

**ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 11.15am on 22 JULY 2010**

Present: Councillors R H Chamberlain, E J Godwin, A J Ketteridge,
J Salmon and P A Wilcock

Officer in attendance: P Snow (Committee and Electoral Services
Manager).

EAWG1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Ketteridge was duly nominated and elected to serve as
Chairman of the Working Group for the ensuing year.

EAWG2 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillors Godwin and Salmon declared a personal interest as ward and
parish representatives of areas under discussion.

EAWG3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009 were received,
approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**EAWG4 TIMETABLE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMUNITY
GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2010-11**

The Committee and Electoral Services Manager reminded Members that
the programme of electoral reviews recommended at the last meeting had
been adopted by the Finance and Administration Committee. He presented
a revised report setting out proposed terms of reference and a timetable for
undertaking the review, and explained the background to the need for a
review to establish community identities at Foresthall Park and Priors
Green.

The review would now incorporate parish electoral arrangements as any
necessary changes were governed by the procedures laid down in the
Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. He referred
to a further report outlining the current representation for all of the district's
parishes and setting out the criteria for determining the correct level of
parish representation, as adopted in 2006.

If the proposed timetable was adopted, the review would commence in
August and would conclude in May 2011. For the purpose of any agreed
changes in electoral arrangements, where boundary change was not
involved, the review would conclude in time for those changes to be put into
effect at the 2011 elections.

Minutes of meeting held on 22 July 2010

Electoral Arrangements Working Group, 18 October 2010, item 2

In respect of any boundary changes that were agreed, the date of implementation was more difficult in that it was unlikely an order could be made in time to be implemented in May 2011, especially for district ward elections. That being so, he proposed that the parish changes order should not be made until some time after the May 2011 elections so as to coincide with any related changes to principal electoral boundaries. A further option might be to extend the term of office of those parish councillors concerned for a further year beyond 2011, and then to revert to the normal ordinary election cycle by allowing for a reduced term following that. He was investigating the legal powers available to the Council to change parish election periods and would advise Members accordingly.

Members discussed the boundary position at Foresthall Park which was agreed as the most urgent matter facing the Working Group. Councillors Godwin and Salmon gave their respective understanding of the present position relating to occupation levels at the site and to community identities in relation to both Birchanger and Stansted. Councillor Wilcock also spoke about the needs and local identities of the residents at Foresthall Park.

Councillor Chamberlain asked about the possible postponement of the scheduled parish elections and there was some discussion about the options open to the Council. It was agreed that there was already a great deal of confusion among new residents at Foresthall Park and that it was desirable to do everything possible to lessen any confusion that may already exist.

The Working Group asked Mr Snow to keep them informed about the progress of the review and on the legal position in relation to the possible postponement of elections. Given a choice between holding two parish elections within a short period or extending the current term of office for Birchanger and Stansted parish councillors, Members expressed a clear preference for the latter option.

In undertaking the review, Members agreed that a press advertisement would not be necessary as long as local residents were kept informed about developments. This could be done by means of a press release followed by a mail-shot (delivered by hand if possible) and other publicity in parish magazines and on relevant websites. Mr Snow confirmed that he would send relevant information to Councillor Godwin and to Ruth Clifford for inclusion in the Birchanger and Stansted magazines by the end of July.

In conclusion, the Working Group AGREED to adopt the timetable and terms of reference set out in the revised report marked 'addendum to item 5', for a community governance review to be undertaken in the district. It was AGREED to undertake a review of polling districts and places only in those areas where concerns had been highlighted at the recent Parliamentary General Election.

A report would be made to the Finance and Administration Committee once firm proposals for change had been drawn up.

The meeting ended at 12.10pm