

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: Shepway Electoral Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report provides further information on the current Shepway Electoral review following the Committee's consideration of the matter at its meeting on 2 August 2012.

1. (1) In November 2011 Shepway District Council established a working group of Councillors to look at introducing predominantly single member wards and reducing the number of councillors. Shepway currently has 46 councillors.

(2) In response to the report of the working Group, the District Council passed the following resolutions:

“(a) To support the submission of a proposal to the LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) incorporating the proposed new arrangements which demonstrate how the Council would operate with 38 member wards where necessary according to current electorate size, future electorate projections and geographical considerations.

(b) That the overall system of governance should continue to be the strong leader and cabinet model with independent overview and scrutiny.”

(3) The LGBCE has noted Shepway's proposal for 38 Members but considered that the evidence provided by the Council pointed towards a council size of 30 Members and that this reduction would be sustainable. The Commission noted the work already done by the Council to streamline its committee structure and considered that 30 Member would be sufficient to effectively manage committee work and to allow individual Councillors to perform their representative role.

(4) At its meeting on 2 August, 2012, this Committee considered a report on the proposals and resolved that the submission made to the LGBCE by Shepway District Council be noted and that Shepway District Council be informed that the County Council would not want to see any review of Ward Boundaries that would lead to the creation of more than two Member Electoral Divisions or any difficulties caused if the County Council wanted to change

existing two Member divisions to single Member divisions in the future; A letter was sent to the LGBCE and a response received which has been circulated to all Members.

(5) KCC has now been informed that the LGBCE commenced a consultation on 23 October 2012 on the appropriate number of Councillors, which will close on 3 December 2012. Local Members have been informed.

(6) After the consultation on Council size, the LGBCE will take a provisional decision on Council size and formulate draft recommendations on ward boundaries, which will be available for public consultation from 29 January to 8 April 2013. The Commission will then formulate draft recommendations, which it expects to publish in June 2013 for a further period of public consultation. The LGBCE expects to publish its final recommendations in early 2014.

(7) The Committee will be kept informed of progress with this review.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to respond to the consultation on the appropriate number of Councillors for Shepway District Council and/or to note the progress with the Electoral Review that will be carried out in the Shepway District Council area.

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694269

Background Documents:

Reports to Shepway District Council and Minute 86 – 21 March 2012

<http://www.shepway.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=2420>

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Shepway Review

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/shepway-fer>