

To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee – 27 November 2012

By: Graham Gibbens, Chairman of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
Geoff Wild, Director of Governance and Law

Subject: Tonbridge and Malling Electoral Boundary Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report provides information on the final recommendations which have been published for the Tonbridge & Malling Electoral Boundary review.

1. (1) As has previously been reported to the Committee, the Local Government Electoral Boundary Commission (LGEBC) has been conducting a review of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in order to improve the levels of electoral representation in the borough, which have become imbalanced since the last review. Currently, the number of electors represented by the Councillors in 38% of the wards varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and the Councillors in Kings Hill ward represent 46% more electors than the borough average.

(2) On 17 April 2012, the LGEBC published its draft recommendations (Appendix 1) and started a consultation which closed on 25 June 2012. Members of this Committee and local County Councillors were contacted and given the opportunity to comment on the proposals

(3) On 3 October the LGEBC published its final recommendations. The final recommendations draw new boundaries for each council ward across Tonbridge & Malling and propose that Tonbridge & Malling should be represented by 54 councillors in the future, one more than the current arrangements. The recommendations also propose that those councillors should represent seven three-member wards, 16 two-member wards and one single-member wards across the borough.

(4) In response to the views submitted during the consultation, some changes are proposed to the draft recommendations put forward earlier this year. For example, it is proposed to alter initial proposals for the parish of Ryarsh which had been divided between two wards in the draft recommendations, most of the parish will now be included in a single ward. Also it is proposed that Watringbury should be part of a single-member ward

rather than joined with neighbouring areas and parishes as previously put forward in the draft recommendations.

(5) The final recommendations and detailed maps are available on the Commission's website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/tonbridge-and-malling-electoral-fer>

(6) The proposed new arrangements must now be implemented by Parliament. A draft order will be laid in Parliament in the next few months. The draft Order provides for the new electoral arrangements to come into force at the borough council elections in 2015.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is invited to note the final recommendations for the Electoral Boundary Review carried out in the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council area.

Peter Sass
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Background Documents: none