

Committee: Council
Date: 22 October 2002
Agenda Item No: 13
Title: Periodic Electoral Review of Essex County Council
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Summary

- 1 A periodic electoral review of Essex County Council's electoral arrangements (PER) commenced on 6 August 2002. It follows the completion of electoral reviews of each of the districts in Essex by March 2001. Under the review timetable, all representations must be submitted by no later than 25 November 2002. The Boundary Committee for England (now responsible for all PERs) has pointed out that the Committee may consider only those representations received during this period.
- 2 The question now arises as to whether and how the Council wishes to respond to this consultation. Two options are identified in this report for members' consideration.

Background

- 3 The review of the County Council's electoral arrangements has been underway for some time. Discussions about the review have taken place at officer level and the Council has provided information to ECC to assist with completion of the relevant preliminary information to the Boundary Committee (BCE).
- 4 Officers were expecting ECC to devise formal proposals for direct consultation with Essex districts. This has not happened and it has only recently become apparent that ECC will submit its own proposals direct to the BCE without this Council having the opportunity to comment upon them.
- 5 However, it was always the intention that options would be placed before members for consideration. Officers envisaged that the Parish Review Working Group (PRWG) would be asked to consider options and to recommend a suggested electoral scheme relating to the electoral divisions in Uttlesford for submission to the BCE. Group leaders were consulted about this proposal but their views differed on how this matter should be approached.
- 6 The options for consideration at this meeting are therefore:
 - Extend the PRWG's terms of reference to include consideration of the PER, invite it to examine options and to recommend an electoral

scheme to the Resources Committee on 21 November for submission to the Boundary Committee by 25 November.

- That the Council decides not to participate in the consultation arrangements at this stage of the PER.

If the Council decided not to submit a proposal to the BCE, it would still have the opportunity to comment on the BCE's draft proposals.

RECOMMENDED that members determine which of the two options set out above should be adopted.

Background Papers: Guidance and correspondence from the Boundary Committee for England; correspondence from Essex County Council