

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 JUNE 2010

Recommendations to Council from the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 June 2010

1. **Minute No GPC/10/7 - Recommendations of the Boundary Committee for England on the Electoral Review of Central Bedfordshire**

The Committee received a report and verbal update from the Electoral and Members' Services Manager on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council'.

The meeting noted that although published on 17 May 2010, the document itself had only been received by the Council on 2 June. The meeting further noted that a response to the draft recommendations had to be submitted to the Commission by 12 July. As such, approval was sought to delegate authority for the preparation of a draft submission in response to the Commission's proposals to Council on 24 June 2010.

Members were advised that the Council was only one of many consultees and other views and comments would be submitted to the Commission at the same time as those expressed by this Authority.

The Chairman of the Council's Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, which had met the previous day to consider the Commission's draft recommendations, reported verbally on the Group's discussions. The Committee noted that the Group had, in particular, focused on the Commission's recommendations relating to Sandy, which involved a proposed three Member ward to include Blunham. Additionally, the Committee noted that the Commission had recommended a change to the pattern of wards for Dunstable, which differed to that submitted by Central Bedfordshire Council, and which involved a proposed extension to the Northfields ward to form a two Member ward. Whilst willing to accept the Commission's recommendation for Dunstable, the Working Group was unable to support that relating to Sandy as it was felt that Blunham lacked ties to Sandy and was closer in this respect to Moggerhanger. As such it was felt that the Council should object to the Commission's recommendation on Sandy and seek support for this position through consultation with Members and neighbouring parish councils.

The Chairman of the Working Group also referred to errors in the Commission's document relating to the ratio of Councillors with the number of electors in Biggleswade and to the number of Councillors at Leighton-Linslade Town Council.

RESOLVED

1. **that the conclusions reached by the Council's Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group with regard to the content of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council', as presented by the Chairman of the Group, be supported and consultation be carried out with both Members and neighbouring parish councils regarding the Commission's proposals to include the village of Blunham within a ward in Sandy;**

2. **that the Director of Customer and Shared Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and the Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, be authorised to prepare the draft submission as the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council' including taking account of any further responses to consultation received in the intervening period prior to the Council meeting on 24 June 2010 at which the draft submission is to be presented.**

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that Council consider any responses received from town and parish councils;***
2. ***that Council approve the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council';***
3. ***that the Director of Customer and Shared Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, be authorised to respond to any questions from the Local Government Boundary Commission raised in connection with the submission.***

[Please note that a copy of the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire' is attached at Appendix A.]

Please also note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=617&MId=3355&Ver=4>