
PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report invites the Sub-Committee to consider the Local Government Commission's draft recommendations for the future electoral arrangements in the District.
- 1.2 The Commission's review is statutory but it is up to local authorities to determine whether it wishes to respond to any proposals put forward by the Commission.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, the Local Government Commission is undertaking a review of the District Council's electoral arrangements. The aim of this review is to try and ensure that the number of electors represented by each Councillor is the same across the District. Any changes to District Council electoral arrangements may have consequential effects on the electoral arrangements of Town and Parish Councils. The new arrangements will also form the building blocks for the review of County Council electoral arrangements which will commence once the District review is complete.
- 2.2 On 20 June 2000, the Commission published its draft recommendations for Rochford. A copy of the Commission's review report has been sent to all local authorities in the Rochford District.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In producing its draft recommendations, the Commission has taken a mixture of the proposals contained in the District Council's draft and final submissions and added some of its own ideas. It is clear that notwithstanding the requirement for the Commission to take account of community identity and local, historic ties, the greatest weight has been given to equality of electors. Whilst the District Council's proposals for Hullbridge clearly fell outside of the Commission's original guidance, it is perhaps disappointing that the Commission has not decided to accept the Council's general principle of trying to balance electoral equality with the strong community identities that exist in the District. As Members will be aware, the District Council attempted to take into account the views of Parish Councils within its submission proposals and these have now effectively been lost. Whilst there may not have been great support expressed to the Commission for the Council's

proposals, there was little opposition either.

- 3.2 The Commission is now consulting on its draft recommendations and has requested responses by 4 September 2000. The Commission will then publish final recommendations to the Secretary of State in November.

4 THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 All local authorities serving the District must now decide whether they wish to submit any response to the Commission's proposals and, if so, what that response should be. The options are to lend support to the Commission's recommendations; support the proposals contained in any original submission to the Commission; or attempt to produce further alternative proposals.
- 4.2 The timetable available, covering as it does the period of recess, makes it very difficult to attempt any further public consultation. However, an item has been included in the Summer edition of Rochford District Matters inviting public views on the Commission's recommendations. Town and Parish Councils have also been invited to provide the District Council with information on their response to the Commission's proposals so that these might be taken into account by the District Council in deciding any response it wishes to make.
- 4.3 An update will be provided at the Sub-Committee's meeting on the views of the District Council's Electoral Review Working Group. County, Town and Parish Council representatives may like to provide an update on the position of their own Authority.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The level of resources required submitting a response to the Commission will depend on what type of response made.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The consequential effects of the Commission's draft proposals are set out in the Commission's review report.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS** the District Council on a suggested response to the Local Government Commission's draft recommendations for the future electoral arrangements in Rochford. (HAMS)

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Background Papers:

Local Government Commission for England – Draft Recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rochford in Essex

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