
NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

To: **Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party – XX June 2015**

Main Portfolio Area: **Corporate Governance Services**

By: **Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All Wards**

Summary: **To formulate comments to pass to the Local Government Boundary Commission regarding the new electoral arrangements for Kent County Council.**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has undertaken an electoral review of Kent County Council in order to address the differing levels of electoral inequality where some councillors represent many more or fewer numbers of the electorate than others.
- 1.2 The LGBCE initially wrote to Kent County Council (KCC) inviting them to make proposals on the size of the Council. The LGBCE then consulted on the divisional patterns for the County and the submissions received then informed the LGBCE's draft recommendations.
- 1.3 This report allows Thanet District Council through the Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party to make comments on the draft recommendations for submission to the LBGCE by the deadline of 6 July 2015.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 Kent County Council currently has 84 Councillors, the LBGCE are recommending that this number be reduced to 81. They are also proposing that these 81 Councillors should represent 65 single member divisions and eight two member divisions. They add that if this adjustment is made none of the 73 new divisions would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for Kent by 2020.

3.0 What does this mean for Thanet?

- 3.1 Thanet is currently served by 8 KCC Councillors spread across three two member divisions and two one member divisions as set out in the table below:

Existing KCC Divisions	Number of Councillors
Birchington and Villages	1
Broadstairs and Sir Moses Montefiore	2
Margate and Cliftonville	2
Margate West	1
Ramsgate	2

- 3.2 The LBGCE recommend that the existing arrangements are replaced by 7 KCC Councillors spread across two 2 member wards and three 1 member wards, as set out in the table below

Proposed KCC Divisions	Number of Councillors
Birchington and Rural	2
Broadstairs	1
Cliftonville	1
Margate	1
Ramsgate	2

- 3.3 Descriptions and reasoning for these proposed Divisions is included at Annex 1 to this report. In addition maps of the existing divisions and the proposed divisions can be found at: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/4285>.

4.0 Commenting on the draft proposals

- 4.1 Comments can be made to the LGBCE on their proposals and the LGBCE will consider every representation received. They will weigh each submission against the criteria the Commission must follow when drawing up electoral arrangements, namely;

- To deliver electoral equality where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county.
- That the pattern of divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities.
- That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

- 4.2 Therefore if the Working Party considers making comments to the LGBCE, it must bear in mind this criterion when shaping its comments.

- 4.3 For the benefit of members and to help them understand the wider context of the review, the full consultation document is attached at Annex 2.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 If the Boundary and Electoral Working Party do make comments, then these would be forwarded to the LGBCE as the Formal Thanet District Council submission. In accordance with the terms of reference of the Working Party a report would be taken to the next scheduled Full Council meeting informing them of the Working Party's work.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial and VAT

5.1.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

5.2 Legal

5.2.1 There are no specific legal implications. However, Members may wish to address themselves to the potential disruption to the existing access to County Council representation and the impact of the proposed changes on the capacity of elected County Councillors to represent their Wards.

5.3 Corporate

5.3.1 The Council was given the opportunity by the LGBCE to comment on its recommendations. The Council regularly responds to consultations run by external agencies as by doing so it allows the Council to promote its corporate aims.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

5.4.1 The recommendations from the LGBC have been made so that the pattern of divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities. Any comments should have regard to this need.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 The Working Party is asked to consider any implications the LGBC proposals might have on democratic representation in Thanet and to formulate any suggestions (if any).

7.0 Decision Making Process

7.1 The terms of reference of the Boundary and Electoral Arrangements Working Party allow it to respond to consultations by the LGCBE, providing they then inform Council of their comments.

Future Meeting if applicable: Council (For information)	Date: 16 June 2015
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Annex List

Annex 1	Proposed new Electoral Divisions for Thanet.
Annex 2	"New Electoral Arrangements for Kent County Council" by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Background Papers

Title	Details of where to access copy
<i>None</i>	

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	N/A
Legal	<i>Steven Boyle, former Head of Legal and Democratic Services</i>