

## COUNTY PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views on the current County electoral division boundaries, in the light of the commencement of the periodic electoral review of Essex County Council and the need to submit any representations to the Boundary Committee for England by 25 November 2002.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Boundary Committee for England is required under section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal authority area in England and to recommend to the Electoral Commission whether changes should be made to electoral arrangements. The procedure began with the making of The District of Rochford (Electoral Changes) Order 2001 which brought in new District ward boundaries (with consequent minor changes to some parish wards). These new wards provide the building blocks for the County divisions and, subsequently, the Parliamentary constituencies.
- 2.2 The next stage, which is the electoral review of Essex County Council divisions, began on 6 August 2002. Rochford District Council has been invited to submit any representations it may wish to make regarding this matter, to the Boundary Committee.
- 2.3 The broad objective of the review is to ensure that the number of electors per councillor in each division is similar, reflects the identities and interests of local communities and secures effective and convenient local government as required by section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992. The Rules also provide that, in considering County division boundaries, the Boundary Committee should give consideration to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards.
- 2.4 Given those considerations and following the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000 (most particularly section 89), the constraints which previously prevented the creation of multi-member county divisions have been removed. However, Members are advised that, subject to the representations received, the Boundary Committee are not likely to recommend the creation of large numbers of multi-member divisions, other than perhaps in the more urban areas of a county.

### 3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Following the re-warding of the District Council, 10 very small polling districts had to be created to take account of the fact that the new District ward boundaries were not coterminous with the present County division boundaries. In one instance, this involved a polling district being created for one property involving three electors.
- 3.2 This could create confusion for the electorate in the event of a County by-election in that one of these small polling districts may be involved in the county by-election, whilst the remainder of the District ward to which it is linked, may not. This would inevitably mean that those electors would be required to vote at a different polling station at the County election to that which they used in the District election.
- 3.3 At the whole Council elections in May 2002 it was necessary to print poll cards and registers for these small polling districts on different coloured paper to prevent confusion for staff, electors and telling agents alike, thus incurring increased administrative costs.
- 3.4 It is therefore considered that representations should be made to the Boundary Committee that the Essex County Council divisions should be made coterminous with the District ward boundaries.

### 4 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is not envisaged that there will be any parish implications as the matter of parish wards was addressed at the same time as the District re-warding.

### 5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To recommend to the Boundary Committee that, in its consideration of the new electoral arrangements for Essex County Council in the District of Rochford, the Committee should have regard, not only to electoral equality but also to coterminosity with the District ward boundaries.

Sarah Fowler

Head of Administrative & Member Services

---

**Background Papers:** Letter from Essex County Council 16 July 02  
Letter from The Boundary Committee 5 August 02  
Local Government Acts 1972 and 1992

For further information please contact Barbara Clayton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318136

E-Mail:- [barbara.clayton@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:barbara.clayton@rochford.gov.uk)