

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2003

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to consider the draft recommendations of the Boundary Committee in relation to the Periodic Electoral Review of Leicestershire County Council, which were published on 24 February, 2004.

Background

2. On 28 January, 2003 the Director of the Boundary Committee for England wrote to the County Council announcing the formal start of the review of Leicestershire County Council's electoral arrangements on Tuesday, 11 March 2003, and inviting the Council to submit proposals by 7 July, 2003.
3. Following a two stage consultation process with elected members and other interested parties, including district and parish councils, the County Council agreed a scheme of proposed electoral arrangements for submission to the Boundary Committee by the deadline date. This scheme was subsequently agreed at the meeting of the County Council on 9 July, 2003.

Draft Recommendations of the Boundary Committee

4. On 24 February, 2004 the Boundary Committee published its draft recommendations in relation to the review, a copy of which has been circulated to all members of the Council. PLEASE BRING THESE WITH YOU TO THE MEETING.
5. A summary of Boundary Committee's recommendations is as follows:-
 - ◆ There should be an increase in council size from 54 to 55 members, representing 51 divisions. Four divisions will return two members each.
 - ◆ In Harborough and Melton District to adopt the County Council's proposals.

- ◆ In Blaby District to adopt the County Council's proposals in all but two cases. In those two cases to adopt the Cosby & Countesthorpe division proposed by Councillor Dr. D. Pollard and its own Narborough & Whetstone division in order to improve the level of coterminosity and better reflect community identity.
- ◆ In Charnwood Borough to adopt the County Council's proposals with two changes. It is recommending two of its own proposals in order to improve coterminosity and electoral equality which includes one two-member division covering Birstall and Thurmaston and a change to keep Mountsorrel together in the same division.
- ◆ In Hinckley & Bosworth Borough to adopt two of the County Council's proposals broadly with minor amendments to improve coterminosity. The Boundary Committee is recommending its own proposals in the remainder of the district in order to improve coterminosity which includes two two-member divisions covering Burbage and Hinckley.
- ◆ In North West Leicestershire District to adopt five of the County Council's proposed divisions. However, it is recommending its own proposals for three divisions in order to improve the reflection of community identity.
- ◆ In Oadby & Wigston Borough to adopt Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's proposals which includes one two-member division covering Oadby. However, it is putting forward its own division names.
- ◆ The electoral arrangements of all divisions, except Asfordby, Belvoir and Glenfields, will be subject to change as the divisions are based on district wards, which have themselves changed as a result of the district reviews.
- ◆ Blaby & Glen Parva (formerly Blaby), Kirby Muxloe & Leicester Forest East (formerly named Kirby Muxloe) and Loughborough East (formerly named Loughborough Central) divisions will be based on the same division boundaries as at present. However, new division names are being proposed.

The Next Steps

6. The Boundary Committee is asking for comments on its draft recommendations by 26 April, 2004. It is consulting directly with District and Parish Councils in the areas and has issued public notices in the local media. The draft recommendations are also being publicised through local information points and libraries.

7. The County Council's response will need to be determined by the Constitution Committee rather than full Council in view of the timescale.
8. All members of the County Council have been advised that this Committee will be considering this matter on 11 March and again before 26 April, to finalise the County Council's response to the draft recommendations. They have been invited to put any comments they wish the Committee to take into account, in writing.
9. The possibility of a representative of the Boundary Committee meeting with members and officers of the County Council has been explored. The Boundary Committee has indicated that it would be willing for such a meeting to take place, subject to a mutually convenient date being arrived at.

Equal Opportunities Implications

10. The aim of the review is to ensure that as far as practical each person's vote carries the same weight.

Recommendations

11. The Committee is recommended to give initial consideration to the Boundary Committee's draft recommendations and indicate:-
 - (a) the timescale within which it will determine the County Council's response, including the final date for the receipt of comments from elected members;
 - (b) what, if any, work it requires officers to undertake in developing possible alternative proposals for consideration by the Committee;
 - (c) whether it wishes to meet with a representative of the Boundary Committee.

Background Papers

Draft recommendations published by the Boundary Committee.

Officer to Contact

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