

BRIEFING NOTE

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PHASE TWO – WARDING PATTERNS

THE WEST

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Electoral Review Task and Finish Group has grouped the District area into 5 zones to develop warding patterns within each of the zones.
- 1.2 All 5 zones use the Town and Parish Councils as building blocks and achieve electoral equality, one of the statutory criteria applied by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). Electoral equality is calculated by dividing the number of electors in an area by the number of Councillors elected to represent that area to produce an 'electoral ratio'. High levels of electoral equality for a local authority will be a situation where a high proportion of wards/divisions across the authority have roughly the same electoral ratio and where no ward/division has a ratio which varies by a great degree from, the average for the authority.
- 1.3 Across the District, to support the agreed Council Size of 48, an electoral ratio of 3,075 should exist using the projected 2025 electorate. A figure within + or - 10% of this figure is acceptable.
- 1.4 The knowledge of local councillors is sought particularly on Community Identity and Interests within the area. This is one of the other statutory criteria applied by the LGBCE.
- 1.5 Community Identity and Interests include, but are not limited to the following:-
 - Transport links – Are there good communication links within the proposed ward or division? Is there any form of public transport? If you are proposing that two areas (e.g. villages, estates or parishes) should be included in the same ward or division together, how easily can you travel between them?
 - Community groups – Is there a residents group or any other local organisation that represents the area? What area does that group cover? What kind of activities do they undertake and are there any joint-working relationships between organisations that could indicate shared community interests between different geographical areas?
 - Facilities – Where do local people in your area go for shopping, medical services, leisure facilities etc? The location of public facilities can represent the centre or focal point of a community. We would like to hear evidence about how they interact with those facilities so that we can understand the shape of local communities and the movement and behaviours of their residents.
 - Identifiable boundaries – Natural features such as rivers, valleys and woodland can often provide strong and recognisable boundaries. Similarly,

constructions such as major roads and railway lines can also form well known barriers between communities.

- Parishes – parish boundaries often represent the extent of a community. In fact, the Commission often uses parishes as the building blocks of wards and electoral divisions.
- Shared interests - Are there particular issues that affect your community which aren't necessarily relevant to neighbouring areas that might help us determine where a ward or division boundary should be drawn? For example, many local authorities contain areas which have urban, suburban and rural characteristics. Each of those areas may have different needs and interests though they could be located next to each other. One area might be more affected by urban issues such as the local economy while an adjacent area might be more concerned with local transport matters. We would like to hear evidence about what those issues are and how they mean ward boundaries should combine or separate the areas in question.

2. THE WEST

- 2.1 The West zone comprises the parishes of Martin, Damerham, Rockbourne, Whitsbury, Breamore, Woodgreen, Hale, Godshill, Fordingbridge, Sandleheath, Hyde, Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley, Ringwood, Burley, Sopley and Bransgore.
- 2.2 The zone is served currently by 11 Councillors and has a total 2025 electorate of 27,621.
- 2.3 To support a Council Size of 48, the zone should be served by 9 Councillors, which results in a 2025 electoral ratio of 3,069.
- 2.4 The Task and Finish Group has agreed that there are two distinct areas within the West, Fordingbridge and the North West, and Ringwood and the South West.

3. FORDINGBRIDGE AND THE NORTH WEST

- 3.1 This area has a total 2025 electorate of 9,273 and should be served by 3 Councillors, resulting in a 2025 electoral ratio of 3,091.
- 3.2 Feedback is sought on the local community identity and interests and what type of warding patterns these support.
- 3.3 The following are prompts in terms of the key questions that need answering for this area:-
 - Could Fordingbridge and some parishes form a 2 Councillor Ward?
 - If so, which parishes are appropriate to do this?
 - Could the remaining parishes form a 1 Councillor Ward?
 - Which parishes fit neatly together?
 - Which parishes do not fit neatly together?

4. RINGWOOD AND THE SOUTH WEST

- 4.1 This area has a total 2025 electorate of 18,348 and should be served by 6 Councillors, resulting in a 2025 electoral ratio of 3,058.

- 4.2 Feedback is sought on the local community identity and interests and what type of warding patterns these support.
- 4.3 The following are prompts in terms of the key questions that need answering for this area:-
- Could the area North of the A31 and the parish of Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley form a Ward?
 - Could the parishes of Burley, Sopley and Bransgore form a Ward?
 - Could the area in Ringwood south of the A31 form a Ward?

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Following the workshop, options will be prepared that are supported by the feedback received from local ward Councillors. Local ward Councillors will then be invited to indicate their preferences from these options which will be considered in detail by the Task and Finish Group.
- 5.2 A full scheme of warding patterns will be the subject of reports to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2020.