

*Subject to approval at the next meeting*

ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

01 August 2018 at 6.00 pm

Present:- Councillors Dendle (Chairman), Wotherspoon (Vice-Chairman), Bower, Chapman, Charles, Elkins and Haymes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Purchase.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2018 were approved by the Sub-Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – BARNHAM AND EASTERGATE

In presenting this report, the Group Head of Policy reminded Members that the Council, having received a request from Barnham Parish Council and Eastergate Parish Council to merge their parishes, had undertaken a Community Governance Review in line with Boundary Commission guidelines and had consulted with local residents and relevant organisations on the proposal.

The report, presented to the Sub-Committee, set out the outcome of the final stage of consultation. This included details of the one objection received and the views of the Officer in their response to the objector. The Group Head of Policy requested that Members take the objection into account when considering their recommendations to Full Council.

The Sub-Committee commended the Group Head of Policy for the clear and concise report and for the informative response given to the objector.

The Sub-Committee expressed concerns about the impact of the Local Plan on the merger of these two parishes. The Group Head of Policy advised that there may be a need to review ward profiles if the developments proceeded. The Group Head of Policy confirmed that both parishes were aware of the contents of the Local Plan and that, in their view, this had no effect on their request to merge the two parishes.

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The Sub-Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - That

- (1) Barnham Parish Council and Eastergate Parish Council merge to become Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council with 13 Parish Councillors, with effect from 1 December 2018.
- (2) the Group Head of Policy be given delegated authority to publish the Reorganisation Order.

5. CANVASS UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a report on the Update of the 2018 Canvass from the Group Head of Policy.

Key points highlighted were:

- The Electoral Commission conducted pilot exercises in 2017 on different formats for the Household Enquiry Forms, which had resulted in a new format being issued this year;
- 43.68% of the responses received so far had been made via automated response methods (compared to 36.89% at the end of last year's canvass);
- A video had been published, advising people how to complete their forms and encouraging on-line responses, which generated 728 views on Facebook and 300 views on YouTube;
- Consideration would be given in the future to offering an incentive scheme for returning the forms by the due date, although it is a legal requirement to do so;
- A Member referred to the collection of email addresses for residents with the suggestion that the form is proactively emailed to residents. The Group Head of Policy explained that the current legislation required the form to be posted out to residents, although it might change in the future in view of the increased use of electronic means; and
- The Sub-Committee asked for a future item about the options for sanctions for not returning the forms.

The Sub-Committee noted the report and congratulated staff involved in this positive outcome.

6. 2018 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Group Head of Policy provided a verbal update on the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review, following an email issued to all District Councillors on 18 June 2018.

The Boundary Commission began the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in 2016 and was required to report its final recommendation to Government between 1 and 30 September 2018. The regulations require that Parliament is the first audience and therefore the final recommendations would not be made public at the same time as the report would be submitted to Government. The final recommendations would only be published on the Boundary Commission website.

If the recommendations were accepted by Parliament, the new boundaries would come into existence at the next General Election after that vote, which was due to be held on 5 May 2022.

The Sub-Committee considered the option of a boundary review of all wards following the local elections in 2019, and prior to the Parliamentary election in 2022. Concerns were raised about the time taken to carry out these reviews and the implications of the number of developments planned in the near future which would impact on the size of the electorate. However, the Sub-Committee supported the suggestion of the need for a review with careful consideration of the cost and amount of work required, along with the rurality of the District and consideration being given to the lessons learned from the last review.

The Group Head of Policy suggested that a paper be drafted to bring to the next meeting to look at the key issues to be considered and how a review might be structured. This was agreed by the Sub-Committee.

(The meeting concluded at 6:43 pm)