

## Extraordinary Council – 24 February 2000

Minutes of a meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **Thursday 24 February 2000** when there were present:

Cllr D R Helson - Chairman

Cllr R Adams	Cllr V D Hutchings
Cllr R S Allen	Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr V H Leach
Cllr J M Dickson	Cllr T Livings
Cllr D M Ford	Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs J E Ford	Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr G Fox	Cllr P D Stebbing
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson
Cllr Mrs J M Giles	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr Mrs H LA Glynn	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs J Hall	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr N Harris	Cllr D A Weir
Cllr Mrs J Helson	Cllr Mrs M A Weir
Cllr Mrs A R Hutchings	

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs D E Barnes, P A Beckers, Mrs E M Hart, A Hosking, G A Mockford.

### OFFICERS PRESENT

R J Honey - Corporate Director (Law, Planning & Administration)

A Smith - Head of Administrative & Member Services

A Wyatt - Committee Administrator

Mrs M Martin - Committee Administrator

### 70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (1) Cllr Mrs J Helson declared an interest by virtue of being Chairman of Rayleigh Town Council.
- (2) Cllr Mrs J E Ford declared an interest by virtue of being Chairman of Rochford Parish Council
- (3) Cllr P D Stebbing declared an interest by virtue of being Chairman of Great Wakering Parish Council
- (4) Cllr T G Cutmore declared an interest by virtue of being Chairman of Ashingdon Parish Council and Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils.

## **71 ELECTORAL REVIEW**

Council considered the report of the Head of Administrative & Member Services which set out the view of the Electoral Review Working Group on the response received to consultation on the District Council's draft submission to the Local Government Commission.

Members wished to commend the work of the Electoral Review Working Group over the submission to the Local Government Commission and in particular recognised the vast amount of time and effort invested by the Head of Administrative and Member Services.

Members were informed that the Electoral Review press launch had taken place on 24 January 2000. Householders had been consulted via a leaflet drop, together with poster displays in Council offices and libraries. There had been 100 requests for further information. During consideration of the report, the following was agreed by Members:-

### **Size of Council**

It was noted that increasing the size of the Council to 42 would not necessarily resolve the under representation of Hullbridge. It could also have negative knock-on effects on other parishes throughout the District. The emphasis of the Working Party had been to maintain Parish boundaries and thus the identity of individual communities. Increasing the size to 42 would not necessarily increase the administrative efficiency of the Council and could increase the cost to the taxpayer.

On balance Members concurred with the Working Group view that the Council should remain at 40 Members.

### **Number of Councillors per Ward**

Members concurred with the Working Group that it was not desirable to join urban and rural areas and that Parish boundaries needed to be retained. However, it was agreed that 2 Member wards with single Member wards as the exception was a workable solution.

### **Frequency of Elections**

Members agreed with the majority view of the Working Group to:

- retain the current frequency of elections, i.e. by thirds
- review the current frequency if new legislation were enacted.

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### **Ward Boundaries and Names of Wards**

#### West Rayleigh

In supporting the Working Group's proposal for West Rayleigh, Members agreed to the following changes to ward names.

- (i) North Rayleigh & Rawreth to Downhall & Rawreth
- (ii) Sweyne to Sweyne Park

Members further concurred with the view of the Working Group in supporting the Rayleigh Town Council Proposals for Downhall & Rawreth, Sweyne Park and Grange, as amended by the Head of Administrative & Member Services to take into account the 1999 Electoral Register figures.

#### East Rayleigh

Members were divided on their support for the proposals under consideration for East Rayleigh. It was noted that Rayleigh Town Council's proposal moved ward boundaries to allow the whole of Rayleigh High Street to come into one 2 Member ward. Mindful of the original proposal put by the Working Group, on a show of hands, it was agreed to put forward the proposal from Rayleigh Town Council on this authority's preferred option, as amended by the Head of Administrative & Member Services to take into account the 1999 Electoral Register figures.

#### Hawkwell North/South

Members concurred with the working group view and supported the proposed boundary change between Hawkwell North & South, considering the change would better reflect community ties.

#### Tolerance Band

Members noted that, since the presentation given by the Chief Executive of the Local Government Commission, where it had been stated a tolerance band of +/- 10% was acceptable, communication had been received from the Commission stating that tolerance bands should be based on the following:-

urban areas +/- 2/3%

rural areas +/- 5/6%

Council considered this late change was unhelpful, given the considerable amount of work undertaken within the original tolerance band and was of the opinion that the authority's original submission should stand as the preferred way forward. It was agreed that the Chief Executive should write to gain confirmation of the tolerance bands from the Local Government Commission.

### **Consequential Effects on Parish Council Electoral Arrangements**

Members agreed with the recommendations of the Working Party.

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### **Submission to the Local Government Commission**

Members agreed that a copy of the Council's final submission to the Local Government Commission should be made available to the public via the local libraries and that wide publicity should be given to the Commission's recommendations due in June 2000.

On the matter of public consultation, Members requested that officers consider in detail the Council's method of consulting with the public over issues such as this and that the matter should be in the report of the Chief Executive. Members further requested information concerning the exercise undertaken for the Electoral Review should be made available to Members to ascertain these areas of concern at an early stage.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the draft submission, as amended above, be sent to the Local Government Commission as this Authority's preferred option for the review of electoral arrangements for the Rochford District.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to redraft the Authority's submission, to take into account those agreed changes outlined above, subject to the revised submission being first seen by the Members of the Electoral Review Working Group prior to its being sent to the Commission on 28 February 2000. (HAMS)

The meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.

Chairman

Date