

ELECTORAL WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.00 pm on 9 NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Councillors R Chambers, J Davey, A Dean and E Hicks.

Officers in attendance: J Mitchell (Chief Executive) M Cox (Democratic Services Officer) and P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager).

EWG16 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Freeman, J Ketteridge and M Lemon.

EWG17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EWG18 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

At the meeting of the Council on 27 September it had been resolved to object to the initial proposals for new parliamentary constituencies in Essex. Authority had been delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the working group, to submit an objection the proposed division of the district into parts of three constituencies.

Since that meeting information had been obtained as to the intentions of some other councils in Essex, and from the responses received there appeared to be little prospect of submitting a joint objection or to agree a counter proposal for Essex. The Council would submit its own objection but members also suggested discussing with neighbouring authorities some minor alterations to the scheme which might achieve more sensible arrangements for Uttlesford. The working group was reminded that there was also the opportunity for political parties to make their own representations and these might carry more weight.

It was agreed that a response would be drafted and copied to group leaders and the working group before it was submitted.

EWG19 POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager presented a report which summarised the further representations that had been received during the final consultation period. Attached as an appendix was the schedule of polling places which highlighted those areas where a decision was still required. The working group was asked to agree the final scheme for recommendation to the Council on 29 November.

Comments were made on the following areas where changes to the scheme were proposed.

Great Dunmow

For the Great Dunmow North West ward the working group agreed that the Great Dunmow Primary School should continue to be used as the polling station. Whilst it was not ideal due to the lack of parking it was felt that a permanent structure was still preferable, in terms of comfort and cost, to the alternative option of a portacabin at the Tesco car park. However members were keen to explore alternative options before the next review of the scheme.

Saffron Walden Shire North

It was agreed that the R A Butler School should be designated as the polling place for the Shire North polling district in place of Four Acres Common Room as the facilities were better and there was more parking available.

Stansted

The working group agreed with the proposal that Stansted North should be sub-divided into two new polling districts. This was justifiable in terms of the increased numbers of electors and would also put a stop to people having to cross a busy road to access the polling station. The 2 polling stations would be

Stansted North East -Youth Centre in Lower Street

Stansted North West ward - Bentfield Primary School

Members also agreed with the subdivision of the Stansted South ward to take account of the new development at Forest Hall park and the effect of the consequential changes order. The polling places were agreed as follows

Forest Hall Park - the Romeera Leisure centre.

Stansted south East – Romeera Leisure centre

Stansted South west – The Peter Kirk Centre

RECOMMENDED

1. That Full Council adopts the revised scheme of polling arrangements to operate from 1 December 2011.
2. The following statement be added to the schedule of polling districts. 'Delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive and Returning Officer to change the polling station designation for any polling districts defined in the schedule, only at any specific election where the designated polling station is unavailable for any reason, to enable him to make the best arrangements possible for electors at that time.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.