council adopts the recommendations of the Boundary Review Panel and approves the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission

for England of the proposals in Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report as their preferred pattern of wards for a 36 member Council, subject to the reconfiguration of Selsey and Sidlesham into two 2-member wards, respectively for Selsey South and Selsey North with Sidlesham

(2) That the Head of Finance and Governance Services be authorised to correct typographical errors and to make editorial amendments to the draft submission

**179 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The press and public were not excluded for any part of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

---

CHAIRMAN

---

Date: