

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 27 February 2013.

PRESENT: Mr G K Gibbens (Chairman), Mr J F London (Vice-Chairman), Mr K A Ferrin, MBE, Mr M J Harrison, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr T Prater and Mrs P A V Stockell.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services) and Mrs A Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

23. Substitutes

(*Item 1*)

There were no substitutes.

24. Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda

(*Item 2*)

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes - 27 November 2012

(*Item 3*)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

26. County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

(*Item 4*)

- (1) Mr Sass introduced the report which considered the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for Kent County Council elections for 2013/14. He said there had been no increases since 2012/13 although a number of new items had been introduced that were explained in the report and that the County Scale reflected the Kent Scale which in turn largely reflected the scale of fees for national elections and the recommendations of the Electoral Commission.
- (2) Committee members raised a number of questions about the proposed County Scale for 2013/14, as follows
 - (a) Referring to items 9 to 12 in the proposed scale, why was it proposed to remunerate some staff involved in the elections with their travelling expenses per mile whereas others were paid a lump sum? Instead, a suggestion was made that all election staff should be paid the same

mileage rate, 45p per mile, which would ensure consistency and accuracy.

- (b) Whether the role of polling station supervisors was necessary or justifiable and that the proposed payment of £197.25 (the same as for a Presiding Officer) seemed a lot of money to pay for the role.
 - (c) The proposed fees for uncontested elections seemed high given the work that the District Councils were required to do in the event of there being no poll to conduct or votes to count.
 - (d) The proposed fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks in combined elections appeared high, given that costs were supposed to reduce with combined polls.
 - (e) Why was there a difference in fees for the counting of votes for single and two-member divisions?
 - (f) Whether the proposed payment for the hand delivery of poll cards at 34p per card was appropriate given that in some houses, 4 or 5 poll cards might be delivered to a single address.
 - (g) Questions were asked about the appropriateness of some of the costs for fitting up polling stations and the suitability of some venues as polling stations
- (3) Following a lengthy discussion, and given the various concerns and issues that they had raised, Members concluded that they were not yet able to approve the proposed County Scale. Accordingly, it was proposed by Mr Prater, seconded by Mr Harrison and agreed by the Committee that authority be delegated to the Director of Governance and Law and the Head of Democratic Services to negotiate further with district and borough councils about the questions raised by the Committee and finalise the proposed County Scale for 2013/14.
- (4) In response to a question about items 34 and 36 of the County Scale, the Director of Governance and Law confirmed that any expenses incurred would be referred to this Committee for approval.
- (5) The Chairman thanked officers for the progress that had been made over the past two years to formalise the arrangements for the conduct of county council elections and acknowledged that the arrangements were on a much firmer than for previous County Council Elections.
- (6) RESOLVED:**
- (a) that authority be delegated to the Director of Governance and Law and the Head of Democratic Services to negotiate further with district and borough councils about all the questions and concerns raised by the Committee and finalise the proposed County Scale for 2013/14.

- (b) that the proposed County Scale of Fees and Expenses for future years be presented for approval annually.
- (c) that a report be prepared and submitted to the Committee following the election in May 2013 detailing all of the costs by each borough or district council in relation to the County Council Elections as well as an analysis of what went well and lessons learned and that this is used to inform the protocol and procedure note for the administration of future county council elections.

27. Any Other Business

Count Venue in Canterbury

- (1) Mr Harrison said he was concerned that the proposed venue for the count in Canterbury was at Kings Hall in Herne Bay, which had no parking and inadequate access for disabled people. The Westgate Hall had previously been used for the counting of ballots but this was no longer available. He asked for assistance in identifying a more suitable venue within Canterbury.
- (2) **RESOLVED** that the Head of Democratic Services be asked to work with Canterbury City Council to identify a suitable venue in Canterbury for the counting of ballots in the county council election.

Electoral Review of Shepway

- (3) Mr Prater said that the Local Government Electoral Commission was currently consulting on warding arrangements in the Shepway area on the basis of having 30 district councillors and this was likely to have an impact on the county divisions. Mr King said, that through this Committee, the County Council should always take the opportunity to consider and comment on the implications of re-organisations proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- (4) **RESOLVED:**
 - (a) That the Committee note the information.
 - (b) That the Head of Democratic Services be asked to circulate the report to Members and seek their views on the latest proposals for the Shepway District.